

Guorui Fan
Thomas S. Popkewitz *Editors*

Handbook of Education Policy Studies

Values, Governance, Globalization,
and Methodology, *Volume 1*



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Introduction: Education Policy and Reform in the Changing World

Since the emergence of the public education system, worldwide education reforms are still in the ascendant and increasingly in remarkable progress. Reforms with a spectrum of foci, including “progressive education movement,” “curriculum and instruction reform,” “educational system reform,” “education choices,” “educational equity,” “inclusive education,” “lifelong education,” and “smart education,” have been fostering the advancement of education in countries and regions all over the world and providing a wide range of opportunities for people from different countries, regions, and cultures to communicate with each other and learn from each other, resulting in worldwide reflection and discussion on the common challenges that education is faced with and the common value that education reforms share.

Modern education entails a continually complex set of relations with society. The study of the relationship between education and society relies on our knowledge and understanding of the relationships between the two. Over a century ago, in his review of Plato (*Πλάτων*, 428/427–348/347 BC)’s education philosophy, Dewey (1916: 97) commented, “The breakdown of his philosophy is made apparent in the fact that he could not trust to gradual improvements in education to bring about a better society which should then improve education, and so on indefinitely.” Similarly, Durkheim ([1977]2006: 166–167) believes “Educational transformation are always the result and the symptom of the social transformation in terms of which they are to be explained. In order for a people to feel at any particular moment in time the need to change its educational system, it is necessary that new ideas and needs have emerged for which the former system is no longer adequate.” It is in this stand in view with the relationship between education and society that Dewey (1900: 20) emphasized “Whenever we have in mind the discussion of a new movement in education, it is especially necessary to take the broader, or social view.”

A social system or an education system is a constantly evolving ecosystem, where its components coexist (Fan 2000, 2011). Hence, when studying the reform and development concerning education, we cannot conduct the research without setting it with the broader context of social life, reform, and the problem of change. These relations take on a distinct quality since the mid-twentieth century with the post-war efforts of recovery, reconstruction, and the reimagining of societies and

education. The relationship between education and society has begun to reveal a quality of mutual interaction and mutual promotion. In addition, increasingly rich and diversified education policy studies have enhanced the advancement of education policies and education reforms in practice.

Education Change and Development in the Social Change

Greek philosopher Heraclitus (c. 535–475 BC) illustrated the constant change of everything in his renowned statement “No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it’s not the same river and he’s not the same man.” Indeed, every individual is constantly changing as well, so it is with the natural and social environment that we depend on for living. Undoubtedly, education, ever since its birth, has been changing in terms of its form, function, and mechanism. Whether in the West or East, education, at least in its initial form, was a private matter when most educational activities were limited to individual families with the goal to pass on the work and life experience and social norms, while in coexistence with some forms of political and moral education only for the candidates of state functionaries and the offspring of dignitaries. Those forms of private education generated some reflections on personalized education. Not surprisingly, relevant reflections at that time focused only on the micro-level teaching and learning activities (Confucius et al. 1885/1967; Comenius [1632]1967) and the teacher–student relationships. At that stage, education theory was taken as “the whole art of teaching all things to all men” (Comenius [1632]1967). Obviously, those reflections on specific education processes scarcely have relevance with the education reform at the macro level. With the development of the modern society and the emergence of modern countries, the institutionalized modern school system has been established and is under constant improvement, and the compulsory education has been developed and scaled up as well. As a result, the connection between education and society is becoming increasingly close and the interaction between the two has become increasingly frequent and complex (Enarson 1967; Green 2013; Marshall et al. 1993).

The global architecture after World War II has undergone tremendous changes, and a series of major events have triggered worldwide competition for talents and in education among countries. The successful launch of satellites by the former Soviet Union in 1957 intensified the technology and arms race between the United States and the former Soviet Union. The United States passed *the National Defense Education Act of 1958*, whose purpose was “to provide substantial assistance in various forms to individuals, and to States and their subdivisions, in order to insure trained manpower of sufficient quality and quantity to meet the national defense needs of the United States” (The 85th United States Congress 1958). For the first time in its history, the United States related educational development to its national security. After the 1960s, the rise of and the independence of the third world nations (Tiers Monde) in Asia, Africa, and Latin America and the emergence of the two major camps of the United States and the Soviet Union generated great turbulence,

division, and restructuring in the international community when a new pattern of the coexistence of “three worlds” began to emerge (Solarz 2012), and consequently education was granted the mission of the liberation, independence, and development of a nation. In the following half century, education reforms have been increasingly reflecting the will of a nation and the power of administration which employ education as an important mechanism for safeguarding national security and interests and achieving national development.

After the 1980s, with the revolutions of 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union (1991), the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union generally ended, while other events including China’s Reform and Opening up, the European integration, Russia’s economic development plans, and Japan’s rapid economic development have led the world moving towards multipolarity. In this process, state-to-state competition has shifted from competition in the military sphere to competition in the economic, technological, and comprehensive national strength, and education has been entailed as a crucial component of each country’s capacity to improve or even maintain its economic welfare (Benjamin 1998).

Society keeps on developing in constant conflicts. Jacques Delors has described a range of tension in the society caused by technological, economic, and social changes, including the tension between the global and the local; the universal and the particular; tradition and modernity; the spiritual and the material; long-term and short-term considerations; the need for competition and the ideal of equality of opportunity; and the expansion of knowledge and our capacity to assimilate it (Delors 1996). Since the arrival of the twenty-first century, the three major social development trends of political democratization, globalization, and information communication technology have profoundly shaped education reforms and development in different ways.

The word “democracy” was derived from the Greek word “demos” which means people. Democracy is based on the principles of the decision-making by the majorities and the respect for the rights of individuals and minorities at the same time, which is a manifestation of freedom in institutionalization. In a democratic system, the management of state and public affairs is the exercise of rights and the fulfillment of duties by all the citizens, either directly on their own or by their freely elected representatives. Therefore, democracy entails the respect for citizenship, which reflects the shift from centralization to decentralization in government’s management style. In this process, education has always been taken as an important vehicle for achieving political democracy. For example, besides its elaboration on the relationship between education and democratic society, Dewey’s classic book *Democracy and Education* also guided us to construct a more democratic society through educational experiments (Dewey 1916). In the arena of education, the democratization of education was introduced by the student movement in the late 1950s, which placed the equal access to education as the principal task of democratizing education. Since then, with the efforts of international organizations such as UNESCO (Faure et al. 1972: 70–80), the connotation of the concept of democratizing education is under constant renewal and redefinition, from the equality of

opportunities for enrollment to schools to the equality of opportunities for the access to educational resources and the equality of educational outcomes, and further to the democratization of the teacher–student relationships, as well as the democratization and equity of educational activities, educational methods, and educational content, which all contribute to increasing opportunities for students to have a range of options to choose freely for their individual needs.

Shaped by the New Public Management and other theoretical trends, there is an imperative call in the field of education management at national level for the replacement of education management building on government authority and centralized power with decentralized and multiple participation education governance. In accordance with his advocacy of free market principles, Milton Friedman's "free to choose" theory became a weighty theoretical framework for liberal education reforms (Friedman et al. 1979). In the attempt to increase education competition, the implementation of a series of educational policies and reforms including school vouchers, charter schools, and school-based management has entitled school choice rights to parents, which simultaneously has broken the monopoly of education by the government and the education administration to a large extent, restructured the school system and school organization, and consequently stimulated the vitality of the school and teachers. Although more studies should be conducted to find the evidence for their impacts in improving the quality of education, these reforms are stimulating profound reflection on how the disadvantages of the traditional public education system can be overcome while still conforming to the trend of social and cultural autonomy, locality, and pluralism, and how the motivations, initiatives, and creativity of schools, teachers, parents, community members, local school districts, and governments at all levels can be stimulated to engage in the course of education with a shared vision for the construction of better public education.

Although when Theodore Levitt first proposed the concept of "globalization," the term was largely limited to the field of markets (Levitt 1983), and people may have different understandings of its concept, yet it has become a focal concept that represents the interdependence and the increasing global connections between countries in the field of politics, economy, and trade and reflects the development of human life on a global scale and the rise of the global consciousness. Hence, globalization has become a social trend of thoughts and social phenomenon that shapes the global economy, politics, and culture.

There is no doubt that the increase of the interconnectedness between countries brings economic prosperity and the overall improvement of people's living standards and quality of life. However, the flow of capital and commodities generated by globalization and an integrated global market as its fruit have presented profound challenge to human's beliefs and competencies (Brown et al. 1996). At the same time, the exchanges and collaboration in culture, science, and technology and the global flow of talents shaped by globalization have enhanced the prosperity of education and empowered the corresponding changes in people's beliefs and competencies. The development of globalization compels countries to strengthen international education exchanges and collaboration, encourage international exchanges of teachers and students, expand international trade in education services, scale up the

education for international students, and jointly support the children in undeveloped areas as endeavors for global education governance. The concept of education for sustainable development and the actions for change should be integrated into the education strategies and action plans at all levels of a nation. Hence, we should enhance the education for international understanding and collaboration to cultivate active and knowledgeable citizens for the establishment of a humane and equal international society and the deepening of international understanding and the understanding of the need for dignity as a common need for all humankind as well. Although globalization is confronted with doubts and criticism rising from the protection of local industries and the preservation of local culture, and even the challenges from the trend of “anti-globalization,” from the perspective of global education reform, a humanist vision of education based on “global common good” will still profoundly shape the education change and progress in many countries (UNESCO 2015). Just as Irina Bokova, the Director-General of UNESCO, stated, “The world is changing—education must also change. Societies everywhere are undergoing deep transformation, and this calls for new forms of education to foster the competencies that societies and economies need, today and tomorrow. This means moving beyond literacy and numeracy, to focus on learning environments and on new approaches to learning for greater justice, social equity and global solidarity. Education must be about learning to live on a planet under pressure. It must be about cultural literacy, on the basis of respect and equal dignity, helping to weave together the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development” (UNESCO 2015: 3). We believe that the statesmen and education policy makers in different countries will proceed from their national contexts and set the education goals of their own country for the balanced development of globalization and localization, adjust their education policies, and accelerate the advancement of education (Ayyar 1996; McGinn 1996; Bakhtiari 2011; Fan 2018).

Technology is the driving force for the progress of human society. In the evolving process of human society, the emerging of a new technology, whether it is a language, a script, the steam engine, electronic technology, computer technology, or mobile communication technology, has inexorably forced revolutionary changes in human life, work, and learning. Undoubtedly, technological innovation and progress will inevitably bring about changes in the educational process and educational ecology as well. In the past, the emergence of a language or a type of script, the invention of the paper, and the development of printing have enabled the instructional process to be achieved through the media of languages and scripts. What is more, remarkable changes in educational goals, mechanisms, and forms of operations were also largely shaped by the invention of the new technologies. At present, a wide range of information and communication technologies, including the internet, big data, blockchain, artificial intelligence, and 5G communication, is leading the human society into a new era. Technological innovation and progress are transforming the working mode largely based on the master of knowledge and the proficiency of skills that came into being in the Industrial Revolution. Consequently, artificial intelligence has replaced human beings in a range of fields to perform

numerous procedural and repetitive tasks, and the future work for human beings will be more complex tasks involving mentoring and managing machines.

The impact of intelligent technology on education is first manifested in the change of the requirements for human literacies. Mastering “3R” (Reading, Writing, Arithmetic) has become essential but inadequate literacies (European Commission 2018). Ever since the 1990s, the discussions on what kind of talents should the twenty-first century education cultivate has been increasing in terms of its size and scope. The report of Jacques Delors (1996) proposed the four pillars of the twenty-first century education—learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. In the last two decades, countries around the world have invariably taken the initiatives to explore the concepts of the twenty-first century skills or transversal competencies that can empower their citizens for the future work and life (Care 2017). With an aim of developing lifelong learners with twenty-first century skills, a wide range of countries and international organizations including the United States, the European Union, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Finland, Singapore, and China have proposed their own frameworks for the twenty-first century literacies, skills, or competencies, with a common emphasis on cross-cultural competence, creativity, and critical competence (OECD 2001; NEA 2002; Finnish National Agency for Education 2004; European Commission 2006; Trilling et al. 2009; Ministry of Education, Singapore 2014; Lin 2016).

The enormous transformative power and imagination embraced in the emerging technologies like electronic whiteboards, virtual reality, e-schoolbags, and cloud technologies further advance education reforms, especially in terms of educational forms. Extensive Internet reading and Internet education platforms represented by MOOCs have given birth to new education forms. A variety of online education forms continues to emerge, and education integrated with information communication technology and artificial intelligence presents new features entailing deep learning, interdisciplinary integration, human–machine collaboration, adaptive learning, intelligent monitoring, and evaluation of teaching and learning process. Compared with the traditional formal school education, informal learning supported by technology is considered to have more capacity to empower young people to learn (not in the way that they have to be in school to learn) (Ito et al. 2009). The increasing openness of education makes it possible for the shift of education from the central role of teaching to truly focusing on the learning of the learners in the future. The future education is extending from the period of children and youth to a person's whole life, is expanding from institutionalized school education to the whole society, and from offline school education to more extensive online education where teachers will become an analyst of learning, a guide for learners' beliefs and values, a personal mentor, a companion of social learning, and a caretaker of psychological and emotional development (Fan 2018).

The Perspectives and Paradigms of Education Policy Studies

Jürgen Habermas' ([1968]1971) philosophical analysis of the human interests explored the complex relations of research as having different conceptions of human interests expressed in the objects of understanding, the modes of reflection, and the conceptions of change that organize the practices of the social sciences. This analysis is conducive to our understanding of the logical relationship between education reforms and education policy studies. When this notion of human interest, paradigms, or "styles of reasoning" are applied to understand the problem of change in the science of education, its diversity becomes visible in thinking about educational research and evaluation (Popkewitz [1984]2017). Regarding the paradigms of social science research, there exist several "styles of reasoning" (Hacking 1992; Popkewitz and Lindblad 2000; Lindblad and Popkewitz 2004).

To a large extent, education reform has become a global phenomenon or movement in the past two decades, with strong policy input and influence (Zajda 2015). An education reform, as a practical activity, is in fact the logical development of an education policy. With the spread of compulsory education, the expansion of education scale, and the strengthening of the role of the state in education, education has increasingly entailed the features of social and public affairs. The state has the rights and duties to run and manage education. Therefore, "education policy" naturally belongs to the category of "public policy" and acts as the crucial means and tool for the government to manage and develop education. Education policy, including regulations, codes, plans, guidelines, notices, documents, programs, and measures, is a norm or measure that addresses educational issues, resolves educational conflicts, and establishes and adjusts educational relationships. Education policy is not only a static existence, but also an organized and dynamic development process that emerges, exists, and adjusts in the course of educational activities—a static and dynamic unity. Education policy is a code of conduct, a normative existence, and a tool employed by a policy entity to govern the educational cause. Educational policy carries the feature of timeliness as it is formulated to meet the needs of development in a particular period in response to the problems existing and emerging in the education field in this particular period (Fan 2016).

Since the 1980s, a range of universities and educational research institutions have successively established education policy research centers or relevant policy research bodies. After studying the education scholars with high public impact in the *2014–2015 RHSU Edu-Scholar Public Influence Rankings*, we found that 71 scholars, among the 200 short-listed scholars, specialize in education policy research and have extensive social impacts (Fan 2016b). Not surprisingly, educational policy has risen as a weighty research area of almost all national educational institutes. While educational policy research organizations are relatively independent, educational policy research methods and research topics are becoming increasingly comprehensive and diversified. In the actual progress of an education reform, whether it is decision-making based on concrete education issues, monitoring of the implementation process of education policy, or evaluation of the effectiveness of education

policy implementation, it is almost impossible for education to advance it without the support of education research. The development of education policies and education reforms is always interacting with education policy research, and hence they are mutually constructive. Studies on education policies can only find its meaning in entailing, caring, and moving towards practice, while in education reform practice, research results related to education policy always lead and support the actual practice of education reform, achieve the goals and ensure the values of education reform, and therefore enhance the development of education. This complex relationship among research, policy, and change has been the focus of academic studies both within and outside the field of policy research. In short, education policy research always points to educational practice. Recently, education policy research is presenting an orientation towards data-based empirical studies. Nevertheless, scholars have been constantly emphasizing the limitations of quantitative research in the studies of education policy and the importance of the historical and cultural perspectives in education policy research (Wirt *et al.* 1988; Phillips *et al.* 2004; Kofod *et al.* 2012).

The Problem-Solving Studies

Education policy and education reform are not only introduced to resolve the tensions and conflicts within the education system, but also to respond to the social changes in a particular period and coordinate the relationship between education and society. “Policy development and enactment should be seen both as an attempt to solve problems and an attempt to ensure that particular values that delineate action are accepted by those who enact policies” (Ward *et al.* 2016). Education policy studies strive to constantly seek for the harmonious and balanced relationship in the changing world between the components within the education system and between education and society through education policies and education reforms. In this way, education reforms are becoming more frequent while the steering role of education policy to education reform is becoming increasingly significant.

Education policy is not only a static existence, but also an organized and dynamic development process that emerges, exists, and adjusts in the course of educational activities—a static and dynamic unity. Education policy is a code of conduct, a normative existence, and a tool employed by a policy entity to govern the educational cause. Educational policy carries the feature of timeliness as it is formulated to meet the needs of development in a particular period in response to the problems existing and emerging in the education field in this particular period (Fan 2016). Undoubtedly, when we consider education reform in a constantly changing and developing social context, it does not demand sharp perception to notice that the education problems faced by different countries and regions in different times have something in common while unique in their own ways, and therefore, education policies in the attempt to solve these issues naturally vary, which collectively reflects the common

characteristics and distinct local features of education reform and development in different countries in the era of globalization.

Fred S. Coombs classified education issues into six types, including financial issues that attempt to answer the question “who pays, how much, for what?,” curricular issues that revolve around the question “what should be taught?,” access issues of selecting certain students for certain kinds of educational experience, personnel issues that come from the question “who should teach and administer the system?,” school organization issues arising from the question “how should schools be organized and run?,” and governance issues that address the question “who should make policy and who is accountable for the performance of the educational system?” (Coombs, 595–597). From his point of view, it is undeniable that the issue of education involves not only the state and the government, but also the components within the school. If we think of contemporary policy and research as entailing a “problem-solving apparatus,” prominent is the emphasis on professional development of the teacher and teacher education as a means to school improvement. In his studies on the complexity of school systems, Fullan (1993, 1999, 2003) elaborated teachers’ role as the change agent. It is true that the recent practice of educational change indicates that education reform relies more on the drive within the school, emphasizing that education change can be introduced by capacity building or school culture reconstruction and consequently, school-based solutions which in most cases are carried out by the school staff have been more widely accepted; Yet, regardless of the scope of the reform or the role it plays, government-led top-down reforms still play an indispensable part in the development of education reform; and this government-led education reform is made through education policy and implementation. The formulation of education policies calls for investigations and researches on the particular educational practices or issues.

The Empirical-Analytic Studies

As a type of cross-disciplinary research, policy research entails the principles and methods of statistics, philosophy, economics, political science, sociology, anthropology, psychology, history, and other disciplines. With the integration of education studies with studies in other disciplines, the methodology of education policy research is becoming increasingly diverse, from qualitative methods in the early period to the dominance of quantitative methods, to the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, then to the wide application of ethnography (Halpin et al. 1994: 198), and now to the integration of multiple research methods (Burch et al. 2016)). The constant adjustments in methodology strives to study the effectiveness of education policy implementation by evidence-based methods, and to conduct random and strictly matched experiments based on the mutual trust between policy makers and educators, which has served as the basis for education policy and practice (Slavin 2002).

Numbers and statistics perform in policy studies as a way of telling the truth that seems independent of historical circumstances and social, historical conditions, in what has been called as a mechanical objectivity. One important element of research, as mentioned above, is the importance of statistics, and more recently the emphasis on metrics and algorithms in identifying the rules through which reforms are enacted and change is facilitated, constrained, or restrained. It is almost impossible to think about schooling without numbers: children's ages and school grades, the measuring of children's growth and development, achievement testing, league tables of schools, and identifying equity through statistical procedures about population representation and success rates.

The increasing use of statistical measure is important for multiple reasons in terms of the relationship between science and policy. Numbers have become part of ambitions to increase transparency and accountability of what is, and what is not, of value and importance. Theodore Porter's (1995) important book on the history of statistics in social arenas, for example, explores how numbers are parts of systems of communication whose technologies appear to summarize complex events and transactions. The numbers appear to be neutral and precise, providing powerful representations in concise and visible forms through tables, diagrams, or percentages. The mechanical objectivity of numbers appears to follow a priori rules that project fairness and impartiality in which the numbers are seen as excluding judgment and mitigating subjectivity.

At the same time, however, educational policy adjustments driven by data, such as the PISA project, have also induced negative outcomes of digital governance (Lingard 2011). Some scholars have pointed out that the way of describing the "truth" of the national school education system and children's education based on numbers is employed to distinguish and divide countries globally (Popkewitz 2011: 32–36). This way of constructing and representing the world with digital information in a seemingly objective and neutral way actually obscures the PISA's theoretical assumptions (Poovey 1998: 237), and as a result, a wide range of countries reform their education systems in an attempt to improve their rankings in the pursuit of economic utilitarian values with economic growth as the core goal while neglecting the intrinsic value of education to nurturing the growth of human beings. The emergence of the above issues calls for attention in the future education policy research.

The Historical and Cultural Studies

If the prior "problem-solving" or empirical-analytic style of reason about policy and research is associated with the enlightenment faith in reason and science for organizing and managing social affairs, a different style of thinking is brought into the present and activated in international discussions. This style of reasoning might be called "the knowledge problematic." The attention to "knowledge" as the object of study directs attention, at one level, to the historical system of reason that orders

what is thoughts, talking about and acted on. But the focus of research on the knowledge of schooling is not merely about ideas and “discourses” but directs attention to the historical conditions in which the classifying and ordering of the “seeing” is entangled with institutions and technologies to give the materiality of contemporary education. This rethinking of the problematic of research and policy studies is expressed by Latour (2004) in a different context of social and science studies. Latour argues that research is to reverse attention from what is assumed as the matter of concern to research that asks about *the concerns of what matters*. Brought into view is a particular notion of science that engages with the tradition of science that Marx engaged in with his analysis of capitalism, Weber with that of bureaucracy, and Durkheim’s interest in collective belonging that simultaneously concerned issues of alienation. Within its contemporary field of the humanities and social sciences, the research in contemporary policy research draws, in part, on science studies and post-foundational and Foucauldian studies.

Entering the twentieth century, the changes in the public education power have presented huge challenges to education policies. The pursuit of private benefits of educational activities under the market mechanism may cause damage to the public welfare of education. Besides, achieving education equity has been compounded by the intervention from the market and society to education.

Policy statements, research reports, and the classification of tables and graphs, as a result of the multicultural development under particular historical conditions, are viewed as documents of a culture. The objects of school learning and children’s development are given a historical substance; viewed as cultural artifacts to analyze the state of things in their multiplicities to understand the groups of rules that define what can be said, preserved, reactivated, and institutionalized (Foucault 1991).

Central in this style of reasoning is the historical and the philosophical that circulates in contemporary research practices. It entails locating the multiplicities of differentiated spatiotemporal relations that form in school reforms, “seeking to reconcile genesis and structures to a number of issues embodied in the sciences that pretend to secure the future” (see, Deleuze [1968] 1994: 20). The historicizing in research is to direct attention to thinking about the grids, or multiple and different historical lines that come together at a particular time and space to produce the objects of change. In thinking this way, the problem of research becomes considering the intersections of various technologies of measurement, theories, and cultural, institutional, and social practices that travel in uneven historical lines but connect at a particular time and space (Popkewitz 2020). Therefore, under the educational values of equity, efficiency, and freedom, educational policies should follow the fundamental principles of the new public administration; take particular historical and cultural backgrounds into account, entail equity as a fundamental policy value goal, balance efficiency and quality, strengthen the respect for and the recognition of ethnical culture, and constantly quest for meaningful and valuable educational policy research.

The Structure and Main Content of the Handbook

The thought of collecting the works of internationally renowned scholars to compile a handbook on educational policy research popped up in our minds on a sunny day in the spring of 2014. At that moment, our intention was to include classic literature and high-cited published papers in the field of educational policy research in the Handbook. Later, in consultation and discussion with some of the members in the Handbook's invited international advisory committee and Springer, the editorial theme was revised, and now it has come out as a collection of the original works that focus on the study of contemporary education issues. Here, we are not going to provide readers with classic knowledge of educational policies, but to present policy analysis and reflection on contemporary education issues. What we want readers to see is that in a world full of uncertainty, education is an important social subsystem that influences the development of individuals and the existence of a society, and is taken by all countries in the world as a driving force for social progress and sustainable development of the country. On the other hand, social, political, economic, technological, and cultural factors are all manifesting unprecedented diversity and uncertainty, impacting people's learning, work, and life in a comprehensive way. The past, present, and future education reforms, no matter in which development stage they are, especially macro-education reforms at the national and regional levels have their roots in educational policy analysis to meet the need to resolve major educational problems at that particular moment. Hence, "education policy and reform in a changing world" embraces a holistic and magnificent rich picture of the multiple interactions between contemporary education and social, political, cultural, technical elements of a society, and the multiple interactions among the elements within the education system.

The science of educational policy studies is not a unitary entity. Rather, it entails different social and cultural principles that change over time. The *Handbook of Education Policy Studies* brings together the latest research with different reasoning styles from a wide range of internationally recognized scholars into two volumes of a book and therefore have the capacity to analyze educational policy research from international, historical, and interdisciplinary perspectives. By effectively and fruitfully breaking through the boundaries between countries and disciplines, it presents new theories, technologies, and methods of contemporary education policy and illustrates the educational policies and educational reform practices of different countries in response to the challenges of constant changes.

The two volumes of the *Handbook of Educational Policy Studies* bring into view two general and different strands of research to present the diversity of policy research and different ways of ordering reflection and designing ways of studying education to enunciate particular solutions and plans for action in the social and historical arenas in which education operates within nations and increasingly transnational. Our effort in the Handbook is to bring together different styles of reasoning to consider the international diversity of research related to policy; how different approaches render judgments about what are the important problems, how to make the fields of existence in schools manageable for understanding, and how to draw conclusions and propose rectification that open up the possibilities for educational change.

Based on the analysis of the nature of education policy and education reform, *Values, Governance, Globalization, and Methodology*, the first volume reflects on the values of education reform and the concept of education quality, focusing on the changes in the macro-education policies at the national level. From the historical and comparative perspectives, it examines the dialectical relationship between education policy and education reform in a variety of countries, analyzes the theoretical and practical issues in the process of moving from regulation to multiple governance in contemporary education administration, and explores the impact of globalization on national education reform and the interdependence between individual countries as well. In addition, this volume also collects the studies on the research methodology of education policy from multiple perspectives. This volume comprehensively reveals the complex relationship between contemporary education reform and social change and explores the new complexity of the relationship between contemporary social, political, economic systems, and education policy research and practice, which provides the readers with a holistic picture of the macro trend of the contemporary education reform.

The second volume, *School/University, Curriculum, and Assessment*, focuses on the changes in education policies at the micro level, that is, the policies and changes in schools and classrooms. The studies on changes in schools present the differences in the policies and challenges of K-12 schools and universities of different countries and regions in response to the contradictions and conflicts between tradition and modernization, as well as the changes of the roles of different stakeholders, especially those of the teachers. In terms of curriculum and instruction, a great number of countries have introduced desirable experiments and practices in educational changes around two themes: “what to teach” and “how to teach.” While enhancing the extensive application and improvement of educational assessment and testing technologies, international education assessments represented by PISA also have exerted far-reaching impacts on education policies and education reforms in different countries. This volume comprehensively reveals the complicated interactions among school organizations, teachers, curriculum, teaching and learning, evaluation, and other elements within the education system, which presents the latest ecological scenario of the reforms in contemporary schools, curriculum, and instruction.

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¹Whitty Geoff, and Jake Anders (2013), Narrowing the Socio-economic Achievement Gap: The Recent Experience of England. In Guorui Fan (Ed.), *Educational Policy Observatory* (Vol. 4), Shanghai: East China Normal University Press, pp. 3–41.

Sages Hall, a classic building at ECNU, as the cover picture of this Handbook. The Ionic order building was built in 1930, which integrates both Chinese and Western cultural elements, and thus perfectly illustrates the vision of the Handbook to connect Chinese and Western education.

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Part I

Values, Quality, and Education Policy

Chapter 1

Beyond the Western Horizon: Rethinking Education, Values, and Policy Transfer



Iveta Silova, Jeremy Rappleye, and Euan Auld

1.1 Introduction

Over the past four decades, the dominant understanding of education policy has shifted dramatically. In the past, education policy was seen as a reflection of particular historical, political, social, economic, and cultural configurations of a given country. Today, policy is increasingly understood as heavily influenced by extra-national forces, so much so that policies “elsewhere” are seen as possible reform options. This has given rise to many dominant trends in education policy today: the OECD’s Programme for International Student Achievement (PISA), the discourses of “best practice,” the dominance of the World Bank in the “developing” world, and now even attempts to borrow from “high performing” countries to improve education policy and practice at home. Examples include the United Kingdom’s well-publicized attempts to borrow Shanghai Math, American ongoing efforts to import Japanese Lesson Study, and an increasing interest among policymakers globally to transfer an illusive “Finnish PISA miracle” into different education contexts.

Yet, this perspective is not new. All modern education systems arose relationally, be it through purposeful learning from systems elsewhere or by forceful implant by colonizing powers. Notable examples of the former include American interest in the Prussian system (Horace Mann), Japanese study of the American system (Iwakura Mission), and China’s import of the Japanese system (Qing Imperial Court Mission 1896). The latter include British education in India (Macaulay) and Hong Kong, the

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United States in the Philippines and Hawaii, and Japan in Korea and Taiwan. Viewed against this larger historical span, the recent shift to an extra-national perspective for policy studies is not a novel development, but a return to the recognition that modern education and education policy are inevitably entangled with the world beyond one's own national borders.

Where difference does arise is in the levels of recognition of global entanglement. Arguably most non-Western countries cannot even imagine education or education policy without reference to the Western world: the legacy of Western colonization remains too powerful, Western-led development ensures constant comparison, or the analytical frameworks that are used to understand education remain imbued with the Western experience. In these contexts—the majority in the world—education policy inevitably and automatically invokes comparison and contextualization in the wider world. In contrast, most Western countries still lack recognition of education policy as relational and globally entangled. Having never experienced colonization (i.e., the receiving end) and viewing their analytical frameworks as universal rather than particular, these countries—the minority in the world—are only now coming to recognize the comparative, global dimensions of education. That is, although Western observers are apt to view global policy trends over the past several decades as novel, in fact they are only experiencing what non-Western countries have encountered since the beginning of modern education: the inevitability of thinking about education *in relation* to the wider global context.

One consequence of the fateful combination of Western academic dominance and Western amnesia regarding relationality is that the analytical frameworks utilized in understanding education policy tend to lack a global dimension. As we detail below, the one area of research that retained this extra-national dimension was studies of educational transfer, also called “borrowing” and “lending” (Steiner-Khamisi and Waldow 2012; Steiner-Khamisi 2004). Yet, even within studies of educational transfer, the analytical frameworks somehow developed with little serious discussion of wider global significance, resulting in a set of easy conceptual tropes: academic/applied, real/imagined, global/local, etc. (for critique, see Silova and Rappleye 2015). While this work remains important, our aim in this chapter is to go beyond the usual ways of viewing education policy and, in particular, the theme of educational transfer within it: we argue that this growing body of work needs to be (re)contextualized within the larger questions of global significance. Inescapably, this requires that we as researchers think seriously about the values that underpin our scholarship and reflect on what sort of global futures our work seeks to contribute to.

1.2 Limits of Current Approaches

America in the 1950s witnessed a coincidence that gave rise to a global contradiction in education policy studies. Parson's structural functionalism was then dominant in the social sciences. Functionalism held that institutions, including education,

changed in relation to the particular historical, social, economic, and cultural configurations *within* a given country. At the same time, America strived for global expansion of its models and, in the context of the Cold War, began to actively promote these ideas worldwide in the form of Modernization Theory as an alternative to Marxism (e.g., Rostow 1971; see also Rapleye 2018). There was a deep confidence that America was leading a universal global trajectory toward a prosperous and peaceful future. The deep contradiction was that education was understood analytically in narrow domestic terms, while change was clearly coming from the outside in the form of Western-led development agencies such as USAID, UNESCO, and the World Bank, in addition to the persisting legacies of Western colonialism (we are apt to forget that dozens of Western colonies existed even as late as the mid-1950s). Western bureaucrats and colonial administrators, joined by like-minded academics and local collaborators, set to the task of finding out how to make functionally efficient education policy to “move” countries toward a future imagined in the image of the West.

This policymaking “logic” only intensified in subsequent decades, particularly after the collapse of the socialist bloc wherein Western solutions enjoyed virtually free reign, reaching a point where education policy studies came to be almost entirely focused on locating narrow “solutions” to predetermined images of “progress.” The most obvious examples today are found within OECD and World Bank led projects seeking to gather immense amounts of data and apply the most advanced statistical techniques in analysis to isolate “what works” in raising students’ achievement (Auld and Morris 2016). Even initiatives such as Education for All (EFA), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and more recently the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reveal a similar focus on minute technical issues without serious discussion of the larger direction and future course (e.g., how to measure progress toward SDG 4, rather than on clarifying what the key term “sustainability” might mean). And while it is easy for critical scholars to disparage these attempts as naïve, in fact the field of education policy studies remains overwhelmingly tied to the functionalist research agenda: it seeks to “fix” education with norms anchored in an unexamined faith in the Western future.

Running counter to these trends within the broader field of education policy studies is research on policy transfer. It has long refused the functionalist fantasy that education can be understood in domestic terms alone. It remains focused on the movement of policies across borders and cognizant of global entanglements. Theoretical frameworks utilized in this area such as World Culture Theory and World Systems Theory actively champion a move beyond functionalism. In this sense, the policy transfer research is leading the way, at least in Western contexts, out of the provincialism bequeathed by functionalism.

Nevertheless, we would argue that educational transfer research still remains too limited, too unaware of the narrowness of its implicit assumptions to affect deep change in the way we understand education policy. Concretely, policy transfer research has too often fallen back on a simple distinction between academic and applied research, attempting to define itself against functionalism. In contrast to applied researchers, academic transfer scholars purport to deal “objectively” with

how transfer occurs, what stages occur in the process, what actors are involved, and what larger social forces are in play (Phillips 2006). This purported objectivity is seen as superior to the normatively laden work of applied researchers, those who seek to intervene in the “real world.”

Among this group of “academic researchers,” another set of dichotomous distinctions has subsequently arisen, those focused on “global” developments (e.g., work in International Organizations and apex of policymaking) and “local” understandings (e.g., how policy is translated into practice, reinterpreted along the way, or morphs-as-it-moves). This global/local conceptualization has been one of the most defining categories of analysis over the past two decades, often reinforcing previous dichotomies such as West/East and North/South (Larsen and Beech 2014; Takayama 2015; Silova 2012). Some researchers even make a further distinction between what is “real” and “imagined” in the process, pointing out how adoption of global discourses alone does not represent authentic borrowing (Steiner-Khamisi 2004). Despite critiques that such dichotomies have become a cul-de-sac for our research imagination (Silova and Rappleye 2015; Silova et al. 2017), they persist.

As such, these conceptual tools, although once useful in bringing more nuance and clarity to understanding borrowing and lending processes, have not only become tropes in their repeated use over the past two decades, but they also continue to obscure the larger questions of global significance. In the push to become more “objective” than naive functionalist accounts, research on policy transfer somewhere along the way lost the larger plot. Why are analyses of policy transfer important? What larger project does this body of work contribute to? What sort of future can we imagine from such studies? Although education transfer research escaped the narrowness of functionalism, it never attempted to subsequently contemplate the wider worldview that bestows its work with significance. That is, it has increased in complexity but has largely failed to address its underlying provincialism.

1.2.1 A New Framework for Education Policy Borrowing

Can we continue policy transfer research but jettison its underlying Western provincialism, and what would such a project entail? Utilizing the work of Mignolo (2011), we address these questions by presenting a new framework for understanding the nature of education policy studies, comprising five main research trajectories that are shaping global futures. Mignolo (2011) describes five co-existing but competing projects: (1) re-westernization, (2) global reorientation to the left, (3) de-westernization, (4) decoloniality, and (5) spirituality. Figure 1.1 juxtaposes these options turned possible global futures.

Here we are in agreement with Mignolo (2011) who argues that “in the forthcoming decades, the world order will be decided in the struggles, negotiations, competitions, and collaborations between five different and coexisting trajectories—without a winner” (p. 33). Our primary goal in this chapter is not to advocate for one specific position or perspective, but instead to call attention to the plurality of projects

unfolding in our contemporary world. If policy transfer research can be successfully repositioned on this larger and more diverse world-historical map—what Cowen (1996) usefully calls “*kosmos*” but now needs to be rendered in the plural—we believe research will become more dynamic and debates far richer. Moreover, we as researchers will be forced to think through and clarify our own values. Below we first briefly describe the five trajectories, then in the next section demonstrate what transfer research based on each of these trajectories might look like.

Rewesternization entails the retrenchment and further expansion of the Western liberal model. Most recognizable in the guise of neoliberal policy, the pillars of this project are “saving capitalism,” resuscitated, reloaded, and revamped through science and technology. Mignolo (2011) highlights the leading role of the United States in advancing this primarily economic project, pointing specifically to the knowledge dimension: “‘Knowledge for Development’ is the unquestioned orientation of the United States in its current project of rewesternizing the world, which is also transparent in the initiation of the World University Forum, in Davos” (p. 36). Mignolo also draws attention to how subjectivity becomes rewritten within this trajectory away from “communal and pluriversal futures” and toward subjectivities of consumerism and, we would add, individualism.

Reorientation to the Left signifies challenges to rewesternization. One half of this project continues existing trajectories of Western thought from within the Western sphere: secularism and ambitions for universality (e.g., Marxism). It continues the hope of, for example, retaking “the commons” from the increased domination of the capitalist logic or reworking existing institutions to foster greater material equality. The other half of this project pursues similar ends but is situated outside of Western Europe: “the Left from a Marxist background, as was introduced and unfolded in colonial countries and subcontinents” (p. 41). Mignolo (2011) argues that scholars

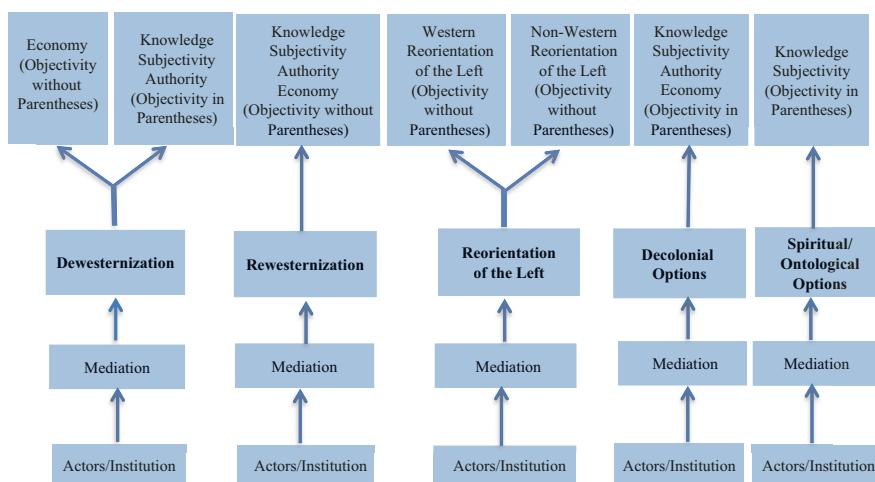


Fig. 1.1 Schematic visualization of five current trajectories of the world order that are shaping global futures. (Source: Adapted from Mignolo 2011: 35)

working from this perspective face similar challenges as in the West and therefore “must consider to what extent Western political theories and political economy and Western universities (as institutions and curricula) shall be the model for socio-economic organization and education” (p. 44).

Dewesternization initially appears like a clean break from the Western frameworks of the first two options, but in fact retains and seeks to perfect one half of it: a universally dominant economic trajectory (capitalism). The proposed break comes instead with Western epistemology and the means through which it is projected: “While dewesternization shares with rewesternization the ‘survival of capitalism,’ the confrontation takes place at other levels of the colonial matrix of power: the sphere of authority, of knowledge, and of subjectivity” (p. 47). Mignolo highlights China as exemplar of this position: China increasingly rejects Washington’s dictates as it grows more confident with its global leadership role, yet the politically driven resuscitation of Confucianism is, Mignolo asserts, largely a means of accelerating the move toward China taking control of the locus of global authority. That is, China seeks not to change the structure and hierarchy of a global order created by Western powers and epistemologies, but simply assert control of it.

The Decolonial Option signifies the attempt to divest from forms of Western knowledge imposed during the course of colonialism. The key term here is “delinking,” signifying an unhitching from Western economic forms and political authority, but particularly epistemic and subjective starting points. A crucial feature of decoloniality is that “objectivity is in parentheses” which means the end of epistemic universality; the end of the very idea that there exists an “ultimate blueprint for the future” (p. 52). Instead, the decolonial trajectory “means both the analytic task of unveiling the logic of coloniality and the prospective task of contributing to building a world in which many worlds exist” (p. 54). Central to this project is the presence of the Other—an entity that does not share the same basic self-understanding, a challenge that simultaneously defamiliarizes one’s own frameworks and suggests alternatives.

Last, the *Spiritual Option* is an attempt to decolonize at an even deeper level, centered on the triad of knowledge, subjectivity, and religion. Utilizing the word “spirituality”—a term we ourselves feel hesitant about and feel is better read as the Ontological Option, as discussed below—Mignolo recognizes that the modernist assumption of secularism continues to operate within decolonial discussions. As such, it is necessary to “decolonize religion to liberate spirituality” (p. 62). Lest this be understood as a mere dropping out from the larger materialism plot and universe of responsibility, Mignolo recognizes that rethinking the spiritual foundations is crucial for the general direction of delinking from Western modernity: “the common ground for all these re-inscriptions of spirituality is the desire to find ways of life beyond capitalism and its magic of modernity and development that keeps consumers caught in the promises of dreamworlds” (p. 62). More constructively still, what the spiritual option offers is “the contribution of opening up horizons of life that have been kept hostage (that is, colonized) by modernity, capitalism, and the belief in the superiority of Western civilization” (*ibid*).

Based on this brief summary of Mignolo's (2011) pluriversal global futures, we now turn to (re)classify empirical studies of educational transfer according to their implicit commitments to one or more of these trajectories. Importantly, we assume that anyone, thinking and writing from anywhere, can participate in any of these projects. That is, the decolonial option is not reserved for scholars in former colonies but can be undertaken from anywhere. Meanwhile, the *rewesternization* project can be undertaken in both Pondicherry and Paris, and Wuhan and Washington. Mignolo writes: "There is no one-to-one relation between actors and trajectories, although actors make their options at the intersections of their biography, their desires, and the available option" (p. 69). This underscores a key point. As educational policy scholars, we are responsible for reading the wider *kosmos* and understanding where our work fits. Our work—educational policy transfer research—is itself a form of decision-making about the future, one Mignolo calls *mediation*: "Disputes for knowledge are fought at the level of mediations. For it is in knowledge-making and argument-building that decisions take place" (p. 67). We submit that educational researchers can no longer escape this decision-making about the global future by retreating to the easy tropes of research to date, unhitched from a wider global plot.

1.3 Toward Multiple Global Trajectories: Agenda for Education Policy Research

In what follows we discuss each trajectory toward global futures separately with a focus on education policy transfer research, while keeping in mind that these trajectories are not fully divergent and may overlap in various ways.

1.3.1 Rewesternization

Stemming from the historical foundations of Western civilization and the accompanying spread of Christianity and colonialism, the project of rewesterization attempts to maintain the global hegemony of the West by protecting and extending privileges acquired over the past 500 years (Mignolo 2011). While overt colonization is no longer politically viable, the project of rewesterization nevertheless continues the Western civilizing mission through new political, economic, social, and racial reconfigurations, ranging from modernization and international development efforts to humanitarianism and anti-terrorism campaigns. At its core, rewesterization is about securing the global future for capitalism, market economy, and democracy, as well as the philosophical tenets of liberalism that underpin it. It attempts to rebuild, or prop up, a flagging global confidence in the leadership of the United States and Western Europe.

Whereas global economic policy discussions have focused on the goal of “saving capitalism,” or “reimagining” its future, especially since the global financial crisis of 2008 (Mignolo 2011), rewesternization efforts in education have translated into the global policies that promote the idea of “knowledge for development,” or, more specifically, knowledge for *economic* development and growth. As resources become increasingly limited, both in physical and political terms, it is clear that “the control of scientific and technological knowledge is the card the West shall [continue to] play” in an attempt to maintain its global competitiveness and control (Mignolo 2011: 49). In fact, the World Bank’s *World Development Report* (1998) spelled this out in utmost clarity over two decades ago: “knowledge, not capital, is the key to sustained economic growth and improvements in human well-being.” In another iteration, the seminal report *Constructing Knowledge Societies* (World Bank 2002) maintained that “social and economic progress is achieved primarily through the advancement and application of knowledge” (p. xix) (see Rappleye and Un 2018).

Underpinning the idea of “knowledge for development” is a set of assumptions associated with the concept of “neoliberalism,” postulating that markets should play a fundamental role in determining educational purposes, priorities, and policies. Rather than viewing education as a public good, the neoliberal education reform agenda has redefined education to serve private interests, restricting its purposes to the pursuit of increased individual productivity and economic growth (for critique see Ball 2007, 2012; Rizvi and Lingard 2010; Morris 2016). The agenda is being driven by many powerful actors, including corporations (such as Pearson), international financial institutions (such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund), European Union (EU), the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), as well as a network of private sector coalitions (such as including Hewlett and Gates Foundations).

The substance to this neoliberal rewesternization agenda is provided by comparative policy studies (often commissioned by the World Bank and OECD), which claim that improvements on global learning assessments such as PISA (i.e., an increase in “knowledge” defined as “twenty-first century skills”) automatically lead to higher Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rates (see Hanushek and Kimko 2000; Hanushek and Woessmann 2007, 2010, 2012, 2015, 2016). The World Bank’s work is duly based on the premise that “education builds human capital, which translates into economic growth” (World Bank 2018: 41). Similarly, the OECD has propelled the neoliberal agenda through its many publications—such as *Employment and Growth in the Knowledge-Based Economy* (Foray and Lundvall 1996) or *The Knowledge Economy* (1996)—as well as using its Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) to promote a link between education and economic growth. Both the World Bank’s SABER and the OECD’s *Education at a Glance* series are subsequently presented as a guide to the “correct” reading of the datasets, collating information on participating societies to provide a source for identifying “best practices” and initiating transfer.

Meanwhile, education policy entrepreneurs, experts, and consultants have stepped up as intermediaries to “translate” PISA data into “best practices,” promot-

ing—and profiting from—the uptake of neoliberal reforms globally (Auld and Morris 2014; Verger 2012; Silova 2012). This industry will be further extended and legitimated under the OECD's (2018) *Learning Framework 2030*, which is aligned with the UN's post-2015 goals as part of the organization's vision for a “new paradigm for development.” The “new” vision uses universal metrics to set nations on an “improvement journey”, on which they will be supported by a global policy network and partnerships with private organizations. It should be noted that this trajectory is not somehow located “outside” the field: the underlying logic is often casually replicated in academic settings, both in consultancy projects oriented toward influencing policy and in research studies developed for an academic readership. The combination of this network of academics, consultants, and international agencies has thus contributed to both scientific legitimization and practical implementation of the rewesternization project itself.

While the World Bank, OECD, and other international agencies continue to pursue the rewesternization project and the neoliberal education agenda associated with it, many education researchers and policymakers worldwide have become increasingly critical. In particular, they have challenged this “new” policy regime for imposing Western-centric lens to understand education across different contexts (Silova 2012), for introducing market principles into public education settings (Verger and Moschetti 2016; Verger 2012; Robertson et al. 2012), for converting education complexity into (Western) “best practices” (Auld and Morris 2016), for insisting on standardization that destroys diverse onto-cultural ecologies (Gorur 2016), for deepening socioeconomic and gender inequities (Stromquist 2016; Unterhalter 2017), or for overlooking other policy alternatives (Edwards and Loucel 2016; Silova 2010).

More importantly, recent studies have cast doubt on the whole validity of the alleged *causal* relationship between student test scores and economic growth—the bedrock of the rewesternization project today. They argue that the relationship between changes in student test scores and economic growth in subsequent periods is “unclear at best, doubtful at worst” (Komatsu and Rappleye 2017: 170). Broadly speaking, this means that the policy logic underpinning the rewesternization education regime is not only ethically, pedagogically, economically, and politically problematic, but it is also empirically flawed. Such research should be approached with caution by policymakers and researchers who find themselves under pressure to introduce education policy reforms recommended by international financial institutions in the name of economic growth and, by extension, participate in the project of rewesternization.

1.3.2 *Reorientation to the Left*

One of the strongest critiques thus far of the rewesternization project has come from a competing global trajectory—“reorientation of the Left”—which encompasses different leftist orientations seeking visions of alternative non-capitalist futures.

Following Mignolo (2011), these orientations include the secular Marxist Left, the Global Left that emerged in the World Social Forum (WSF) as a response to the foundation of the World Trade Organization (WTO), as well as “modern/colonial Left” that has unfolded in former colonial settings (South America, Caribbean, the Middle East, etc.). Underpinning the theoretical foundations of these different leftist orientations are dependency theory and world-system analysis that aim to explain “the differential power of nation states located hierarchically within the world-economy” in the face of the unequal distribution of wealth, resources, and well-being (Griffith and Arnove 2015: 95; see also Clayton 1998 and Wallerstein 1983, 1995). In this context, the “re-orientation of the Left” project seeks to engage in developing “educational policies and practices that can help to create more peaceful, just and democratic futures” (Griffith and Arnove 2015: 90).

In the comparative study of education policy transfer, the “re-orientation of the Left” is visible in the empirical studies directly critiquing the rewesternization project and mapping alternative education trajectories of the Global Left. Such a two-prong approach enables researchers and policy makers to transform a “language of critique” into a “language of possibility” (Giroux 1997: 108). In particular, a sustained critique of the unequal power dynamics inherent in the North-South education transfer has led many researchers to investigate a South-South cooperation and grassroots mobilization as possible ways to build more symmetrical relationships between the lenders and borrowers of education policies and practices (see Chisholm and Steiner-Khamsi 2008; Jules and Morais de sá e Silva 2008; de sá e Silva 2009). In the context of international development, South-South transfer has been conceptualized as “a way out of the dependency trap in educational development,” offering new forms of collective mobilization to overcome global inequalities (Steiner-Khamsi 2009: 242).

Scholars have approached the study of the South-South transfer from multiple angles, ranging from cooperation initiatives at the nation-state level to transnational social movements to community-driven forms of political mobilization. For example, Hickling-Hudson (2004) calls attention to the governmental efforts to pursue South-South cooperation in the context of the post-Cold War world. In particular, she examines Cuba’s international educational assistance to schools in Jamaica and Namibia as an example of “South–South collaboration which would be independent of traditional direction and financing with strings from the wealthy countries of the ‘North’” (p. 308). In such relationship, the countries of the “South” attempt to reduce their dependence on the “North” by assisting each other in the process of building “radically new relations” necessary to ensure independence from the “North” in education and other fields. For example, some Caribbean governments have assisted Cuba with solidarity and trade, while Cuba—with its comparatively large proportion of scientists and research capacity—has assisted countries of the Latin America region with several hundred tertiary education scholarships and teacher exchanges within a cost-sharing framework. While recognizing that Cuba’s education model is “an imperfect modernist one,” Hickling-Hudson (2004) nevertheless argues that it has the potential to “energize alternative postcolonial thinking, a necessary step in facilitating the building of a high quality of ‘education for all’ ” (p. 309).

In addition to intergovernmental efforts that advance visions of alternative non-capitalist futures, many studies have focused on the grassroots initiatives pursuing leftist agendas in response to the neoliberal project. From a progressive leftist perspective, participation in a market economy reproduces the neoliberal social order and exacerbates various systems of oppressions such as patriarchy, racism, and sexism, among others (Edwards and Klees 2012; Stromquist 2016; Apple 2010; Torres 2002). This means that the concept of participation itself needs to be redefined in “a way that goes beyond being an actor in the market” but rather reflects empowerment that entails “more just and democratic relations among peoples” and facilitates “the involvement of average people in the making and implementing of those decision and policies which affect their lives” (Edwards and Klees 2012: 59). Scholars working within this research trajectory have examined various alternative forms of education participation that purposefully challenge the capitalist regime, ranging from the Landless Workers’ Movement in Brazil (Tarlau 2012; McCowan 2003) to *Escuela Nueva* in Colombia (Luschei 2004) and BRAC Non-Formal Primary Education Program in Bangladesh (Nath 2002). While different in nature, orientation, and scope, these grassroots initiatives have aimed to develop and implement education alternatives to a market-based rewesternization project in their local contexts and, when successful, transfer their experiences beyond national borders.

On a global level, civil society organizations, nongovernmental organizations, citizen associations, and teacher unions have mobilized into transnational advocacy networks to target the neoliberal agendas of international financial institutions at scale. For example, Mundy and Murphy (2001) describe how the establishment of Education International, a global association of teachers’ trade unions, in 1993 signaled “a renewed solidarity and internationalism among teacher unions” and “a new era of cooperation between international trade union associations and other international nongovernmental actors around a common agenda for global change” (p. 107). While the main concern of teacher unions historically revolved around the international standards of the teacher status, Education International rearticulated its aims in response to the threat to teachers, and to public education more generally, posed by austerity and the new policy agenda in the late 1990s. In 1999, Education International joined forces with Oxfam and Action Aid—forming a new transnational alliance—to lead the Global Campaign for Education in an attempt to democratize global education governance (Edwards and Klees 2012; see also McPhearson 2016; Mundy and Murphy 2001). As Mundy and Murphy (2001) argue, such transnational advocacy networks have the potential “to contribute to the development of civility and democracy at the international level” by reframing of global educational needs and reshaping of decision-making processes in the field of international educational cooperation (p. 126).

Despite the variations within the “reorientation of the Left” trajectory, these projects have one thing in common—they all strive to create visions of non-capitalist futures that offer alternative *universalist* logics for a “socialism for the 21st century” (Mignolo 2011: 39). All tend to assume that a global mobilization of the Left is the most promising way to challenge the hegemony of Western capitalism. However, as Mignolo (2010) insightfully notes, it is important that any strategies toward the

future—socialist, capitalist, or other—avoid “the modern and *imperial* temptation of the good and best universal” that would replace the existing ones (p. 354). Given that both capitalist and socialist projects stem from the foundations of Western modernity claiming universality, Mignolo (2010) argues that re-imagining the Global Left as a new universal project “means falling back into the old house while just changing the carpet” (Mignolo 2010: 354). In other words, “re-orientation to the Left” does not leave much space for imagining alternative worlds and world-views beyond Western modernity.

1.3.3 *Dewesternization*

Mignolo (2011) points out that empirical cases of dewesternization can be found with the greatest intensity in East and Southeast Asia. In many of these countries, there has been a confrontation with Western epistemology and “the structure of enunciation,” i.e., the domination of forms of knowledge that remain European and White. Nonetheless, here the flavor is not completely anti-western, as dewesternization shares the same underlying commitment to capitalism and modernity: “it is not a movement of anti- but self-affirmation” (p. 47).

Empirical examples of education policy transfer from the region support this vision. Given that the number of empirical cases is far fewer than work in the two dominant trajectories outlined above, we opt to focus only on the two most salient. Shibata (2006) illustrates how Malaysian political elites in the 1980s–1990s initiated a “Look East” campaign that took Japan as its exemplar, importing policies, policy experts, and training schemes. At first glance, this appeared as a break from the Western world. But, in fact, this referencing functioned more as a political tool to accelerate political, economic, and social consolidation: “Look East as well as learning from Japan were political metaphors for Anti-Western and pro-Asian region based policies. The metaphors were useful in enabling the Malaysian people to understand the goals they had to pursue and the outcomes they could gain rather than abstract notions of political ideas or ideology” (p. 655). Herein “Confucianism” functioned as a discursive technology to accelerate capitalism and political projects of the ruling elite and a move at “deracialization” of legitimate knowledge, but not the more challenging move to rethink capitalism or modernity.

Singapore arguably went much further. Avenall (2013) describes how Singapore launched a “Learn from Japan” campaign, detailing the actual import of institutions such as the police box system (koban) and quality control circles. Singapore also attempted to launch worker productivity campaigns and experimented with Japanese style labor-management relations, both aimed at molding Singaporean workers in the image of industrious, harmonious Japanese. In education, there were also initiatives to bolster moral education. Key to all of this was a discourse of “Asian Values,” as loudly promoted by Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Kwan Yew. It revolved around the idea that “Asians” preferred social harmony, placed greater emphasis on the collective, and adhered to loyalty toward authority (see Bangkok Declaration

1993). Yet Avenall (2013) concludes that rather than a decisive break from capitalism and modern statehood, the Learn from Japan campaign and its associated borrowing are better understood in terms of providing “ideological utility in teaching people about being productive, patriotic, and compliant Singaporeans and in legitimating the persistence of authoritarian governance and neoliberal developmentalist economics” (p. 45). That is, Singapore’s government-led attempts to transfer policies from Japan sought to fulfill capitalism and Western modernity, but on its own terms; to self-affirm its own knowledge in the process of convergent capitalist expansion and acceleration. China’s contemporary combination of unabated capitalist expansion and its recent turn to replace the ideology of state socialism with “Confucian familism” (Vickers and Zeng 2017: 334) appears to replicate this now familiar pattern (see also Sahlins 2015).

While research has elucidated how policy transfer, as both substance and discourse, is utilized in political processes of dewesternization, it is also possible to imagine academic research that operates within a dewesternization framework, regardless of the empirical object. Take for example, an article by leading Chinese comparative education Gu Mingyuan entitled “Learning from Each Other: a comparative study of education in China and Japan” (1995) wherein he argues:

All-around moral intellectual and physical development is a common objective of educational systems in China and Japan. In particular, the two countries place a lot of stress on moral development. This is a tradition of Oriental culture, and can trace its origins to Confucianism. Moral education, or the perfection of personal character, is the core of Confucian virtue. (Gu 1995 [2001]: 202)

While this initially appears identical with the discussions of Malaysia and Singapore above, in fact, at this time Confucianism was still not a topic encouraged by the Chinese government. To this day, there is no explicit Chinese government campaign to “learn from Japan.” Instead, Gu was pushing for a dewesternization reading of practices in Japan. The sole focus on “moral development,” however, reveals an implicit commitment to existing economic goals. The point here is twofold and nuanced: dewesternization always exists for scholars as one larger frame within which to situate policy transfer regardless of the larger political discourse, yet what defines it (particularly in contrast to decoloniality) is its acceptance of the underlying economic and political status quo, as well as its insistence upon self-affirmation rather than confrontation (anti-) with Western modernity. This in-built ambivalence is one reason why dewesternization work so often comes under critique: it sometimes has difficulty explaining the deeper driver of its self-affirmative move to replace the outer packaging of existing structures with “vernacular” symbols.

1.3.4 The Decolonial Option

The decolonial option represents a distinct break with modernity associated with any forms of capitalism, socialism, or other abstract universalisms. It involves a comprehensive “divesting of colonial power” on which Western empires were

founded and expanded globally (Mignolo 2011: 52). Because coloniality is constitutive of modernity, the pursuit of the decolonial option requires changing “the terms and not just the content of the conversation” (Mignolo 2007: 459). In the history of the modern/colonial world, the content has in fact been changed many times—“by Christianity (e.g. theology of liberation); by liberalism (e.g., the US support of de-colonization in Africa and Asia during the Cold War) and by Marxism (also supporting de-colonization in Africa and Asia during the Cold War)” (p. 459). Yet, these changes in content have not challenged the hegemony of Western modernity, leaving its colonial foundations and operational logic intact. Therefore, delinking from modernity/coloniality needs to start with the epistemic and ontological shift in order to bring to the foreground alternatives, i.e., other principles of knowledge, understanding, and being. According to Mignolo (2007), such a shift will ultimately lead to *pluriversality*, opening spaces for multiple ways of understanding the world, society, education, and being.

One example of an epistemological delinking is Kuan-Hsing Chen’s *Asia as Method* (Chen 2010), which offers a decolonial, de-imperial, and de-Cold War analytical framework that moves research beyond Western-centric interpretations of history and enables scholars to imagine historical experiences in Asia as “an alternative horizon, perspective, and method for posing a different set of questions about world history” (p. xv). Building on Mizoguchi Yūzō’s (1966/1989) “China as method” and Takuchi Yoshimi’s (1960) “Asia as method,” Chen (2010) has analytically approached “Asia” as both a geographic region and a constructed cultural-political space with complex, contested, and intertwined historical relations within the region and with the “West.” By reorienting the conventional reference points away from the “West” and instead focusing on knowledge “inter-referencing” within the Asian region, Chen (2010) re-centers Asia “as the source of a multiplicity of new [knowledge] flows” (p. 8), thus effectively interrupting the hegemony of Western knowledge and offering a new view on global history. Furthermore, he proposes to explore “how local history, in dialectical interaction with the colonial and other historical forces, transforms its internal formation on the one hand and articulates the local to world history and the structure of global capital on the other hand” (p. 66). In other words, “Asia as method” opens ways to bring to the foreground multiple histories, while revealing the relationality and interdependence of different global spaces.

In the field of education, “Asia as method” has inspired research in the areas of science and technology (Anderson 2012), teacher preparation (Ma 2014), curriculum inquiry (Lin 2012; Daza 2013), childhood studies (Burman 2018; Millei, Silova, and Piattoeva 2018; Yelland and Saltmarsh 2013), global citizenship education (Abdi et al. 2015), and comparative and international education (Zhang et al. 2015; Takayama 2016; Silova et al. 2018). These different articulations of “Asia as method” in education reveal that this decolonial project goes beyond a question of geographic focus but also entails a change of analytical approach in education research. In childhood studies, for example, Burman (2018) has followed Chen’s framework to develop the concept of “child as method” as a resource for critically interrogating Western models of child development and education and exploring

alternative theoretical frameworks. In particular, Burman (2018) argues that local, national, and international policies— influenced by Western neoliberal agendas— have viewed the child as both “an index, a signifier of ‘civilization’ and modernity” and “the key arena in which to instill such civilization” (p. 77). Challenging the mainstream narratives that construct the child as “other”—whether an innocent, inferior, or deviant “other” who can develop into a fully human adult through the processes of psychological and pedagogical socialization—Burman (2018) proposes instead to see children as *beings* (rather than *becomings*) by shifting attention on the individual and cultural-political subjectivities of children in different contexts. Aiming to disrupt the teleology and linearity implicit in Western child development theories (e.g., such the idea of “growing up”), she joins queer childhood and education theorists who have attempted to understand the diversity of childhood experiences in terms of growing “sideways” (Stockton 2009) or queering the parameters of childhood narratives through a process of “telling it slantwise” (Przybylo and Ivleva 2018). As a result, the “child as method” approach enables researchers to multiply cultural imaginaries of childhood in both research and everyday life, giving way to previously silenced stories and histories to unfold along different non-Western trajectories.

In addition to research inspired by “Asia as method,” important decolonial options have been developed by scholars working with Southern Theory (Connell 2007; Takayama et al. 2017a, b), Epistemologies of the South (Santos 2014; Esteva et al. 2013; Earle and Simonelli 2005), postsocialist/poscolonial studies (Silova et al. 2017), and other decolonial projects. While ranging in theoretical perspectives, methodological approaches, and geographic focus areas, these various projects have two things in common. First, they neither claim universality nor offer an “ultimate blueprint for the future” (Chen 2010: 52). Rather than replacing one epistemology with another or others, these decolonial projects instead contribute to creating a space where many different worlds and worldviews could coexist on a non-hierarchical basis (Tlostanova 2012; Tlostanova et al. 2016). Second, they aim—both individually and collectively—to fundamentally transform knowledge structure, content, and production, as well as “culture and mind, desire and body” (Chen 2010: x). These decolonial projects powerfully illustrate that decolonization of knowledge production requires scholars to also engage in decolonizing their subjectivity, so that “the understanding of the self may be transformed, and subjectivity rebuilt” (Chen 2010: 212). For the scholars who continue to live with the consequences of colonial and modern legacies in knowledge and subjectivity, this means reclaiming their positions as epistemic subjects who have both the legitimacy and the capacity to interpret the world from their own origins and lived realities (Silova et al. 2017). Here we locate intriguing intimations that this “resistance” can be done without reinscribing taken-for-granted notions of an active, individualized subject, a move Takeuchi describes as passive “oriental resistance” (see Calichman 2004). Ultimately, decolonization of subjectivity encourages researchers to look outwards “to alternative and multiple forms of identification through the practice of ‘becoming others’ ” (Zhang et al. 2015: 26). In this process, new geopolitics of knowledge

and being emerge, unsettling the very logic of modernity/coloniality and embracing a global viewpoint that reflects *pluriversality*.

1.3.5 *The Spiritual (Ontological) Option*

The spiritual option is the least elaborated of the five trajectories and for us emerges as problematic in the way Mignolo (2011) briefly describes it. He argues that “basically stated, the spiritual option advocates decolonizing religion to liberate spirituality” (p. 62), aiming at “finding new ways of life beyond capitalism and its magic of modernity.” Unfortunately, this cursory definition suggests that spirituality—emphasis on the Spirit—is something “subjective,” something pursued by individuals, and that “religion” (never defined) somehow interferes with it. It appears as a way out of capitalism and retreat from colonialism, but Mignolo’s description remains disappointingly vague. And yet, he is clearly on to something: by supporting secular analytical lenses “progressive intellectuals indirectly support capitalist’s arguments for modernity and development” (pp. 62–63). To avoid all of this, we instead choose to read the spiritual option as a move beyond materialism or, more challengingly, a gesture toward importance of ontological concern. Hence, we attempt to rename it. It is predicated on the idea that the assumption of a material world of ontological discrete objects that can be known “objectively” is a bedrock of Western science and capitalism, but also a derivative of a particular religious worldview (Christianity). In this reading, the spiritual option moves to open up new ontological possibilities, or if some prefer, metaphysical universes, ones that refuse a secular, materialist worldview as a starting and end point of research. It partially overlaps with recent discussions of the “post-secular turn” (Wu and Wenning 2017; see also Habermas 2008), the ontological turn (Jensen 2017; Holbraad and Pederson 2017), and bears close affinities to work seeking to center spirituality in the academy (Shahajan 2005; Shahjahan 2004; Edwards 2016; Edwards 2020).

We offer three preliminary examples from our recent work, demonstrating how we have tried to operationalize this trajectory in policy transfer related research. The first study explored the origins and drivers of the “Mindfulness” movement in the United States (Rappleye *forthcoming*). It began by exploring the actors and institutions, and agendas that catalyzed the borrowing of Buddhist meditation techniques into American public schools. It showed how two key actors—US Congressman Tim Ryan and Professor John Kabat-Zinn—carefully reframed these non-Western meditation practices into the language of empirically verified science, emphasizing their practical benefit while downplaying religious dimensions and highlighting similarities with dominant Christian practices. By “silencing” its non-Western and “spiritual” origins, these key actors were able to help Mindfulness successfully gain a foothold and th mainstream. Particularly, John Kabat-Zinn in his book *Coming to Our Senses: Healing Ourselves and the World Through Mindfulness* (2005) links this “import” of spiritual practices into secular modern institutions to a future beyond capitalism and in recognition of climate change. If transfer research turns to

focus on new initiatives such as Mindfulness and Yoga that have moved from (usually non-Western) religions into the realm of the “spiritual” and are then inserted into the secular (e.g., schools), we can begin to imagine research that reveals new worldviews anchored in non-material concerns.

A second example is our recent work on temporality, self, and nihilism (Rappleye and Komatsu 2016). At the center of the analysis is the feeling the pervasive sense that life has no meaning—nihilism—a feeling we source to the diffusion of linear time over the past 500 years from its origins in Christian theology. The work draws its legitimacy less from a bevy of statistics and breadth of historical sweep, more from the potential connection with readers who feel something similar. Focusing on the case of Japan, we analyze how the concept of Linear Time was “borrowed” to face the threat of Western colonialism and propagated largely through modern schooling. To analyze the case, we draw not from Western theorists but Japanese thinkers, those adept in synthesizing Western thought and East Asian traditions such as Mahayana Buddhism (e.g., The Kyoto School). This automatically provides a theoretical lens that is “spiritual,” forcing readers’ attention away from material structures and onto questions such as selfhood and the search for meaning in one’s own life. While this initially appears as a flight from the responsibility of scholarly work, in fact it aims to release the central category that underpins “subjectivity,” the notion of selfhood itself. In this sense, it is far more radical than even Mignolo (2011) appears ready to imagine: it asks when and how the fundamental categories we use for critique (e.g., subjectivity) arose and why we fail to see other historically specific formations (e.g., clock time) and thus miss its “spiritual” impact upon us.

Our third example brings into focus non-Western worlds and worldviews through the study of nature-centered spiritualities in Latvian early literacy textbooks and children’s literature published during the pre-Soviet, Soviet, and post-Soviet periods (Silova 2019). The study reveals that nature-centered spiritualities have survived in Latvian culture and everyday life despite the centuries of Christian crusades and decades of socialist atheism-turned nihilism. However, they have remained mostly invisible in the light of reason, logic, and rationality associated with the European (and later socialist) modernity project, especially social science and education policy research. Yet, this apparent invisibility does not mean that alternative worlds and worldviews disappear or lose their importance in people’s lives. Rather, it means that we (as researchers) need to refocus our gaze in order to become aware of the previously unknown or invisible dimensions of our existence. Once we dwell in this space and attune ourselves to it, we can see that Nature’s deities continue to live in cultural (and educational) practices, mythological consciousness reveals itself in children’s literature through folk stories and fairytales, and spirituality continues to unfold in people’s daily lives through ordinary, everyday activities. By contemplating taken-for-granted notions of time and space, Silova’s study brings these spiritual domains more clearly into focus, disrupting the established boundaries—between space and time, passion and reason, adult and child, animal and human, self and other—and thus opening a space for (re)imagining education and childhood beyond the Western horizon.

The spiritual (ontological) option is arguably the least developed of all five trajectories. The reasons for this are several: critical scholars are usually of the modern Marxist-mold and view religion as a mere “opiate” of political deception; postmodern scholars are willing to question everything except their own unexamined secularism and theoretical preeminence; and scholarship in the Western world still largely lacks access to ways of thinking that derive from different ontological worldviews. Moreover, epistemological discussions have dominated ontological contemplation, prompting Shahjahan et al. (2017) to poetically lament that:

This movement toward a “possible way forward” in terms of the adoption of different epistemologies tends to remain within the same ontological parameters that we are trying to transcend because it relies on the same investment needs, reproducing again the circular dance of distraction: we try to change knowing without changing our ways of being. (p. 566)

Future research must develop this trajectory carefully to bring into dialogue different onto-epistemic perspectives, without relegating any of them into the realm of myths or subjective beliefs. Here we have suggested three possibilities that revolve around a similar approach: focusing on an object that is more “spiritual” in nature and attempt to utilize theoretical frameworks not originally forged out of the secular, materialist worldview of the West (hence the natural link to decolonial perspectives that take us beyond the Western horizon). But many more possibilities surely await.

1.4 Challenges to the Next Generation of Research

The multiplication of options, rather than the elimination of them, is.... the road to global futures. (Mignolo 2011: 39)

Each of these trajectories outlined above presupposes different understandings of truth and objectivity and, therefore, different approaches to research on education policy transfer. In particular, rewesternization and reorientation to the left trajectories, despite their radically different political, social, and economic orientations, are built on the assumption of “truth without parenthesis,” that is, an assumption that there is *one* objective and universal truth predicated on one ontological reality. In the area of education transfer research, this belief in abstract universalisms has commonly translated into the search for “best policies and practices,” which are assumed to be globally relevant, applicable, and transferable. While the dewesternization option strives for self-affirmation in the areas of knowledge, subjectivity, and authority beyond Western hegemony, it nevertheless remains bound to the idea of universal truth and therefore limits research on education transfer to the normativity of functionalism. By contrast, decolonial and spiritual (ontological) options operate on the assumption of “truth in parenthesis,” acknowledging that there is not one (objective) truth but rather a multitude. As Maturana (1985) explains, “when one puts objectivity in parenthesis, all views, all verses in the multiverse are equally

valid. Understanding this, you lose the passion for changing the other” (quoted in Mignolo 2011: 27). From this perspective, there is no longer the need to search for and defend *the* universal truth; the focus is rather on acknowledging multiple, coexisting trajectories toward the future.

While different in their goals and orientations, four of the five trajectories outlined above—dewesternization, the reorientation of the left, decoloniality, and the spiritual (ontological) options—share the common goal of decentering Western hegemony in knowledge and subjectivity. They offer different ways toward the global future that is not exclusively dominated by the rewesternization trajectory but rather delinks from it and unfolds toward pluriversality. According to Mignolo (2007), delinking requires an economic, political, philosophical, and ethical reframing of the terms of the conversation that makes “the Bible, Adam Smith and Karl Marx *necessary* (because Western categories of thoughts have been globalized through the logic of coloniality and the rhetoric of modernity) but *highly insufficient*” (p. 459, emphasis added). In other words, decentering Western hegemony does not mean its complete erasure or replacement with other ideologies. Rather than replacing one “truth” (or one hegemon) with another, the critical task is to create “an open horizon of pluriversality” where many different worlds and worldviews can coexist on a non-imperial and non-hierarchical basis (Mignolo 2011: 275). This entails both “unlearning” the terms of modern/colonial knowledge production and ways of being and learning to attune to, acknowledge, and engage with multiple interconnected (and always relational) worlds.

Moving toward pluriversality thus presents several challenges to researchers of education policy studies. In the introduction, we flagged two dominant characteristics of current work: a continued commitment, albeit not always explicit, to functionalism and a persistent tendency toward dichotomous thinking (e.g., global/local, real/imagined, objective/subjective). In the deafening silence over values and contemplations of the future, existing policy research must rethink its approach at a fundamental level if it is to contribute to pluriversality. Here we flag two moves that must come to replace our current commitment to functionalism and dichotomy.

The first move requires awareness of both one’s own values and the ways that one’s research embodies such normative commitments. It demands not “objectivity” in contradistinction to “applied” researchers, but an awareness of how values are already inherent in whatever form of research we participate in. As discussed, choices of research objects are “mediations”: inherently normatively laden decisions in favor of one or another possible future. And contemplating these choices helps us understand *our-selves*: “Questioning the material, epistemic and ontological fabric that ‘we’ have created—and that in turn has created a part of ‘us’—necessarily means to question ourselves. Who are ‘we’ supposed to be after all, if we ‘transform’?” (Schultz 2017: 137). Through a functionalist lens, an objective world comes under the refined eye of a skilled policy analyst. Unfortunately, that same lens not only renders values invisible but also suggests that change need only occur in the world “out there.”

Second, and closely connected to this, is the move from dichotomy to relationality. Dichotomies signify two options, both equally ambitious in their claims to

universality. In the landscape of binaries foregrounded by a horizon of universality, our collective energy is dissipated in either waging war against the “other side” or turning away from each other completely. It is by now no secret that so many of the binaries that structure existing educational work—even self-proclaimed critical work—is still predicated on distinctions hardened to the point of antagonism during the long sweep of modernity: man/woman, nature/culture, subjective/objective. In contrast, a pluriverse acknowledges more than two options, spaces in-between, and more than one ontological reality. At the same time, it recognizes that “mediations” on future trajectories arise only in relation to different mediations. That is, we need to produce work not only *about* relationships but also *from* relationships. To write only *about* relationships is to fall back into the objectivist conceit and ensure a future of antagonism, rather than sympoiesis (Haraway 2016).¹

1.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, we attempted to go beyond the usual ways of viewing educational policy and the theme of educational transfer within it; we sought to replace the implicit, un-thought backdrop of existing studies within a new worldview and onto-epistemic range of possibility—an admittedly ambitious move to replace both the kosmos and episteme (Cowen 1996) of existing research to set up the possibility for pluriversality. Drawing on Mignolo (2011), we renamed research as “mediations”: decisions about what sort of future will unfold. We then reviewed existing research, providing examples of the sorts of work that articulate different trajectories.

What is missing from all this is the significance of our title: Why is it necessary to move beyond the Western horizon to bring about the pluriverse, and what would such research entail? Here we envisage three distinct meanings, albeit all interwoven and interconnected at the most fundamental level. First, there can be no doubt that the biggest threat to the pluriverse at present is the acceleration of the rewesternization trajectory. With the rollout of each new OECD metric—from “Baby PISA” (International Early Learning and Child Well-being Study) to PISA for Development (extending to the developing world) to PISA4U (The Online Programme for School Improvement)—and the transfer of every new “best practice” associated with these new metrics, multiple meanings are rendered increasingly less visible. It is not that these meanings are actually erased, but instead they become harder to see, buried under a layer of Western symbols. Concretely, we may “see” Japanese education on, say, PISA league tables, but these familiar symbols

¹ Restricted by space we cannot extend the discussion fully to its post-anthropocentric implications and the obvious connections it has to the environment. Yet we agree with recent concerns voiced by scholars like Haraway among others that the limits of relationality necessarily extend beyond the intra-human horizon. For some indication of future directions we seek to develop in coming years vis-à-vis relationality and the environment, see Silova et al. (2020), Komatsu et al. (2019), and Rappleye and Komatsu (2016).

betray a complex reality below, tempting us to mistake the symbol for the signified. Yet, the only way to become clear of the differences is to move beyond the horizon of Western symbols, to refuse the familiarity offered up by the rewesternization narrative. It is inconceivable that a pluriverse could arise from a ground already mediated by rewesternization priorities.

The second meaning entails a realization that the Western horizon is not simply an on-going political project (i.e., rewesternization) but a set of perspectives embedded in our epistemic and methodological choices. As outlined in the introduction, the analytical toolkit of most education policy scholars has been forged out of the hard certainty of Parsonian functionalism and gains legitimacy by comparing itself favorably against uncritical, “applied” research perspectives. But the toolkit is anything but certain: it was developed inside the Western historical, sociological, and cultural experience, thus limiting our ability to see and understand multiple worlds and worldviews outside of it. As but one example, we may return to the issue raised in introduction: the methodological nationalism of educational policy studies is a non-relational fabrication generated by the functionalist analytical lens. It is virtually impossible to understand this until one finds analytical toolkits built in relation to different non-Western cultural experiences. And this is true even for tools given by, say, post-modernism (e.g., governmentality, policiescapes). We should not forget, as just one poignant example, that Nietzsche’s project, which has generated so much new thinking when it passed through the hands of social science luminaries such as Max Weber and Foucault (Owen 1994), drew significant momentum from non-Western thought (see Figl 1991; Scheiffele 1991; Rappleye 2020).

Finally, the Western horizon constitutes many education policy researchers at an even more fundamental layer: the notion of self. Prior to even the choice of analytical tools and research objects stands an implicit set of assumptions about what it means to *be* or—in this case, to *be a scholar*. Most scholars taking advanced studies in Western institutions come out subscribing to the Western Enlightenment view of self: Kant’s *transzendantales Ich*. Deemed necessary to make democracy viable, “Kant’s answer to the question about what kind of subjectivity needed in a democracy,” writes Biesta (2006), “focused on the ability of individuals to make use of their own reason without direction from another” (p. 127). The enlightenment self was to be both rational and autonomous (from the Greek *auto*, meaning self). These qualities stand in opposition to the *relationality* and *sympoiesis* we have been gesturing to throughout this entire piece.

This underscores just how much the Western horizon is both within us and constitutes us: what is presented here as a new idea is really what becomes visible when the Western horizon of subjectivity is loosened up. Ultimately, the move to a pluriverse can be started at the political and analytical layers, but for it to gain momentum, it will need to be anchored in “subjectivity.” Given that intellectuals in the West are still so thoroughly imbued with Kantian subjectivity, one of the only ways to get there is to move beyond the Western horizon. Only here, in spaces beyond Western demarcations, does pluriversality become possible, opening endless opportunities for conversations and mutual learning across different epistemic and ontological realms.

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Chapter 2

Education Policy: Development and Enactment—The Case of Human Capital



Leslie A. Bell

2.1 Education Policy and Policy Processes

Education is always implicitly or explicitly a political issue (Bell and Stevenson 2013). What is taught, what is not taught, how students are taught and how educational institutions are organized are fundamentally political questions. Education cannot be disconnected from wider views about the society in which it is located. Thus reproducing and reinforcing what exists are implicitly political but no less so than explicitly mobilizing for radical change. The extent to which the focus of policy is on conserving or changing is largely determined by political responses to the prevailing dominant discourses. It is such education policy that frames much of what happens in individual educational institutions and that shapes the experiences of those who study or work in educational institutions. However, it is important to understand more precisely what is meant by policy.

Traditional approaches to policy analysis tend to assert that policy consists of a set of aims, goals or statements of what should happen in any given set of circumstances. One succinct definition of policy is that ‘policy is whatever governments choose to do or not to do’ (Adams 2014: 24). Harman (1984) extends this definition and sees policy as:

the implicit or explicit specification of courses of purposive action being followed, or to be followed in dealing with a recognised problem or matter of concern and directed towards the accomplishment of some intended or desired set of goals. (Harman 1984: 13)

However, this view of policy as a product of government action is far too limited. It tends either to ignore the relationship between policy and action or implementation or to present policy generation and implementation as a linear and sequential process in which policies pass smoothly from conception to execution. Working within this tradition, Kogan (1975) argued that policies are best understood as oper-

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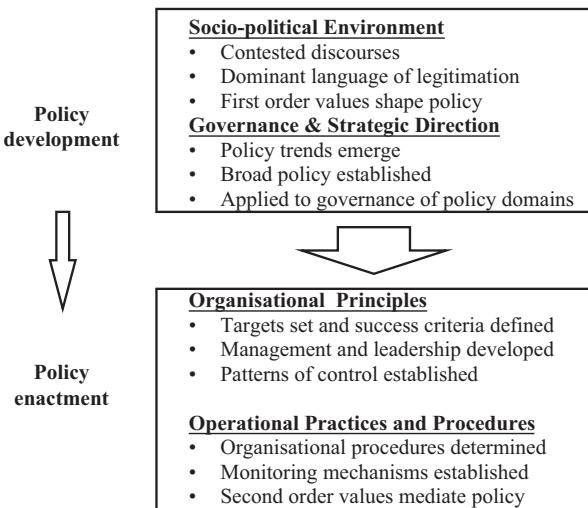
ational statements of values. He identified four key values that informed education policy—educational, social, economic and institutional. He further argued that it was possible to distinguish between first- and second-order values. First-order values included the educational, social and economic. These are values that required no further defence than it is held to be right by those who believe it, whereas second-order values were considered to be supporting in nature and therefore focused on means rather than ends. This was written at a time when there was post-war social consensus in that there was a broad agreement about key social objectives and the means of achieving them (Tomlinson 2001). Since that time, any such consensus has unravelled, and neo-liberalism has emerged as the new orthodoxy on a global scale. For example, as Suzuki (2000) has argued, the Japanese view of educational administration has, in recent decades, been closely related to the worldwide view of neo-liberalism as propounded in the USA and the UK. However, despite the dominance of such ideas, it is difficult to argue that one consensus has replaced another. Policy is often much more sharply contested, and values that underpin policy can no longer be described as what Kogan (1975) sees as being self-justified.

Education policy, therefore, needs to be understood in terms that reject the tidy logic of the political pluralists. Policy is about both intention and outcome. It is purposive and intended to produce specific ends. As Ward et al. (2016) point out, policy development and enactment should be seen as an attempt both to solve problems and to ensure that particular values that delineate action are accepted by those who enact policies. They also reject what is presented as an artificial, and unhelpful, separation between policy development and enactment. Policies rarely emerge fully formed, and so the enactment process involves revising, re-ordering and re-inventing. The policy process, therefore is not neat and tidy but rather is a messy process in which, at any point in the policy cycle, participants negotiate over both implementation and outcomes. Policy is constantly being made and re-made, formed and re-formed, as those engaged in the policy processes bring their differential interpretations and influences to bear. Policy therefore can be considered to be the realization of contested meanings. In some cases, policy may be relatively inconsequential and uncontentious in nature and largely unproblematic in its enactment. However in other cases policy may reflect sharp divergences over values, means and ends. In such cases the contested nature of policy is likely to be more overt with more visible signs of conflict and struggle based on competing sets of values that may be identified in the discourses that shape educational policy.

2.2 Policy Development and Enactment

In order to explore the complex relationships between policy and the factors that shape both policy development and formulation, a more sophisticated form of analysis than that offered hitherto is required (see Fig. 2.1). The framework presented here seeks to combine an approach that reflects the importance of central agencies in driving and determining policy agendas, such as the central governments in

Fig. 2.1 From policy development to policy enactment



nation states, but also to recognize the potential for policy to be contested and mediated at the levels of both development and enactment. In some approaches to policy analysis, the terms policy formulation and policy implementation are frequently used (Bell and Stevenson 2006). Here a somewhat different terminology has been adopted. Instead of formulation and implementation, the terms development and enactment have been used. This is because the use of the terms formulation and implementation reinforces the erroneous view that these are discrete elements of a policy process in which both are connected, but in an overly simplified form (Bowe et al. 1992). Within the framework presented here the term Policy Development is used to challenge the notion that policy is made in rational ways. For similar reasons, implementation has been replaced with a term deployed by Ball et al. (2011), namely enactment because enactment conveys the contested nature of policy implementation. Ball et al. (2011) refer to the complex process of enactment by which different types of policy become interpreted, translated, reconstructed and remade in different but similar settings. Hence, the term captures the sense of a contested process in which anticipated outcomes and experienced realities are often divergent.

The first element within policy development, the *socio-political environment*, is the context in which policies begin to be framed. The wider socio-political environment provides the forum for ideological and philosophical debates and contested discourses from which the organization of education is derived. It shapes the context within which policy is framed and enacted and incorporates the emerging discourses of policy development, with a particular focus on the specific way in which policy problems are presented. It is the dominant discourses of the time, therefore, which formulate the overarching guiding principles that shape policy and which provide the languages in which policy is couched and the criteria by which policy is legitimated and evaluated. Hence these dominant discourses are reflected in the three subsequent levels of this framework.

As policy begins to emerge in more explicit forms, it is appropriate to consider *governance and strategic direction*. The notion of strategic direction refers to the way in which policy trends emerge with increasing clarity from the socio-political environment, the parameters within which policy is to be established are set and policy priorities are established. This broad policy is developed and enacted within specific policy domains. Here, policy provides the structure of governance within which the organization of educational institutions is shaped. The influence of major policy discourses can be seen in the establishment of the patterns of governance and the strategic directions within which educational institutions are organized. The boundaries between the analysis of such major policy discourses and how they are manifested, however, often remain blurred and even permeable as policy is shaped and re-shaped.

Once the structure for the governance of education has been articulated, the concomitant *organizational principles* begin to focus on the specific ways that policies shape the nature of educational institutions and provide the organizational context within which management and leadership take place. At this stage, sometimes policy becomes clearer, and success criteria are often articulated with increasing clarity. Roles are delineated and boundaries established. Targets are set and patterns of state, local and, eventually, institutional control procedures are established. National responsibility and local flexibility relating to implementation are determined. Different forms of organizational structure evolve, and the implications for leaders and managers of both of these organizational forms and the policies that frame them in different contexts emerge. However, policy enactment may evolve into a contested process if there is a perceived mismatch between ends and means or a significant challenge from alternative value perspectives.

The final element in the framework refers to *operational practices and procedures*, whereby the governance framework and the strategic direction set within policy is manifest in the daily activities and experiences of those who work and study in individual institutions. Institutional policies are developed and secured and monitoring mechanisms established. These are influenced by many factors such as the nature of the organization and patterns of leadership and management. Here, second-order values mediate policy. This is the point at which policy developed ‘up there’ is experienced and enacted ‘down here’ (Stevenson and Tooms 2010). The linearity within the framework makes clear that these processes are fundamentally top-down, but that does not deny the extent to which policy is reshaped and contested from below or minimize the extent to which policy is subject to multiple interpretations based on the specificities of local contexts, the nature of the work of educators, of their professionalism and of the procedures deployed to lead and manage, any of which may lead to challenges emerging to specific aspect of policy enactment.

The linearity of this framework, with its apparent top-down emphasis reflects the predominant ways in which policy is perceived and experienced. This is not to assert that policy cannot be formed from below or that resistance from below is incapable of fundamentally challenging policy from above. Rather it is to recognize the dominant power of the superordinate bodies in framing policy agendas and asserting decisive influence on the way they are experienced. The power flows that

are implicit within this framework are by no means one-directional, but it is important to recognize the extent to which power resides centrally within systems. Moreover, within the framework, there is no intention to convey a tidy correspondence between the levels within the framework and any levels of governance structures. Rather there is a need to recognize within this framework a tension between the dominance of global discourses and the resistances of local cultural contexts. For example the role of the nation state is clearly pivotal, but in what ways do the apparatuses of individual nation-states relate to the wider questions of global power? Within nation-states what are the relationships of power between central government and governance at the level of regions, localities and individual institutions?

This framework is a testament to the complex nature of education policy. By applying this framework, it is possible to explore many different issues, some of the most significant of which are the tensions in the discourses that shape education policy:

- Between globalization and the needs of nation states
- Between welfare values and neo-liberalism
- Between the competing demands of centralization and decentralization

These tensions and discourses create contested and challenging environments within which the policies, governance, leadership and management of public education, as well as the work of those in educational institutions, are located. It can be seen, therefore, that an analysis of the debates within the socio-political environment that give rise to educational policy can facilitate a detailed understanding of the policy development and enactment processes. The strategic direction and organizational principles provide further insight into the text of policy, its aims and purposes, while an examination of operational practices will focus attention on the consequences of policy, its interpretation and implementation. Hence the conception of policy developed here is one that rarely lends itself to neat and simple models.

2.3 Policy and Purpose

The discourses that shape educational policy tend to be derived from perceptions about the overall purposes of the educative process. Spring (2011) addresses the questions of educational purpose by identifying three different dimensions of purpose—the political, social and economic. He argues that the political purpose of education is to help young people to become engaged participants within the political structures of society and to be able to function as citizens in a liberal democratic system. The social purposes of education relate to those aspects of education that shape the social form and structures of society—this may include reducing inequalities for example or promoting social cohesion. The economic purposes of education in turn focus on developing the labour force at the level of both the individual and the collective. Capital requires labour in appropriate numbers, and of appropriate quality, and the education system has a key role to play in meeting these needs.

These issues have a much wider application across national borders and across educational phases. Not only are they universal in the sense that they might provide a focus for educational processes anywhere, but they are also global in the sense that such issues are increasingly being addressed, at a global level. Understanding this link between global discourses and the lived experiences of educators and students in individual schools, colleges and universities is the essence of policy analysis.

It follows that there are a broader set of questions to be asked about education—what is education for? What are its purposes? And how best might it be organized in order to most effectively meet these objectives? Such questions are inevitably political as they are fundamentally bound up with wider questions about the nature of the society. It is important therefore to recognize that whatever the detail being considered, whether it is a government minister determining the content of a statutory curriculum, or classroom teachers exercising some choice over what they teach in their lesson the next day, the starting point for an analysis of these issues derives from a much more fundamental set of questions. What is to be taught? What might count as official knowledge (Apple 2000)? And, critically, who decides? The first two questions focus on the content of education, but the third question raises a wider set of questions about processes. What are the mechanisms by which educational decisions are made? What is the balance of power between the government minister and the classroom teacher and who else might have a say in that decision—business, the community, parents or indeed the students? How should such interests be represented?

However, the value differences that underpin these questions are often not recognized, and the current educational provision, whatever it may be, is presented as the desired norm. Education is too often thought of as simply the delivery of neutral knowledge to students. In this discourse, the fundamental role of schooling is to fill students with the knowledge that is necessary to compete in today's rapidly changing world as cost-effectively and as efficiently as possible. Hence, there are a number of significant themes which shape education policy debates within the socio-political environment and from which values and discourses are derived. The drive to develop human capital, the promotion of citizenship and pursuit of social justice and questions of accountability, autonomy and choice, for example, these must be placed in the context of the wider, international context shaped by one dominant theme within the social and political environment that of globalization (Bell and Stevenson 2006).

2.4 Globalization and Educational Policy

Central to understanding the issues raised by any analysis of education policy is an appreciation of the term globalization and its significance for the educative process. Globalization might best be regarded as:

A process of increasing interdependence between people, territories and organisations in the economic, political and cultural domains. (Verger et al. 2012: 5)

The drive to find out what works and how best to achieve the maximum return on investment become critical issues when education is seen as central to surviving and thriving—whether it be for individuals or whole nations. Education is perceived to be pivotal to economic success in a global economy in which knowledge is considered the key to competitive advantage. At the same time education is seen as essential for preparing young people for the worlds in which they live—worlds that are characterized by diversity, complexity and rapidity. Not surprisingly, therefore, any review of the education policy objectives of governments around the world will often reveal a remarkable commonality of language and aspirations. In Singapore, a country considered extremely high performing in global terms, the government argues that the task of schools and tertiary institutions is to give young people the chance to develop the skills, character and values that will enable them to take Singapore forward in this future (Singapore Ministry of Education 2012). The Ministry of Education in Kenya aspires to a quality education that will produce Kenyans with globally competitive skills, thus providing the requisite manpower required to drive the country to middle income status by 2030 (Kenya Ministry of Education 2008). Increasingly, therefore, the purposes of educational policy are framed in terms of preparation for a globalized world, but education itself is increasingly shaped by globalized considerations. Global imperatives are shaping local provision (Rizvi and Lingard 2010). Nevertheless, national governments play a key role in shaping the educational provision in individual national states.

If, as Verger et al. (2012) argue, globalization is based on increasing international interdependence, then how does globalization begin to frame the issues raised for those who make and implement educational policy. At its simplest, globalization might be considered to refer to a ‘shrinking world’ in which lives are increasingly integrated with those of others who live elsewhere in the world. As a consequence, through global networks of decision-making, trade and communication, events in any one location have an impact elsewhere (Giddens 1990). There is nothing new about the concept of international trade, or the movement of peoples around the world. However, the sheer reach, pace and scale of these current developments mark globalization out as something distinctive and new (Held and McGrew 1999). If this is the case, then a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon of globalization is required. This can be supported by distinguishing between globalization in its cultural, political and economic forms (Bottery 2000; Olssen et al. 2004)

- Cultural globalization has been described as the expansion of culture to all corners of the globe, promoting particular values that support consumerism and capital accumulation (Olssen et al. 2004). The trend to cultural globalization is often associated with increasing standardization. Perhaps this is most clearly illustrated by the profile, and market dominance, of global brands that assert a powerful influence in shaping our identities as consumers.
- A key feature of political globalization is the emergence of supra-national institutions of governance whose power and influence have been at the expense of individual nations. Such institutions might include the United Nations, the World Trade Organization and the European Union. Hence, it is argued, sovereign

powers of policy-making have transferred to institutions whose remit and authority transcend national boundaries. Individual governments have been weakened at the expense of supra-national institutions. Many of the institutions associated with political globalization, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, have a very obvious economic role, and they highlight the need to see economic and political functions as deeply integrated.

- Economic globalization has largely been associated with a drive to expand available markets for raw materials, component products and finished goods and services. A feature of contemporary globalization, therefore, has been an expansion of world trade, an increase in capital movements in particular and the increased movement of labour around the world on an unprecedented scale. Much of this has been driven by market-based theories of comparative advantage and the conviction that international competition and specialization, unfettered by barriers to trade, will drive economic growth, innovation and development.

Critics have argued that the pressure for profitability in a global economy has generated unsustainable levels of consumption, that markets require inequalities and globalized markets compound global inequalities. For some, globalization:

Is a function of neo-liberalism, imposing government education policies and practices while ... Education has been distorted into a tool for managing social divisions of labour and for promoting market ideology. (Peim 2012: 294)

Thus, globalization is not a unified and coherent movement but consists of a number of loosely interconnected global trends that appear to have a significant influence on the shaping of educational policy in many countries. The most important of these is economic globalization which sets the context for other forms of globalization since its language is increasingly used to describe their activities—it captures their discourses (Bottery 2004).

2.5 Economic Globalization and Human Capital

Economic globalization has a profound effect on many countries, in part, because no other global system appears to exist which allows alternative forms of activity and organization. It also leads to an increasing emphasis on economic growth by both multinational companies and nation-states. Consequently, on the part of both private and public sector organizations, there is an increasing concern with economic efficiency and effectiveness coupled with an emphasis on the individual as consumer. This contrasts with traditional public sector values of care, trust and equity. In this context, a set of implicit, explicit and systematic courses of action are established based on a human capital approach to education. The growing impact of globalization has forced nation-states to enhance the skill levels of their labour force. In turn, this has produced comprehensive reviews of their education systems. This form of globalization has important effects on education for a number of reasons:

The economic imperative dominates much where radically different conceptual agendas such as those of education are reinterpreted through its language and values (Bottery 2000). This legitimates the social and economic values from which the educational and institutional values and concomitant actions are derived. Increasingly these values and actions are derived more from the economic imperative than from educational principles and procedures. The economic imperative also affects the financial probity of nation-states and their ability to maintain adequate provision of welfare services, including that of education. This represents a significant re-ordering of the values hierarchy on which education policy is based on those values derived from human capital theory becoming first-order values while educational and personal values are relegated to the level of second order.

Capital in all its forms is generally seen by economists as the resources available through marketized networks to individuals, groups, firms and communities, within which people are believed to act rationally and function as equals (McClanahan 2003). Thus, if physical capital is the product of making changes to raw materials, then human capital is created by changing people to give them some desired skills and/or knowledge (Ream 2003). As Schultz (1997) puts it, human capital consists of skill, knowledge and similar attributes that affect particular human capabilities to do productive work. It helps to determine the earning capacity of individuals and their contribution to the economic performance of the state in which they work. It is usually measured by examining the level of skills and knowledge of the recipients such as members of a firm or a cohort of school pupils.

The consequences of economic globalization on the education policies of nation states are profound. The intensification of global competition in commercial terms has placed a corresponding pressure on individual nation-states to secure competitiveness through investment in human capital and knowledge production. In a globalized knowledge, economy education is seen as a key means by which human capital is developed and competitive advantage is secured. Knowledge production and specifically marketable intellectual capital are also at a premium, and therefore, the focus on these issues is of considerable interest in policy terms. The intensification of global competition therefore has provided a key impetus to invest in skills and development.

However, it is important to clarify that the demands of the economy are much more complex than a given number of workers with a given set of skills. It might be considered to extend to potential workers having the right attitudes, values and predispositions for the work environments in which they function. For example, capitalism as a specific social form encourages particular types of worker behaviour—this may be ‘entrepreneurialism’, acceptance of managerial authority or, more widely, acceptance of the profit motive as the legitimate means for guiding resource allocation decisions in society. Education has a key role in developing and reinforcing these ideas. This might be considered a key part of its reproductive function. In short, education’s role in relation to the economy extends far beyond producing the raw labour required by industry. It also has an important ideological function in reproducing labour.

2.6 Human Capital and Education Policy

Economists have long argued that people are an important part of the wealth of nations. It is assumed that individuals' self-interest will be served by personal investment in the acquisition of qualifications and relevant experience. At the level of the individual, therefore, an approach to education based on human capital would indicate that people invest the level of time and effort in education that they believe they should, based on their view of their future earning potential and of all the conceivable benefits which could possibly be derived from investment in human capital. The human capital approach to educational policy at the national level works on the assumption that there is a national economic benefit to be gained from education and from having an educated and skilled work force. As Leadbetter (1999) argues, the generation, application and exploitation of knowledge are driving modern economic growth so it is necessary to release potential for creativity and to spread knowledge throughout the population. In many social systems, education is regarded as the main process by which such transformations might take place, although the issues surrounding which skills and knowledge are to be acquired, by whom and who makes those decisions often lack clarification. Education is viewed as an investment in human capital that has both direct payoffs to the educated individual and external benefits for society as a whole. How then, does human capital theory inform educational policy?

The impact of human capital theory on educational policy can best be identified by examining the socio-political environment which provides the impetus for policy-making and from which, in most instances, the legitimization for that policy stems. The languages of legitimization used to present and justify educational policy (Bell 1989), reflect the dominant discourses within the socio-political environment. Thus, in the last half century in most pluralistic societies, the discourse within the socio-political environment has been dominated by the struggle between economic individualism and social collectivism as determinants of social organization. Hence, educational policy is shaped by and located within the context of the outcomes of debates in the wider socio-political environment. The language in which that policy is expressed is derived directly from its dominant discourse. Within this context, a range of social and political influences have combined to establish economic functionality as the dominant discourse underpinned by reference to individualistic languages of legitimization based on a belief in the efficacy of market forces as a mechanism for social organization and in the capacity of education to supply appropriately skilled labour for employment. The outcome of this, as far as education is concerned, is exemplified by the use of principles derived from economics generally and from human capital theory in particular, to legitimize educational policy and, in many countries, to underpin the use of elements of the market place to structure decision-making and resource allocation.

The nature of such education policy, its overall content and the strategic direction that defines the shape of policy are also derived from that wider environment. It is widely recognized, for example, that in most countries where education is subject in

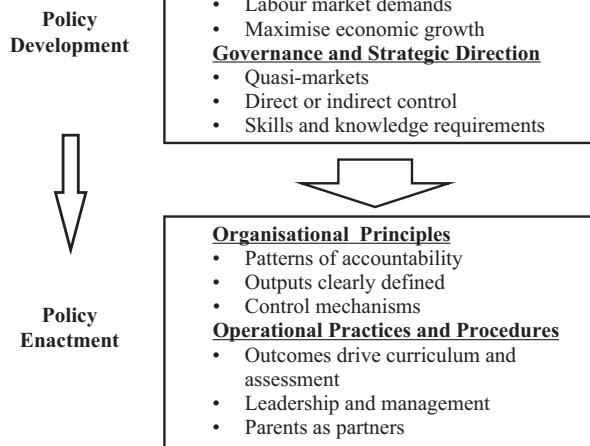
any way to market forces, then those forces do not constitute a free market in the sense that total deregulation applies. Rather, the education market is a quasi-market in which the market functions within an overall system in which the state retains an important role. Where the operation of the education market is informed by human capital theory, the role of the state is to determine the nature and mix of skills and knowledge that the system is required to produce while still retaining elements of market forces such as a mechanism for resource allocation, competition between institutions and the ability of parents to exercise choice. Reliance is placed largely on the language of economics to formulate success criteria. Reference is frequently made to efficiency, effectiveness, quality, value for money, choice and economic development. Human capital theory produces, in particular, an emphasis on the inter-relationship between individual choices, the demands of the labour market for specific skills and economic growth.

Organizational principles define, for example, the limits of autonomy, the patterns of accountability and the procedures for assessment and quality control. Educational institutions must respond to the specific demands from the centre to produce particular forms of outputs in terms of students with predetermined skills and abilities that will sustain and enhance economic development in their particular country. In order to achieve this, some form of central control over educational provision will operate. This might be based on tightly defined and rigidly assessed curriculum content and pedagogy, an extensive inspection process, detailed reporting processes, the assessment of pupil learning outcomes and teacher performance or a combination of all of these factors. Here the content and the consequences of the policy overlap because pedagogy, curriculum content and forms of assessment must be appropriate for the production of these outcomes.

The operational practices are linked to these organizational principles which are usually centrally determined. These are the activities which contribute to the formulation of internal policies that will enable the institution to deliver an appropriately skilled and trained set of students, the day-to-day organization of schools, the specifics of decision-making and the nature and extent of delegation of responsibilities. Thus, within schools, the key factors in determining the nature of the operational practices and the structuring of responsibilities are the principal/teacher relationships and the arrangements for decision-making in the school. Once these are established, the nature of the curriculum and its content, pedagogy and assessment, the roles of individual teachers, the mechanisms for reporting to and involving parents, the internal management of the school, and mechanisms for establishing relationships with the external environment can be established (see Fig. 2.2).

The main institutional consequences of all these are the extent to which the ideological move to construct education as a market place is successful together with the necessity for schools to promote a positive image based on performance indicators such as examination results. The implication of this is that both students and parents are partners in the educational enterprise. As a result, parents who were once regarded as passive supporters have changed into active participants as informed consumers in the educational market place. Education has become a commodity with both the individual and the state as consumer, the individual seeking to

Fig. 2.2 Policy into practice: human capital



maximize personal benefit and the state seeking to maximize economic growth and development. This emphasis on human capital on educational policy is based on the assumption that education is the most effective route to economic well-being for any society through the development of the skills of its population. Consequently, education is regarded as a productive investment rather something intrinsically valuable in its own right.

In practice, however, the relationship between education and national economic success is anything but straightforward (Middlewood and Abbott 2017). While the importance of skills for employment and economic development has featured heavily in much educational policy making, doubtful definitions of appropriate sets of values and of relevant skills pervade such policies (Bowl 2012). This is partly because, as Bowles and Gintis (1976) have argued, education policy based on human capital closely reflects the perceived needs of industrial society for workers with particular skills and, at the same time, illustrates the role of the state in ensuring that such a work force is available. These perceived needs, however, may not accurately reflect the actual needs which tend to be too dynamic to predict accurately. Even if such predictions can be made, the educative process may be too inflexible to deliver a workforce with the precise balance of skills and abilities required. Hence, the interconnection between human capital and educational policy has its limitations which can be found at each of the four levels of the analytical model and are sufficient to cast doubt on the efficacy of the human capital approach to education as a sufficient legitimization for the structuring of the educative process in most societies.

At the level of the socio-political environment, the extent to which the fundamental tenets of human capital theory pertain to the educative process is open to question. It is far from certain that there is an economic benefit to be gained from

additional or specific forms of educational investment or that education does make a significant contribution to economic growth and development:

Relatively successful economies may make greater investment in the education of their populations, measured by the duration and level of schooling and training but [this] may, at least in part, be a result, rather than a cause, of economic success. (Killeen et al. 1999: 99)

The relationship between expenditure on education and the economic performance of any particular country is largely one of correlation rather than one of cause and effect. There may well be intervening variables at work here such as investment in infrastructure or in research and development. It is particularly difficult to establish the precise nature and value of such investments in human capital (OECD 1996). The OECD Report argues that while educational investment does constitute the formation of capital, its value is hard to establish. Monteils (2004) goes even further. Using data from a survey of ten countries over a 2-year period, she failed to find any positive correlations between investment in education and economic growth. Thus, at the societal level, questions can be raised about the context from which such policies emerge and the extent to which education grounded in human capital theory can achieve its stated outcomes.

Similar questions can also be raised about the impact of these policies on individuals. How far, for example, does education increase the productive capacity of individuals? Rather than generate such an increase, education may merely act as a selection device that enables employers to identify those potential workers with particular abilities or personal characteristics that make them more productive (Woodhall 1997). Even if this is not the case, education systems may not successfully produce the skilled labour force required by employers. Choice mechanisms militate against this to the extent that individual choice may be constrained by limited knowledge and resources, or available options being restricted by an imperfect understanding of future skill requirements. The structuring of choice and opportunity within any society is such that a large number of factors will influence the extent to which such personal investments might take place. Individuals may choose to undertake education and training only to the degree that they are aware of both educational and employment opportunities available to them and can establish what are the required types and levels of knowledge and skills. At the same time, family support and pressure, financial resources, and the limitations of realistic aspirations all operate to limit the extent to which free choice can be used by any individual to gain the maximum benefit from education (Hodkinson et al. 1996).

However, it is not only the access to finite resources that are important. The relative levels of inequality will impact on family well-being and influence the choices that are made. Furthermore, although human capital theory was first mooted to support the argument for increased state investment in education, neoliberal economists have used it to justify shifting the onus on investment from the state to the individual, causing significant problems for those unable or unwilling to invest in education while, at the same time, enabling many employers to use largely irrelevant qualifications to screen job applicants rather than focusing on skills and experience (Bowl 2012). The impact of such limitations on choice mechanisms may produce

results contrary to those expected by policy makers—more social science students rather than more engineers. The capacity of any society to match the human resources produced by its education systems to the demands of the labour market is, at best, imperfect and, at worst, potentially damaging to the very economies that should be sustained. As Bulmahn (2000) argues, those who deploy human capital theory as the sole or predominant legitimization for educational provision at the socio-political level, and who thus consider education from the perspective purely of national economic self-interest, will be unable to develop long-term policies for the future.

At the strategic level, economic utilitarianism based on human capital theory may not only be short-sighted, it may prove entirely counter-productive. As Agbo (2004) argues, in some African countries, it can facilitate the establishment of an educated elite who are socially mobile to the disadvantage of the society as a whole or cause a society to lose touch with its cultural roots in response to a search for technology which is globally accepted. It can also have an adverse effect on the ability of nation-states to compete in the global economy. Given the time lag between entering a training programme and completing it, market demand for a particular type of training may have changed with a resulting lack of jobs. In the competitive global market, such an outcome is all too likely. Similarly, industries that are currently thriving may decline in future as the demand for products change and technological innovation has an, as yet, unforeseen impact. As a result, employer-led training schemes may not contain the vision required in order to maintain the high skill base necessary (Halsey et al. 1997). Thus, the consequences of such policies may be counter-productive. Attempts to establish too tight a focus for education or to exercise too much control of curriculum, content and pedagogy will lead to a trained incapacity to think openly and critically about problems that will confront us in the future (Lauder et al. 1998). At the strategic level, therefore, it is doubtful if an educative process legitimated purely on the basis of human capital theory will have the capacity to produce an appropriately skilled labour force.

The organizational principles on which the relationship between human capital and education rest tend to be based on a technical-rationalist approach to education generally and to the organization of schools as institutions in particular. This gives little consideration to the benefits of education other than economic utility. This emphasis on economic rationalism has meant that education values have become marginalized, thus distancing education from both the social and the cultural. The application of human capital limits the wider benefits that may be gained from a more liberally based education and marginalizes the ethical dimensions of education that might shape both the nature of educational institutions and the totality of the educational enterprise. In fact, matters related to schools as social and moral organizations, living with others in a diverse community and wider issues of social justice may be ignored in the quest for a narrowly defined form of academic attainment. Thus the social and the moral are subordinate to the economic and the utilitarian. This failure fully to consider the wider purposes and benefits of education has allowed policy makers to deduce simplistic solutions to complex problems and to develop approaches that serve very narrow purposes based on limited and restrictive

policy objectives linked specifically to economic utilitarianism and human capital outcomes.

Furthermore, the organizational principles on which the relationship between human capital theory and educational institutions is predicated—that the skills and knowledge that are required to initiate and sustain economic development are identifiable by either governments or employers and will be delivered by educational institutions—can be challenged. It is assumed that teachers will respond to the rewards and sanctions within the organization to ensure that an appropriate curriculum is delivered and that children are either sufficiently malleable to respond to a school's organizational structure and processes or that they understand their own self-interests sufficiently to follow the incentives created by the school (Lauder et al. 1998). This ignores the very tension that is at the centre of this type of education policy, between what the state might regard as economically desirable and what the individual might regard as appropriate personal development. It is doubtful, therefore, if people are equipped to grapple with life's changing challenges by focusing entirely on meeting the immediate instrumental needs of the state.

A similar tension exists within many educational institutions that derive their operational procedures from organizational principles that emanate from human capital theory. These operational practices tend to be based on certainty, predictability and the operation of rules. They are often inflexible, impersonal, heavily bureaucratic, rule-bound and based on a rigid separation of responsibilities within the organization, an hierarchical arrangement of those responsibilities, and on exclusivity rather than inclusivity (Zohar 1997). Such organizations are efficient and reliable. They are ideal for a relatively stable, predictable, if competitive, environment. As long as rules and procedures are followed, they operate with apparent smoothness and can give the impression of orderliness and of having an impressive ability to plan for and cope with the future. Many important processes, however, are marginalized in organizational forms based on order, simplicity and conformity where everything operates according to specific, knowable and predetermined rules and where actions are supposed to be rational, predictable and controllable. Learning, therefore, is rooted in the Newtonian scientific paradigm of analysis through dissection, so that the parts can be isolated and understood. That which should be learned becomes the same as that which is instrumental. It is an individualistic process that proceeds in a linear way through analysis and the construction of generalizations based on empirical evidence. It inhibits the development of the very creativity, imaginative thinking and entrepreneurship that is often required to sustain economic development.

Where there is a high degree of standardization and inflexibility in educational systems or the institutions within them, these very systems and institutions become singularly less well equipped to prepare their students to face demands for greater flexibility and creativity (Bottery 2004). Thus, schools cannot readily take account of forces emanating from the external environment in a period of rapid and extensive change and cannot generate the creativity and flexibility necessary to cope with such forces. Yet, it is widely acknowledged that the knowledge and skills that schools must seek to develop have to be based on creativity and innovation. Already

there is a major concern in Pacific Rim countries about the lack of critical thinking, creativity and innovative skills amongst students. The lack of such skills is widely regarded as one of the contributing factors to the recent decline in the Tiger Economies (OECD 1996). As Bassey (2001) recognizes, the over-riding emphasis of human capital theory on the role of education in contributing to economic competitiveness results in a set of pedagogical strategies linked to a narrow conceptualization of school improvement and effectiveness that ultimately are antithetical to the demands of a high skill economy. In other words, human capital, when applied to education, contains the seeds of its own failure. Thus, from a human capital perspective, the management of learning becomes problematic in itself since it can produce:

- Reductionism—the curriculum is split into a limited number of key areas.
- Positivism—science and mathematics became pre-eminent in the curriculum at the expense of the arts and humanities.
- Rationalism—values formation becomes an incidental rather than a central part of the curriculum.
- Quantifiability—the curriculum and assessment focus on what is measurable. The measurable is safer to handle than the intangible ... As a result the intuitive, the expressive, the unmeasurable, the subjective and the intensely personal have never found a satisfactory place in the curriculum. (after Beare 2001: 39–40)

Thus, the processes of managing teaching and learning created by an emphasis on the human capital approach to education fail to acknowledge the complexity of school organization and the development of effective teaching and learning. This reductionist view of education is rooted in human capital justifications for the entire educational enterprise.

The links made between educational, human and economic development, therefore, produce an excessively utilitarian approach to schooling that can lead to an inappropriate narrowing of educational objectives and processes because of the emphasis on national economic competitiveness (Kam and Gopinathan 1999). The human capital justification for the structuring of educational provision has produced an excessive instrumentalism in the curriculum:

Instrumentalism has produced the competencies movement; it has affected the curriculum, producing concepts like ‘key learning areas’, as though learning is not legitimate unless it is information-driven and packaged into traditional subjects ... It has driven the outcomes approach to schooling, a concentration on tests, the publication of school-by-school results and ‘league tables’. (Beare 2001: 18)

These operational practices are all control devices to compel schools and colleges to concentrate on utilitarian outcomes linked to economic productivity and the demands of the labour market. Consequently younger children must become proficient in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy while their older siblings need to enhance their skills through an emphasis on information technology, science and mathematics. In tertiary colleges and universities, the focus shifts to that of the knowledge-based economy and lifelong learning to respond to the changing

demands of the work place (Bassey 2001). It is evident that the narrowing of the focus of education in Singapore, for example, has helped to create an education system that produces students who are excellent at passing examinations but very limited when it comes to creative thinking and the development of enterprise (Ng 1999). The STU noted that, in Singaporean education: ‘The emphasis was on results. We bred a generation of Singaporeans who were examination smart ... but we killed the joy of learning’ (Singapore Teachers’ Union 2000: 1).

The present global emphasis on developing human capital within a market or economic development paradigm, therefore, is based on a model of education policy that is deeply flawed in a number of ways. At the socio-political level, the human capital discourse of legitimization is both confused about the extent to which individuals can and do make educational choices based on human capital criteria and unconvincing about the degree to which investment in human capital does contribute to economic development. At the strategic level, the concentration on economic utility of education at the expense of its many other contributions may have adverse consequences for both society and the individuals within it. The organizational principles that shape the relationship between human capital and education produce organizational structures that mitigate against the development of the very skills that may be required to meet future economic challenges while the related operational practices lead to inappropriate forms of leadership and a reductionist approach to teaching and learning to the ethical dimensions of leadership and the wider issues of morality and social justice at a school level. Thus, human capital as the sole legitimization for the educative process in any society has severe limitations and may be counter-productive.

2.7 Conclusion

It can be seen therefore that human capital theory when applied to the educative process leads to education being treated as a private consumable, a commodity or a positional good in the market place at both individual and state level (Bottery 2004). The rationale for change and re-structuring in education is largely cast in economic terms, especially in relation to the preparation of the workforce and repositioning national economies to face international competition (Levin 2003). The impact has been significant:

leading to changes in management processes and organization, institutional cultures (at all levels) and in perspectives on a wide range of dimensions of education from teaching and learning, to resource management and external relations. (Foskett 2003: 180)

Nevertheless, as has been argued above, human capital theory as the sole legitimization for educational policy has severe limitations such that its outcomes may be counter-productive. It has produced a situation in which education has become merely a way of increasing the value of human labour. This fails to recognize that both education and labour are more than commodities and that they are value-driven

social processes. The human capital discourse, therefore, requires to be replaced by either an alternative form of legitimization or a significant leavening by incorporating key aspects of an alternative legitimization. Education is more than the production of human capital. It is about values and beliefs, ethics, social justice and the very nature of society both now and in the future. As Hills has argued, the basis for education in the future is not:

Facts and figures ... the explicit knowledge of the internet, the textbook or the lecture theatre because much of this is quickly obsolete and is often an obstacle to new ideas. It is the implicit knowledge gained from experience, or ... case studies, because ... these are the bases of values, morals and character. They prepare a person for the unexpected and the difficult decision.(Hills 2004: 27)

The deployment of the four-level framework for policy analysis presented in this chapter can highlight the fundamental contradictions inherent in much educational policy by exploring the precise nature of the languages of legitimization political discourses that are evident in the wider socio-political environment. By linking these discourses to the evolving governance and strategic directions that emerge from policy development the framework can help to establish both consistencies and inconsistencies in the policy development process. The framework, by exploring how organizational principles that are derived from the overall strategic directions within the policy, helps to illuminate where the conflicts in policy enactment might emerge. It can also go some way towards identifying consistencies and inconsistencies between organizational principles and operational practices and, in so doing, demonstrate the complex, contested nature of educational policy.

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Chapter 3

Elites and Expertise: The Changing Material Production of Knowledge for Policy



Jennifer T. Ozga

3.1 Introduction: Elites, Expertise, Knowledge, Policy

The terms ‘experts’, ‘expertise’ and ‘knowledge’ are used frequently in current discussion by policymakers and in academic literature on policymaking in education and other fields, though often in loosely defined or contradictory ways. Experts face criticism as enemies of the free flow of information, as anti-democratic, serving vested interests and conspiring against society to protect economic and political elites against challenges to their power and interests. Experts are, nevertheless, invoked frequently by policymakers in support of specific policy directions, yet also castigated by them for their failure to provide coherent, incontrovertible and ‘actionable’ knowledge (Grundmann and Stehr 2012: 19). At the same time as the public is confidently told that policy can now be based securely on objective scientific fact, policymakers state that society ‘has had enough of experts’ (see, e.g., Michael Gove, then Secretary of State for Education in England, quoted in Clarke and Newman 2017: 1).

The revolt against ‘expertise’ is illustrated in current popular and media hostility to ruling elites, to ‘normal’ politics, and is brought into sharp focus in the UK by Brexit and its aftermath, including political, media and public hostility to EU bureaucrats and those seeking to maintain Europe’s four freedoms. Bureaucracy or perhaps, more accurately, technocracy is represented in the media and in populist discourse as dominated by economic agendas and bureaucratic logic, in a context where nation states seem less able to act independently of global capital and are increasingly subject to the authority of supranational institutions (Jessop et al. 2008; Bevir 2013; Grek 2015; Hartong 2015).

I should note that I am not engaging here with debates about the nature of scientific knowledge nor with competing models of the policy–knowledge relationship.

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Previous research with colleagues in the project ‘knowandpol’¹ suggests that policymakers and scientists follow opposing logics: as Demsky and Nassehi put it, science is based on ‘debating, doubting and rejecting knowledge claims’ (2014: 113), while policy:

... obeys a diametrically opposed logic. Policy is a practice of making visible and identifiable decisions that are supposed to change the social world. In such a context, the admission of doubt is fatal. (2014: 113)

That project also identified knowledge, including scientific knowledge, to be best understood as socially constructed, and as shaped at least in part by the contexts of its production, and by the social relations in which it is embedded.

In what follows, I want to look more closely at the contexts of production of expertise, and at the objects and artefacts through which knowledge is expressed, with a focus on different forms of knowledge production, comparing and contrasting those forms available to policymakers in the 1970s and 1980s, with those mobilised in the current conditions. In looking at education as a policy field in which knowledge production may be interrogated over time, I suggest that we can identify significant change in the nature and intensity of the knowledge–policy relationship, resulting, at least in part, from the recent explosion of knowledge production, its encoding in data, combined with its increased capacity to travel at speed. As an OECD publication puts it: ‘the key question posed is: how do governance and knowledge mutually constitute and impact on each other in complex education systems?’ (Fazekas and Burns 2012: 6).

The research that I draw on exploring ‘mutually constitutive’ contemporary governing forms has been carried out in funded research projects with a number of colleagues² in Europe over a period of years, starting in 2006. Many of our main conclusions can be found in previous publications [see, e.g. Ozga (2016), Lawn and Grek (2012), Grek and Lindgren (2015), Ozga et al. (2012), Ozga and Lawn (2014), Ozga et al. (2011), Grek and Ozga (2010)]. For the purposes of this discussion, the key points that characterise this research may be helpful in situating the argument in this text and may be summarised as follows:

1. Changes in governing and changes in knowledge are interdependent.
2. In the neo-liberal imaginary, society is increasingly organised in networks constructed and held together through the flow of comparative knowledge and data.
3. As governing becomes more networked, more flexible and interrelated, so too does knowledge change, moving from disciplinary silos into a more problem-based form, involving new actors in its production.
4. Valued knowledge for policy identifies what needs to be done, or ‘what works’.

¹ Knowledge and Policy in Health and Education (www.knowandpol.eu).

² There are too many people involved in this research to list here, but I owe a particular debt to Luis Miguel Carvahlo, John Clarke, Sotiria Grek, Martin Lawn, Joakim Lindgren, Linda Ronnberg and Eric Mangez.

5. Experts and consultants, as well as key actors in education (e.g. inspectors) are responsible for translating coded knowledge and are also ‘coded’ by data.
6. Their work is thus increasingly ‘political work’, but its politics is concealed in the processes of knowledge production and exchange.

To elaborate, nation state-centred governing is in decline, hierarchical organisation and formal regulation are increasingly displaced by networks and standards, and formal policy actors are replaced by a diversity of actors, public/private hybrids and non-formal actors (consumers, third-sector members, media) and guided in action by data. In the context of increasing involvement of new actors—especially corporate actors like Pearson and McKinsey—in data production and use, data systems enable relations to be established between political and other authorities, offer ways of forming and maintaining these connections and supply devices and techniques that make tactical aims practical (Rose and Miller 1992). Data systems create governing assemblages that shape individual conduct while apparently enabling autonomous, choice-making activity. These data are public—they are described as ‘transparent’; they are no longer produced for and distributed among the bureaucratic elite but distributed among and doing political work in the wider population, not only for politicians and civil servants. Local government and schools that used to be relatively closed to public and central government scrutiny are now rendered visible and calculable (Ozga et al. 2011: 92). Data expressed as public rankings, league tables and PISA results are both ‘official and popular’ knowledge forms, and so, as Piattoeva (2014) argues, we can see them as doing political work; for example enabling and consolidating control over a wide network of actors and institutions—local authorities, schools and teachers included.

The ‘popular’ work they do is make connections to individual citizens/learners/pupils in such a way as to steer or mediate their decisions and actions in the economy, family sphere and any other aspect of everyday life (cf. Rose and Miller 1992: 180). Data thus ‘make people up’—make them visible and encourage people to think of themselves in particular ways—to classify themselves. In schooling, data act powerfully on individuals and groups through their predictive capacities, and individuals accept and work with this information, becoming engaged in their own production. Digital data construct schools as ‘computational’ projects. Here, the ‘modelling’ of education through digital data fosters a sense of algorithmically driven ‘systems thinking’ through which complex (and unsolvable) social problems associated with education can be seen as complex (but solvable) statistical problems.

This new governing–knowledge relationship creates a demand for new skills and new kinds of work from particular groups of actors who are positioned at key points of intersection of knowledge production and practical problem-solving. Such work demands skills in translating information into ‘practical knowledge’, mediating conflict and brokering interests (Clarke et al. 2015). There is a growing literature on the influence, interconnections and work of networks of experts (Ball and Junemann 2012; Shiroma 2014), who promote cognitive consensus among policymakers based on the linked processes of simplification of large volumes of information and the dominance of international comparison as a basis for policy (Ozga 2015). The rapid

growth of experts, advisers and consultants in education arises from the rapid expansion of data-based knowledge; simplification strengthens the trend towards comparison and the search for ‘actionable knowledge’ derived from patterns in comparative data, and also increases the influence of analysts and gives considerable power to those who can interpret data and identify those ‘levers for action’ (Grundmann and Stehr 2012: 20–21) that make political action easier.

These experts are ‘more than the diffusers of ideas; they develop conceptual knowledge in order to promote educational reforms, drawing on their substantial experience as policy advisers to governments and IOs’. Moreover, ‘their attributes as experts and consultants tend to obscure the ideological and political dimension of their activities of knowledge production for policy’ (Shiroma 2014: 2).

Despite the claims of big data proponents (see, e.g. Anderson 2008), data do not speak for themselves but contain coded policy choices and require interpretation. The political nature of that interpretation is often concealed, as Shiroma points out, because the label ‘expert’ confers scientific status and authority. Concealment of the political work that expertise does is also enabled because much of the activity around data involves the application of rules, standards and processes stored in algorithms and technical formulae that mobilise the particular preferences of their creators and are applied without explicit reference to the choices they contain (Higgins and Larner 2012: 7). As Williamson (2016: 4) puts it: ‘Digital software technologies, data systems and the code and algorithms that enact them have become powerful yet largely hidden influences in the governing of education’.

A focus on the political work that data do draws attention to the processes of brokering and translation that are key in data work for policy and to the kinds of experts who are doing this work in particular institutions with their own work cultures, technical capacities and interests. The growth of this form of expertise is recognised as a transnational phenomenon, with experts increasingly working between national and transnational arenas, and claiming status as a ‘new governing elite’ (Stone 2013: 41 Lawn and Grek 2012: 75) also described as a ‘magistracy of influence’ (Lawn and Lingard 2002: 292) and a new ‘European technocracy’ (Normand 2016: 129).

These groups operate globally to promote convergence in education policymaking through the construction of models of education systems that are claimed to be simultaneously effective, efficient and equitable. A global convergence of educational and cultural worlds is understood as an inevitable facet of modernity driven by the logic of technology, science and the idea of progress that is, ultimately, dependent on scientific advance. The authority of science is invoked to sustain this approach, but, as Dale points out, the idea of science that is invoked here fails to acknowledge that ‘scientific authority’ does not in itself ensure acceptance of models, without reference to ‘the set of political conditions’ under which they are advanced (Dale 2000: 445). Nor is it attentive to the related recognition that scientific knowledge is produced, accepted and contested in specific contexts (Connell 2007; Demszky and Nassehi 2014).

In the next section, I want to highlight the contrast between the research findings summarised above, drawn from work on the impact of performance data on the

governing of education, and which reveals the speed and power of data to shape relations and practices, and the almost data-free landscape that characterised the research environment of policymaking from the 1940s to the 1970s and 1980s. Here I am drawing on a database of interviews that I have carried out with policymakers from the 1970s onwards, some of which were retrospective, and some of which have been the basis of earlier publications (see, e.g. Gewirtz and Ozga 1990, 1994). Returning to that period demands attention to changes in what Dale identifies as the ‘political conditions’ of knowledge production and also draws attention to change in the material conditions of knowledge production, highlighting how changes in knowledge technologies—which may be summarised as a shift from *paper-based knowledge* to *digital data*—impact on the nature and composition of education policy elites. By material conditions of production is meant attention to (1) the social, political and economic relations that structure work (including knowledge production) and (2) the instruments and material artefacts seen as ‘key bearers’ of knowledge (Freeman and Sturdy 2014).

3.2 The Pre-digital Production of Knowledge for Policy

A return to the policy world of the 1940s–1980s, through exploring and re-analysing interview and textual data, is also a revisiting of my own past as a researcher and administrator. I was an administrator in the headquarters of the National Union of Teachers in the 1970s, and a researcher at the Open University in the 1980s, and in both of these work contexts, I was able to record interviews with policymakers, in the case of the OU as part of the study of education policy, and for the NUT as part of my work in gathering and analysing knowledge to help support Union officers. In this period work in educational organisations had much in common in respect of organisational practices and cultures, which were often modelled on civil service norms and practices. The NUT—a major player in policy in the 70s, but about to enter a turbulent period and a decline in influence—was deliberately constructed to parallel the structure of the Ministry (later the Department) of Education in England. It had the same organisation of responsibilities as the Ministry, and its local organisation reflected the organisation of the Local Education Authorities, then responsible for local provision of schooling and other education services. In their design and assumptions, the Union’s working practices were also a reflection of the Ministry’s in that NUT administrators were understood to provide the objective knowledge resources that informed the practical policymaking activity of the Union’s elected officers (just as officials in Whitehall were said to act without bias but draw on experience in informing politicians).

In thinking about knowledge production at that time, it is important to remember that the 1970s are pre-digital. There is no Internet and no email and communications work through telephone and post, or person to person. Letters are still often handwritten or dictated, then typed by clerical staff (who keep and file duplicates). Copying is messy and tedious, large-scale production of material (policy documents,

research reports) has to be printed in systems that do not allow for easy correction or revision. Photocopying developed in the 1980s and laser printing by the mid to late 1980s, and word processing then arrived and became widespread in the 1990s. These changes in information technology bring huge changes in work organisation (which are discussed, e.g. in Fox and O'Connor 2015, Zammuto et al. 2007). But the dominant instruments of knowledge accumulation and distribution in the period up to the late 1980s are paper-based and need people to construct their content. This paper-based material is heavy, and it is not the weightless, flexible, transportable material of digital data moving around the Internet—it requires physical manipulation and categorisation in order to do knowledge work. Storing and retrieving paper-based data is a skill that is both demanding and very time consuming, which requires attention to and design of hierarchies of importance, that relate to hierarchies of work organisation. So, for example, the listing of educational 'plant' (buildings and equipment) and salary costs constitutes the basic data for system management: the recording of examination data is not centralised and does not include the whole school population. Paper is the medium through which information is gathered: for example the NUT carried out frequent paper-based surveys as a way of informing the direction of policy and keeping in touch with its (then) 300,000 strong membership. These surveys had to be constructed, distributed and analysed in paper form.

These processes obviously shaped the kinds of knowledge that was produced, for example in the Union's development of responses from members or local officers about education policy. These queries arrived as letters, which had to be recorded and classified, so that they could be directed to the appropriate source of information, from which a reply could be drafted for official signature. Responses also needed to be classified and recorded. This activity gradually created a knowledge base among those engaged in it, who developed knowledge of the policy 'line' on current issues.

Importantly, that knowledge base depended heavily on *precedent*. Precedent also guided Committee decisions, and perhaps the power of precedent was most vividly illustrated at the Union's Annual Conference. This was, and still is, its main policy-making forum where membership and officers debate and decide policy directions. In the 1970s, administrative staff were responsible for transporting to the Conference site all potentially relevant materials relating to current debates, packed in a large wicker hamper, so that they could retrieve the correct materials that guided action.

The point here is that this form of knowledge production, which also characterised the work of the Department of Education and the Local Education Authorities, was strongly shaped by past practice. The past was the source of guidance for action in the present, the future barely featured. The production of knowledge was shaped by the very concrete knowledge forms (files, memoranda, log books) that guided the present. These were 'heavy' but not inert, as they became actionable through the interaction of the paper archive (i.e. in Freeman and Sturdy's terms, the inscribed knowledge) with the embodied knowledge of experienced administrators and officers (Freeman and Sturdy 2014).

Examination of the material production of knowledge in the Ministry/Department of Education in the period up to the 1980s in England reveals that the preferred form

of knowledge production and dissemination was the *administrative memorandum*. These documents are lengthy, graceful and erudite essays, which both built and expressed consensus around key principles for the governance of education that were largely preoccupied with preserving a hierarchy of schooling to select and maintain a small meritocratic elite. Their rules of production were largely implicit and echoed the rules of production of the Oxford undergraduate essay. Scrutiny of personal correspondence between civil servants and local government officers, and of minutes of meetings and conversations, reveals a rather sharper focus on problems, often solved through informal agreements that operated to close down controversy (Gewirtz and Ozga 1990).

Capacity in the production of memoranda and other paper-based knowledge forms was understood as best developed over time, from knowledge of past practice. Learning ‘on the job’—informally described as ‘sitting by Nellie’ though there were vanishingly few female senior civil servants—was standard practice, once selection from the correctly socialised pool of candidates had been made. Experience was valued. My interview data provide examples. Here is Sir Toby Weaver, Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Department from 1962 to 1972, describing the workings of the Department’s administrators:

As part of your stock in trade as an educational administrator you will be expected to have acquired a wide range of knowledge about both the work of the Department and the problems that beset the educational world. By the time you have been in the Department for some years you will have become familiar with the chief reports of the Councils, Committees and Working Parties of different kinds whose analyses of problems and recommendations for solving them form one of the main sources of material for policy making.

(For example), as an educational administrator you will certainly be familiar with what the Plowden report said about nursery education. You will know what the law says about the topic and how in the past it has been interpreted by the Department. You will have at your elbow any regulations that bear on it. You will be familiar with the past and present policy of the Department, be ready to explain and defend it, be aware of its limitations. You will do your best through books, journals and research articles to keep abreast of the development of expert thinking on the subject, and to read the press cuttings that cross your desk every day, in the hope of spotting anything relevant.....Finally you will be wise to keep in touch one way or another with the Secretary of State’s day to day thinking on the subject.

From where we are now, these procedures seem painfully slow and startlingly removed from connection with the public (or with public representatives). Indeed, even in the 1970s, and especially after the oil crisis of 1979, there was pressure for change on stately education bureaucracies. These pressures came from the OECD, which characterised policymaking in education in the 1970s in England as secretive, conservative, committed to maintaining the status quo, and as disconnected from other policy developments (especially those concerned with employment/skills/economy). A subsequent Parliamentary Select Committee enquiry, at the height of the oil crisis, demanded reform of the DES, stressing in particular the need for connections between education and the economy, and for more consultation and openness, to which the DPS (Weaver again) responded that the DES did not go in much for consultation because it ‘did not wish to encourage premature speculation’ (Weaver, in House of Commons 1975–1976).

3.3 Changing Knowledge Production

The tone of response to external critique and the assumptions that inform it—of reliance on what is known and reluctance to imagine the future—was challenged throughout the 1970s in debates about the structures of schooling and about its capacity to meet different needs (first in relation to gender, then ethnicity) on an equal basis. That period of debate and disruption was followed by (and perhaps produced) Thatcher's 'reform' agendas which of course included significant changes in the Department and in the local government of education too. The Civil Service Efficiency Unit was established under ex-businessman Derek Rayner in the mid '80s to drive cultural change in Whitehall, prioritising technical expertise and recruiting 'action oriented thinkers-people who can get things done'. The Civil Service College was encouraged to develop contacts with top management in business and industry, and a new breed of political advisers begin to make their presence felt. This is happening as word processing becomes widespread, spreadsheets become the new currency of knowledge exchange, and new public management ideas are spread through technologies that disrupt the previously tightly bounded knowledge regimes of education in the public sector, in the Department, in the LEAs. Here we see a change in the knowledge and expertise that are valorised in governance—a shift to generic management (Cutler and Waine 1998), where universal principles are applied across public sector organisations, and generic knowledge and skills are demanded of public servants. Bureaucracies are demonised as rule bound, and precedent driven, as vulnerable to producer capture. The growth of new technologies of knowledge production enabled the transmission and reception of new management practices and beliefs and disrupted the established patterns of precedent and hierarchy.

The charge of being rule-bound and hierarchical, shaped by precedent and shared cultural practices, was levelled at another elite group Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI). Inspection of schools is a peculiarly interesting knowledge-based governing practice. In summary, in England, it was and is directly observational of sites and practices. That is, in the case of schooling, inspectors are empowered (and required) to enter the world of the school and observe what takes place within it. It is thus embodied evaluation: the inspector is a distinctive type of agent whose presence is required at the site of inspection and who embodies inspec-torial knowledge, judgement and authority. Furthermore, it is a form of qualitative evaluation, involving the exercise of judgement rather than, for example, only the calculation of statistical regularity or deviation from a performance norm or target, though the relationship between performance data and judgement has tightened in recent years (Ozga 2015).

The transformation from the tradition, independence and elite status of Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) to the government agency of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) in England offers a good illustration of the alignment of key

factors in the political conditions in changing knowledge production for policy. Here is Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in 1974, describing inspection:

Inspection has always been close observation exercised with an open mind by persons with appropriate experience and a framework of relevant principles (Sheila Browne, former HMCI 2003: 2)

This approach, which prioritised embodied and experiential knowledge, was set aside when Ofsted was created in 1992, because HMI, which included distinguished educationalists, were seen by the 'reforming' governments of the late 1980s/1990s as more focused on influencing government than on schools and vulnerable to producer capture. Indeed the organisational culture of Her Majesty's Inspectorate made a very strong impression on those who encountered it, including this senior member of the inspectorate, reflecting on the pre-reform culture of HMI:

....it was a certain kind of style I would characterise as militaristic and hierarchical—It was driven by the sorts of people who came into the inspectorate, certainly in the post-war period.....it was very, very powerful. I thought it was both very powerful as a means of inducting people and giving them a very good professional grounding in the business of inspection. But I was also slightly concerned that it was about adopting a rather small conservative set of attitudes and values. ...

And I think there was something about the code which you almost had to just discern—it wasn't ever really taught....when you looked at the senior ranks that was actually drawn from a much narrower educational/social stratum, a predominance of people with independent school backgrounds—quite a predominance-way out of proportion to what you'd expect normally. (former HMI)

HMI, then, exercised a form of knowledge-based power, managed through conversations and reports, which are related to their elite status, their professional community and their operational significance as the only body that linked disparate sites and practices of schooling. Their claims to authority rested on knowledge of individual schools—knowledge that was located in notes, files, reports, and letters—and circulated through their networks and publications. In the 1970s HMI produced their own research and sampling techniques for national Primary Surveys and published analytical studies of inspection reports: describing themselves as 'one of the most prolific sources of incisive, constructive pamphlets on current educational issues' (Allen 1960). Inspectors in England before 1992 expressed a strong commitment to the view that a kind of inspector-connoisseurship or artistry formed the most appropriate basis for judging schooling. The validity of their judgement was tied to 'the background, training and, most importantly, the experience of the inspector, and builds on standards that are internalised versions of collective judgments'.

However Kenneth Baker, the Secretary of State in Thatcher's government responsible for the 'modernising' Education Reform Act (1986) in England, condemned the inspectorate as 'rooted in progressive orthodoxies, in egalitarianism and in the comprehensive school system. It was devoutly anti-excellence, anti-selection, and anti-market. If the civil servants were guardians of this culture, then Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education were its priesthood' (Baker 1993: 168).

While HMI had been located within the government Department, enabling a degree of professional and cultural connection, Ofsted was physically separated

from it. Ofsted was also a more dispersed organisation, with a smaller core and a large amount of outsourced employment. In relation to knowledge production, HMI had put the emphasis on observation and experience, combined with strong socialisation and a shared culture of work, but Ofsted started the move towards criteria, the use of templates for observation, and from the late 1990s to the present the increasing use of performance data to set the parameters for inspection. These forms of knowledge production placed substantial constraints on reference to and mobilisation of experiential or embodied knowledge, as we found in our recent research:

I think in England we have too much data and a lot of the inspectors don't really understand it. (...) I mean data—you can make it say anything you want it to and it's difficult to refute in an inspection, or to say something different from what the data appear to be saying. (...) you are in the bottom left hand quadrant. It's very difficult to say in a report (...) well yes you are there but in actual fact the school is much better than that-and there are reasons why, but Ofsted will say, but the data says this. (Contract inspector 14)

I think that the last framework was the least professionally orientated, gave inspectors the least opportunity to use their professional judgement.... because of the algorithms that existed within it. Ok so if x was a grade one and y was a grade one then z would have to be a grade one. (Contract inspector 11)

Attention to the prevailing political conditions highlights changes in most forms of work from the 1980s onwards—the increasingly technocratic rationalisation of work in the context of globalised production and the dominance of neo-liberal principles drives new work cultures and the relationships that accompany them, including increased employee dependency, limited and punitive contractual relations that advantage transnational employers, demand for intensified productive efforts from workers, and their heightened risk and insecurity, as well as a de-collectivisation of interests and alienation from historically embedded values. And yet work is supposed to be generating resources for the Knowledge Economy in '*Knowledge-rich continuously-learning dynamically-innovating organisations*' (Casey 2013: 201). The policy orthodoxy is that for innovation and growth, 'employers need workers who actively and constantly seek out new and better ways of doing things' and not only better skill levels but 'a new, trust-based relationship between employer and employee' (EC 2010:Europe 2020).

Our research on work relations and practices in the Inspectorate in England between 2012 and 2014 found a workforce characterised by fragmentation and division, surveillance and the absence of trust. Regulation of work was accompanied by increasing data use that limited professional judgement and increased stress:

... you do go in and yes you have the data there, but when you turn up at the school, you know you can often find that it doesn't quite match. But then what you have to do though is to be able to—and this is where some inspectors find it difficult—is to make it add up if the school itself doesn't look like the picture that the data is giving you.

(INT) How to do you make it work? How do you make it all add up? If the data are telling a different story from the school?

That's where professional judgement comes in. But often you know you find that people play it safe and go with the data there is an element of that, due to the risk factor. The risk factor is common when you are less confident, less experienced....it can be difficult. (Inspector 25)

High-risk working conditions supported and continue to support increased data dependency. In other areas, too, established expertise came under attack, as explicitly political influences became more dominant in policy. In the 1980s, political advisers appeared as a group that rapidly became a powerful source of knowledge for policy and which has increased in numbers and influence ever since. The extract below from an interview in the 1980s with Stuart Sexton, who was political adviser to six Secretaries of State from 1979 onwards, and who was very influential in introducing market principles to education, explains how he, and others who followed, worked to influence policy:

My role was in effect proposing, developing, researching what became our education policy for the 79 election and subsequently I was what's known as a special adviser to the secretary of state following it through and developing it further-I was probably the only one in the 70s but then others came in on it as it developed throughout the 80s.

...in addition I produce publications from the IEA, [Institute of Economic Affairs] which are widely distributed to Ministers, MPs and so called opinion formers-so publications, conferences, seminars and lots and lots of informal meetings.

Roger Scruton, the well-known conservative political philosopher, also interviewed in the 1980s, describes the influence of the Hillgate Group, which he established:

The Hillgate group is a private little club of people who share their concern about the collapse of the educational system, in particular about what was going on in state schools, and we had as our purpose to write a trenchant pamphlet at the crucial moment when the government was beginning, at last to think about these problems, in such a way if you like, that language was provided with which to formulate new policies.

These interviews, and others, stress paper production as the dominant form through which ideas were disseminated by political advisers operating in groups like the IEA and Hillgate, but they also draw attention to the importance of networks of 'opinion formers' and to the new, politicised language through which new policies could be formulated. These are not the internal, silo-based communications of bureaucracies, nor do the 'trenchant' pamphlets use the style and language of administrative memoranda. Indeed what characterises that influential writing in favour of education 'reform' in this period is the absence of evidence and the strength of the opinions expressed, as well as a determination to escape from precedent and history.

As a former Director of Education comments, considering the growth of influence of political advisers:

Well they are bloody frightening, they are. Because they are usually people with very, very little experience. Very ambitious, so this is only a step on the route. And, very opinionated. So they will have views about exactly what needs to be done, that will be influenced by the press, public opinion, and not history. From '74 through to '79, it was still.... the people running it [the Department of Education] were old-style civil servants, and they had excellent folk memories of how things had happened. I mean, any sense of history has gone. It's gone from the civil service as well.

(Interview TB 2013)

This quotation, like much of the data gathered in research over a period of years with colleagues on the changing nature of knowledge production (Issakyan et al. 2008; Ozga and Lawn 2014), highlights the changing nature of the expertise involved, the growing influence of the media, and the emphasis placed on ‘actionable’ knowledge, involving ‘real’-world translation and brokering. This is a long way from the closed world of administrative memoranda, as the quotation from a senior civil servant in the Department illustrates:

I am deeply involved in data-interpretation, management, use of, future of....I have been involved with targets, national curriculum results, what they mean and assessmentI am a full time civil servant but importing some external expertise brings some grounding in reality to policies.

I've got people who are crack teachers, crack advisers and they're talking to children first-talking to kids first-hand about what went wrong—I think that's a professional job, not a civil servant's job.

(Interview, DfES 2007)

3.4 Discussion

The collaborative research referenced in this chapter provides evidence of considerable change in the material conditions of knowledge production for policy. From knowledge production based on static and centrally controlled materials stored in large files that acted as a source of guidance based on precedent, governing knowledge is now decentralised, future-oriented, networked, processual, autonomous and fluid (Issakyan et al. 2008). Its networked nature (in the sense that it is co-produced by different networks of policymakers, experts and practitioners) promotes its easy exchange and hence its operation as one of the prime engines for its marketisation within neo-liberal economies (Thrift 2005). These changes also imply the presence of new policy actors, organised in networks, translating and brokering increasingly dense digitised information. Do these policy actors constitute a new elite?

Elite theory is currently somewhat neglected, but was firmly established in the 1970s when my research began, both in the academic study of education and among those who defined themselves as policymakers (at least in England). Policy elites were understood as constituting a fairly well-defined group, connected to one another through education and experience, as well as through family background, class, gender and religion. Research on the ‘assumptive worlds’ of policymakers from this period describes how their social and professional identities were inextricably intertwined, while Greenaway’s (1988) study of the political education of the Civil Service mandarin elite in England stressed the impact of education in shaping a commitment to the generalist all-rounder as the preferred model civil servant, characterised by integrity, detachment, and team work. The major Public Schools and ancient universities were seen as ideal training grounds for such knowledge production and were also understood to foster camaraderie, loyalty and respect for tradition (Kelsall 1954). Indeed Gail Savage found that 60% of Board

of Education/Ministry officials in the 1940s–1960s were public school and Oxbridge products with a ‘high degree of social homogeneity’ (Savage 1983). Between 1900 and 1986, the Clarendon public schools were attended by three in five Permanent Secretaries and 75% of them between 1965 and 1986 were Oxbridge men. The close ties formed among senior civil servants lasted from early school age through working life. As a Treasury official, quoted in Heclo and Wildavsky’s famous study of the private governance of public money, put it:

The civil service is run by a small group of people who grew up together. (Heclo and Wildavsky 1974; 76)

The documentary analysis and interviews that Sharon Gewirtz and I carried out in the 1980s with retired officials and officers who had been active in post-war reconstruction of the system, and which are drawn on here, revealed close social networks (established at particular public schools) and through intermarriage. These were long-lasting friendships that built mutual recognition and reciprocity and were further characterised by collective sponsorship of the next generation. These policy actors were often sustained in their practical policymaking by a shared belief in the different abilities that they believed to be present in the school population, as indicated by IQ tests. Policymaking was characterised by reference to precedent, disrupted only by some anxiety about pressure for change from ‘below’, especially in the immediate post-war years (Lawn 1996).

The workings of post-war education policy could best be understood, on the basis of that earlier research (Gewirtz and Ozga 1990) as the management of a system through a group of highly networked individuals who ensured very considerable continuity in policy while maintaining their power and control. In classic Marxist terms, this was a *positional* elite, ensuring its continuing dominance through structural domination and shared—if rather implicit—ideological conviction. This elite shared a capacity to work within structures of domination (including education systems) in order to pursue their material and social interests—especially those that supported them in maintaining their position in the face of challenge ‘from below’.

More recent theorisation of elites has challenged structural analysis (in this and many areas) and focused on horizontal, culturally based forms of power and control, and on distributed social relations. Indeed elite theory has become rather preoccupied with cultural elites and their shared educational experiences (see, e.g. van Zanten et al. 2015). There is considerable potential, however, in extending the range of engagement with elites, including through the lens of expertise and the production of policy knowledge, in order to highlight change in elite strategies of knowledge production and to illustrate how they intersect with governing forms. One effect of the current controversies and the hostility expressed towards elites in populist discourse has been to revive theoretical and empirical work in this area, as political scientists and sociologists of policy seek to understand the intersection between the possession of economic, cultural and political capital and the growth of consultancy, technology and new governing networks (Ball and Junemann 2012; Normand 2016). In the UK, John Scott’s (2008) work has consistently drawn attention to elite capacity to exercise both structural power through its capacity to store and hold

power, while also observing and recognising the fluidity of structures of domination and their capacity to function as dynamic institutional formations, subject to change and development. In Reed's words, such an approach to elites combines the 'storage and holding of power' with the 'exercise and mobilization of power' (Reed 2012: 210) including through the knowledge–policy relationship.

In this chapter, I have attempted to explore the growth of new elites (experts) in conjunction with the growth of data and its dominance in policymaking. Research conducted since 2006 traces the rise of data, the increasing dependency of policymakers on data to provide 'actionable knowledge' and the parallel growth of consultancy. In our research on the rise of data in Europe, we identified the growth of technical expertise and the increased power of technocrats in framing policy issues and their solutions (Ozga and Grek 2012). More recent research identifies a European technocracy that is developing 'epistemic' governance, using its skills and capacities to consolidate and extend its authority and power (Normand 2016: 129).

The contrast with the 'data-free' period of the 1970s is evident if we focus on what Freeman calls 'the real things, that is, the objects, tools, instruments and artefacts' with which people engage in the practice of policy. These artefacts, as I have tried to show, are not inert, but structure practices (Fenwick and Edwards 2014). The artefact or object—an administrative memorandum, an algorithm—expresses and shapes knowledge, communicates knowledge and codifies it. It carries implicit and explicit messages, in the 1970s, about the importance of experience, and precedent, in contemporary contexts, about the need for speed and forward-thinking. The artefacts discussed here do indeed suggest that the elites have changed and that expertise is located in a different place and takes a different form from that prevailing in the past in England. But such a large question—on the nature of elites—cannot be 'answered' in a short and selective account of research such as this. What I do suggest, however, is that widening our approaches to policy as a topic, to include what Thrift (2005) calls 'mundane materials' and their active role in producing and constituting knowledge for policy, will add a missing dimension to our understanding of the role of experts and elites in policymaking.

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Chapter 4

The National Concept of Education Quality



Zhenguo Yuan

Education quality has long been debated by education philosophers as what education is good (Burbules 2004). In the global practices, many countries have engaged in exploring how to make learners acquire good education. In the Education Policy Outlook 2015 published by OECD (2015), about 16% of education reform measures by the OECD member countries focused on education quality and equity.

“Improving education quality” has become a strategic education reform theme in China since 2013. It is also the overarching requirement for education in China’s 13th Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development.¹ The period covered by the Plan is crucial for improving education quality and allowing China to become a major country in terms of educational scale and impact. It is also the time² when education quality improvement is deemed a key task as China reaches a new stage of development.³

¹The 13th Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development refers to China’s plans and arrangements for the major activities of the national economy, science and technology, education, and social development between 2016 and 2020. It is a major programmatic document that guides economic and social development.

²In the past four decades, China’s development mainly relied on investment and consumption, but with the development of the economy and the progress of society, especially the upgrading of industry, China’s future development is increasingly dependent on high-quality workers. Because high-quality education cultivates higher quality workers, it is very important for China to improve the quality of its education system at this stage.

³According to the data released by the Chinese Ministry of Education, the gross enrollment rate for the first three years of pre-school in 2016 was 77.4%, which represents an increase of 12.9% since 2012, surpassing the average level of middle- and high-income-earning countries. Also during this period, the primary school net enrollment rate was 99.9%, and the junior high school gross enrollment rate was 104.0%. Additionally, the 9-year compulsory education consolidation rate was 93.4%, which is 1.6 percentage points higher than in 2012 and higher than the average for high-

Since the beginning of China's Reform and Opening-up in 1978, the Chinese government has released several historic documents of vital importance on education, such as the Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the Reform of the Educational System (1985), the Guidelines for the Development and Reform of Education in China (1993), and the National Medium- and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010). In the three documents mentioned above, the word "quality" appears four times, 20 times, and 51 times, respectively, reflecting that education quality has become a policy focus in China. At present, China is going through a significant period of accelerating education development as it transitions from a "big country of education" to a "strong country of education." It is necessary and timely to focus more on quality to achieve better development of education in this new era, which features a more complex world, fiercer international competition, and increasingly rapid innovation.

"Education quality" is a rich and contentious term, and how to define and improve education quality may receive contesting answers among students, teachers, schools, regions, and countries. Therefore, the ways to improve education quality may vary accordingly. The quality of education can be viewed either from a national perspective or a local government or school's perspective. For example, a school may be most concerned about quality in terms of the school's academic achievement, enrollment, and graduation rates. From a macro perspective, such as the national perspective, the quality of education is more concerned with quantity, structure, equity, teachers, and innovation. This chapter focuses on the latter perspective, which is framed as "national concept" of education quality.

4.1 Ensuring Appropriate Education Quantity Is the Foundation of Improving Education Quality

The core of education quality ultimately depends on the cultivation of talent (Hill et al. 2003). Two criteria for quality talent cultivation from the national perspective may be particularly useful: (1) whether the education system can adapt to the needs of economic and social development, which is to say, both meet society's current demand for talent in specific areas in specific amounts and also anticipate and prepare adequate talent for future development; and (2) whether the education system can support individual development, that is, both ensure the fostering of students' habits of mind and skills and provide space for personalized development. On the national strategic level, there are five key factors that influence and determine education quality. Thus, enhancing education quality entails deepening reform to achieve continuous improvement of the following five factors.

income countries. The gross enrollment rate in high school was 87.5%, which represents an increase of 2.5 percentage points from 2012, while gross enrollment in higher education was 42.7%, which represents an increase of 12.7 percentage points from 2012, both of which surpass the average for middle- to high-income countries.

4.2 Quantity: Appropriate Education Quantity Is the Foundation of Improving Education Quality

In nearly 40 years since Reform and Opening-up, the rapid increase of educational capacity is the most striking feature and achievement of educational development in China. During this period, China has fully realized a system of providing 9 years of compulsory education, with the high school enrollment rate rising from 20 to 87%; at the same time, the higher education enrollment rate has risen from 3 to 40%.⁴ Due to this rapid development, China has transformed from a country known for having a large population to one known for having skilled workers in many sectors, with the largest scale of education and the largest number of college students in the world. In addition to enrollment rates, there have been increases in graduation rates, passing rates, and excellence rates at all levels of education⁵; particularly noteworthy is the fact that the duration of compulsory education has been adequately extended.

However, China has not completed its task of quantity development in education, which undermines education quality from the perspective of producing future high-quality national workforce. The number of years included in compulsory education largely determines the quality of education received by students and the overall skill level of a nation's workforce. Internationally, the average number of years of compulsory schooling is 9.24, and in high- and middle-income countries is 9.5, but, as noted, it is only 9 in China (Yuan 2013). An analysis of countries that have successfully escaped the “middle-income trap”⁶ reveals that lengthier period of compulsory education is a shared contributing factor to their national success. As China is undergoing this transition, it will be critical to extend compulsory education lower to preschool education and higher to senior secondary education. With extended period of compulsory education, the quality of national manpower will be increased accordingly. However, implementation can be phased, with careful consideration of rural and remote areas during the expansion.

⁴These statistics are taken from the National Statistical Bulletin on National Education Development in 2016 and do not include data for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the Macao Special Administrative Region, and Taiwan.

⁵The graduation rate is the number of persons who completed school divided by the total number of children of official graduation age. The passing rate is the number of persons who passed a grade divided by the total number of students in the grade. The excellence rate is the number of students attaining “excellent” status divided by the total number of students.

⁶The World Bank’s East Asia Economic Development Report (2006) sets out the concept of the “middle-income Trap.” Its basic premise is that few middle-income economies succeed in becoming high-income countries. Instead, most middle-income economies experience stagnant economic growth because they cannot compete with low-income countries on wages and cannot compete with rich countries in terms of cutting-edge technological development.

4.3 Education Structure: Appropriate Structure Is the Framework of Education Quality

Education structure refers to the coherent conjuncture of the various parts of education, including school types, education levels, layout, disciplines and programs, and so on.⁷ Ill-structured education would lead to social waste or even social disaster (e.g., a massive structural unemployment); well-coupled structure of education–employment–industry would help accelerate social economic development and improve national competitiveness (Jia and Chu 2012). Thus, from the perspective of the appropriate education structure, more high-level education does not necessarily imply better outcomes. The overall structure conditions education quality. Take South Korea as an example: its higher education enrollment rate reached 84% in 2012, but the country experienced both (1) a large number of unemployed graduates and (2) a severe shortage of skilled workers, due primarily to a mismatch in skills. To defuse this issue, the government of South Korea cut its enrollment rate to 73%. As the South Korean government recognized, education structure is optimal when it produces skilled personnel in ratios that best suit socioeconomic development needs (Yuan 2013).

An appropriate conjuncture of basic education and higher education, general education and vocational education, and public education and private education is fundamental to optimizing education structure. As China moved into the 2000s, it made great efforts to promote the balanced development of compulsory education⁸ and the diversified development of high schools; in higher education, China has focused on the development of “Double First-Class” (project of world-class universities and the first-class disciplines in China)⁹ to enhance quality. Thus, both elementary and higher education have made great progress. Governments at all levels have given additional attention to vocational education and continuing education,

⁷ School types include public education, private education, public–private education, and so on. Education levels refer to pre-school education, basic education, secondary education, higher education, and so on. Layout refers to the layout of educational development between different regions, cities, and rural areas. Disciplinary structure mainly refers to the proportion of each discipline necessary for balanced development. Programs refer to the proportion of professional talents in the population.

⁸The balanced development of compulsory education means that in the compulsory education stage, the government needs to allocate educational resources reasonably, improve the overall quality of teachers, and narrow the gap between the levels of education in schools, urban and rural areas, and regions. The basic objectives of the balanced development of compulsory education are as follows: each school meets the standards for operating a school in the country, and the funds for operating a school are guaranteed; education resources meet the needs of teaching, and curriculum are fully developed; and teachers' allocation is reasonable, and teachers' overall qualifications are improved.

⁹To propel a group of high-level universities and disciplines into the first-class ranks in the world and at the same time to improve the level of student training, scientific research, and social service in higher education, the Chinese government proposed a new policy on higher education reform called “Double First-Class.” This policy was launched in 2015 and formally implemented in 2017.

which has narrowed the gap between vocational and general education, and school education and continuing education. Meanwhile, private education has also been developing, but—compared with general education, pre-service education, and public education—vocational education, post-vocational education, and private education are clearly in a disadvantaged position, leaving room for improvement.

The importance of vocational education has gradually been understood by Chinese government and society. However, while the government demonstrates great enthusiasm for vocational education, the private sector often fails because it can be difficult to obtain benefits. Theoretically, vocational education and general education are simply two different but equal types of education, but in fact vocational education is sometimes still treated inferior schooling. In the last decade, due to the dramatic increase in funding for vocational education, the difference in per-student educational expenditure between vocational education and general education in high school has become rather small. According to education statistics released by the Chinese government, the total investment in vocational education from 2006 to 2013 increased from 114.1 billion RMB to 345 billion RMB, with an average annual increase of 17.1%. However, vocational education still faces certain policy barriers and is far from being respected by all or from being chosen voluntarily by students. The difference is much more remarkable when it comes to higher vocational education,¹⁰ and thus, it is important to adjust relevant policies, improve standards for vocational school operations, increase financial investment, and reduce tuition.

Post-employment education,¹¹ to a great extent, has not yet been incorporated into the national education system by the Chinese government, and thus when education is discussed, people generally refer to pre-service education.¹² As a society moves to one of knowledge and intelligence, the number of people engaged in the knowledge economy grows and the significance of post-vocational education becomes more evident. A report by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2012) shows that during times of economic crisis, the employment rate of young people generally declines and most employees' incomes decrease, while the incomes of high-skilled workers rise and the number of jobs available for them exceeds worker supply. This research demonstrates that the key competitiveness of a nation lies not in its economy, technology, or population size, but rather in the skills of its employees and their training. Despite the great importance of post-employment education, however, the attention devoted to it is insufficient in China. There is still a lack of a clear legal framework for post-employment education, and it has long been marginalized in the Chinese education system.

¹⁰Vocational education is divided into secondary vocational education and higher vocational education.

¹¹Post-employment education is mainly designed to help workers gain access to professional knowledge, skills, and professional ethics necessary for them to achieve greater success and productivity at their jobs.

¹²Pre-service education is aimed at people who are about to embark on their jobs. The main contents cover three aspects: basic working ability, psychological quality, and social common sense and basic etiquette.

Worse still, provisions for the funding, professional personnel, and government responsibility for post-employment education remain very vague. Post-employment education is currently not even an explicit item in most financial budgets.

The relationship between private education and public education in China has been evolving in complicated ways. Now their relationship manifests as the private sector retreating while the state advancing. Through regulation and management, the government circumscribes rather than supports the development of private education. From 1995 to 2005, educational funding in China rose noticeably, and its source channels were greatly diversified due to the reform of the school operation and fund-raising system. The proportion of overall educational investment to GDP increased from 3.09% to 4.55%, of which fiscal and non-fiscal input¹³ contributed 0.47% and 0.99%, respectively. During the following 9 years, from 2005 to 2014, the government strengthened funding for education at all levels, with fiscal investment greatly increasing, while non-fiscal investment continuously declined: the ratio of total educational investment to GDP grew from 4.55% to 5.15%, among which fiscal input contributed 1.36%, while non-fiscal input fell by 0.76%. According to the *China Statistical Yearbook*, the Engel coefficient of Chinese urban residents in 2013 fell by 4.4% compared with 2000, and in rural areas by nearly 12%. However, the structure of Chinese residents' consumption over the past 10 years shows the opposite trend: during 2000–2013, Chinese residents' spending on health care, transportation, communication, and clothing was on the rise, while education expenditures trended downward, with urban residents' expenditures declining from 7.3% to 4.7% and rural residents' expenditures reducing in half from 10.5% to around 5% (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2013). At present, the government expects to place emphasis on encouraging and supporting private education in policymaking to fulfill the 13th Five-Year Plan commitments of supporting and regulating the development of private education and encouraging social forces and private capital to provide diversified education services.¹⁴ But great importance should be attached to boosting the development of for-profit and non-profit private education so as to meet the rising demands of Chinese parents.

¹³ Fiscal input means that the government allocates funds raised from social products or national income to all sectors of the national economy, which is an important part of its fiscal expenditures. Non-fiscal input refers to the investment by enterprises and individuals that are qualified as independent legal persons.

¹⁴ In The 13th Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China (2016–2020), published by Central Compilation and Translation Press.

4.4 Education Equity: Equity Is Integrated to Education Quality

Education equity is the social justice in the field of education. It has become a wide belief that a country's education system should be accessible not just to elites but to all citizens. Quality and equity exist in a kind of partially symbiotic, partially antagonistic relationship. Without quality, education equity only involves equal access to a shoddy good, while without equity, high-quality education is only open to a minority. In fact, equity and quality are two sides of a coin, interdependent and complementary to each other. Education equity is a goal requiring constant effort, and its development is recognized as having four stages: opportunity equity, fair conditions, process equity, and outcome equity (Yuan 2015). Coleman (1968) put forward that one role played by the modern education was to confer valuable certificates independent of their social-economic status, i.e., the opportunity of social mobility. Following this argument, Pfeffer (2015) proposed to evaluate education quality from the provision of equal opportunity to education.

The essence of opportunity equity is that schools can be accessed by everyone—education for all, without discrimination (Youjiao Wulei有教无类). The core of fair conditions is operating every school well—balanced development (Junheng Fazhan均衡发展); the key to process equity is to treat each student equally—to make no exceptions (Yishi Tongren一视同仁); and the essence of outcome equity is to provide suitable education for every student—to teach students in accordance with their aptitudes (Yincai Shijiao因材施教). These four stages are interrelated, complementary, and mutually reinforcing.

“Education for all without discrimination (Youjiao Wulei有教无类)” is an educational principle that was proposed by Confucius 2500 years ago. In the Education Law of the People’s Republic of China,¹⁵ it is stipulated that “citizens shall enjoy equal access to education irrespective of their ethnicity, race, gender, occupation, property status, religious belief, etc.” Education equity starts with the premise that each child should enjoy access to school education, because without it, a child’s ability to acquire equal opportunity and welfare will be severely limited.

However, there is a great difference between merely having access to schools and obtaining quality education. Although 9 years’ compulsory education is offered in China, different schools may have completely disparate performance. In the last few years, China has made great efforts and achieved remarkable progress in promoting education equity in this regard, but the phenomenon of school choice¹⁶ in primary and secondary schools is still widespread, reflecting the disparity of schools’

¹⁵The Education Law of the People’s Republic of China was promulgated and implemented in 1995.

¹⁶School choice means that if education resources are insufficiently balanced, parents should be able to choose a good school for their children to enjoy a quality education. This requires parents to pay extra, and in many cases, only families with good financial situations can afford to go to school.

operating conditions. Different schools teach differently, and even students on the same campus or sitting in the same classroom do not necessarily receive the same education. One main government measure to promote education equity is to allocate public education resources to narrow the educational gaps between urban and rural areas, as well as between different regions and schools, thereby creating a fair educational environment.

For students, inequity in the school and classroom has a greater and more direct negative impact on individual development. In this context, the realization of process equity involves at least two important issues: how to realize the basic principle of modern education that every citizen receives an equal education, and how to ensure equal treatment of every student to guarantee a fair opportunity for learning and development. This requires meticulous work and greater progress in updating educational concepts and teacher quality.

As for result equity, it is unrealistic for all students to obtain the same grades and reach the same level of achievement. Education equity does not mean dragging people from a high level to a lower one, for instance; on the contrary, it refers to providing appropriate, individualized education to enable each student to obtain the best personal development possible and to offer non-discriminatory education to students from all family backgrounds to weaken the impact of social disparities and intervene the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

It is noteworthy that across the four stages mentioned above, the question of fairness and justice prevails: special populations must be treated with special care, and education resources should be prioritized for the disadvantaged. During the 12th Five-Year Plan period,¹⁷ the Chinese government adopted a package plan with various measures and took a significant step forward in education equity. Currently, it is a major trend in China for rural farmers to move to urban areas and become city residents. Today's children of migrant workers are tomorrow's city residents, and their education and development will shape the future of Chinese cities. Comparatively speaking, it is more difficult for migrant workers' children to receive equal education. Tackling this issue has been a challenge due to inadequate policies. The free 9 years of compulsory education for the children of nearly ten million migrant workers has not yet been guaranteed. In particular, in major cities with a large number of migrant workers, there is a significant gap between urban and rural students in education quality, owing to restrictions on teaching assignments,¹⁸ school scale, and education budgets. Hence, it is imperative to work with sectors of the community to resolve these problems to ensure equitable social development.

¹⁷The 12th Five-Year Plan period was 2011–2015.

¹⁸Teacher assignment is part of the teacher management system in China. Teachers who have teacher preparation are full-time staff of the school, similar to civil servants. Their salary is appropriated from the state budget, and their jobs are guaranteed and stable.

4.5 Excellent Teachers: Teachers Are Key to Improving the Quality of Education

Teachers are key to the twenty-first century education quality (Darling-Hammond and Lieberman 2012). To enhance the quality of education, it is necessary to develop, retain, and perpetuate excellent teaching talent. To cultivate and gather top education talents is essential to educational development as well as to national development. However, it represents great challenge for China that being a teacher is no longer attractive. In a ranking of the 19 major categories of occupations in China, the rank of teachers in terms of income level has been hovering between 10 and 11 for years. In addition, due to long work hours (more than 54 h per week for most teachers) and stressful conditions (lots of repetitive tasks in addition to teaching), teachers now feel less honored and less interested in their profession than before (China's Ministry of Education 2016). The admission scores for students majoring in teaching in universities have been gradually declining over the past 10 years. In rural areas, lagging improvement in teachers' living conditions, serious problems with the aging teachers, and structural disorders have intertwined to severely restrain the quality of rural education. Therefore, it is a great concern for the future of China that teachers' incomes and living and working environments be improved to maintain the teaching profession's appeal to top talent.

Based on the current situation in China, the following aspects are pressing for maintaining and improving education quality through excellent teachers.

First, to lift the overall quality of teachers. At present, there are 15 million teachers in Chinese primary and middle schools. Over the past 20 years, teachers' overall educational attainment has been lifted to a new level: teachers in middle schools are all armed with bachelor's degrees, as are a considerable proportion of teachers in primary schools. However, confronting the ever-changing social situation and further evolution of the innovation economy, information age, and international integration, it is an imperative to strengthen teachers' continuing education and job training, thereby updating professional knowledge so as to improve the overall quality of teachers.

Second, to attract the outstanding talent to join the teaching profession. Since the 1990s, teachers' incomes in China have been rising constantly, and living and working conditions have also been continuously improving. However, teachers' salaries still rank in the lower-middle range of the categories of occupations in China. With increasing work pressure, there has been a reduction in the appeal of the teaching profession, especially in remote areas. Therefore, it is necessary to foster an environment in which teachers are respected and education is valued by the general public, to increase teachers' salaries and protect their welfare, and particularly to guarantee the welfare and working conditions of teachers in poor areas.

Third, to accelerate the growth of educators (Jiaoyujia 教育家). Educators are leaders in education, whose practices in schools are key to improving schools and teaching performance. There has been an increase in the demand for outstanding teachers and school principals. The contemporary era calls for educators equipped

with an educational philosophy and strong, innovative approaches and distinctive styles.

Fourth, to encourage the outstanding educational talent to move into the central and western regions, as well as other remote and poor areas of China. The economic underdevelopment in these regions is temporary, but the effects of underdeveloped education are long-lasting. Since the beginning of this century, Chinese government has increased its support for education in underdeveloped areas. However, for economic reasons, outstanding teachers in these regions are moving to more economically developed areas; brain drain in teachers is a major obstacle to the development of these areas. In light of this, efforts could be increased to ensure that cities support rural areas, while the east sends skilled people back to the west. In addition, a variety of flexible and effective mechanisms could be designed and established to attract more outstanding educational talent in these areas.

4.6 Educational Innovation: Innovation Is at the Core of Improving Education Quality

In today's world, the knowledge economy is on the upswing and is beginning to take a leading role in the global economic landscape, continued advances are being made in economic globalization, international competition has intensified, and application of advances in information technology have become increasingly prevalent. As China reaches a crucial phase in its industrial transformation and upgrade, innovation becomes the primary source of development. As stated in China's 13th Five-Year Plan, innovation is at the heart of China's development and the cultivation of creative talent is the key to this innovation. However, insufficient capacity for innovation and poor development of creative talent represents China's greatest weakness and may even be regarded as the country's Achilles' heel.

In 2009 and 2012, certain students in Shanghai participated in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) conducted by the OECD and obtained remarkable scores. Topping the rankings in mathematics, science, and reading, these Chinese students received great attention from the international community. However, while Chinese students spent the most hours studying, they scored relatively low in problem-solving and imagination (OECD 2012).

Since the resumption of the National College Entrance Examination in 1977, China has produced more than 3,600 top scorers for all provinces. These students represent the best talent by Chinese selection and assessment standards, and it is reasonable to believe that they should accomplish great things after college and postgraduate education. However, their performance has not lived up to expectations. "High marks but weak competence (Gaofen Dineng 高分低能)" has been frequently used to label Chinese high-score students produced from the examination-oriented education system.

Currently, the highly selective examination system has been reformed to encourage local governments and schools to explore their own characteristics of operating a school. Innovation of curricula, teaching methods, assessments, and school administration are also considered in the recent systemic reforms to nurture students' innovation, which has been taken as a key indicator of quality in the national education system.

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Part II

Education Policy and Reform

Chapter 5

Education Reform Phenomenon: A Typology of Multiple Dilemmas



Yin Cheong Cheng

5.1 Introduction

Since the end of 1990s, there had been numerous education reforms initiated by policy-makers in different parts of the world with aims to meet the challenges from globalization, international competition, technological innovation, and economic transformation (Cheng and Townsend 2000). To a great extent, education reform has become a worldwide phenomenon or movement in the last two decades with strong policy input and implication (Zajda 2015). To countries with different cultural, social, and economic backgrounds, the formulation and implementation of education reforms for systemic changes may be different in some ways. But in general, nine common trends of these reforms at the macro, meso, site, and operational levels can be observed in many countries or areas particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, such as Australia, Cambodia, PR. China, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, and Singapore (see, e.g., Baker 2001; Caldwell 2001; Castillo 2001; Cheng 2001a, b; Rajput 2001; Rung 2001; Sereyrath 2001; Shan and Chang 2000; Sharpe and Gopinathan 2001; Suzuki 2000; Tang 2001; Townsend 2000; Yu 2001).

According to previous works of Cheng (2005a, Chap. 7) and Cheng and Townsend (2000) at the turn of new century, the main trends of systemic reforms at the macro-level include re-establishing a new national vision and educational aims; restructuring an education system at different levels; and market-driving, privatizing, and diversifying education. At the meso-level, increasing parental and community involvement in education and management is a salient trend. At the site-level,

Parts of materials in this chapter were adapted from Cheng (2005a, 2015a, b, 2017) and Cheng et al. (2016a).

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the major trends are ensuring education quality, standards, and accountability; increasing decentralization and school-based management; and enhancing teacher quality and the continuous lifelong professional development of teachers and principals. At the operational level, the main trends include using information technology in learning and teaching and applying new technologies in management and making a paradigm shift in learning, teaching, and assessment.

These trends cover nearly all key aspects of an education system and each trend itself may involve many initiatives and efforts in policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation. It means that there may be a wide range of new initiatives and changes to be implemented in a systemic education reform. As a phenomenon, education reforms share some interesting features across countries as illustrated below.

In response to serious international competitions, when one country in a region is initiating education reforms with aims to further enhance its human capital and competitive capacity in a context of globalization and knowledge economy (Beetham and Sharpe 2013; Longworth 2013; Ramirez and Chan-Tiberghein 2003), its regional competitors also launch their reforms and initiate more changes in their education systems with a hidden agenda to outperform their counterparts in terms of growing human resources. The international rankings in performance of school education (such as PISA-OECD (2006, 2009, 2012), etc.) or higher education (such as Times Higher Education's (2014–15) World University Rankings) in the past two decades are in fact accelerating this tendency and driving the public concerns and policy dates about performance and reforms in education locally and internationally.

Given the above context, it is not a surprise that education reforms mutually influence and widely spread across countries and areas in the world as a part of globalization or international movements, sharing some common trends and similar patterns of reform behaviors. For example, education accountability, quality assurance review, school-based management, and marketization in education are common worldwide initiatives in education reforms (e.g., Figlio and Loeb 2011; Gawlik 2012; Keddie 2015; PISA 2011).

Assuming all initiatives' intention is good and achievable without taking the cultural and practical conditions into consideration, the policy-makers often make fundamental changes at all levels, implement many initiatives in parallel but plan to achieve them in a very short time. Probably they worry about losing their country competitiveness if they do not reform as fast as possible (Amdam 2013; Baumann and Winzar 2016; Fitzsimons 2015). This may be the reason why many countries implement so many initiatives, covering most trends of education reforms in the last two decades.

After nearly two decades, huge national resources had been invested in education reforms in most countries in the Asia-Pacific region and other in order to bring about substantial changes in many different aspects of society (Cheng and Townsend 2000; Savage and O'Connor 2015; Lee and Gopinathan 2018). Unfortunately, until now many countries or areas are disappointed with the outcomes of education reforms as well as the performance of their education systems in preparing their new generation for facing the challenges of the new century. For example, Taiwan

started its large-scale education reforms in 1995 and Hong Kong launched its blueprint of education reforms in 2000. But after more than 15–20 years of implementation, both of them report serious frustration or failure in different key aspects of their systemic changes (Cheng 2017; Chou 2003).

Neither parents nor members of the community see the education system reformed satisfactorily as promised. Instead, they are generally confused and disappointed with the new initiatives and are increasingly losing confidence in school education. To some families, the better-offs are simply sending their children abroad for education if they can afford. Meanwhile, most school teachers and principals feel frustrated or even exhausted under great pressure. With Hong Kong as a salient example, the over competitions from marketization, the close control from accountability measures, the increasing workload from numerous parallel initiatives, the de-professionalization from over-management and monitoring, and the high pressure from uncertainties and ambiguities in education environment become some typical concerns of education reforms that potentially damage teachers' well-being and working conditions (such as being burnt-out and overburdened with unnecessary busy works, declining status of the teaching profession, and deteriorating quality of teaching and learning (Cheng 2009, 2017).

Given the education reforms have been implemented with far reaching impacts in the past two decades, it would be interesting and significant in policy analysis to know why the education reforms with so good intention at the beginning may not bring out the expected outcomes at the end, if not fail. What lessons can be learnt from the education reform phenomenon in the past decades such that we can avoid repeating the similar failures in future policy planning and implementation? In particular, what are the major concerns, tensions, and dilemmas in education reforms that the policy-makers, teachers, educators, change agents, and other stakeholders have to struggle with in formulating and implementing the reform policies?

To address these questions, this chapter aims to provide a preliminary analysis to illustrate the possible key dilemmas or tensions that potentially shape the characteristics of education reforms and affect their success and failure in implementation. It is hoped that some implications can be drawn for bridging the theoretical and practical gaps in research, policy-making, and practice in education reforms locally and internationally.

Based on the author's research on the worldwide education reform phenomenon since the end of 1990s to 2017 (Cheng 1996, 2005a, b, 2007, 2009, 2014, 2015a, b, 2017; Cheng et al. 2016a, b; Cheng and Greany 2016; Cheng and Townsend 2000), a typology of seven fundamental dilemmas in education reforms will be discussed and analyzed in this article, including (1) *orientation dilemmas* between globalization and localization, (2) *paradigm dilemmas* between the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd waves, (3) *financial dilemmas* between public interest and privatization, (4) *resources dilemmas* between parallel initiatives, (5) *knowledge dilemmas* in planning and implementation at different levels, (6) *political dilemmas* between multiple stakeholders, and (7) *functional dilemmas* between school-based management and central platform in education reforms. Without understanding and managing these

multiple dilemmas and related tensions appropriately, many education reforms with good intentions may finally fail in implementation.

5.2 Orientation Dilemmas Between Globalization and Localization

Rapid globalization is one of the most salient aspects of the new millennium in the last two decades. How education should respond to the trends and challenges of globalization has become a major concern in policy-making in these years (Stromquist and Monkman 2014; Zajda 2015; Verger et al. 2016). In addition, facing the increasing demands for various developments of individuals and local communities in the new century, not only globalization but also localization and individualization are necessary in ongoing education reforms. Efforts and initiatives for a paradigm shift towards globalization, localization, and individualization in education have been gradually evident in some countries in recent years (Cheng 2005a, Chap. 3).

Globalization creates numerous opportunities for sharing knowledge, technology, social values, and behavioral norms and promoting developments at different levels including individuals, organizations, communities, and societies across different countries and cultures. In particular, the advantages of globalization may include the following (Brown 1999; Cheng et al. 2016a; Spring 2014; Waters 1995):

1. Global sharing of knowledge, skills, and intellectual assets that are necessary to multiple developments of individuals, local communities, and international communities;
2. Increasing opportunities for mutual support in producing synergy for various developments of countries, communities, and individuals globally;
3. Creating values and enhancing efficiency and productivity through the above global sharing and mutual support to serving local needs and human development;
4. Promoting international understanding, collaborations, harmony, and acceptance to cultural diversity across various countries and regions; and
5. Facilitating multi-way communications and multi-cultural appreciations among various groups, countries, and regions.

As strong evidence of globalization, internationalization of education, particularly higher education, has received central attention or strategic priority in international declarations, national policy statements, university strategic plans, and academic articles since the turn of new century (Knight 2014a). In general, it was often believed that the processes and results of internationalization contribute to the development of student global competences, economic competitiveness, income generation, national soft power building, modernization of the tertiary education sector, and transformation towards a knowledge/innovation society (Altbach and

Knight 2007; Knight 2014b; Mohsin and Zaman 2014; Yeravdekar and Tiwari 2014). The number of international students studying in overseas universities has grown by leaps and bounds in different parts of the world, and international education has become a booming business in the past two decades (Institute of International Education 2008a, b, c, 2014). Recently it was projected that the number of international students will grow from 4.5 million in 2012 to 8 million in 2025 (OECD 2014).

Globalization or internationalization seems to be unavoidable to many countries, and numerous related initiatives have been made in education reforms with aims at taking opportunities to develop their societies and people in the process of globalization. However, in recent years, there are also increasing worldwide concerns about the negative impacts of globalization on indigenous and national developments (Cheng 2005a, Chap. 3). Various social movements and demonstrations have been initiated against the threats of globalization particularly on developing countries (Porta et al. 2015; Fominaya 2014; Martell 2016). It is believed that the dangerous consequences of globalization are various types of political, economic, and cultural colonization and overwhelming influences of advanced countries to developing countries and the rapidly increasing gaps between rich areas and poor areas in the world. In particular, the potential negative impacts of globalization include the following (Brown 1999; Stiglitz 2002; Waters 1995; Martell 2016):

1. Increasing the technological gaps and digital divides between advanced countries and less developed countries that are hindering equal opportunities for fair global sharing;
2. Creating more apparently legitimate opportunities for a few advanced countries to economically and politically colonize other countries globally;
3. Exploiting local resources (including physical resources and human talents) and destroying indigenous cultures of less advanced countries to benefit a few advanced countries;
4. Increasing inequalities and conflicts between areas and cultures; and
5. Promoting the dominant cultures and values of some advanced areas and accelerating cultural transplantation from advanced areas to less developed areas.

Many people believe that education is one of the key factors that can be used to moderate some key impacts of globalization from negative to positive and convert threats into opportunities for the development of individuals and local community in the inevitable process of globalization (Green 1999; Henry et al. 1999; Jones 1999). Given the above discussion, there may be dilemmas or tensions in policy orientation between globalization and localization in education particularly for developing countries. For example, how to maximize positive effects but minimize negative impacts of globalization is a major dilemma in the current educational reforms for national and local developments.

Specifically in education, how can we foster local knowledge and human development for individual and local developments through globalization but without its negative impacts? In what way the local education systems and their practices can localize the global knowledge and world-class skills to develop their students' twenty-first century competence for the future in a context of overwhelming

globalization? Unfortunately, there are not too many studies to explore these important dilemmas and issues in policy-making and vision building in the past decades even though there were numerous education reforms locally and internationally.

5.3 Paradigm Dilemmas in Education Reforms

Since 1980s worldwide education reforms have undergone three waves of change including the effective education movement, the quality education movement, and the world-class education movement. According to Cheng (2005a), each wave of reform works within its own paradigm in conceptualizing the nature of education and formulating related initiatives to change educational practices at the operational, site, and system levels. In the transition from one wave to the next, *paradigm shifts* may occur in the conceptualization and practice of learning, teaching, and leadership (Abbas et al. 2013; Beetham and Sharpe 2013; Cheng 2011, 2014; Cheng and Mok 2008; Kiprop and Verma 2013).

These three paradigms in education differ from each other in terms of their assumptions about the environment, reform movements, the conception of effectiveness, the role of educational institutions, and the nature of learning and teaching (Cheng 2015b) (Table 5.1).

The First Wave. Effective education movements represent the first wave of education reforms aiming at improving internal processes in learning, teaching, and management and enhancing the *internal effectiveness* of educational institutions in achieving preplanned education aims and curriculum targets (Cheng 2011). Numerous initiatives targeted at internal improvements including changes in school management, teacher quality, curriculum design, teaching methods, approaches to evaluation, resourcing, and teaching and learning environments (Cheng 2005b; Ghani 2013; Gopinathan and Ho 2000; Kim 2000; MacBeath 2007).

In the first-wave paradigm, the major role of an educational institution is the delivery of planned knowledge, skills, and cultural values to students in a stable industrial society. This paradigm assumes that learning is a process in which students are mainly *trainees* receiving a planned set of knowledge, skills, and cultural values for their survival in society. The role of the teacher is mainly perceived as that of *knowledge deliverer* or *instructor* (Cheng 2014).

The Second Wave. In response to concerns about the educational accountability to the public, the education quality that satisfies stakeholders' expectations, and the marketization of education provision in the 1990s, a paradigm shift from the first wave to the second wave of education occurred in different parts of the world. Various education reforms were initiated to ensure the quality, accountability, and competitiveness of education provision to meet the needs of internal and external stakeholders (e.g., Figlio and Loeb 2011; Gawlik 2012; Keddie 2015; PISA 2011). A growing trend of education reforms towards *quality education* or *competitive schools* emphasized quality assurance, school monitoring and review, parental choice, student coupons, marketization, parental and community involvement in

Table 5.1 Three paradigms for education reforms

Key features	First-wave paradigm	Second-wave paradigm	Third-wave paradigm
Assumption about Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An industrial society Comparatively stable and predictable Education provision under centralized manpower planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A commercial and consumption society Unstable with lots of uncertainties and competitions Education provision driven by competition and market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lifelong learning and multiple-development society Fast-changing society with globalization and technology advances Education provision and content mainly characterized by globalization, localization, and individualization
Reform Movements	Effective Education Movements To improve the internal process and performance of education institutions in order to enhance the achievements of planned goals of education	Quality Education Movements To ensure the quality and accountability of educational services provided by institutions meeting the multiple stakeholders' expectations and needs	World-Class Education Movements To ensure the relevance and world-class standards of education for the multiple and sustainable forms of development of students and the society for the future in globalization
Conception of Effectiveness	Internal Effectiveness Achievement of planned goals and tasks of delivery of knowledge, skills, and values in learning, teaching, and schooling	Interface Effectiveness Satisfaction of stakeholders with the educational services, including education process and outcomes, and as accountability to the public	Future Effectiveness Relevance to the multiple and sustainable forms of development of individuals and the society for the future
Role of Education Institution	Delivery Role Delivery of planned knowledge, skills, and cultural values from teachers and curriculum to students in a comparably stable society	Service Role Provision of a service to satisfy the needs and expectations of stakeholders in a competitive market	Facilitating Role Facilitation of multiple and sustainable forms of development of students and the society in a context of globalization and change
Nature of Learning	Trainee A process whereby students receive knowledge, skills, and cultural values from teachers and curriculum	Client/Stakeholder A process whereby students receive a service provided by the educational institution and teachers	Self-Initiated CMI Learner A process whereby students develop contextualized multiple intelligences (CMI) and other twenty-first century competences for multiple and sustainable forms of development
Nature of Teaching	Knowledge Delivery/Instruction A process of delivering planned knowledge, skills, and cultural values to students	Service Provision A process of providing education services to multiple stakeholders and satisfying their expectations	Facilitation of Multiple and Sustainable Forms of Development A process of facilitating capacity building for multiple and sustainable forms of development of students and the society for the future

Note. Adapted from Cheng (2005a, 2015b)

governance, and performance-based funding (Cheng 2015b; Cheng and Townsend 2000; Mukhopadhyay 2001; Pang et al. 2003).

In the second wave, the role of educational institutions is the provision of educational services in a commercial and consumer society, with quality satisfying the expectations and needs of key stakeholders—students, parents, employers, and other social constituencies. This wave emphasizes *interface effectiveness* between educational institutions and the community, typically defined by stakeholders' satisfaction, accountability to the public, and competitiveness in the education market. Learning is assumed to be a process for students as *clients or stakeholders* who receive a service provided by teachers and then become competitive in the job market. The teacher is perceived as an *education service provider*.

The Third Wave. Since the turn of the new century, a third-wave paradigm for education reforms has been emerging, with a strong emphasis on *future effectiveness*, often defined as the relevance of education to the future development of students and of the society. Given the strong implications of globalization and international competition, the new wave of reforms is driven by the notion of *world-class education movements*. Educational performance is often studied and measured in terms of world-class standards and global comparability to ensure that the future of students is sustainable in this challenging and competitive era.

The third-wave paradigm embraces the key elements of contextualized multiple intelligences (CMI), globalization, localization, and individualization in education (Cheng 2015b; Maclean 2003; Baker and Begg 2003). Many initiatives pursue new aims in education, develop students' CMI or twenty-first century competencies for sustainable development, emphasize lifelong learning, facilitate global networking and international outlook, and promote the wide application of ICT in education (Finegold and Notabartolo 2010; Noweski et al. 2012; Salas-Pilco 2013; Kaufman 2013). In the third wave, *learning* is treated as the process whereby students as *self-initiated CMI learners* develop their CMI and high-level or twenty-first century competencies to participate in multiple and sustainable forms of development in a fast-changing era. The role of the teacher is that of a *facilitator* of students' multiple and sustainable forms of development.

Paradigm Dilemmas. Given that the paradigms of the three waves of education reforms are fundamentally different as mentioned above, there are some paradigm dilemmas in formulation and implementation of education reform policies as illustrated below.

Some policy-makers and educators may be ignorant of the key characteristics of different paradigms that are used to conceptualize education reforms. They often directly adopt the new initiatives from the popular trends of education reforms in the world without understanding if the related paradigm is socially, culturally, and technically appropriate to their existing contextual conditions, development stage, and societal background. In other words, there may be paradigm dilemmas between the adopted reforms and the contextual background, resulting in frustrating the implementation of education reforms at different levels.

Paradigm dilemmas between the implemented change initiatives and the planned aims and goals in education are also common, hindering the success of education

reforms. For example, ignorant of the paradigm gaps between the second wave and third wave, the policy-makers in Hong Kong have implemented a wide range of the second-wave initiatives (such as marketization, competition, and accountability measures) with targets to achieve the aims and goals of the third-wave education. The education reforms have created a lot of conflicts and frustrations in implementation in the last 16 years (Cheng 2017, 2018). How to reduce this kind of paradigm dilemmas or gaps and ensure the alignment between initiatives and aims within the same paradigm should be an important issue in planning and implementation of education reforms.

The paradigm shifts from one wave to another involve not only technical or operational changes but also ideological and cultural changes at the individual, group, site, and system levels. The transition is quite complicated and dynamic, involving different types of dilemmas and tensions to be managed and tackled. For example, how can involved parties change their original patterns of thinking and practice from the first- or second-wave paradigm to the third-wave paradigm? What are the major conditions or driving forces to make such a paradigm shift possible and successful? What are the major characteristics and best practices of paradigm shifts in learning, teaching, and leadership, locally and internationally? What are the major problems in leading paradigm shifts at different levels of education? All these and similar questions suggest unexplored areas for investigation (Cheng 2015b).

5.4 Financial Dilemmas Between Public Interest and Privatization

In general, policy-makers are often facing tight financial constraints in making policies to meet the fast-increasing diverse needs of local or national developments in an era of globalization, international competition, and social transformation. Given the limitation of scarce public resources, the financing models may be different to serve different purposes, such as public interest and private benefit (Labaree 1997; Bloom et al. 2007; Le Grand and Robinson 2018). There are often dilemmas in education reforms on financing education and also controversies on what education services belong to public interest but not just private benefit.

In education reforms, it seems quite often that policy-makers try to change the financial model of education from the exclusive public funding model to privatization or marketization as one major approach to expanding the sources of resources for diversifying and improving education to meet the increasing expectations. For example, China, being caught in the stream of development with its market economy playing an increasingly important role, is confronting more complicated and tighter financial constraints in developing its education system to satisfy the huge and diverse needs for education (Tang and Wu 2000; Smith and Joshi 2016).

Particularly when more and more people want to pursue higher education in order to survive in a very competitive job market, the privatization of tertiary educa-

tion will inevitably become more common in, for example, Korea, Taiwan, Japan, PR China, and the Philippines. It is generally believed that privatization will allow educational institutions to increase their flexibility of use of physical and human resources. How to create a market or semi-market environment for promoting competition between educational institutions has become a salient issue in reform. Some countries (e.g., Australia) experimented with funding methods designed to encourage self-improvement as well as competition among schools. Other areas (e.g., Hong Kong and Singapore) tried out different types of parental choice schemes (Taylor 2018; Böhlmark et al. 2016).

Whether the shift in financing model can ensure equity and quality in education for students in general and those disadvantaged in particular is a crucial concern in policy-making of education reform. It is often perceived by the public that marketization or privatization in education may prefer those rich but disadvantage those poor in getting good education opportunities. Therefore, how to ensure those disadvantaged having equal opportunities for quality education in the new funding policy is a typical issue for debate in many developing countries in the Asia-Pacific Region (Cheng et al. 2002b).

Public education has multiple roles to serve the national aims and visions in addition to equipping students for their future (Cheng and Yuen 2017). But the privatized education may be driven by the market forces instead of the national aims, and therefore, there may be a dilemma or tension between the market force and the national agenda. As such, how can policy-makers and educators ensure that the market forces at the local or community level are in operation in line with national development? To what extent a policy framework should be set for privatization in line with national development but without hindering the market initiatives in developing education?

In planning education reforms related to funding model changes, all the above issues and dilemmas should be studied and addressed with an appropriate balance between public interest and privatization and between equity and quality in education.

5.5 Resources Dilemmas Between Parallel Initiatives

As mentioned previously, there were nine trends of education reforms at the four levels, including numerous new initiatives. In the last two decades, many policy-makers were eager to make systemic changes implementing many initiatives in parallel in a very short time.

Any education reform often requires huge resources. The larger it is in scale, the more resources it needs. However, available resources are often limited, in particular the valuable manpower, expert experience, and available time. In particular, the large-scale curriculum and examination reforms require implementation within a short time and consequently extra and huge costs. But who will pay such costs? Besides, education reforms are always intended to achieve some noble goals of

parallel initiatives all together, such as equality, fairness, efficiency, effectiveness, inclusiveness, accountability, and meeting individual needs of every student. However, front-line teachers and students are expected to achieve these high sounding goals with limited resources and support. They are required to carry out many new initiatives despite their time and ability in serious constraint. As a result, they are exhausted and frustrated, failing to cope with the changes and finally such education reforms become chaos. These are resources dilemmas between limited resources and numerous parallel initiatives, limiting the successful implementation of systemic reforms.

The *bottleneck effect* in education reform of Hong Kong may provide a profound example to further illustrate the impacts of resources, dilemmas, and conflicting parallel initiatives on systemic changes (Cheng 2009, 2015a). The bottleneck effect is the situation that any new education initiatives with good will can become additional burdens on teachers and schools and the initiatives themselves also jam or block at the “bottle-neck” and hinder the implementation of other new reforms, as illustrated in Fig. 5.1. The more reforms initiated, the more hindrance jammed at the “bottle-neck” and the more pressure on teachers and schools. Why did such “bottleneck effect” happen in the Hong Kong educational reforms?

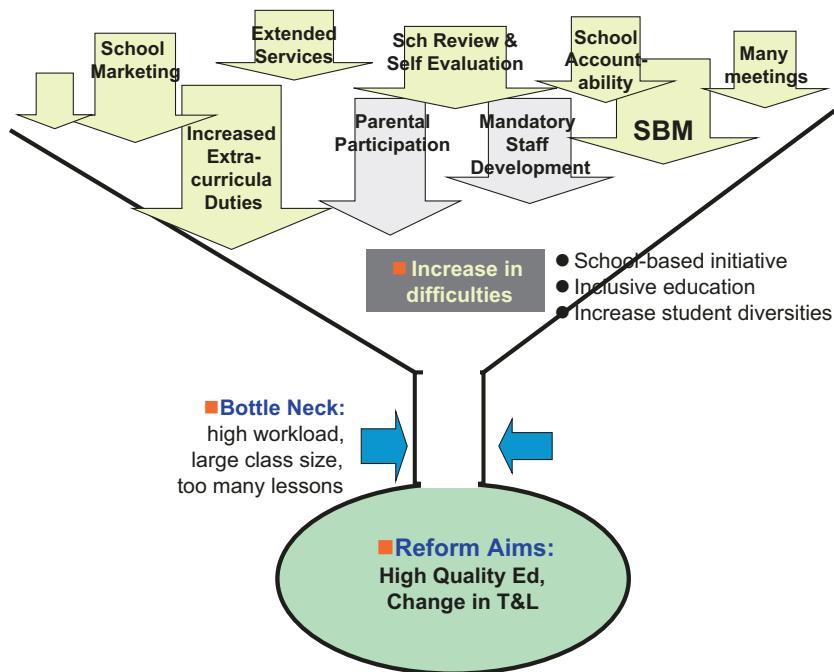
Before the reforms, the workload of Hong Kong teachers was already very high, more than 30 lessons (normally 40 min each) each week. Also, the number of students in each normal class was often in a range of 35–40. Such high workload and large class size set a very tight constraint on Hong Kong teachers’ teaching approaches and strategies. Unfortunately, the initiated education reforms had paid no attention to this structural constraint that became the structural part of the “bottleneck” hindering the change of teaching and learning towards high-quality education (Cheng 2015a).

To reduce the labelling effect, the reforms converted the classification of academic quality of student intake to secondary schools from five bands to three bands such that the individual differences were drastically increased within each school and within each class in a very short period. Inevitably this structural change largely increased the difficulties and burdens on teachers’ teaching and taking care of students’ development.

As one of new initiatives, the implementation of inclusive education without sufficient support package also immediately and largely increased the individual differences within class and related difficulties on teachers’ work. This structural change also further requested more efforts, time, and energy from teachers.

The new initiatives on implementing school-based management, school-based curriculum, school-based innovations, and integrated curriculum requested nearly all teachers to give up their familiar teaching materials, methods, curriculum, and styles and start from the beginning to prepare new teaching curriculum and materials according to the new curriculum framework and school-based needs. The challenges, difficulties, and work pressure were inevitably increased very much beyond teachers’ capacity.

With the existence of “bottle-neck” in school education, many new initiatives with very good intention had become heavy burdens to teachers and schools and



(adapted from Cheng, 2015)

Fig. 5.1 Bottle-neck effect in Hong Kong education reforms. (Adapted from Cheng 2015a)

were finally “jammed” at the bottle-neck. As shown in Fig. 5.1, these initiatives included school self-evaluation, external school review, parental involvement in school management, school marketing in the local community, extended professional services to parents and the community, more responsibilities of co-curricular activities, various types of quality assurance measures and reporting, and teacher participation in school-based management and development.

Given multiple and parallel initiatives in education reforms competing for teachers’ time and energy in implementation, how the policy-makers and change agents address the above resources dilemmas and the related difficulties created by bottle-neck effects should be a crucial issue related to the success and failure of a systemic education reform.

5.6 Knowledge Dilemmas in Planning and Implementation at Different Levels

As mentioned above, the education reforms often change the key aspects of the whole education systems involving many new initiatives. The scope of reforms is so huge, and the nature of changes is so fundamental, and therefore, a strong and comprehensive knowledge system is really needed to support formulation and implementation of such large-scale reforms and their numerous related initiatives at different levels of the education system and at different stages of development and change. Unfortunately, there is often absence of such a strong knowledge system to support the related policy planning and implementation. Why?

Let the author use the case of Hong Kong to illustrate the problems in using knowledge for education reforms. In Hong Kong there was an intended strategy to use research to inform policy-making before the large-scale education reform, including that outlined in the Education Commission (1997) Report No. 7: “draw reference from experiences and research materials in and outside Hong Kong; research into specific issues related to the review.”

In practice, however, research-based policy development was a rarity and luxury in Hong Kong (Cheng et al. 2002a). For example, the Education Commission had a very tight schedule of just 1–2 years but had to review the whole education system and make numerous recommendations in 1999–2000. It was really a dilemma between using research and knowledge to inform education reforms, the large scale of education reforms, and the urgency (tight schedule) of reform implementation. What kind of research and knowledge could they expect except their own experiences and ideas as well as some overseas experiences without rigorous analysis? There was lack of a comprehensive and relevant knowledge base to support policy development and implementation of large-scale and influential reforms in such a short period (Cheng 2005a, Chap. 8, 2017).

Hong Kong is a small place with population of around seven million. While there are some tertiary institutions, only four of them have faculties or departments of education. The numbers of academic staff, experts, or researchers in different areas of education were in fact too small when compared with the large-scale of education reforms and the numerous areas of education at different levels to be reformed. In other words, there might not have the critical mass of education expertise in each key area to provide the necessary expertise, intelligence, and knowledge base to support reforms. In particular, there was also absence of any centrally established research institute to coordinate these separated research and expertise forces to serve the multiple and parallel initiatives in reforms.

The advisory or steering committees in Hong Kong education have involved tertiary scholars, school practitioners, and community leaders as members to contribute advices and ideas to policy-making of education reforms. Their chairmen were often business or non-education leaders appointed by the Government. This arrangement was a tradition to encourage wide participation and input from non-education sectors to policy-making. However in these years, the scope and nature of education

and related reforms have become so complicated and fast changing. All these committee works became very challenging and demanding even far more than a full-time commitment. Many key members who were successful leaders might have already several, if not many, substantial community commitments on top of their full-time jobs. From this point, we can see that the policy-making of such a large-scale reform was in leadership and advice by “*part-time or lay intelligence*.”

Since the 1990s, the top leadership of the Education Department has changed frequently from a few months to 2 or 3 years while other senior officials have been repositioned to different offices often. The *bureaucratic/technocratic knowledge and intelligence* that had been accumulated slowly in the past years was disappearing quickly due to the fluid personnel and frequent changes in leadership. Given the losing bureaucratic knowledge and intelligence, the development and implementation of new initiatives became more ad hoc, unstable, and unreliable and often ignored some important ecological relations in the policy environment, that finally affected the success of education reforms with so many parallel initiatives (Cheng and Cheung 1995; Cheng et al. 2002a).

From the above discussion, we can see that knowledge dilemmas that influence education reforms involve not only the availability of relevant research and knowledge, the scale of education reforms and parallel initiatives, and the urgency of reform implementation but also the critical mass of related expertise in key areas of education, the leadership by “*part-time or lay intelligence*,” and the disappearing bureaucratic knowledge and intelligence.

5.7 Political Dilemmas Between Multiple Stakeholders

Education reform involves the short-term or long-term interests and concerns of multiple stakeholders such as parents, students, teachers, principals, supervisors, education officers, educators, change agents, community leaders, employers, unions, public media, and other. During the reform process, these diverse stakeholders may have different concerns, competing demands, and even conflicting expectations. They may exercise their political and social power to influence the policy-making in line with their needs. In the policy reform of medium of instruction (MOI) in Hong Kong schools, for example, there have been highly contradictory ideas and responses among stakeholders over the years, which have a significant impact on Hong Kong’s development (Cheng 2017, Chap. 7). Therefore, there are often political dilemmas and struggles in education reforms that affect the direction, implementation, and outcomes of education reforms. How can multiple stakeholders have a rational and comprehensive understanding of an education reform, in order to reach a consensus despite their prejudices and established views?

For example, teachers or educators emphasize the citizenship quality of their graduates. Parents are more concerned with whether their children can pass the examinations and get the necessary qualifications for employment. Employers often doubt whether the graduates have the necessary knowledge and skills to perform at

the workplace. In view of the above, at the system level, how should the expectations of these key stakeholders be identified and given priority in making the reform policies? At the site level, how can school practitioners handle the diversities and conflicting values of multiple stakeholders on the changes in the aims, content, processes, and outcomes of education during the education reforms? These are some examples of political dilemmas emerging at different levels, which have to be tackled and managed.

During the past several decades, parents and the community have increased expectations of education and are becoming more demanding of better school performance for their children. Also, there is an increasing demand for educational accountability to the public and to demonstrate value for money because education is mainly financed with public funds (Figlio and Loeb 2011; Gawlik 2012; Keddie 2015). Inevitably, educational leaders at the school, district, and national levels have to provide more direct avenues for parents and the community to participate in the management of the schools.

In some developed countries, such as Canada and the United States, there was a long tradition of parental involvement in their schools. In Asian areas like Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Thailand, people have become more aware of the importance of involving parents and local communities in school education (Wang 2000). Although there is seldom legislation in some areas to guarantee parents' involvement in school education, sentiment is growing that parents should be given this right.

In addition to parents, the local community and the business sector are also direct stakeholders in education. Their experiences, resources, social networks, and knowledge are often very useful to the development and delivery of education. From a positive perspective, community involvement in education can benefit the educational institutions by providing more local resources, support, and intellectual input, particularly when facing the increasing but diverse demands for quality education. Also, parents and community leaders can share the management responsibilities; strengthen communications between families, the community, and the schools; motivate teachers; monitor school operations; and even assist the school in combating negative influences inherent in the local community (Goldring and Sullivan 1996).

Even though parental and community involvement may have advantages, how to manage the related political dilemmas among multiple stakeholders and implement it effectively is still a core issue in the current education reforms. The involvement will inevitably increase the complexity, ambiguities, and uncertainties in the political domain of schools. How can school leaders be prepared to lead multiple stakeholders, build up alliances, balance diverse interests between parties and resolve conflicts of diverse interests? Would the induced political dilemmas and related difficulties from this kind of involvement in fact waste the scarce time and energy of teachers and leaders from their central education work with students?

Most Asian countries lack a culture of accepting and supporting the practice of parental and community involvement. Teachers are traditionally highly respected in the community. It is often believed that school education should be the sole respon-

sibility of teachers and principals. Parents have tended to view them as the experts in education. Parental and community involvement is often perceived as the act of distrust towards teachers and principals; to involve parents can be perceived as a loss of face among professionals. How the policy-makers and educators can change this culture and tackle the political dilemmas to encourage more parental and community involvement is still an important concern in policy making and reform implementation.

5.8 Functional Dilemmas Between School-Based Management and Central Platform

The emerging international trend in educational administration moving from external control to school-based management for an effective use of resources and promoting human initiatives in education was evident in the 1990s and is continuing today. Centralized management often ignores school-based needs and human initiatives that it is often too rigid to meet changing school needs (Cheng 1996). As one of major trends worldwide, the movement of decentralization in education seeks to facilitate school-based initiatives for the development and effectiveness in education (Townsend 2000; Kim 2000; Lee 2000; Gopinathan and Ho 2000); Tang and Wu 2000).

In practice, there are some functional dilemmas between school-based autonomy and external control. For example, after decentralizing authority and power to the school-site level, how can the self-managing schools and teachers be kept accountable with respect to the quality of their provided education and their use of public money? It is often a dilemma in policy-making and practice between decentralization and accountability.

Another functional dilemma commonly appears between school-based management and equality in education. People often believe that with a greater autonomy, better schools may take the advantage to recruit better students and teachers and get better opportunities and more external resources for education. Therefore, it will increase educational inequality for those disadvantaged students (Townsend 1996).

One more functional dilemma is between school-based initiative and piecemeal knowledge. Since the implementation of school-based management, schools are assumed to develop, manage, and improve their activities and operation by themselves. Many schools and teachers often scratch from beginning to accumulate their experience and knowledge particularly when they make any school-based innovations in education. For example, many schools in Hong Kong develop their own multimedia materials and software for teaching and learning. Even though teachers are very committed and spend a lot of time to learn, prepare, and produce the materials, unfortunately the quality of materials is not so good and the technology and knowledge they use and accumulate are so thin, piecemeal, and repeating

other people's effort. It is so ineffective and sad if teachers' scarce time and effort are used in such a way instead of directly helping and guiding their students.

If there is a central knowledge platform supported by the state-of-the-art technology and software, world-class education resources and packages, frontier expertise knowledge and experiences, and interactive supporting team to support school-based initiatives, teachers can build up their initiatives for teaching and learning at a much higher professional level and at the same time can save a lot of time to develop their students. To tackle the functional dilemmas between school-based management and piecemeal knowledge, a high-level central knowledge platform should be developed to serve the following functions (Cheng 2005a, Chap. 8):

- In practicing school initiatives and education activities, teachers and students can start from a higher level intelligence platform that can provide the state-of-the-art knowledge and technology. They can concentrate their energy and time to use this platform for education practice and school operation, rather than wasting their time to scratch from beginning at a lower level. Of course, from the spirit of school-based management, they have their flexibility and autonomy to decide how to use the platform more effectively to meet the school-based needs.
- Associated with various types of global and local networks, the platform can provide the critical mass of intelligence and knowledge to generate new ideas, knowledge, and technology to support education reforms and school education and ensure the relevance of the policy development and educational practice to the future.
- The platform itself can be individually, locally, and globally networked to expand the critical mass of intelligence, maximize the availability of intellectual resources, and create numerous opportunities for continuous intelligence development at different levels of education.

How to develop these central platforms and facilitate schools and teachers to perform at a high level is really a strategic issue for further exploration in current education reforms worldwide. The establishment of such a central platform is capital-intensive, intelligence/knowledge-intensive, and technology-intensive, and therefore, national, regional, and even international collaborations may be needed.

Both the central platform approach and school-based approach have their own strengths and limitations. The former can be used to raise the level of intelligence, knowledge, and technology used by all practitioners in education and to avoid piecemeal, repeating, and ineffective efforts scratching from beginning. The latter can be used to promote human initiatives in the process of learning, teaching, and management and address the diverse developmental needs at the site levels. Both are necessary and important to education reforms.

5.9 Conclusion: A Typology of Multiple Dilemmas

From the above discussion, we can see that numerous education reforms worldwide experienced different types of dilemmas in policy formulation and implementation and finally resulted in various kinds of frustrations and difficulties in the last two decades. Without understanding the nature and dynamics of these dilemmas, many education reforms with good intentions may fail in implementation. To address this concern, the article discusses the trends of education reform phenomenon and related dilemmas commonly happening locally and internationally.

To summarize the above analysis of seven dilemmas, a typology of multiple dilemmas in three clusters can be presented in Table 5.2. The first cluster is entitled as “Direction Cluster,” including *orientation dilemmas* between global orientations and local concerns and *paradigm dilemmas* between the first, second, and third waves. The dilemmas in this cluster mainly concern the issues and tensions related to major directions, orientations, visions, aims, conceptions, and paradigms of education reforms. The key implications drawn from the analysis of dilemmas in this cluster may be summarized as below:

- To foster local knowledge and human development through globalization but without its negative impacts;
- To localize the global and world-class knowledge to serve the local community;
- To manage gaps between the adopted reforms and the contextual background;
- To reduce paradigm gaps between the implemented initiatives and the planned aims; and
- To eliminate gaps during paradigm shifts across waves of education reforms in implementation.

The second cluster is entitled as “Support Cluster” which consists of *financial dilemmas* between public interest and privatization, *resource dilemmas* between parallel initiatives, and *knowledge dilemmas* in planning and implementation at different levels. This cluster of dilemmas mainly focus on the issues and tensions in allocation of resources and funding, competition for scarce resources across multiple and parallel initiatives, and use of knowledge and research in supporting education reforms and related initiatives. The common implications drawn from this support cluster for policy analysis and implementation may include the following:

- To ensure equity and quality in education while changing funding models towards privatization or marketization;
- To keep a balance between the market force and the national agenda in policy making;
- To eliminate the negative impacts of bottleneck effects by reducing and prioritizing the parallel initiatives to be implemented;
- To align and reduce multiple initiatives within the capacity of teachers and students to implement them;
- To ensure the availability of relevant knowledge and research to inform education reforms particularly those large scale;

Table 5.2 A typology of multiple dilemmas in education reforms

Clusters of dilemmas	Types of dilemmas	Key factors involved	Implications for managing reforms and dilemmas
Direction	Orientation dilemmas	Global orientations vs. local concerns	To foster local knowledge and human development through globalization but without its negative impacts; To localize the global and world-class knowledge
	Paradigm dilemmas	First, second, and third waves	To manage gaps between adopted reforms and contextual background; To reduce gaps between initiatives and aims; To eliminate gaps during paradigm shifts across waves
Support	Financial dilemmas	Public interest vs. privatization	To ensure equity and quality in education while changing funding models; To keep a balance between market force and national agenda in policy-making
	Resources dilemmas	Multiple and parallel initiatives	To eliminate bottleneck effects by reducing and prioritizing parallel initiatives; To align multiple initiatives within the capacity of teachers and students
	Knowledge dilemmas	Planning and implementation at different levels	To ensure the availability of relevant knowledge and research to inform reforms particularly those large scale; To build up the critical mass of related expertise in key areas; To keep strong knowledge/intelligence in leadership and bureaucracy for reforms
Execution	Political dilemmas	Multiple stakeholders	To manage the diverse needs and conflicting expectations of multiple stakeholders; To maximize the positive contribution from participation but to minimize the negative effects
	Functional dilemmas	School-based management vs. central platform	To manage the tensions between school-based autonomy and equality/accountability; To develop school-based initiatives with the support of central knowledge platform; To build up knowledge-intensive and technology-intensive central platform

- To build up the critical mass of related expertise to support reforms in key areas; and
- To keep strong knowledge/intelligence in leadership and bureaucracy for planning and implementing education reforms.

The third cluster is “Execution Cluster” including *political dilemmas* between multiple stakeholders and *functional dilemmas* between school-based management and central platform. The dilemmas of this cluster concern issues and tensions related to conflicts, difficulties, effectiveness and efficiency in the execution, functioning, and implementation of various education reforms and involved multiple stakeholders. The key implications from the execution cluster may be summarized as below:

- To manage the diverse needs and conflicting expectations of multiple stakeholders;
- To maximize the positive contribution from parental and community participation but to minimize their negative effects;
- To manage the tensions between school-based autonomy and equality/accountability to the public;
- To develop school-based initiatives with the support of a high-level central knowledge platform; and
- To build up a knowledge-intensive and technology-intensive central platform with local, regional, and international collaboration.

The analysis in this article and the proposed typology of multiple dilemmas provide a preliminary conceptual framework for international educators, policy-makers, researchers, and change agents to analyze and understand the multiple dilemmas and their complicated impacts on the policy-making and implementation in the education reform phenomenon. Depending on the purposes of the policy study, the analysis of dilemmas in education reforms may focus on the key features and impacts of some selected types, clusters, or their combinations of dilemmas. Hopefully, the coming worldwide efforts of education reforms can be benefited from this typology and related analyses and implications in this chapter.

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Chapter 6

Changes in Educational Institutions in China: 1978–2020



Analysis of Education Policies and Legal Texts from a National Perspective

Guorui Fan

This chapter reviews key historical documents and reform events and outlines China's educational reform and development in the macro context of 40 years of social, political, and economic changes. Professor Elizabeth J. Perry (2014) noted the significance of studying contemporary China from the Reform and Opening-up in the field comparative politics and public policy, which marked the beginning of “a new era of developing socialism with Chinese characteristics” (Xi 2017). This chapter focuses on the process of education institutional changes and innovation and identifies the educational reform and opening-up as a predominant narrative, aiming at breaking through the obstacles of existing institutional structures and promoting sustainable development of education. A key challenge to reforming education institution lies in how to solve the Chinese governance dilemma of loosening control in chaos or tightening control in suffocation (“Yifang Jiuluan, Yishou Jiusi” “一放就乱 一收就死”). Solutions are suggested as exploring appropriate tensions among education institutional factors and stimulating the vitality of educational elements and institutions under appropriate tensions.

6.1 Research Approach

Factors that influence changes and innovations in educational institutions range from external socio-political and economic factors and inherent factors of contradictions and tasks, to the build-in logics of educational institution. Therefore,

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undertaking a study of the changes and innovations in educational institutions during China's 40 years of reform and opening-up is a complicated project. The following methodological principles are sorted to guide this study:

Unification of history and logic. The changes and reshaping of educational institutions that have occurred are the historical results of development in China. Major events in educational reform and the logic of system reconstruction could only be understood within the broader historical contexts and process of reform and opening-up.

Unification of education institutional analysis and social system analysis. Education is closely linked to and interacts with political, economic, cultural, and other social forces. Changes in educational institutions are the result of changes in educational policy and reform, which are initiated and managed by the government. Education institution is the sum of diversified schooling institutions nationwide, for which the government bears at least some responsibility in terms of overall control and supervision, and whose components and processes are interrelated (Archer 1979).

The development of and changes in socialist educational institutions with Chinese characteristics are closely related to the politics and institutional reform of the country. In the historical period of the 40 years of Reform and Opening-up, the development strategy centering on economic construction has directly influenced the transformation and development of various social factors. An investigation of the changes that have occurred in educational institutions thus should be contextualized in the interconnected social, political, and social changes. Therefore, this chapter draws upon typical texts representing the contexts from speeches given by Party and state leaders, the relevant policies of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCCP) and the State Council, as well as relevant national laws and regulations, education laws, regulations, and rules, and policies of the Ministry of Education and local governments.

The unification of institutional changes and educational development. The establishment and improvement of educational institutions aim to coordinate relationships between various educational elements and to promote the healthy development of education. The main contradictions and major tasks vary in different stages of educational development and require corresponding educational institutions. Therefore, while examining the changes in educational institutions, it is necessary to maintain the focus on educational development.

The unification of systematic construction of educational institutions and analysis of major educational reform events. Education in China is a complex system composed of the schooling operating system, school leadership and management system, educational personnel system, education finance system, and examination and enrollment system. At different stages of educational development, due to differences in main contradictions and major tasks, there are different landmark events in educational reforms. These major educational reform events not only are highly relevant to certain educational institution elements but are also related to the improvement of the entire education system. In this chapter, the interpretation of significant reform events is situated in the whole systemic and institutional changes.

The unification of “top-level design” (Dingceng Sheji 顶层设计) and the practical processes of educational improvement. Faced with outstanding contradictions and tasks in education development, central and local governments will seek institutionalized measures to solve educational problems through a series of decisions and actions. In practice, due to society and educational development itself, adjustments to institutionalized top-level design are needed based on actual conditions to innovate and improve institutional design. Therefore, during the research process, the top-level design of educational institutions, implementation, correction, adjustment, and improvement of educational reforms shall be systematically examined.

6.2 The Historical Context of Educational Changes in China

Educational reform and changes in educational institutions have gone through different stages of development of the past 40 years, including bringing order out of chaos, restoring and rebuilding education, comprehensively initiating educational reforms, exploring institutional changes based on market mechanisms to promote educational development, adjusting education policies from an efficiency-based focus to fairness, promoting comprehensive reforms in the field of education, and accelerating modernization of education governance systems and enhancing governance capabilities.

Restoration and reconstruction of educational institutions (1978–1984). After the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the CPC, an urgent task faced by the education sector in China was to restore and rebuild educational institutions that were destroyed by the “Cultural Revolution” and improve education. By negating the “two Estimates” of the “Minutes of the National Conference on Education” in 1971, the shackles that plagued teachers and intellectuals were removed, so did the obstacles that hindered education, science, and technology development. A policy of “respecting knowledge and talents” advocated by Deng Xiaoping (1977) led the general public turn to respect and value education. By drawing lessons from the educational experience of the 1960s, provisional regulations for higher education institutions and primary and secondary schools¹ were revised, and educational order was restored and rebuilt. The educational policy of

¹In 1961, the CCCPC issued the *Provisional Regulations for Higher Education Institutions Directly Affiliated to the Ministry of Education (Draft)*; in 1963, *Provisional Regulations for Full-time Secondary Schools (Draft)* and *Provisional Regulations for Full-time Primary Schools (Draft)* were issued. These three regulations have played an important role in standardizing education, improving educational quality, and promoting educational development. From September to October 1978, the Ministry of Education revised and issued the *Provisional Regulations for Full-time Secondary Schools (Draft for Trial Implementation)*, *Provisional Regulations for Full-time Primary Schools (Draft for Trial Implementation)*, and *Provisional Regulations for Higher Education Institutions (Draft for Trial Implementation)*, which rectify and restore working systems in institutions of higher learning and secondary and primary schools.

the “Three Orientations”² and the training objective of the New Generation with “Four Qualifications”³ were proposed, which have directed the later educational reform and development. The restoration of the unified college entrance examination and admission system became a symbolic beginning of the restoration and reconstruction of the educational system, and for the new order and modernization of education in China. In the context that the state urgently needs specialized personnel while education resources are insufficient, Deng Xiaoping proposed “there are two ways to develop education, on the one hand, we need popularization, on the other hand, we need improvement. We need to run key primary schools, key middle schools and key universities” (1977: 40–41). Thus, the establishment of the key school system has played an important historical role in “raising more talents in a quicker manner” (Duochu Rencai, Kuaichu Rencai 多出人才 快出人才) and meeting the country’s need for educated and talented personnel.

Development of educational institutional reform: Streamlining administration and decentralization of institutions (1985–1991). In the early 1980s, the CCCPC issued a series of decisions concerning economic restructuring, on science and technology reform, and on educational reform (hereinafter referred to as the “Decisions” (CCCP 1985)). Three important documents on these areas constitute the general framework for social reform and development during this period, thus greatly promoting the modernization process of Chinese society. In the field of education, the Decisions aims to arouse the enthusiasm of the government at all levels, the general staff, and the community at large and to promote the development of education. As for the ethical value of educational reform, the Decisions puts forward the conclusion that education must serve the socialist construction, and the socialist construction depends on education, which responds to the development strategy of “mak[ing] economic development our central task” since the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the CPC.

The essence of educational institutional reform is defined as streamlining administration and decentralizing to expand school autonomy. On various levels and aspects, such institutional reform manifests. On the central and local relationship, while strengthening the macro management from the central government, in primary education, the responsibility of basic education development is decentralized to local government. To promote the development of compulsory education, the Decisions first proposed the “two growths” principle of the educational input system, namely “the growth of education allocations of central and local governments should be higher than that of recurrent financial income, and the average education cost per student should gradually increase.” On the school leadership, the Decisions stipulated that “school[s] gradually implement [a] principal accountability system (Xiaozhang Fuzezhi 校长负责制),” thus clarifying the relationship of rights of

²The “three orientations,” referred to orienting “education towards modernization, globalization, and future construction” (Deng 1983: 35).

³The “New Generation” with “Four Qualifications,” referred to a “new generation with lofty ideals, moral integrity, good education and a strong sense of discipline who are determined to contribute to their people, country and mankind” (Deng 1980).

responsibility among school leaders, party secretaries, university councils, and staff congress, which established the basic structure of China's modern school system.

Exploration of educational institution reform: Introduction of the market mechanism (1992–2002). “Establishing a socialist market economy system” for economic institutional reform was put forward at the 14th CPC National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 1992 (Jiang 1992). Since then, Chinese society has embarked on a new development path of establishing a socialist market economy with Chinese characteristics. The focus of educational institution reforms in this period lies in the following factors: first, establishing an education management system compatible with the socialist market economy system. The *Outline for Education Reform and Development in China* in 1993 emphasized the need for “new education institutions compatible with socialist market economy institutions, political institutions, science and technology institutions reforms” (CCCP, The State Council 1993). The management institution of “decentralized operation and decentralized management (Fenji Banxue Fenji Guanli 分级办学 分级管理)” on the one hand facilitated localized implementation and fed incentives in the lowest governmental units, but on the other hand caused the dependence of compulsory education on township-level finance and literally increased the financial burden of education in the underdeveloped areas, due to the excessive “localization” of the system (Chen 1996). After the new financial allocation system was implemented in 1994, the township-level financial capacity became increasingly weakened. Therefore, the regional economic disparity resulted in the regional and urban–rural gaps in developing compulsory education.

Second, education funds were raised in multiple channels. In 1992, the 14th CPC National Congress of the Communist Party of China proposed that “governments at all levels shall increase education investment and meanwhile encourage different walks of life to raise funds for running schools and private schools, and change the situation where the state has a virtual monopoly on higher education” (Jiang 1992). *The Outline for Education Reform and Development in China* stipulated to gradually establish a multi-channel fund-raising system in which education is mainly funded by public fiscal allocation, supplemented with tax for education, tuition and miscellaneous fees from non-compulsory education students, school-affiliated industrial revenue, social donations, and education funds. This new kind of multiple funding system is literally created to cover the shortage of governmental funding, which inevitably produced the later notorious phenomena of “arbitrary school fees (Luan Shoufei 乱收费)’.

Third, privatization of public schools. The term of public school transformations was used in Chinese rather than privatization. In 1994, the document *Implementation Opinions on Outline for Education Reform and Development in China* by the State Council encouraged enterprises and public institutions to run schools in accordance with national laws and policies. Various forms of “minban” schools (literally private schools) as “civilian run and public subsidized (minban gongzhu 民办公助)” or “public run and civilian subsidized (Gongban Minzhu 公办民助)” were allowed to experiment and practice (The State Council 1994). Since 1993, pilots for different forms of public primary and secondary school transformations were carried out. A

group of transformed schools was set up under the market mechanisms, which has experimented in raising education funds through multiple channels, improving school conditions, promoting rapid development of basic education, expanding quality educational resources, and meeting the diverse educational needs. Apparently, the focus of education in China has shifted from serving the interests of proletarian politics to serving needs of economic construction, which is influenced by human capital theory (Schultz 1997). However, compared with the practice of some developed countries of fostering competitive talents through standardized education to achieve economic ends in the globalization process (e.g., see Singapore Ministry of Education 2012), the practice of privatizing education and making it a commercial industry (CCCP 1992; Zhang 1993) deprives education of its meaning and value in human development (Bulmahn 2000).

Continuity of educational institutional reform: From efficiency to equity (2003–2009). China's rapid economic development has enabled remarkable progress in economic and social development, but also resulted in inequalities in such development. Since the proposition of “Scientific Outlook on Development” in 2003, people-oriented, comprehensive, coordinated, and sustainable development has gradually become China's new model of economic development (Hu 2004). Accordingly, the focus of educational reform has changed from the pursuit of educational quantity, scale, and speed to educational equity.

First, the arbitrary collection of school fees was stopped. Raising education funds through multiple channels based on the market mechanism leads to the increasingly serious phenomenon of arbitrary educational charges. Since 1996, the Ministry of Education has begun to “improve regulations and systems of school fee management” (National Education Commission 1996). After that, the Education Fee Publicity System (Jiaoyu Shoufei Gonshi Zhi 教育收费公示制)'s (National Planning Commission 2002) “One Fee System (Yifei Zhi 一费制)” in compulsory educational institutions (Ministry of Education 2004) and the “Three Limits Policy (Sanxian Zhengce 三限政策)”⁴ in senior high school selection fees were approved, which strengthened the control of arbitrary school fees (State Council 2001).

Second, transformed schools were regulated. In order to solve the problem of privatizing schools, high school fees, and public education resource losses yet to regulate by the developing legal system in the 1990s, China began to adjust its reform policies for running public schools and regulated the school activities in 2005. Approval of newly reformed schools and their fee standards were terminated, and the “advance and withdrawal” strategy to conduct a comprehensive investigation

⁴The so-called Three Limits policy means that public high schools organized by the government can recruit a certain number of students through the choice of schools under the premise of completing this year's enrollment plan, but the scores (no student with a score under admission line can be admitted), the number of persons (not exceeding the central government-mandated number and local government prescribed proportion), and the amount of money (tuition standards for students through the choice of schools issued after the proposition by Education Administrative departments and approval of provincial government) must be strictly limited (General Office of State Council 2001).

and cleaning of the existing transformed schools were adopted (Ministry of Education 2005; National Development and Reform Commission 2005). The “advance” strategy refers to completely privatize the transformed schools, independent of their previous dependent public schools. The “withdrawal” strategy indicates de-transform the transformed schools and restore schools as public property.

Third, the balanced development of compulsory education was actively promoted. Since the proposition of “actively promoting balanced development of compulsory education” by the Ministry of Education in 2002 (Ministry of Education 2002), “balanced development (Junheng Fazhan 均衡发展)” has become a “strategic task of compulsory education” (Working Group Office of the National Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan 2010) to implement the “balanced development of nine-year compulsory education” (Hu 2012) and “coordinate [the] integration of urban and rural compulsory education” (State Council 2016), as well as to gradually establish a guarantee mechanism for rural compulsory education finance, improve public financial institutions of cost-sharing by central and local governments according to projects and proportions that ensure the balanced development of compulsory education, and to implement the “Three Increases”⁵ of educational funds and “Two Exempt and One Subsidy”⁶ policy.

Deepening of educational institution reform: From management to governance (2010 to present). “After long-term efforts, socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era” (Xi 2017). The main contradiction in Chinese society has shifted from “the contradiction between [the] ever-growing material and cultural needs of the people and the backward social production” (CCCP 1981) at the beginning of the reform and opening-up period to “the contradiction between [the] unbalanced and inadequate development and the people’s ever-growing needs for a better life” (Xi 2017). In the field of education, the primary contradiction is the imbalance between the demand for quality education and the pace of education’s development. Chinese education has entered the new stage of “deepening comprehensive education reform” (Hu 2012) and the modernization of educational governance and governance capacity. The task of educational institution reform in this new era is to further separate the management, operation, and evaluation of schools, while expanding the involvement of provincial governments in educational coordination and increasing school autonomy to oversee and improve their internal governance structures (CCCP 2013). The goals of deepening reforms of educational institutional mechanisms by the Chinese government are outlined: (1) by 2020, to establish an essential educational institutions, forming vigorous, efficient, and open

⁵The “Three Increases” of compulsory education funds refer to the following: “Appropriations for compulsory education by the State Council and local governments at all levels shall increase at a faster rate than regular state revenues, and expenditure on education per student, faculty salaries and funds per student shall also increase steadily” (The State Council 2006; Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress 2006).

⁶“Two exempt and one subsidy” students are exempt from tuition and incidental fees during compulsory education, free text books are provided for students with financial difficulties, and living expenses are subsidized for boarding students.

educational system mechanisms conducive to scientific development; (2) to further settle and solve the well-concerned educational issues and problems by the general public; (3) to bring to perfection the pattern of government exerting macro-management of the educational system in accordance with the law, schools running themselves autonomously in accordance with the law, the orderly social participation of the general public, and the joint efforts of all parties for the further improvement of the educational system; and (4) to provide institutional enabler for the development of a world-class modern education system with Chinese characteristics (Xinhua News Agency 2017).

6.3 Changes in Educational Institutions: Seeking Appropriate Tension and Stimulating Vigor

Reform has altered the relations of production and interest. The first 30 years of Reform and Opening-up advanced economic growth and accumulated wealth by following the principle of efficiency. After that, the issue for further reform is the readjustment of interest relations, redistributing wealth by fairness so as to promote the harmonious and sustainable development in China. Therefore, the overall deepening of reform involves “resolutely break[ing] away [from] all outdated ideas and disadvantages of institutional mechanisms and break[ing] out of barriers of interests consolidation” (Xi 2017). For Chinese society, the 40 years of reform and opening-up is a process of restoring and reconstructing social order to break through institutional barriers and to stimulate social vitality, from a planned economy to a market economy, through the unified, centralized management of the government with the participation of multiple parties. Therefore, the conflicts and compromises between different parties’ interests will inevitably occur throughout the process.

Following this line of development, in the field of education, changes and innovations of educational institutions inevitably involve a series of complex processes and ambivalent relationships, including centralization and decentralization, central planning and the market economy, government and society, government and schools, and schools and society. The process of educational reform is to seek balance and harmony among multiple parties to maintain order and stimulate the passion and vitality of all interested parties.

6.3.1 To Adjust the Central–Local Relationship and Promote Integration of Top-Level Design and the Local Exploration of Educational Institution Changes

Since the beginning of the Reform and Opening-up, the core of educational institution reform has lied on the improved mobilization of “all levels of government, general staff and students, and all members in society,” while “decentraliz[ing] the

responsibility of developing basic education to local governments” (CCPCC 1985). However, when educational management responsibility was decentralized level by level to the township, it resulted in serious regional disparity in education development. In 2001, the State Council issued the *Decisions on Basic Education Reform and Development*, which changed the rural compulsory education management institutions that had been in place for 15 years and made it clear that in “implementing the institutions under the leadership of the State Council [...] the local government is responsible for the institutions, which practices hierarchical management and is county-oriented.” The establishment and perfection of provincial-level and county-oriented educational management institutions became a useful exploration in deepening educational institutional reform and promoting the balanced regional development of education in China.

Taking curriculum reform as an example. Over the last 40 years, explorations within tensions between the authority of the national curriculum and the flexibility of local curricula have never ceased. Balancing games among the state, local governments, and school levels have been continuously staged. Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China, concerning the teaching materials used in primary and secondary schools, the state has been responsible for providing standard teaching plans, syllabi, and educational materials. At the beginning of the Reform and Opening-up, in the context of the “streamlining administration and decentralization” brought about by the *Decisions on Education Institutions Reform* by CCPCC, the National Education Commission allowed Shanghai in 1988 to experiment curriculum reform. Shanghai then launched the “first-stage curriculum reform” as an attempt to change the exam-orientated education centered on university admission to a curriculum and instruction model featuring “Three Breakthroughs,” including reducing workload, improving quality, strengthening basics, cultivating capabilities, and developing personal characteristics. After 5 years of such efforts, Shanghai developed a curriculum for primary and secondary schools, curriculum standards, teaching materials, and supplementary educational soft wares suitable for economically developed areas and has carried out corresponding experiments (Sun et al. 2016: 25). Shanghai thus provided useful experiences for the national-wide curriculum reform. In the 1990s, the National Education Commission proposed that general high schools be managed in three levels, that is, at the central government, local government, and school levels, which enables administrative authority at all levels. “The establishment of three levels of management of curriculum teaching materials is to ensure and promote the curriculum’s adaptability to different regions, schools and students and to implement guided gradual decentralization” (Secretariat of the National Curriculum Professional Committee 2001: 90). The basic education curriculum reform initiated at the beginning of the new century requires “to change the situation of excessive concentration of curriculum management, to implement three levels of curriculum management of central government, local government and schools, and to the curriculum’s adaptability to different regions, schools and students” (Ministry of Education 2001). The implementation of a three-level curriculum management system delivers the over-centralized curriculum power at the national level to local governments and schools, enabling local governments and

schools' participation in curriculum development, thus forming the situation that the national curriculum, local curriculum, and school curriculum coexist so that the curricula are more suitable for local and school-specific teaching situations. It reflects the trend of curriculum management moving from centralization to limited decentralization. The curriculum issue not only involves the classic question of "what knowledge is most valuable" (Spencer 1860: 21–97) but also involves the key problem of "whose knowledge is most valuable."⁷ To fully implement the Party's educational policy and integrate the cultivation and practice of core socialist values within the process of national education, since 2012, the Ministry of Education unified textbook compilation for three subjects including ethics and law, Chinese, and history. These textbooks were put into use nationally during the autumn of September 2017 in high school. An audit system consisting of disciplinary review, comprehensive review, thematic review, and final review was established and practiced to ensure the overall quality of teaching materials. In March 2017, the Textbook Bureau was established by the Ministry of Education for the planning, production, and management of textbooks. In July of the same year, the National Textbook Committee was formed by the State Council to guide and coordinate textbooks nationwide.

In the process of promoting modernization of education governance institutions, "promotion of partial and phased Reform and Opening-up shall be carried out on the premise of strengthening top-level design, and [the] strengthening of top-level design shall be planned on the basis of advancing partial and phased reform and opening-up" (Xi 2012). As is proposed in *Opinions on Deepening Reform of Education Institutional Mechanism*, the combination of top-level design and grassroots exploration not only strengthens system planning but also respects grassroots initiatives. It also fully mobilizes the enthusiasm, initiative, and creativity of local districts and schools and timely serves to distil successful experience to systems and policies (Xinhua News Agency 2017).

A salient feature of educational institution reform in the new era is the strengthening of top-level design, such as deepening the reform of examinations and enrollment systems, the construction of modern vocational educational institutions, the construction of first-class universities, the reform of educational laws, and other major educational reforms, which are deliberated by the Standing Committee of the State Council before promotion and implementation by the State Council and relevant ministries. In March 2018, to strengthen the centralized and unified leadership in education, a leading group of education experts was established according to *Program for Deepening Party and State Institutional Reform* of the Third Plenary Session of the Nineteenth Central Committee of the CPC (CCP 2018). The leading group was established as a decision-making and coordination organization of

⁷ Michael W. Apple, professor of the Department of curriculum and teaching and education policy at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in America, tried to reveal the complex relationship between knowledge and power in education and critically examine "legal knowledge" of particular social groups or classes during particular historical periods and, in particular, institutional contexts by using his concept of ideology and hegemony. See Apple (1990).

the CCCPC, whose major duty is to put forward and organize the implementation of policies adhering to the Party's leadership and strengthening the Party's construction, to study political and ideological work in the field of education, to deliberate the national education development strategy, medium- and long-term planning, major policies for education and institutional reform plans, and to solve current problems in education. This is of great significance to strengthening the top-level design of educational reform, in dealing with relationships between central and local, partial and whole, and improving the system in its entirety, thus forming an overall effect. On the other hand, with educational reforms entering the “deep end,” many regions and schools proceed from reality, adhere to problem-oriented principles, and summarize a lot of experience of reform and exploration. Some of the experience proved to be effective, which provides important support for macro-decision-making at the national level. The City of Qingdao, for example, has conducted school administration reform experiments and modern school construction according to law since 2014. On this basis, in February 2017, the Municipal Government of Qingdao issued the *Regulations for Primary and Secondary Schools in Qingdao*, which specifies that the “principal may nominate [and] appoint [a] vice-principal,” as well as other school autonomy recruitment of professional and high-level personnel in shortage,” “independent establishment of internal institutions and [the] appointment of [a person in charge] in accordance with provisions” (Municipal Government of Qingdao 2017). Those were previously controlled by the local government. In recent years, Shanghai, as an experimental region responsible for initiating comprehensive educational reform, has actively explored and proposed many new ideas and reform measures under the guidance of the top-level design of national macro-educational reform. In December 2017, Shanghai People’s Congress formulated the *Regulations for Higher Educational Promotion in Shanghai*, which is the first local regulation dealing with higher education. It distils new achievements and experience in the form of laws and provides a strong guarantee for modernizing higher education management system and the sustainable development of higher education in Shanghai (Fan 2018).

Those educational reforms related to overall reform and innovation in national education law, educational institutions, educational standards, and educational strategy planning and coordination requires national-level coordination and implementation. Education reforms of key and difficult issues can be implemented gradually and adjusted dynamically based on the experiences of local pilot programs. For education reform at regional and school levels, it is necessary to allow room for grassroots educational reform initiatives and encourage individuals at the local and school levels to innovate and explore. Therefore, the process of educational reform mechanisms could integrate state-level design with grassroots exploration. This will lead to general advancement based on the key breakthroughs.

6.3.2 To Rationalize Inter-Government Relationships and Establish and Perfect the Mechanism of Governmental Coordination and Inter-Provincial Consultation

Inter-governmental relationships refer to the vertical and horizontal relationships among different levels of government, as well as the relationships between governments in different regions. In the same area, it mainly involves horizontal inter-governmental relations among government departments of the same level. In the government education administration system, commissions including development and reform, organization, finance, human resources and social security, compilation, land and resource planning, urban and rural construction, science and technology, supervision of state-owned assets, and economy informatization have their own corresponding educational management responsibilities.

However, the long-lasting situation that each department does things in their own way with the intersection of powers and poor communication between education administrative departments and other functional departments have caused a serious impact on school operation. In the process of reform, the education administrative departments in some regions tried to coordinate education management activities in government-related functional departments. For example, in Shanghai, *Regulations for Promotion of Higher Education in Shanghai* proposed the establishment of a coordination mechanism for the deliberation of major policy reform in higher education at the municipal level and to establish a Higher Education Investment Assessment Committee to evaluate major investments in higher education and supervise the use of funds (Standing Committee of Shanghai People's Congress 2018). Management measures for primary and secondary schools in Qingdao stipulate that “for appraisal, evaluation, assessment, competition, inspection and other activities related to primary and secondary schools, relevant departments need to submit plans for the next year before November of the previous year. The catalogue of the plan needs to be complied by the administrative Department of Education and is published at the beginning of the next year” (Municipal Government of Qingdao 2017). These practical explorations have resulted in the accumulation of useful relevant experience for deepening government educational institution reform, as well as establishing and improving government coordination and the educational governance mechanism for inter-governmental consultation.

6.3.3 To Streamline Administration and Decentralize, Fair Supervision, Service Optimization, and New-Style Government–School Relationship Reconstruction

The Decision of CCCPC on Education Institutions Reform in 1985 proposed the “reform [of] management institutions, while strengthen[ing] macro-management, resolutely implement[ing] streamline administration and decentraliz[ing], and

expand[ing] schools' operational autonomy" (CCPCC 1985). Educational power was thus reallocated so that the traditional educational administrative relationship has undergone great changes since 1985. Since then, the expansion of school autonomy has been the main line of educational reform. In 2017, in the report *Deepening Reform of Education Institutions Mechanism* by the General Office of the CCPCC and the General Office of the State Council, it was stated that "schools operate independently according to law" was an important part of the educational governance structure, which is "dynamic, efficient, more open, [and] conducive to scientific development" (Xinhua news agency 2017). School autonomy in China is a result of government's decentralization. It is necessary for the government to scientifically plan the types, scale, and speed of national and regional education career development so that each school has a scientific and rational development orientation. A sound system of educational standards shall be established and improved so that schools have standards to follow in the process of independent operation. Schools shall be empowered. Operational and post-operational oversight shall be strengthened, so that the schools operating by law are supervised and guaranteed. In addition, education resources should be allocated in a balanced way, and professional services should be provided for schools for their healthy and sustainable development.

6.3.4 To Actively and Steadily Use Social Organization and Market in Education

In the 1990s, a global trend of education reform using marketization and performance emerged to solve the public dissatisfaction with educational quality (Goertz and Duffy 2001; Headington 2000; Heller 2001; Mahony and Hextall 2000). In this process, quality education and competitive schools have become salient, emphasizing education quality management and quality assurance, school monitoring and evaluation, parental choice, education vouchers, marketization, parental and community participation in governance, as well as performance-oriented funding mechanisms and other reform issues (Cheng 2015: 5–29; Cheng and Townsend 2000: 317–344; Mukhopadhyay 2001; Pang et al. 2003: 1063–1080).

With the development of China's market economy, in the process of deepening economic system reform, the role of the market in resource allocation changed from "basic" to "decisive" (Xi 2017). In the process of promoting government institutional modernization, in addition to participating in school operation, social organizations are participating in public affairs, including education, by bringing their professional advantage. The Ministry of Education (2015) suggested to use contract-out services in legal consultation, faculty training, evaluation services, sports and arts curriculum, teaching resources, etc.

6.3.5 To Expand School Autonomy and Vitalize Schools

As mentioned above, “expanding school autonomy” is the proposition of education reform put forward in the *Decisions on Education Institutions Reform of CCCPC* in 1985 and is still in progress today. The *Decisions* proposed that “schools gradually implement the principal accountability system,” which establishes a framework for school management structure consisting of school party organization, principal, school administration committee, and representatives of faculty and staff congress. “The school Party shall liberate themselves from managing everything in the past and concentrate on strengthening party-building and political work.” (CCCP 1985). With the deepening of education reform, the school leadership system in China is constantly changing. To further strengthen and improve the Party’s leadership in schools, public colleges and universities should adhere to and improve principal responsibility institutions under the leadership of the CPC and give active political roles to grassroots party organizations in primary and secondary schools and private colleges (General Office of the CPC Central Committee 2014).

Schools are “ecological” systems with structures and their own vitality. Educational management systems and management mechanisms, as being imposed externally, affect or constrain the vitality of schools. The vitality of a school depends more on internal self-organization mechanisms. School vitality is manifested in three aspects: first, in the pursuit of educational values, ideals, and responsibilities, and the shared school mission; second, in internal institutions and mechanisms to inspire, facilitate, and support the school organization as well as individuals to participate and create actively; third, in active self-learning and autonomous development of students in the designed learning activities with teachers and their peers

6.4 Educational Institutional Changes and Laws

Reform is integral in the forming process of social regulations (Popkewitz 1991). Change and innovation in educational institutions require the support of the legal system. Fundamentally speaking, the reform of educational institutions in the past 40 years represents the process of the continuous legalization of educational reform. In 1980, when the first educational law, *Regulations on Degrees in the People's Republic of China*, was issued, it signified the starting point of the legal path of educational development (Standing Committee of the NPC 1980). Since then, the two laws of *Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China* and *Teachers Law of the People's Republic of China* were successively issued. The issue of the *Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China* in March 1995 marks the transition toward the comprehensive rule of law in China.

In the new century, with issuing *Vocational Education Law of the People's Republic of China*, *Higher Education Law of People's Republic of China*, *Law of the People's Republic of China on Promotion of Privately-run Schools*, and several

administrative regulations and local laws, a framework of China's education legal system was formed, and education legislation embarked on a comprehensive and systematic stage. In the process of education legislation, an important document regarding national education development issued in 1993 proposed that China would “initially establish the framework of education laws and regulations system by the end of this century” (CCPC, The State Council 1993). *The Outline of the National Medium and Long Term Program for Education Reform and Development (2010–2020)* issued in 2010 further proposed to accelerate the education legal construction and perfect laws and regulations of socialist education with Chinese characteristics, in accordance with the requirement of the fundamental principle of governing the country by law; and outlined the specific tasks of amending the six laws including the Education Law, the Vocational Education Law, the Higher Education Law, the Regulations on Degrees, the Teachers Law, and the Law on Promotion of Private education and formulating five laws respectively in the fields of examinations, schools, lifelong learning, preschool education and family education (Working Group Office for The Outline of the National Medium-and Long Term Program for Education Reform and Development 2010). The issue and revision of relevant laws and regulations on education have promoted laws and regulations in education. In the new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the contradictions and legal relations between various educational stakeholders are becoming increasingly complicated. Tensions among them are unavoidable but can be tuned within a legal framework. Confronted with the arduous task of responding to the national strategic demands the people, there is still a long way to go in terms of legislating, practicing, and enforcing the law.

6.5 Concluding Remarks

Education reform enacted in China over the past 40 years of Reform and Opening-up is a process of perfecting educational institution mechanisms and a process of continuously improving socialist education institutions with Chinese characteristics. It also entails a process of moving from promoting scattered reform by using education policies and regulations to regulating educational organization by using laws and promoting the construction and perfection of the education institutions. The process of education reform has explored gaming and appropriate allocation of power and interests, in which educational order has been rebuilt to break the constraints. The course of education reforms features moving from regulation to empowerment, through empowering by law, promoting consultation and shared governance, and vitality stimulation.

The main task of education institutional reform in the new era is to construct and perfect “the pattern of government's macro management according to law, school operation by law, orderly social participation and concerted efforts of all parties,” and to make education “dynamic, efficient, more open and conducive to scientific development.” In the future, the mission of education development is to

further promote the balanced development of education, to solve the problem of unbalanced and insufficient development, and to meet the increasing needs of people to enjoy fairer education with higher quality (Cai 2017).

Looking forward, we are now entering an era with prevailing new technology. Internet-based big data and artificial intelligence have generated an uncertain but in-depth impact on our lives, work, learning, and thinking. Internet-based learning resources make school no longer the only source of knowledge, while immersion learning happens at any time and in any situation.

Educational institutional reform in the past 40 years in China has been based on institutionalized school education. When the institutionalized, systemic, and regulated school education institutions and its functions have undergone revolutionary changes, and new educational conditions based on the blending of online and offline learning will become the “new normal” of education. A call for new education institutions and education governance mechanism is soon to appear and facilitate this “new normal” education.

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Chapter 7

Social Inclusion/Exclusion of Youth and Rhetorical and Symbolic Illusions of Social Change in Recent Spanish Education Policy



**Magdalena Jiménez-Ramírez, Antonio Luzón, Miguel A. Pereyra,
and Mónica Torres**

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, Spanish education experienced a full historical cycle closely related to the profound political changes that the country underwent during that period. The social and economic structure of the Spanish society changed considerably during the years of Francoism, and as such the regime's social base was gradually narrowing during the 1960s and its last years (e.g. it was the significant case of the progressive disaffection of the great support received from the beginning from the Catholic Church). The 1970s witnessed the decline and definitive disappearance of the dictator in 1975, when a process of political transition began that was to a certain extent complete, but peaceful and based on agreement among the main political parties and social groups. It was generally regarded as a “success story” as well as a foundation of a country’s re-emergence as a welcome, more effective player on the international scene. This was a so-called transition by transaction (*reforma pactada*) (Gillespie 2017) and was approached by the political elites, from both inside and outside the regime, with much improvisation and even expeditiously under pressure regarding the new arrangements. However, this “judicious pragmatism” (Tzortzis 2017) that was praised for so many years has now come to be perceived by many as one of the most relevant weaknesses of the whole process and a means of generating for the near future a sense of historical amnesia among citizens and in particular for the new generations.

The first fruit of this process was a new Constitution (approved by universal suffrage in 1978). This Constitution established a new political regime that is a parliamentary monarchy, similar to those of some other European countries. Accordingly, in 1986 Spain was admitted as a full member of the European Union. For the first time in the history of the country, an ambitious decentralization project was undertaken, resulting in the country’s division into autonomous communities with a significant degree of self-governance (Judit 2006).

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We must add to these and other political changes a process of rapid and relatively successful modernization that had just begun in the late 1950s, after the most authoritarian years of the regime, when Spain began a new era with its “economic stabilization plan” of 1959 supervised by the World Bank, and during the 1960s through the so-called Economic and Social Development Plans (created following the French model of “indicative” economic planning of the post-war era, and technocratically accomplished by an elite of high-ranking civil servants linked to Opus Dei) (Balfour 2000). With the advent of democracy after General Franco’s death, modernization accelerated, after the so-called Social Pact of La Moncloa was signed by political parties, trade unions, and entrepreneurs, with significant consequences for all aspects of the social life of the country. During the 1990s, Spain succeeded in situating itself among the most developed countries of the world, experiencing excellent economic indicators and a transformation of social structures and lifestyles. In the field of education, a number of major reforms were promoted by a succession of governments of different ideological orientations, which, obviously, is similar in many ways to what occurred in other Western countries, with the difference of the historic *acceleration* of these processes in the case of Spain (McNair 1984; Boyd-Barrett and O’Malley 1995; Bonal 1998; Escolano 2002; Cuesta 2005; de Puelles 2016).

Our aim is to analyse the politics of education during this crucial period, but we will focus attention particularly on the last great reform of the twentieth century, carried out in 1990 by the Socialist party (PSOE) during its first period in government (1982–1996). The effects of this reform persist to this day, as the socialists were returned to power following the Madrid terrorist bombings in March 2004. In this sense, our “historical” remarks are really quite contemporary. Our intention is not so much to describe accomplished deeds, but to analyse the interpretations, images, and assessments that different social actors have applied to the consequences of this socialist reform.

Principally, we will analyse their discourse regarding the impact these changes in the governance of education have had on processes of social integration and exclusion, paying particular attention to the role played by young people in secondary education. It must be remembered that from the start this reform was grounded in a powerful social rhetoric dominated by such expressions as “equality,” “democracy,” “participation,” and “innovation.” For accomplishing this kind of analysis, and from the perspective of language as creator of representations of reality, we conceive “discourses not only represent the world as it is (or rather is seen to be), they are also projective, imaginaries, representing possible worlds which are different from the actual world, and tied in to projects to change the world in particular directions” (Fairclough 2003: 124). Clarifying at this instance, it would be necessary to point out that in the production of discourses, in front of the logic of the argumentation of them, another logic can also be produced, the logic of the appearance in which the issues of conviction and persuasion play a significant role, with their ideological stance.

7.1 History and Politics in the Construction of Education Policy in Contemporary Spain

But let us briefly return to the beginning of this historical cycle, to the final phase of the regime of General Franco. From the 1960s, rejection of the dictatorship gradually grew as it came to be regarded as illegitimate and anachronistic in the contemporary European context. This attitude of rejection extended throughout the university and the labour communities, both of which were clearly conscious of the fact that Spaniards did not have access to the most elementary political rights. Spain, whose political and strategic geographical situation helped it receive foreign investment in both industry and tourism, enjoyed manifest economic development during those years; and it led to the transformation of a predominantly rural state into a modern industrialized one, whose standards of living approached those of most advanced European countries.

During the 1960s the annual economic growth and industrial output of Spain was one of the highest among all OECD countries being more than doubled since that time, also thanks to the very important amounts of cash remittances sent by the emigrants working mainly in European countries (Krasikov 1983: 5–6). On the other hand, in this final stage of the dictatorship, General Franco's own government was aware of the waning relevance of many institutions in the face of the changes being experienced by Spanish society. Among these were the educational institutions. As a result, the regime promoted a grand education reform in 1970 by means of a *General Law of Education* (Ley General de Educación), the greatest transformation imposed on the Spanish education system since the middle of the nineteenth century and opportunistically presented as the next step in the implementation of the above-mentioned Economic and Social Development Plans. Likewise, the new educational reform led by Opus Dei was actually a kind of promoter of an almost thaumaturgical modernization of Spain, seeking internally to find a better cover-up aimed with calculated ambivalence to link modernity with the seamless, reactionary, and Catholic anti-liberalist sources of the regime (we must not forget that it was part of a *fascistized regime*, which Francoism was *par excellence*, at that time desperately trying to survive). As such, Spain was presented to the nation's population and also internationally as a modern “Europeanized” nation with a certain orientation to Weberian ethics of success, provided by Opus Dei's strategic rhetoric and conscientiously arranged manoeuvres (Saz Campos 2004; for analysis of the role played by Opus Dei in Franco's regime, whose influence was felt from the outset, see Casanova 1982, 1983, Estruch 1995, and Camprubí 2014).

7.1.1 *In Search of Compensatory Legitimation of the Dictatorship*

Through a technocratic reform conceived under the premises of the human capital theory of the 1960s as promulgated by reports conducted by the UNESCO, OECD, and the World Bank (according to which education began to be considered in Spain as investment and consumption), the Franco regime attempted to adopt a progressive rhetoric of social change in order to sustain and extend as much as possible its increasingly precarious national and international credibility, and its real deficit of political legitimacy at a time when it was seeking to be admitted to the European Common Market. In this sense, the reform enacted in the so-called Villar-Palasí Law, promoted by a pioneering program of mass media publicity, aptly characterized as a “political spectacle” (Edelman 1988), sought to promote a new language of social change by means of a mystified expression of social modernization (Ortega 1994). This process, characterized by the use of the effective authority-based tools of mutually supporting persuasion, incentives, and controls in the process of constructing an effective education policy requiring legitimation, can be understood as an example of the process that Hans Weiler (1983) called *compensatory legitimation* in his successful analyses of educational reforms as the Spanish one (Morgenstern de Finkel 1991, 1993). When this most important reform—actually not developed during Franco’s time but during the transition period to democracy by a national agreement among the different political parties—was quickly enacted in less than 2 years, the dictator was a very decrepit human being.

Ironically, this feature of the political strategy of the 1970 reform has not received adequate analytical attention in Spain. However, this reform ended up profoundly altering a traditionally elitist system, institutionalized a distinctive and effective comprehensive school system inspired by the Scandinavian model through the emerging processes of educational globalization undertaken by OECD and UNESCO recommendations, and brought about wide-ranging curricular reform.

After the death of Franco and in the context of the so-called Transition to Democracy (*Transición a la Democracia*), numerous educational reforms took place that exposed the fundamental disagreements underlying the diverse political, social, and professional constituencies affected. The parliamentary debates concerning the new Constitution were particularly acrimonious when addressing educational issues. Generally speaking, the political right supported the position of the Catholic Church, which had traditionally exercised an extraordinary influence on public instruction in Spain and still controlled a great part of private education. Leftists sought to increase the control of the state over schools. They also favoured encouraging the participation of parents in the governance of educational institutions, and they sought to enhance the equality of the system through programmes of social integration. For the left it was essential that political democracy translates into educational democracy. As had already occurred in the nineteenth century and during the Second Spanish Republic (1931–1936), people began to speak of a “school war.” This tense educational climate persisted throughout the following political stage and, in reality, continues to this very day.

7.1.2 Political Democracy vs. Educational Democracy

In 1982 the Socialist party overwhelmingly won the general elections. It was a historical milestone given that this party, which had such a decisive role during the Second Republic in the 1930s, re-emerged in the 1970s after a long period of clandestine activity during the Franco regime. A new generation of young socialists, headed by Felipe González, was to maintain control over the Spanish government until 1996. Soon after assuming power, they established the *Ley Orgánica del Derecho a la Educación*, or the Organic Law of the Right to Education (LODE 1985), that developed some essential points of the Constitution of 1978. This extraordinarily polemical law explicitly consecrated “the principle of participation of the members of the educational community” as a key factor of educational policy and the State established controls to prevent discriminatory practices that even applied to private schools. As could be expected, the new regulation of educational institutions was harshly criticized by the proprietors of schools and by some parents’ associations in the private sector. Protests were frequently held in the streets and in the media, and parliamentary procedures for the approval of the law were slow and tortuous. The defenders of private education, among them the Catholic Church, argued that this law represented an unacceptable interference of the State in the rights of families and the liberty of instruction that were also recognized in the new Constitution.

In 1990 the Socialist Party (after having produced some critical social movements against the government’s economic policies—e.g. the introduction of new more flexible contracts for unexperienced youngsters—which ended with a successful general strike in the whole country) undertook a new modernization of the Spanish education system. It was in fact the first since the reform of 1970, and it would put an even greater emphasis on the comprehensive nature of the school by avoiding defined tracking policies (Bonal 1998; Fernández-Mellizo, 2003; Fernández-Mellizo and Martínez-García 2017). This new reform was formalized as the *Law of General Planning of the Education System* (LOGSE 1990). Obligatory schooling was extended to the age of 16 years, and wide-ranging changes in the curriculum were undertaken. Among the most important of these changes were the introduction of the so-called cross-curriculum areas of study and new fields of social learning concerning gender, multiculturalism, and the environment (Boyd-Barrett and O’Malley 1995).

The curriculum designed by the Socialist reform was theoretically based on cognitive constructivism and defended the creation of a new type of school culture and a new educational community through the development of appropriate moral values and attitudes (in fact the reform was designed by leading professors of educational psychology—and not pedagogy as is frequently thought—at the level of a *total psychologization* where language was consciously saturated “with constructivism, aptitude, psychological diversification... but not social classes, racism, cultural bias, school failure...”: see Torres 2007: 121; and Varela 1991, for a provocative understanding of this reform as one designed for the middle classes). With the

increase in conflict in schools, “living together” gradually became a priority focus of interest, as would also occur with “multiculturalism” attendant with the growing influx of immigrants, mainly from Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. In these circumstances, “educating for values” and “intercultural education” came to be well-known and frequent discourse subjects in a curricular context that the Socialist reform attempted to “flexibilize”.

Nevertheless, after an initial phase of intense pushing for reform during the 1980s, when the rhetoric of the old ideological traditions of the left predominated, the Socialist party gradually lost enthusiasm for some of the reforms initially championed. Pragmatically, the governing socialists began to take into account that the emphasis they had placed, for example, on social participation was much closer to the utopian ideas of the 1970s than to the responsible realism that, they thought, ought to characterize the action of a governing political party. These types of arguments were deployed at times to justify what came to be regarded as a necessary pragmatism, and some socialist leaders came to reconsider some of their earlier proposed reforms. For the most severe but sound critics, this kind of shift represented a surrender of principles in the face of the neoliberal currents that were beginning to inundate the educational arena or “market” in the rest of the world (see Rozada 2002 for the case of the Spanish education reforms introduced by the last of Socialist Felipe González’s Ministers of Education).

7.2 New Political Changes, New Educational Changes Ending in a Great Recession

In 1996, after their victory in the general elections, the conservative Popular Party formed a new government that immediately began to redirect the main aims of the Socialist education policy (a national evaluation of the education system was conducted for the first time in history; see García Garrido et al. 1998). After obtaining another majority in the 2000 elections, the Popular Party pushed through Parliament the Law of Educational Quality (*Ley de Calidad de la Educación, LOCE* 2002), which openly questioned the overall foundations of the previous reform, introducing some substantial changes in the obligatory period of education that have for the most part not been implemented (Rambla 2006).¹ In an atmosphere in which the predominant impression was one of chaos in the classroom, with insistent calls for recovery of lost authority and order, some measures began to be taken to improve the situation.

¹ In March 2004, the Socialist Party returned to power. One of the priorities of its program was to halt the application of the Law of Quality (LOCE) and reform it along the basic premises of the LOGSE. In April 2006, the Spanish Parliament approved the new Organic Law of Education (*Ley Orgánica de la Educación 2006*). The Popular Party voted against the new reform. One of the few important innovations introduced by the new law referred to the development of free schooling for children from 3 to 6 years old.

As noted above, the analysis follows centres exclusively on the application and development of the socialist reform under the various governments (1982–1996), although the LOGSE also remained legally in force under the first government of the conservative Popular Party (1996–2000). During the Felipe González era, the Socialist Party attempted to build a comprehensive, integrating system to tackle the social inequalities in Spain at that time. In these circumstances, the development of a comprehensive school was seriously hampered, as shown by many diverse studies that focused on the lasting consequences of the rhetorical images, questions, or slogans such as the issue of “social redemption” that accompanied the Socialist reform of the 1990s (Peruga and Torres 1997; San Segundo 1998; Carabaña 1999; Echevarría 1999; Rambla and Bonal 2000; Bolívar and Rodríguez-Diéz 2002; Sevilla 2003).

When the Socialists returned to power in 2004, a new cycle of reforms began (then already including an ideological “hybridation” with the assumption of beliefs coming from neoliberalism) (García Yanes 2017: 221–222); and again after 2012 when the conservatives returned to government, introducing in 2013 a more controversial and conservative “organic law” of education for the compulsory education system and post-compulsory secondary education (the so-called LOMCE or Organic Law for the Improvement of Educational Quality, which replaced the Socialist LOE or Organic Law of Education of 2006). At present, with a new Socialist government since May 2018, supported by nationalists and left-wing parties, the LOMCE will probably soon be amended although it does seem that the new government is just going to derogate some conservative reformist initiatives and replace for others, as to provide a stronger role to the public schooling and less to the private-subsidized one.

Some recent general analyses in English of the different main educational reforms, as elaborated in the four “organic laws” (compulsory in the entire State), stated since the institutionalization of democracy in Spain, try to introduce some theoretical understanding although somewhat disappointingly (Jover et al. 2017). However, an achieved and well-defined ideological analysis of these main laws, thought from a multidisciplinary approach, has also recently appeared. It is focused on the relationships of causation and intentionality present in the cognitive linguistic models (necessary for its construction as links between society and discourse and as they are transmitted by their texts) and also using a critical discourse analysis (CDA) (García Yanes 2017: 221–222).

Through the reconstruction of the situation models induced by each of the texts analysed, in the case of the two laws approved by the Popular Party—especially accentuated in the case of the latter, the LOMCE of 2013—it can be observed that they appear saturated with conceptualizations of conceiving the individual as a social actor, but this is defined exclusively by the function that he/she fulfils within the educational system (63.5% of the references to the individual in the case of conservative laws versus 32.9% of the socialist laws). The Popular Party, when it comes to referring to the person who is the subject of the education system’s action, tends to conceptualize it exclusively based on the role he/she plays towards school

performance, regardless of the rest of his/her personal characteristics and dimensions (García Yanes 2017: 94–96).²

In this entire context, the result was not so much a weakening and development in Spain of a dual education system, but, indeed, its reinforcement, thus adding another indisputable source of social exclusion to factors such as race, gender, or social marginalization. We are, of course, referring to the progressive devaluation of the public network of schools in favour of the private sector. In 2015, according to Eurostat, 68% of all students enrolled in Spain go to a public centre (European average 81%), while 60% of primary and secondary students attend grant-maintained private schools, many of which depend on the Catholic Church and its religious orders. In general, public schools are becoming the schools of the least socially and economically privileged children, while the middle classes monopolize grant-maintained schools. This parallel system, traditional in Spanish education (a general historical account in Boyd 1997), is being reproduced in the public system itself, as a possibly spurious consequence of the principle of autonomy. Particularly in urban areas, the public education network is gradually breaking up in a manner that reflects the geographical location of the centre, the pupils' social origins and the duration of the school day. There are clearly marginal public schools used only by families living in the vicinity. On the other hand, there are prestigious public schools in extraordinary demand by both teachers and families, even though they may live some distance away. In practice, the two represent utterly different institutional strands. In general terms, the immigrant population living in suburban or poor areas makes use of the lower quality centres, thus adding to their already complex problems (Fundación Encuentro 1998). This on-going process in the Spanish education system is one of the major sources of social exclusion (McAll 1995).

Taking into account the ever-increasing complexity of these processes (see a more detailed but synthetic description in Pereyra et al. 2009), we can say that social exclusion is the result of the interactions among different classes of social actors, rather than an end-state or condition attributable to a particular population or group. In this sense, social exclusion can be understood in an increasingly diverse manner, as a processual, accumulative, multidimensional social reality operating in different

²LOMCE exploits, as a reform argument, the social and economic consequences that would have for the individual (the “social exclusion”) as for the country (“deterioration of the competitiveness”) of not carrying it out the educational reform that recommends. But this law (and also the previous LOCE) excludes from their inventory ideal quality attributes of people such as identity or personality. Unlike what happens in general to the socialist laws, they mainly attribute to the individual a more instrumental character, with the goal of creating individual value and the need for diversification, individual sophistication and greater “employability” (expecting to achieve the goal of developing the ability to compete successfully in the field of the international market and to face the challenges that arise in the future, through the achievement of “new patterns of behavior that place education in the center of our society and economy”) (García Yanes 2017: 108, 146, and 173). In addition, we observe that in the LOMCE disappears the interest shown by the previous socialist LOCE for the issue of immigration. With this kind of argument, the LOMCE ends up promoting the conservative ideology as regards the hierarchical conception of society, which is characteristic of conservative ideology where inequality and hierarchy of society are accepted as natural.

social spheres, most particularly in education (Littlewood and Herkommer 1999; Moreno 2000; Goguel d'Allondans 2003). In this text, we analyse the presence of this and other key concepts in the discourse of various educational actors regarding the construction of the Spanish school of today—how they imagine it and its problems—taking the reforms mentioned above as our point of reference.³

7.3 Young Spaniards' Social Awareness of Education

The Education Governance and Social Integration and Exclusion (EGSIE) project carried out a survey among young students on questions concerning the importance given to education, valuation of work, choice of post-compulsory studies, and young people's own view of their future social integration or exclusion. EGSIE, over the years, is one of the very first exponents in educational research of the launching of two contemporary concepts of the greatest significance such as the relationship of *educational governance* and *social inclusion/exclusion* in policy, from the foundation of which the “policy research becomes bound to the policy makers definition of research main issues, [avoiding to take] the categories and problems definitions derived from governmental policies with the problems of research without any serious intellectual scrutiny”. This pioneering introduction in the field of educational policy research takes place on the basis of theoretical orientations that initially did not converge with the foundations that will consolidate from the beginning of the twenty-first century. It was due to the fact that the theoretical leaders who leaded the EGSIE project derived the conceptualization of the own concept of governance of contemporary educational systems, and its direct application to the case of the mechanisms of inclusion/exclusion of youth, of social theory then still called postmodern with the Foucauldian new thinking as a distinctive orientation (Popkewitz and Lindblad 2000: 6).

³To this end, we used 788 young people's replies to questionnaires based on the theoretical categories of the *Education Governance and Social Integration and Exclusion in Europe (EGSIE)* project. EGSIE was an international project of comparative research carried out between 1998 and 2002 as a TSER (Targeted Socio-Economic Research) project of the XII Directorate General Research of the European Commission within the Fourth Framework Programme of the European Commission. The surveys were mainly carried out in the regions of Andalusia and the Canary Islands, which may be characterized by their peripheral geographical location within the European Union and by their modest economic development by Spanish standards. See: Lindblad and Popkewitz 1999, 2000, 2001; Lindblad et al. 1999. The Spanish version of the final report of the Spanish case appears in Luengo (2005, Chap 7).

The official publication *European Research on Youth Supporting Young People to Participate Fully in Society* published by the European Commission included several references to the EGSIE project as well as other youth-related projects funded from the fourth to the seventh research framework programmes of the European Union from 1996 to 2013 (http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/policy_reviews/policy-review-youth_en.pdf).

The EGSIE project was one of the three TSER (Targeted Socio-Economic Research) projects of the 4th Framework Program that investigated the issue of exclusion and social integration of European youth in the context of the governance of education systems. The concept of social exclusion, when approached within the project, had recently been introduced as a concept within the social sciences as drawn from French Republican thought where social exclusion refers to rupture of the social bond or solidarity.

The others projects were the important YUSEDER project (Youth Unemployment and Social Exclusion, ended in 2000), focused on the investigation of the concept of social exclusion in the context of unemployment of vulnerable groups of young unemployed people in six Northern and Southern European countries, with diverse historical and social understandings of being socially excluded or marginalized, and the ENTRANCE project (Enterprise and its transfer to combat social exclusion, also ended in 2002), in which university partners of Hungary, Spain, Israel, and England, under the leadership of the Centre for Education and Industry at Warwick University and its director Prue Huddleston concluded that entrepreneurial education for young people would help them confront that risk since it has a significant impact on the affective domain of the youngsters as regards motivation, self-confidence, and locus of control). The YUSEDER project was headed by Thomas Kieselbach, director of the Institute for Psychology of Work, Unemployment, and Health (IPG) at the University of Bremen in Germany, and published an important book—EGSIE and ENTRANCE did not ultimately produce a book on their project—containing the findings of the contributors, who were work psychologists, sociologists, and social workers (Kieselbach 2000).

Although the YUSEDER project made a very elaborate approach to the concept of social exclusion, we think that the EGSIE project was more sophisticated in addressing the conceptualization of this new concept of social exclusion of young people in school (compared and internally related to inclusion since this must be conceived as a two-sided process). In addition, unlike the other two projects, it included a pioneering treatment of governance in the context of educational institutions, which is not mentioned in the important volume cited above. In fact, the governance concept was officially used with some precision in main European Commission's reports in 2001; the title of the important final draft of 2000 of the European Commission on *management methods* (nurtured heavily by the New Public Management, increasingly integrated into the mainstream of policy-making methodology) was still called *Reforming the Commission*, but when released the White Paper in 2001, they decided to change the previous title to *Governance in the European Union* (Tarschys 2010: 37).

The 6th Framework Program (2002–2006), which additionally focused on citizens and governance in a knowledge-based society, contained moderate research on the question of governance in the field of education. The education-related

projects in the 7th Framework Program did not consider exclusion in school either, but the focus was on social exclusion in the CSEYHP projects (Combating Social Exclusion among Young Homeless Populations, 2008–2011) and YOUNEX (Youth, Unemployment and Exclusion in Europe, 2008–2011).

7.3.1 Study Topics, Young People's Characteristics, and Family Backgrounds

The survey, carried out in the year 2000, formed the third phase of the project, with the participation of four EU countries (Finland, Sweden, Portugal, and Spain) and one non-EU country (Australia), as part of a comparative study (*Youth Survey*, co-ordinated by Risto Rinne from the University of Turku, Finland) (Rinne et al. 2003).⁴ The Spanish sample consisted of 788 pupils in the third and fourth year of Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) in the Autonomous Communities of Andalusia (458 pupils) and the Canary Islands (330 pupils). Some of the participants were registered in two measures of attention to diversity known as Social Guarantee Programmes and Curricular Diversification Programmes, as defined by the 1990 Law of Education (LOGSE). In all the participating countries, the sample used was of pupils reaching the end of compulsory education, with a total of 3008 cases.

The young people surveyed live in a traditional nuclear family model, where a majority of parents have only primary education, and a minority have higher education or university degrees. In the main, male parents have university degrees, and there is a correlation in the family structure showing that the higher the educational level of the father, the higher that of the mother. In this family model, the male parents are in paid employment, whereas 55.3% of the female parents are housewives. However, there are also working mothers, who are basically those with higher educational level. The parents are employed in white-collar professions, the services sector and craftsmanship, and in skilled and unskilled manual labour (blue-collar).

In the comparative study, the traditional family model was found in Portugal and Sweden, whereas in Finland and Australia, the young people lived under other family compositions. Regarding educational level, the data indicate that in Portugal the parents had only basic primary education, whereas university studies were found in Finland and, especially, in Sweden. The figure of the housewife was not a visible

⁴By age, the Spanish study included young people from 14 to 19 years of age, the majority of which were in the 14–16 years age range, although 19% of those over 16 were still in the compulsory education stage. By sex, 54.3% were girls and 45.7% boys. The survey was carried out at 15 educational centres, 11 public centres (4 in Andalusia and 7 in the Canary Islands), and 4 private state-subsidised centres (2 in Andalusia and 2 in the Canary Islands), with a sample taken followed a quota system of pupils from different geographic and educational contexts (the urban or rural nature and considering also the socio-economic and cultural status of their pupils).

option, unlike the case of Spain. The percentages of family unemployment were higher in the countries from southern Europe than in those from the north.

The parents tend to work mainly in white-collar profession in the Nordic countries, unlike the southern countries. Access to education, the family structure, and differentiated distribution of roles in the productive and/or reproductive spheres can be explained by the role played by the State, family, and market in the different models of welfare states defined by Esping-Andersen (1996, 1999) and, in particular, by the role played by the Catholic Church in the familism or the family-centred welfare states, such as Spain.

The ESO is a crucial stage in school life and the biographical trajectory of young people. It covers 100% of the population as access has been democratized, but not without some problems due to the difficulty in compulsorily keeping pupils in the classroom. ESO is also important inasmuch as the school certificate obtained on completion is the first certificate awarded by the Spanish education system and is necessary to continue post-compulsory studies or to join the labour market. Lack of this certificate places pupils in a situation of academic failure and/or school dropout, with the accompanying risks of educational and social exclusion (Jiménez 2015).

The aim of the survey was to discover and describe the discourse about the narratives, sagas, and myths young people have about the relation between forms of governance in education and how it affects processes of social integration and exclusion in education and at work. Specifically, we were interested to know young people's perception of the changes taking place in the education system, whether there was a relation between their social, educational, cultural, and economic backgrounds and their success or failure at school, their future possibilities of integration or exclusion in the job market, as well as their perception as fully fledged members of a multinational environment (EU), which could, *a priori*, offer better training and work options.

7.3.2 Meritocracy as Motto: Faith in the School as a Means to Achieve Equality

The young people, the main actors in the education system, were aware of the changes taking place in education and society, as well as the not always positive consequences of education and their access to the job market. However, in their discourse, they retained some myths about equality in the education system and the need to cater for a diversity of pupils with different school trajectories, in order to guarantee them the right to education.

Analysis of the survey found that education is highly valued by the young people, as they expressed a strong belief in it as a medium that can bring social equality. They thought that it was worthwhile to study to be successful in life (90.8%), that education is a public good (87%), and also, although to a lesser extent, that it is a solution to the problem of youth unemployment, which agrees with the fact that a

low level of education is an obstacle to finding work. A majority—more girls than boys—also favoured the view that school has an equalling capacity and that individual and personal characteristics (effort and persistence) are key aspects to be successful in school if one works hard.

These comments show that young Spaniards have a meritocratic ideal in their popular consciousness, according to which education has the capacity to smooth out inequalities (Jiménez et al. 2003). This idea is also based on the fact that they believe education should be more supportive of pupils with difficulties. Among young Europeans, young Spaniards stand out by their solid belief in meritocracy and egalitarianism, despite the fact that Spain is not a country where the development of the democratic principles of the welfare state has reached the same level as the Nordic countries, for example. This faith in education is shared by the young people in the other countries analysed (Rinne et al. 2001).

The young people also consider the myth of equality when they almost unanimously state their preference for a system that offers more opportunities and support for disadvantaged pupils and/or pupils with special educational needs. This expression of solidarity may be the result of having been accustomed to the continuous policy introduced by the LOGSE (1990) of the integration of pupils with special needs into schools. From a comparative viewpoint, equality is also significantly valued by young Portuguese and Swedish pupils, although Finnish youth was less convinced of possible social equality, as were the Australians. Girls have a strong belief in equality, whereas boys are more reticent. There are differences in the manner of understanding the support for pupils with special educational needs: the Swedes and Portuguese favour a solidary educational system that gives more support to pupils with difficulties. However, the young Australians and Finns had less of a tendency towards solidarity with pupils in difficulty, and, particularly, the young Australians valued very strongly that support should be given to highly gifted pupils.

The pupils surveyed also thought that teaching staff tend to favour and pay more attention to more studious pupils and those who show better academic progress (72.3%). However, they do not agree so clearly with the idea that teachers are more favourable towards girls, and even fewer think that teachers treat pupils differently according to their social and family origins. They also interpret that inequality is more a question of individual effort and not sex or family origin, on which they disagree with their European and Australian counterparts, who do think that the family has a decisive influence on success at school and their own future. Nonetheless, despite valuing meritocracy, they also identify with the idea that individual competence should be key in school culture.

The myths of meritocracy and equality contrast with the important research by Martín Criado (1998; 172–173), whose study shows that, despite the devaluation of school certificates, “young people continue to have confidence in school capital as a means of social promotion, (...) they share a project of social promotion based on their confidence and on the returns from investment in school capital. With a meritocratic conception of society, there would be no insurmountable barriers, all could be overcome thanks to individual will and effort”.

7.3.3 Internationalization of Spain: Scepticism on the Advantages of the European Union

Spain's entry into the European Union substantially altered social, economic, political, and educational relations between countries and their citizens. Young people also have their opinions about the expectations and demands associated with joining the EU, and what opportunities or limitations might affect them regarding their future as citizens, students, and workers in a common market.

The study on this question carried out by Prats et al. (2001) concluded that “the majority of young people have a very imprecise and distant view of what the European Union is; a vision which, moreover, does not concern them despite the importance that the decisions taken there will have on their lives” (p. 148). The young people interviewed for the EGSIE replied with scepticism about their attitude to the EU because, despite the legitimacy of the institution according to young people in another study (Elzo et al. 1999), a considerable number choose the “Don't know” option. In any case, they think that the EU promotes peace in Europe and increases equality among citizens because it creates conditions in which the individual has more opportunities. However, they do not consider unanimously that such opportunities are related to the creation of more possibilities for work, and they are notably reticent about other European citizens coming to Spain to work. This same opinion was expressed forcefully by all the other young Europeans and Australians interviewed, who did not accept foreign workers coming to their countries.

The indecisiveness and lack of awareness of the young Spaniards may be due to a lack of information on the EU provided by the education system and the internationalization of Spain, as it can be seen they are unaware of both the advantages and disadvantages of European integration. Opportunities for student and worker mobility have different values for these young people. The girls were especially favourable (58.7%) to encouragement to study in other countries and were agreeable to the idea of foreign students coming to study in Spain (58.2%), which is already taking place under the Erasmus Programme.

However, the results show a different story regarding the question of work. The idea of working abroad is not well received, with 50.4% not being agreeable to encouragement to work in another country, as against 30.3% that would be ready to look for job opportunities in Europe. The older young people did not agree (53.5%) that EU workers should come to Spain, although there is disparity because almost 25% were not against this and the remainder had no set opinion. The girls were most in agreement with foreign workers coming to Spain.

In consequence, the young Spaniards interpret the process of European integration with scepticism, with the “Don't know” option ranging from 30 to 60% in their replies. Prats et al. (2001) stated that “teenagers are in favour of the process with the European Union, but a large percentage of them –around four out of ten– look on it with indifference and disinterest. They are not opposed to it, but neither do they express decided support” (p. 157).

Within this context, the following recent evolution in the case of the European image and the idea of integration in Europe among Spanish youth has some relevance as confronted with the case of other European nations as shown by the Centre for Sociological Research (Spanish acronym CIS), which has for many years been the most important Spanish institution to undertake periodic surveys of the Spanish population on a wide variety of questions, using privileged samples that are significant in the number of participants and the sophistication of research techniques and whose results enjoy full public access. As such, several years ago, in 2009, the CIS carried out an initial inquiry into pro-European feelings in Spain. The survey of 3,459 persons found that Spanish citizens give great importance to belonging to the European Union, with a significant 17.5% of young people from 18 to 34 years who felt purely European, with less allegiance to their country of origin. However, this percentage rose to 65.1% when they were asked about feeling European and Spanish, as against 13.4% of young people, who did not identify particularly with either Spain or Europe. Following this line of research and shifting the question of Europe to only the young Spanish population, in 2014 the INJUVE (National Institute of Spanish Youth) analysed young people's interest in the European Union. The results found that Spanish youth was divided between 51.5% who showed interest in questions relating to the European Union and 48.4% who did not.⁵

But with the economic crisis that began in 2008, and the introduction of neoliberal packages of structural adjustments that became harsher after 2013 with the return of the Popular Party and its policies of flexibility in the labour market, youth unemployment has been creating "new views" among Spanish youth about what had been said before. Unemployment has gradually increased to alarming levels (with higher unemployment rates and more temporary and part-time employment than before the recession or the global financial crisis).⁶ This is why we can state

⁵The INJUVE study concluded that young Spaniards with apparently less strong pro-European feelings have a lower level of education, whereas those with further and university studies tend to be more concerned and better informed about events in Europe. Similar considerations were found in young people who classed themselves as "left-wing", who had stronger pro-European feelings than young right-wingers, although both also considered themselves Spanish nationals. We can therefore conclude that young Spaniards, still suffering serious difficulties in the labour market, view Europe as a way out of these difficulties. The European Union is seen by 34.7% as a means of collaboration and aid among countries, and 13.9% emphasize the importance of travelling and studying in a European country. In short, the conception and attitude of young Spaniards towards the European Union are positive, with as high as 86.6% giving considerable importance to the EU.

⁶The last youth unemployment rate reported in Spain is 37% of youth (the second highest in EU-28 after Greece). According to Eurostat data, for the EU as a whole, the percentage of long-term unemployed young people between 15 and 29 fell from 6% at the beginning of the 2000s to 3% in 2008, and since then has gradually increased until reaching a maximum of 7% in 2013 (Echave and Echave 2017). In the case of Spain, the percentage of young people affected by long-term unemployment (12 months or more) went from 15% in 2007 to 50% in 2015. There are hardly any gender differences in the incidence of this social phenomenon among Spanish youth (Montero González 2017). Unfortunately, this is in fact one of the features of the Southern European model (understood as historical and comparative political economy) whose socio-demographic model is characterized by a lengthening of young people's residential, work, and family dependency, in a context characterized by weak family policies (Domínguez-Mujica and Pérez García 2017: 18).

that higher vulnerability in unemployment, worse working conditions, and more precariousness among the young is something structural in the Spanish job market and something that the crisis has merely made worse.

Consultation of both European and Spanish sources corroborates not only the disadvantaged position of young people (aged 16–29 years) compared to the population as a whole but also the existence of profound inequalities among youth before and during the crisis, where the youngest and women are most precarious and vulnerable because of their differential work characteristics.⁷ In this context, youth emigration has increased in recent years, with the United Kingdom, Germany, and France being the three main countries to which these young people move in search of work (Caro et al. 2018).

7.3.4 Self-Confidence for School Success and Obtaining Education Credentials

Young Spaniards think of themselves as motivated students, who work hard and strive to achieve credentials as a means to open up both educational opportunities, such as post-compulsory studies, and job opportunities, as they state that obtaining an academic certificate gives them better chances of integration in the job market. In general, the young people consider that education is the panacea for all social evils and, of course, for not being unemployed. This discourse found in the social consciousness of youth was common in the 1970s and consistent with the expansion of compulsory education in the developed countries. Now, towards the end of the second decade of the twenty-first century, we might ask if the extension of compulsory schooling, the massification of access to post-compulsory training, the increased obsession with accumulating certificates and the excess of university training (and, by contrast, the lack of numbers choosing VET, although it has become a more popular option for post-compulsory secondary education and higher education (Homs 2009) are elements that contribute to improve equality and are an incentive ensuring the promotion and social rise of young people, or, on the contrary, this situation causes over-qualification.

⁷ Spain has been plagued by high youth unemployment for the last several years (in 1999 the rate reached 25%, falling slowly over the following years until the great recession started in 2008, when it rose gradually to near 48% in 2015 on average for the whole country) (OECD 2018). This dramatic phenomenon of great social concern is also connected to the brain drain, since many Spanish professionals cannot find employment opportunities at home (Aguilar-Palacio et al. 2015; Nelson 2015). Furthermore, between 2007 and 2013 there was an increase of 18.5% in young people between 15 and 24 years who neither studied nor worked (NEET: see <https://data.oecd.org/youthinac/youth-not-in-employment-education-or-training-neet.htm>), where important increases in countries such as Greece, Ireland, or Spain (over 50%) contrast with decreasing trends (only occurring in Luxembourg, Malta, and Germany). The most noticeable cases are Italy (22.2%), Bulgaria (21.6%), Greece (20.4%), Cyprus (18.7%), and Spain (18.6%), as against the lower percentages of Luxembourg (5%), Holland (5.1%), Denmark (6%), and Germany (6.3%) (Ramos et al. 2015).

These young people, perceived as meritocratic, think that certain distinctive qualities are needed for academic success. Specifically, and according to this meritocratic perception, they value highly individual personal qualities to be successful in school, over and above the positive valuation of other family aspects that could have an effect on school performance. Being diligent or constant in study (97.6%), a positive attitude at school (94.4%), talent and personal abilities (80.3%), and even a capacity for rapid adaptation are the most important characteristics for success at school, all more intensely valued by the girls. Other aspects, such as behaving as the teaching staff wants, ambition and the will to compete with others, well-educated parents, being popular among peers or having rich parents (8.6%) are less highly valued, although the boys believe they are more important. These results coincide with the valuation of education by young Swedes, Finns, and Portuguese. They too are meritocratic and value personal qualities and determination in school work over family influence. The boys have a higher belief in competition and being popular among their peers than the girls. The young Australians also think it is important to work hard and have personal skills, although, in comparison with the young Europeans, they give greater importance to being competitive and ambitious. This question is affected by the educational level of the parents, i.e., young people whose parents only have elementary education or VET considered competition and ambition to be much less important.

It is clear that to think one way does not imply behaving that same way, and, as in other questions, the contradiction between discourse and practice can be seen in the young Spaniards, but not so much among the Europeans and Australians, where there is a higher correlation between what they think and what they do. Almost all the Spaniards state that success at school depends on hard work, but only two thirds of those claims to put this into practice in their daily school lives. This proportion is much higher for the girls, who also obtain the best results and have a more positive attitude to work. Apart from personal merit, the academic results seem to bear some relation to cultural and educational aspects of the family. Specifically, the educational levels of the father and mother, as well as their job status, have a positive influence on school success, although we must not discount the fact that the data suggest that students whose parents are employed achieve the lowest percentage of poor or unsatisfactory results. In contrast to what the students suggest (that educational differences depend on personal merit), these data rather seem to indicate that social origin affects the level of school success and also the processes of socio-educational integration and exclusion, which coincides with research by Calero (2006) and Tarabini and Curran (2015).

7.3.5 Myths about the Ideal Job in Time of Uncertainty: Job Stability and Remuneration

Young people in Spain are leaving home at an increasingly late age (Benedicto 2017) because of the difficulty in finding a job, given that youth unemployment is one of the most flagrant social problems (Moreno Mínguez 2012). The young people

surveyed also gave very high importance to everyone's duty to earn their living through work (93.3%), even though the job might not mean that a person felt fulfilled by it. However, they prefer a boring, monotonous job to being unemployed. The girls valued more intensely the ideal of feeling fulfilled by their work, and the boys gave more value to personal enrichment without much effort. These are basically the same attitudes for the young European and Australian participants.

In order to gain access to the job market and be successful in it, the young people considered that certain characteristics were basic, all valued in importance at over 75%: to work a lot, to have a good education, to present suitable habits and attitudes, communicative capacity, flexibility, abilities, and talent, and, to a lesser extent, to have vocational training in a specific field, and the ambition and capacity to compete with others. These aspects once again confirm the meritocratic tendency already evidenced in the educational identity, although the girls valued more intensely effort and appropriate personal aptitudes, and the boys leaned towards ambition and competition in the workplace, which also correlated with those having the best marks on their academic record. Perhaps with the idea of entering the job market, VET was the preference of the older boys still in compulsory education and with lower than average educational performance, who came from families where the parents had elementary education and worked in blue-collar jobs. In the comparative analysis, there were no differences in the perceptions of the young people, except for the importance of competitiveness for the young Australians (Aro et al. 2010) and the fact that the young Portuguese showed a preference for VET.

However, the most important characteristics for choosing future employment do not agree with what the young people would actually wish or choose. Although they consider personal individual characteristics to be very important, in practice the highest value awarded to choice of job is related to the extrinsic benefits, i.e., having a stable job (96.2%) and good remuneration (95.1%), which are conditions found generally throughout the young Europeans and Australians surveyed. Consequently, the myth of a stable job for life, which allows you to have a professional career with good financial rewards, prevails over the possibility of learning and developing, and interacting with other people. Nonetheless, we must question whether these characteristics of an ideal job continue to be real (particularly if we take into account that the high rate of youth unemployment, job flexibility, precarious job contracts, and baseline earnings, among other factors, have reshaped this myth of the steady job and a good salary). Although many young people mention this myth, much more importance is given by the boys to having a significant remuneration for their work, while the girls value being able to develop personally and professionally.

7.3.6 Exclusion and Integration: The Result of Personal Acts by the Individual, Not Family or Social Influence

We were also interested to know the young people's awareness of the factors that could lead them to social exclusion or integration in their future lives. They identified the qualities for success in life as being hard-working or diligent in the workplace, the capacity to mix with other people, and studying as much as possible, with a majority of the girls identifying with these qualities. However, with the exception of the young Australians, little importance was given to being able to compete with others, having well-educated parents, and, with an even lower valuation, having rich parents. Once again, we find personal ability considered as a fundamental value, together with the importance of meritocracy and a low valuation of the cultural, economic, and educational capital of the family. We also find a certain predisposition towards language learning and an interest in new technology.

Unlike other political, teaching, and social actors, the young people surveyed considered the causes of social exclusion to be having poor quality education, not wanting to take risks in life, a person's passivity, not having the will to compete with others, or being unemployed, this last being considered very important by the young Europeans and Australians. However, they did not think that a family with few resources could influence them as a determining factor in their situation of social exclusion or integration, an idea on which they do not differ from other young people. This view confirms the young Spaniards' discourse of strong confidence placed on education and the little influence of family background to be successful in life and not be excluded in society. Moreover, this interpretation has little or nothing to do with the explanation given by other educational actors that family and social background are mainly responsible for exclusion.

For the young Spaniards, unemployment is not considered decisive for social exclusion, despite the fact that they considered having a stable job as the most important thing for their future. As Martín Criado (1998) pointed out, the different agents and groups involved in the job market give different symbolic views and strategies when valuating different situations, such as unemployment. According to the students, coming from a "family with few resources" is an even less decisive factor for causing exclusion. In their view, school is a valuable means of social promotion.

With an egalitarian, solidary discourse taken straight from reforming rhetoric, the Spanish students display, first, a meritocratic and even pragmatic attitude, based on the most individualistic credentialism. They even go so far as to deconstruct these beliefs into the immense possibilities of personal effort, giving numerous examples proving the reproductive capacity of the school system and, therefore, of the determinations of social origin.

7.3.7 Post-compulsory Studies: Differentiated Educational Expectations for Access to University or VET

In the process of building young people's identities, it is important to know how they project their image of the future regarding the continuation of post-compulsory studies. Over half the young people surveyed chose *Bachillerato*, traditionally followed by university studies, before specializing professionally in a field of work. In fact, only 14% chose professional training for their future. This view clashes somewhat with the pragmatism the young people show in other ways and falls into line with the Spanish educational tradition, in which VET has never had much social prestige and has always been "the poor relative of the system" (Lorente García 2012)⁸.

Another variable conditioning the choice of future studies is the estimation of the pupils' academic performance. Only 18% of students confessing to below average marks chose *Bachillerato*, 49.1% chose VET, and only 11% chose university studies. Despite the fact that successive educational reforms have tried to improve the value and image of VET, it continues to have very little demand from students with high academic qualifications (only 9.5%). This symmetry is disturbing, as it shows that school drop-out and the risk of social exclusion are a plausible pairing. It is well known that this type of relations has been the focus of scientific attention for many years. According to the classic analyses of Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) and Bernstein (1988), among others, there are two mechanisms to explain these processes of social reproduction. First, school has a marked cultural bias expressed in an "elaborated code" that privileges certain types of contents more typical of the middle and upper classes. Cultural competence therefore acts as a value that shapes and determines success at school. Second, social difference is associated with the position of each social class—the expectation of achieving a certain type of diploma is closely linked to social class by way of *habitus*.

The social awareness of the young Finns, Swedes, Portuguese, and Australians on continuing post-compulsory studies shows that they all chose post-compulsory training. In Finland and Sweden, almost none of the young people marked the option of not continuing their studies. Access to the university is one way for the young Finns, Swedes, Spaniards, and Portuguese, with no differences by sex. Although the Australian students also opted for university studies, they showed a

⁸ However, we did find significant differences between girls and boys, the former being more apt to consider *Bachillerato* and university, whereas the latter opted more for VET. The students choosing VET were children of blue-collar working parents with basic education. On the contrary, the children of secondary or higher education and white-collar workers basically preferred university. We must also mention that choice of further study according to the employment and education of mothers shows that a great number of students whose mothers are housewives and/or have only primary education have serious doubts about the course of study they want to follow, and many of them choose VET over university courses. Equally, most students whose mothers have secondary studies generally opt for university study, while less choose VET. It therefore seems that the choice between one and other types of further education differs according to the occupational category and education of the fathers and mothers, as has been pointed out in other research on young Spaniards (Fernández de Castro 1990; Martín Criado 1998; Carabaña 1999; Calero 2006).

stronger tendency towards the VET option. The branches of knowledge chosen would lead them in future to hold jobs classified as white-collar.

7.4 Discussion: A Story of Light and Shade on Politics, Policy, and Educational Reforms for Young People in Spain

Spain is now a country that has arisen from a long period of fascist dictatorship, which systematically manoeuvred using rhetorical and symbolic illusions of social change without introducing and implementing deep political and socio-economical transformations. In this context, analysis of the discourse of the actors in the Socialist reform of the 1990s shows it to be an indistinct, ambivalent narration arising out of the gap between a few illuminating intellectual discoveries and darker practical implications. The optimism they express about the social changes occurring during this decade turns to scepticism regarding the changes experienced by the school, which they understand to be not exclusively due to the educational reforms.

These contrasts can probably best be seen among the teaching staff. In-service teacher training, for example, has improved substantially. However, the social prestige of teaching has declined, the practice of the profession has deteriorated (excessive workloads, hard to accept social expectations, etc.), and relations with the political administration have become increasingly strained. Democratization, autonomy, and bureaucratization have become typical factors in the imagery and narratives of school actors. Despite the fact that the educational reform should have meant greater democratization and autonomy of management, the teachers continuously complain of bureaucratization and the deficient administrative organization of education.

On the other hand, the one essential change in the structure of the system brought about by the LOGSE was the extending of obligatory education to the age of 16 years, with the subsequent creation of a new stage of secondary education, i.e., a strong drive towards a comprehensive school. However, this decision has led to numerous problems—shown explicitly during the brief period of economic expansion occurring with the conservative governments after 1995, and even when the Socialists returned after 2004 and until 2008 when the larger crisis became notorious—related to the desire of some pupils to leave the system before that age. Early school-leavers or even school objectors wanted to work in the booming real estate business—a phenomenon also found in the educational discourses of the EU and there was to the excessive diversification of pupils caused by different programs of integration or compensation.⁹ Many school actors believe that this increase in the

⁹We need to bear in mind that the Spanish contemporary growth model has been based on sectors offering little added value (tourism and construction with low technological development). The real estate business generated a certain economic recovery after 1995 with the conservative Popular Party in power, although it really masked the continuity of economic crisis when the real estate bubble burst, when the Socialists were again in power (Buendia and Molero-Simarro 2018).

comprehensive period of instruction is only of benefit to, and actually was invented for, the most disadvantaged pupils, with no regard for those who are characterized as “above average.” These discourses make very clear the tension between comprehensiveness—the typical option of education policies in the welfare state—and efficiency, the preferential aim of neoliberal policies that have been very active in recent years (Simola et al. 2002).

The same constants apply to the relationship between the family and its relation with the school. The family naturally continues to be considered key as a socializing agent and, therefore, essential for the development of the new educational system. Yet its participation in school life—highly valued by the reform—has fallen short of expectations. If the family does not participate, the system begins to break down—this is one of the most repeated conclusions in the interviews analysed, especially when the object of consideration is inclusion and exclusion. For many, the cause of exclusion resides not in the school but in the family, in society, and in the very individuals who suffer it. As registered in our “cognitive unconscious” (Lakoff and Johnson 1999), school, by itself, rarely excludes, although, as a matter of fact, in Spain the family is a key institution for young people, actually the most highly valued. However, as a counterpart, young people think that the family does not influence their exclusion/inclusion processes because they are young meritocrats, and everything depends on their effort and their involvement in school.

This rhetorical exoneration of the school is predictably present in narratives, thought of as symbolism or social imaginaries (that is to say, the subject and society are constituted and instituted imaginatively and as such their meanings are perceived and imagined) (Castoriadis 1997). All this gives this institution called school a sort of “magic aura” inscribed in a “story of salvation” to which all individuals are summoned regardless of their origin or condition and where they are involved in local decision-making that brings government policies closer to the individual (Lindblad and Popkewitz 2004: 84). Although let us first admit that the effect of including the excluded is not necessarily inclusion. As Goodwin (1996) suggested, the frontiers or limits of marginalization are mobile and constantly shifting.

What really happens, then, is that what is in fact a socio-political problem is denaturalized and turned into an individual question of moral or ethical conscience. The narrative effect of this transformation is a host of weak, diffuse images (a “humanitarian soup” as the Spanish leading sociologist Manuel Castells would say) that do not reward reflection or lead to the invention of new creative formulae of governance that could be useful in overcoming the spaces of classification and normalization so firmly embedded in the school system. In fact, these images work as part of a *normalizing of ideology* through precisely “the production of images of human beings that unjustly serve to keep people in their place” (Beach 2017: 199).

In a more general view, we could say that social inclusion-exclusion in the educational sphere causes the emergence of different, socially distorted school cultures. The prevailing models (discourses and imaginary) are those that opt for a school based on success and results, where there are no insurmountable barriers for individual effort and perseverance in study, as against the other models and traditions that put emphasis on social and economic factors (Silver 1994). The question of

equity is translated into a system of reason that labels, differentiates, and divides the subjectivity of educational actors and agents according to certain normalization procedures.

School educates, i.e., it qualifies and capacitates students, but at the same time it normalizes them depending on their comprehension of and proximity to this new and all embracing, but likewise contradictory, legitimacy. This “new legitimacy” has been queried in various ways by educational actors, whose image of the school is distinct from that optimistically presented by the Socialist reform of the 1990s. Many of them felt tired and disappointed upon seeing how, behind all the modernizing rhetoric of efficiency and quality, there remains an insufficiently creative school guided by traditionalist models and values. The future is uncertain. Freedom and autonomy are a mirage, and the level of student achievement continues to drop alarmingly (in particular in secondary education). Teachers are trapped by the demands of the educational authorities, the families, and society, but above all they feel they are undervalued and alone in the face of a task that is beyond them. The “ideal” student imagined and desired by the educational reform, society, and teachers bears little resemblance to the “real” unmotivated and even aggressive student who is actually present in the classroom (González Faraco 2003). School has changed, but its future is the murkiest image of all.

Such scepticism and uncertainty contrast with the extraordinary confidence shared by the vast majority of the educational community in the egalitarian condition of today’s school. The same is not true when deciding on the reasons for failure and exclusion. For the students, it is a fundamentally personal process, whereas for the other educational actors, its origin is essentially social. The latter admit self-exclusion but consider that exclusion is a socially produced artefact (Jamrozik and Nocella 1998) and that only society is capable of setting it right, so that the initial confidence in the school’s integrating capacity now becomes doubtful. However, no one doubts that public and private schools (a decisive duality in the Spanish educational system) differ in their perception of social inclusion and exclusion and other closely linked concepts such as “equal opportunity”, “attention to diversity”, and “school autonomy”.

Taking these differences into account, the most widespread impression is still that the school cannot solve problems that society has not been able to solve heretofore, that it is not ready to accept all sorts of pupils and that it has little to offer pupils with difficulties, who end up excluding themselves. Therefore, it merely confirms the marginalization of those that society has already marginalized. Consequently, for many educational actors, progress towards cultural plurality, which should not be a plurality of cultures but a plurality of culturally defined communities (Bauman 2000: 86), is no more than a beautiful dream.

This confused panorama presents many interrogatives, but there is one above all, directly related to education and its relations with social inclusion and exclusion, that we find especially worrying: what is to become of the school system and those involved in it if it is not openly recognized that its capacity for exclusion, differentiation, and segregation remains intact, even though it is masked and hidden beneath flowery rhetoric?

7.5 The Relevance of Educational Research in the Forming of a European Union Policy: By Way of Conclusion

One of the main contributions of the EGSIE project studied in this chapter consisted of describing the social imaginary of young students on concluding their compulsory education from a comparative viewpoint. As actors in the education system, the students were not examined in depth from the viewpoint of the new practices of governance, despite their being one of the main actors. The conclusion of compulsory education represents a key moment to begin the processes of juvenile transition, which are determined by the construction of discursive imaginaries on the importance of education and training, work, and the qualities required to be successful in life. These aspects give meaning to the configuration of de-standardized transitions that do not follow a classic linear trajectory and cannot be understood unless they are interpreted in a changing socio-structural context, in which belonging to the European Union appears as a possible horizon for the development of expectations of transition for young people. This was found particularly in the case of Spain, in comparison to the other countries analysed. Even today, one might say that the social imaginary of Spaniards in general regarding Europe and Europeans continues to be attractive, more so than for the rest of EU nations together.

The description of the young people's social imaginary was carried out following three analytical categories used in the theoretical framework of the research and which we believe give theoretical consistency to the analysis. Just before the new century began, the category of "narratives, sagas and myths" described how young people constructed and idealized the changes they wished to achieve for their project of school life, taking into account that those changes were contextualized by official discourse that visibilized and continues to visibilize the school as a space offering better social opportunities. This belief that young people have in the education system is legitimized by a discourse in which equality and trust in the school conform a myth of their social imaginary.

The "subject construction" category laid the basis for the identification of the images, perceptions, and qualities that the young people have or idealize for their transition processes to imply success at school and in work. In this case, they showed a meritocratic conception for the achievement of success, both in the school and at work. After a long crisis from which Spain has not fully emerged, these images have been considerably eroded and devalued. It is not for nothing that one of the choices young Spaniards have been taking in recent years has been to leave Spain in search of work. This general emigration towards Europe is not the same as that undertaken by their grandparents or parents, many of whom were born abroad, because many of the young now emigrate after concluding their university studies.

In any case we have to point out that the "governance, social inclusion and exclusion" category of the EGSIE project referred to forms of governance found in the schooling and education received by these young people, which build and give identities for action and participation and, naturally, influence the processes of social inclusion and exclusion of these same young people. Far from having been sufficiently researched in Spain, it remains of interest to know and understand the

perceptions of young people today concerning the qualities necessary for success in juvenile transitions, the influence of individual, family, and social factors, and their expectations for the future.

As part of an important publication on education policy, this chapter represents a singular case of scientific literature that is not really well known in the European context and is intellectually removed in various ways from well-known policy analysis studies, traditionally in debt to conventional North American approaches in several aspects. As we have already said, the EGSIE project formed part of the European Union's Framework Programmes for Research (FPR) that was set up in 1984. Over the last 30 years, these programmes have led to the development and identification of specific goals and priorities for a European research policy. At first heavily influenced by the North American policy of research and innovation (R+I), these programmes began to encourage the competitiveness of European industry and technology and have extended their priorities to include questions belonging to the social sciences that were not considered priority until the approval of FPR4 in 1994 under the denomination *Targeted Socio-Economic Research Programme*, including the EGSIE project. This FPR has been considered one of the most far-reaching (Finnegan 2015), because it introduced the need to analyse the economic and social effects of the technological changes taking place, including the consequences for the labour market and unemployment.

In the following FPR, the areas of influence continued to consider the need to support policy-oriented research that affected the achievement of solutions to such problems, as well as further, emerging ones. By means of these FPR, the European Commission has acted as a policy entrepreneur ("that is its skills to keep long-term pan-European goals, at the same time as using the situation as a 'window of opportunity' to expand the scope of its political arena/competences" (Kaiser and Prange-Gstöhl 2012: 60). Furthermore, with the launching in 2000 of the so-called Lisbon Strategy Agenda, the EU set the goal of creating a knowledge-based society and becoming the most competitive and dynamic economy using the three instruments of knowledge, education, and research and innovation. The creation of the European Research Area (ERA), the improvement in standards of education and training, with emphasis on mobility, and the development of programmes promoting Lifelong Learning, in the context of a cohesion policy focused on reducing economic inequality by boosting growth, have been encouraging the use of structural funds in the area of research and innovation (Milio 2012).

The present programme called Horizon 2020 (2014–2020) has involved the greatest financial contribution of the European Union to research. The final budget is 80 million euros for R+D over 7 years. On average, about 9% of the EU budget has gone to research and innovation over the past decade. Recently, the EU has required most of its member states to invest much more in domestic R+I systems, even under its budgetary policies of austerity.¹⁰

¹⁰Unlike the FPR focused on technological research, in search of an innovative discursive framework, Horizon 2020 shows how the scientific policy of the EU is seeking a new semantics prioritizing innovation, economic growth, and policy improvement. In fact, this programme has three main

Last year, 3 years altered the setting up of Horizon 2020, the European Parliament approved the Resolution of 13 June 2017 on the evaluation of the execution of Horizon 2020, as well as the recommendations for the upcoming FPR9, Horizon Europe. Some of the transversal questions pointed out are the need to promote the importance of collaboration in research in universities, research centres, industries, and other actors, i.e., the triple helix model and the achievement of “excellence”¹¹ as an essential evaluation criterion for the three pillars of the programme.

In this context, the place of the social sciences, education sciences, and humanities has been under-represented in the different framework programmes, as recognized by the EU itself. However, for them to be considered, they must be integrated into the designs of interdisciplinary research, not just as an afterthought to technological projects, in a conception of science not merely part of or related to the traditional academic disciplines, but “explored in the area of interdisciplinary engagement and [rather with the plea] for a significant broadening of research approaches, albeit one in which interactional research would feature prominently. This represents an investment in our future because if we can understand better how interdisciplinary research gets done, we can find ways of doing it better, and in doing it better we can enhance its contribution to the world in which we live” (Seongsook and Richards 2017: 267).

Recently, Zapp et al. (2018) analysed European education research and pointed out that political interests have profoundly transformed the goals and type of research that should be promoted. On the one hand, government intervention is legitimized in planning and programming educational research, and, on the other, it is shown that the EU and international organization are influencing the formulation of national policies.¹² In this way, the FPR represents the most important motor for

areas of research known as “pillars”. The first of these is “Excellent Science”, aimed at encouraging basic research, the second is “Industrial Leadership”, aimed at encouraging strategies of industrial innovation, and the third, “Societal Challenges” with 39% of the budget, aimed to develop policies to improve social and economic problems. Within this new discursive framework, basic research has been redefined as “frontier research” and has been institutionalized by the creation of the European Research Council. On the other hand, applied research is linked to the rhetoric of “great challenges” (Kaldewey 2013).

Nonetheless, one of the weak points of the whole policy of the FPR is its lack of evaluation as policy. It is only in the last few years that solid research has begun to be published on it, generally of an independent nature. Recently, the European Commission has been receiving calls to “to provide a broader definition of ‘impact’, considering both economic and social effects, by stressing that the assessment of the impact of fundamental research projects should remain flexible and... maintain the balance between bottom-up and top-down calls and to analyze which evaluation procedure... is more useful to avoid oversubscription and to conduct quality research” (see the assessment of Horizon 2020 implementation in view of its interim evaluation and the Framework Programme 9 proposal, and point 16 on Evaluation states at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A8-2017-0209+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>).

¹¹ Flink and Peter (2018) have recently analyzed how the concepts of “excellence” and “frontier research” have structured the political agenda, financing and evaluation of European research.

¹² More specifically, Kaldewey (2013) similarly suggested that the list of problems presented by the German Ministry of Education coincided with that of the European Commission and becoming central themes for European scientific policy. Symptomatically, themes such as poverty, education or unemployment figured in second place.

the Europeanization of research policy by way of their influence on the determination of research agendas and the creation of conditions to establish academic networks producing European educational research. In short, the move is towards increasing isomorphism in the types and formats of research produced.

The EGSIE project is one of the only cases of specifically educational research financed by the European Commission, i.e., one proposed by scholars and academic communities of educationalists which, in the framework of expanding points of view and flexibility that the latest FPR projects approved have not fully enjoyed, attempted to clarify and provide complex but valid answers to peremptory problems of a period of change. The search is of sound inquiry to identify the multiple mechanisms pushing exclusion, and lack of integration of youth in the context of ever more complex societies. Being or not inherently of rhetorical nature, these mechanisms have been leading in effect to an increase in economic inequality and its transmission into educational inequality—which is also political—and both are mutually reinforcing.

When the EGSIE Project was thought, the governance of educational systems on the stage in which it is currently producing internationally was only in its early present stages. In fact, this project was finished and sent to Brussels just at the beginning of the year in which the first PISA test results were going to be internationally launching after being applied to 265,000 thousands of young school boys and girls of 24 OECD countries plus 4 additional partners in 2000. Ten years later, “data production and management” have become central to the new governance until transforming today into a real “network governance”, which combines vertical, vertebrate, bureaucratic approaches with horizontal, cellular, and media networks across sectors and in the context of globalization across scales and spaces (Ozga 2012; Ball and Junemann 2012). In conclusion, the introduction of new regulating technologies and fields of governance in education, presented in models for governance by numbers and results dealing with large-scale assessments of international study shown through list ranking (this is not only for the case PISA, which is now diversified in different formats) (Pereyra et al. 2011; Lindblad et al. 2018a) has given birth to an “era of transnational governance”.

As a priority intellectual enterprise, an urgent implication of all this for us “is the demand for critical analysis of the premises for educational knowledge and strategies for educational change ... [in order] is to capture the interaction between different actors with their interests and the politics of knowledge in transnational and national governance and policymaking” (Lindblad et al. 2018a: 18). In this sense, we believe that the EGSIE project in which we were involved proudly was an accurate work of scholarship, but also an experience of intellectual global.

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Part III

Government, and Education Governance

Chapter 8

Retrospect and Prospect: Overview of 30 Years of Education System Reform in China



Kaisheng Lao

The reform of a country's educational system is a concrete historical process in terms of its macro-societal changes in the context of its structuring of educational institutions. Such innovative changes to any given educational institution can be considered to be a rational decision reached by social participants; therefore, the issue of reform rationality, which often rests upon certain ethical values, is of central importance. Given this, any rational decision-making regarding social change can be ultimately presented as a choice of guiding values. Equity, justice, public rationality, and public interest are the chief values by which the current Chinese educational system is measured. These values reflect not only the leading social zeitgeist but also the realistic needs and active pursuits of social participants. Therefore, they ought to serve as the basic principles for educational reform.

China's educational reform has experienced three tumultuous and eventful decades since its advent in 1985. This government-led reform has completely reshaped the landscape of China's educational system. While the general public has begun to recognize the merits of past changes, they are also simultaneously contemplating future changes. Attempting to overview these three decades of reform is conducive not only to the objective understanding of reformatory process extracting experiences therein but also to the informed prediction of developmental directions so as to more rationally direct future reforms.

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8.1 Global Reconstruction of Public Education

The global public educational system has undergone tremendous changes in the last 20 years. The magnitude of such changes has been attributed to general discontent with the scale, speed, quality, and efficiency of the development of public education. People are seeking an educational system that pursues higher equality, coverage, quality, and standards. The educational reform of a number of countries has been focused on opposing government-led and all-taxpayer-supported colossus educational machines, thereby placing the public educational sphere under increasing social pressure. Throughout the 1980s, reforms having astonishingly similar forms emerged in several countries with emphasis on contesting the monopoly of public education. These countries enacted a series of policies to rehash their public educational institution through marketization and privatization, attempting to reconstruct the relationship between state and education, government and schools, and schools and students or their parents. This can be understood as part of a broader process of globalization in terms of economy, politics, and culture. During this process, the educational reform of various countries has faced some common issues, and the borders between countries have never been more ambiguous (Whitty et al. 2003; He 2008).

8.1.1 Common Issues Faced by Different Countries

Since the birth of modern education, the social demand for education has always been met by two channels, the formal and the informal. In the earlier stages of human social development, when education was distinct from social production and social life, people consciously trained their children in rudimentary laboring skills and living norms; however, this kind of education was only primitively combined with social life. Hence, education in its primal stages was mostly informal, that is, passed on from one generation to the next hand-in-hand. When human knowledge continued to become richer and mature, its impartation became increasingly critical. In the meantime, education gradually became a part of daily routine, and it is at this stage that spontaneous educational activities began to form a domain of specialized human activities alongside social production and social life. To a large extent, education shifted from the informal channel to the formal, meaning that it began to be provided chiefly by specialized institutions and professionalized faculties. With further progression of education, its formal provision entailed two forms, the public channel and the market channel. Public-channel education was offered by the state and its affiliate municipal administrations or churches, whereas the market channel consisted of profit-seeking individuals and organizations.

In the history of education, the birth of the public educational institution that had the function to popularize education was tightly entwined with social modernization. In the nineteenth century, family-based education faced dire challenges due to the burgeoning emergence of numerous public schools. The accentuation of schooling shifted from the general public to formal public institutions, and as such, formed the

foundation of public education. This was one of the rational choices made within the process of modernization. In a majority of countries, the finalized systems of public education after World War II were all funded and spearheaded by the government and delivered to social participants via a non-market channel. Thus, public education became deeply rooted in the national political and social life and driven by political orders under nationalism, which had a profound influence on the educational quality and efficiency of schools. The effect of nationalism upon education was bi-faceted. In terms of advantages, the strong interference of the state in education largely accelerated the popularization of education guaranteeing equal opportunity. In terms of disadvantages, nationalism gave rise to state monopoly over education resulting in a series of abuses to education such as over-staffing and decrease in efficiency among educational organizations, the suppression of popular voices and the passive reception of education (the lack of individual free choice) among students. Therefore, the problems with the public educational institution ought to be attributed to institutional problems themselves. The advocates of public educational reforms held that traditional public education, although beneficial to the popularization and development of education, led to the formation of rigid regulations and strict hierarchy, which exacerbated over-staffing, led to decrease of efficiency of educational organizations, and derailed schools farther away from their initial goals. They thus failed to meet the students' and parents' demand for diversity and self-choice in education. In the 1980s and 1990s of the last century, the general public believed that the public educational institution needs to urgently reconsider traditional way (Lao 2009).

8.1.2 Redefinition of Governmental Educational Functions

The institutional reforms of worldwide governments in the 1970s and 1980s have prompted those governments to reflect upon their omnipotent and all-inclusive grand-government mode and modifying themselves to handle the relationships between the government and market and those between government and society more skillfully. From a modern standpoint, governmental functions have two aspects, to solve market dysfunction and to promote social justice. In terms of the first aspect, the government proffers public goods, resolves various public problems, regulates monopolizing corporate behaviors, overcomes the imbalance of market information, coordinates nongovernmental conducts, secures market development, etc. In terms of the second, the government seeks to protect the socially disadvantaged groups, enforces social-security plans, establishes social welfare, actively engages in capital re-configuration, etc.

The abovementioned governmental functions can be further dissected into fundamental function, intermediary function, and positive function. With regard to fundamental function in the context of resolving market dysfunctions, the government should be providing pure public goods such as national defense, law-making, public hygiene system, macro-economic management, etc. In the context of enhancing social justice, the government should emphasize the protection of socially disadvantaged groups, enforce anti-poverty drives, eliminate diseases, etc. With regard

to intermediary function in the context of solving market dysfunction, the government should incorporate solution-finding for an assortment of public issues (such as providing mandatory education and environmental preservation), regulating monopolizing corporate conducts (such as enacting monopoly laws and implementing anti-monopoly policies), and overcoming information imbalance (such as establishing social insurance system, financial law system, and consumer right protection system). In terms of promoting social justice, the government is obligated to provide social insurance, such as allocating pension, unemployment insurance, and women's rights preservation mechanisms. With regard to active function in the context of resolving market dysfunctions, the government should engage in the coordination of activities in the public sphere, boost market development, and promote the formation of various social measures. In terms of social justice, the government should more actively engage in the re-allocation of social capital.

Specific to the educational sphere, governmental functions mainly entail the appropriation of funding for host activities aiming to promote the equality of educational opportunities at all levels and scale. The government should also simultaneously conceive and implement national educational standards and incentivize social groups to provide education and establish specialized schooling mechanism to guarantee the independent status of social educational institutions. The cultivation of teaching staff and established professionalized teaching managerial mechanisms should be encouraged (The World Bank 1997: 26–27).

Based on the governmental functions above, although the government plays a leading role in the provision of education, particularly rudimentary education, the government is certainly not the sole provider of education. In fact, the government's role in the funding and modulation of education has to be considered within the framework of the mutually restrictive and mutually supportive relationship between market and society. Literally, worldwide political reforms have given rise to the reconstruction of public education, governmental function in education has experienced fundamental changes in this wave of reform, and a brand-new relationship between schools and administration is being born.

8.1.3 Means of Reforms in Marketization and Privatization

The state and the public, or the administration and the market constitute the two poles of the society for public schools. It is, therefore, held by many that the importation of nongovernmental strength in education and the market-economical mechanism can help change the stagnant educational status quo (Whitty et al. 2003: 3–4). They hope that marketization and privatization reforms that will introduce market economic factors to solidify the foundation of market economy will elevate the independence of schools to break the confines of administrative institutions (Yan 2011).

In the process of the reconstruction of public educational institutions, different countries have enacted and implemented a series of relevant educational policies focusing on introducing cross-the-board participation and free market competition

into schools by means of promoting the reconstruction of educational marketization. In order to escape excessive control by the government and completely solve existing problems facing public schools, a number of countries have made fundamental adjustments to their educational functions from the conventional direct interference to indirect interference. Simultaneously, these governments have also been attempting to establish public educational systems centered on the autonomy of schools and free choice of students and their parents to reshape the old functioning model monopolized by the state, aiming to eventually boost the performance of public education. American public schools, under the auspices of private companies and the liberal support of the government, have enjoyed successful reforms to a large extent. Participation of the private sector has revitalized the reforms, resulting in the rise of chartered public schools during the trend of privatization campaign. Supporters of privatization believe that this could largely change the unitary status quo of governmental school-running and elicit sources outside the administration such as social groups, corporations, and able individuals to co-host education in order to provide more diversified educational services for students and parents and to enable various schools to fulfill the educational needs of learners at different levels. The privatization of public schools can also commit purchases of public services from educational organizations by channels of indentures or inter-governmental contracts that can free the government from the rigmaroles of single-handedly running public schools.

Overall, the promotion of marketization and privatization has been a critical reformative ideology to enhance the efficiency and quality of public education. Smaller government, better services, broader social participation, and fairer and more efficacious education have been the common theme of educational reforms of a variety of countries. The reshaping of school-government relations and the assistance provided to improve educational efficacy and quality have become the principle characteristics of educational reform.

8.1.4 Major Measures to Reconstruct Public Education

School Independence: In order to establish schools that fit the market situation better, the reforms in many countries have delegated powers to public schools. Such power includes financing, personnel redistribution, and policy-making. This move seeks to transform schools into independently functioning educational entities. The foremost reason for promoting school independence is that educational service has certain technological requirements. Education is based upon interpersonal relationship, communication, and the feedback for such communication. It is also based upon the knowledge, skills, and experiences of the teaching faculty. Hence, the technological resources that a school needs lie in itself, not in policy-making or at the higher-up administrative level. The second reason is the huge conflict between definitive behavioral requirements and strict disciplinary standards under hierarchical management and high-quality education. The uncertainty of education activities has given rise to an objective and quantified way to measure concrete activities,

namely the process and outcome of schools, which has heavily influenced the control of educational management over the entire educational working process. The third reason derives from market requirement. The primary goal of schools is to satisfy the needs of their potential customers. School staff performs exchanges with students and parents every day; they know them better than the management and are more capable to adopt more flexible measures to improve school services and to enhance educational quality. In terms of the division of power, the most creative solution is teacher empowerment and school-based management, that is, to provide a better environment to the schools that are suffering from low efficiency in terms of empowering their teaching staff. Typical self-managed schools are mainly the so-called chartered schools, which are the new-type schools legally authorized by the government. Although chartered schools are fully funded by the government, they are managed by private individuals. With the exception of complying with agreed upon educational goals, chartered schools are not bound by common educational administrative regulations. As such, the reforms of chartered schools are implemented in an exceptional manner that gradually turns former public schools into private and self-managed educational institutions, which boosts the quality of service provided by public schools for educational consumers (Feng 2004: 135).

Choosing Schools: Typical public schools are mostly under the theoretical guidance of governmental management, aiming to increase convenience, rather than student management, which has proved to be more conducive to the growth of students. Therefore, this management system is run under governmental monopoly. Under governmental management, all school participants have to follow the instructions provided by the local government, and children are required to enroll in the nearest institution rather and are deprived of the basic right to choose their own target schools. A considerable number of parents are forced to choose private schools for their children on account of their varying situations. However, this type of choice is largely affected by the occasional rigorous entry standards of private schools in terms of the intellect, specialties, and familial background of the young applicants. In addition, choosing private schools also entails significantly higher tuitions, which feeds the sense of injustice among many because the private-school-opting families have already paid their children's public school tuition by paying taxes, and these families have to make a second payment to private schools. For this reason, people appeal to include the right to choose schools freely into the scope of basic educational rights; families need to have the liberty of choice instead of adhering to governmental assignment to designated schools. School-choosing policies ought to encompass a series of concrete stipulations that aim to enhance pupil and parental liberty such as open enrolment, chartered schools, indenture projects, tuition reductions, and educational tax-free financial deposit. These policies highlight the obligations and responsibilities of the providers and the consumers of education, particularly the free choice on the consuming end (students, parents, and society), and allow free choice to play a role in important life decisions. Therefore, school-choosing policies have brought about a ground-breaking change with a compulsory hue to conventional public educational institution and become the spearhead of public-school reform (Friedman 1986: 96–111).

Competition: Introducing higher levels of competition into education signifies the end of traditional governmental instructions in the adjustment of education and the rise of market competition mechanism. What used to be accomplished by the administration has now become the job of educational institutions or some intermediary institutions, such as fiduciary institution, agencies, and other autonomous institutions, and become implemented under a type of new competitive mechanism. The government has extricated itself from its past position in providing educational services and is in the process of learning to adjust and allocate educational opportunities with higher efficiency by virtue of the comprehensive policy lever that maintains governmental strategic maneuver over education. Competition has effectively reduced educational costs while ensuring high educational quality and promoting school performance. Competitive mechanism offers students a true chance of free choice that in turn urges educational institutions to satisfy variegated consumer needs with higher flexibility. Under the force of this mechanism, economic goals will enjoy the brightest spotlight, and the market shall find itself in the dominant position in the sector of education. For instance, going abroad for education has become the new fashion for consumption. Overseas education shares a variety of characteristics commonly found in global trade and commodity's exportation. Many advantageous countries in this respect have already re-directed their attention toward the hungry world market that has witnessed exponential growth in the number of international students, and advanced education is gaining popularity all over the globe. This alone has prompted high-education institutions worldwide to more actively engage in heated competitions seeking higher gross that has increased the complexity of the relationship between market and education (Shi 2005).

Indentured Education or Educational Voucher Theory: This theory was proposed by American scholar Milton Freidman in 1955. He was the first to recognize the problem of injustice caused by educational monopoly in public education, that is, those who opt for private education are bound to pay tuition a second time given that the first time was paid via taxation. In order to eliminate said injustice, Milton proposed indentured education as the demonstrative means of educational justice (Friedman 1986: 87–96). This indentured system became a common practice in the 1980s under which children and teenagers could acquire an indenture by which their parents could send the next generation to any school of the families' own choosing. The parents then submit their indentures to the school at enrolment, and the schools use them to exchange funding accounts accordingly from the administration. The merit of this system is that it eliminates the unreasonable phenomenon of paying second tuitions and guarantees educational equality in this respect. Meanwhile, it also reflects the free choice of individual families. Lastly, education by indenture encourages schools to introduce bigger efforts into the enhancement of quality given the fiercer competitive environment.

8.2 China's Educational Reform Since the 1980s

The public educational system in China emerged almost a century later than Western countries. However, after having undergone a developmental stage of approximately 100 years, the Chinese public educational system bloomed. In terms of positive aspects, this system fully motivated resources and strengths from every front accelerating the popularization of education and radically altered the vicissitudes of Chinese education. Nevertheless, China's public education system underwent a similar trajectory as the West including the problematic phase of governmental monopolization.

Even though the reforms of the 1980s were primarily targeted at China's own problems, and hence had their unique traits in terms of developmental logic, these reforms exhibited remarkable similarities with a number of other countries, indicating that a certain type of bad fate had been shared in a manner beyond political and cultural borders; such degree of universality was not coincidental.

8.2.1 *The Emergence of Educational Reform in China*

Although it emerged a century later than the West, China's public educational system took on an all-encompassing look after long-time development, and the vicissitudes of Chinese education underwent fundamental changes. However, like Western countries, China's public educational institution was also led mainly by the state. Hence, state monopoly of the development of public education had always been a serious issue. Things worsened since the Chinese Emancipation in 1949. Planned economy significantly influenced the function of education, and public educational institution was re-purposed into a government-founded, plan-adjusted, enclosed, and centralized system. In the 1980s, when China marched toward Reform and Opening, the most important issue facing education was to revamp the old system and build a new one that was convenient both for administrative coordination and the active elicitation of different social groups to partake in running schools, a system that granted schools significantly more liberty.

Educational reform began with the release of invigoration. Toward the end of 1979, four university presidents from Shanghai wrote a joint article in the *People's Daily*, calling for reform of advanced education and the liberation of educational institutions. Their appeal generated strong social reactions (Su et al. 1976). The broadening of school independence, an encouraging contributions from all social groups have become the most vocal demands and major break-through points for every education-themed reform since.

Given the above background, how can we accurately comprehend the release of vitality in education? It is my contention that two basic pairs of relations ought to be captured:

The first is the relationship between the government and schools. Under a chronic planned economy, the control and adjustment to the Chinese society relied upon an extra-economical political institution. The chief engine of the institution was rule by people, which placed every sector of the society under governmental reach. The excessive strengthening of governmental influence caused the shrinking of socially independent power, and the situation in the educational sector was no different. In this case, the basic issue to address for the waves of educational reform in the 1980s was to change the framework of power allocation between the government and schools. To achieve this, the functions of the government had to change, which meant the delegation of power on specific affairs under the overall enforcement of governmental macro-management, which was bound to alter to no smaller extent both the comparative power structure and a portion of the legal relationship of some administrative nature between government and school. This type of institutional reform led to a complete split between the roles of the government and school; their relationship became one of host, school-runner, and manager, which patently effected the traditional allocation of educational power of China and posed an existential challenge to the new governmental role.

The second relationship was between education and market. An extremely critical factor that motivated the educational development of China was the social transition from a planned economy toward market economy. This transition encouraged the shift of the old integrated Chinese social structure toward one that was more diffuse, resulting in the birth of a new social sector in this process, the market. The adjustment to this sector was predicated upon fair exchange and fair competition under the economic rule of the market rather than the previous extra-economic political strength. Thus, in educational reform, the public educational institution was confronting a new social institution that was entirely different from the original planned economy, namely the market economy. Market interference made the positions of all social groups undergo evident changes, particularly the varied, re-adjusted relationship between the government and schools. The government, the market, and schools had become three inter-connected and inter-cancelling forces, and their respective rights and obligations needed to be redistributed under new institutional conditions.

8.2.2 Three Phases of the Reform and Educational Institution

According to the change in dynamics, the 30-year Chinese educational reform can be divided into the following phases: the first was the decade between 1985 and 1995 or “the First 10 Years”; the second was between 1995 and 2005 or “the Second 10 Years”; and the last was after 2005, when the contradictions from previous reforms began to erupt and a series of new complexities came to the fore, which began to be represented as the “Post Reform Era.”

8.2.2.1 The First 10 Years

The CCCPC issued *The Decisions on Reforms of Educational Institution* (henceforth referred to as *Decisions*) on May 27, 1985, stipulating that China should “cut in from educational institution and conduct reform systematically.” This document signified the beginning of educational reforms. These decisions particularly emphasized the reinforcement of macro-management, the implementation of simplified administration and the delegation of power, and the enlargement of schooling independence. Therefore, to revamp the old system built upon planned economy and to re-define the relationship between the state and school, simplified administration and power delegation became the prioritized goals of reform. Moreover, these goals were evidently mentioned and specifically regulated in the *Decisions*. In the meantime, the *Decisions* stipulated that education on the fundamental level should be provided under the principles of divided responsibilities of localities and hierarchical management. In terms of professional education, the *Decisions* clarified that the active participation of state-owned enterprises and administrative units should be encouraged and that the collective school-running strength of groups and individuals should be summoned. The professional schools, in addition to cultivating talents for departments of public units, should also accept the authorization from other units to groom professionals for a fee. In terms of advanced education, the *Decisions* sought to loosen control over the managerial structures of advanced educational institutions and to broaden their independence in school running under united national educational principles and plans. In addition, they were encouraged to enforce the associations between schools and production, technological innovation, and other social spheres, in order to increase the capability and activeness in their adaptation to suit the need of economic and social developments.

Notably, the notion of “independent school-running” proposed by university principles first reached official documentations; it transformed from myth to reality. This meant that in the reform characterized by simplified administration, the *Decisions’* proposal included two aspects, namely the delegation of power from the central government to the local and then to respective schools. The re-allocation of administrative power was not limited within governments, from the central to the local, but also from within governments to schools.

Nonetheless, simplified administration has not always been a smooth journey; in fact, retroactive power retraction occurred in every phase of reform. Hence, power delegation and retraction were a pair of mutually competing ideas. The power delegation that began in 1985 led to a chaotic situation by the end of the 1980s. For instance, the scale of advanced education drastically increased to the point where the government had to impose restrictive measures. Therefore, power delegation was not a mere transfer of power; it gave rise to a number of subsequent issues. Right around this juncture, the issue of controlling educational scale and re-directing attention to engineering restrictive measures surfaced, and the process of power retraction then emerged. When viewed thus, power simplification was a circulatory process that always led back to its beginning. Reforms at this phase had the manifestation of power simplification, yet judging from its engine mechanism, the

delegation of power had not originated from lower social levels, but from the level of movers and shakers. Therefore, reform at this stage came from the design, planning, and promotion of decision-makers and was implemented with the distinctive characteristic of a top-down, all-compliant governmental mandate.

8.2.2.2 The Second 10 Years

The 1993 version of *China's Outline on Educational Reform and Development* (henceforth referred to as *Outline*) was the second national document on educational reform from the CCCPC, and it could be seen as the mark of the second 10-year period. In comparison to the 1985 *Decisions*, the 1993 *Outline* implemented a measure of continuity in policy, but it also demonstrated evident shift in direction. Since 1985, the goals of the reforms to delegate power had not been completely realized. This was not merely due to the entangled power relationship between government and schools but also due to the resounding effects of the burgeoning market economy, which increased the complexity of the said relationship. Hence, the most pressing issue in the *Outline* was how to continue adhering to simplified administration and power delegation, because educational reforms appeared to be delving headfirst into the negative circulation of “delegation, chaos, retraction and relapse.” Meanwhile, the general reformative environment of China was undergoing tremendous changes, and it began to make way into the new stage of establishing a “market economy with socialist characteristics.” The change in the macro-environment led to changes in educational reforms. When the market economy grew into a new factor that education had to confront, the conventional and relatively crude relationship between the administration and public schools began to transform into that among administration, public schools, and the market. In the education sector, the topic pertaining to the new bond between education and market gained considerable attention, and all expectations were placed on the newly emerged Chinese market. The influence of this new factor is amply apparent in the 1993 *Outline*. In the *Outline*, despite the continuity of the 1985 *Decisions*, one important breakthrough was the recognition of the need to build an educational system adaptable to the new socialist market economy, which was a previously unprecedented phenomenon. The *Outline* also proposed to utilize financial and credit means to raise educational funds and to develop school-based industries and social services, provision of the necessary logistics for society, new faculty appointment system, new charge system in advanced educational institutions, etc. The *Outline* was an official statement declaring the relationship between education and the market, which provided political back-up for public schools to take advantage of the market.

Another critical change that transpired at the second stage was that of the dynamic mechanism of the reform. As mentioned above, the reform had previously been following the top-down principle of uniform compliance to higher power, and hence, it was almost always compulsory. However, since 1995, new instrumental characteristics started to emerge that were completely different from previous reforms. After the first 10 years, public schools started to bear the mark of some

profoundly re-grouped, even fundamentally different functions. Their behavioral ability and behavioral mode underwent some substantive changes. In this scenario, internally, public schools started to illustrate spontaneous actions related to institutional reform. The dynamic behind reforms no longer derived from top-down governmental will, but from profitable opportunities derived from institutional imbalance. Driven by economic interest, the direction of reform began to derail from the original path. This change resulted in the changes in public schools having some characteristics of induced institutional shift. The institutional roots of state-monopolized public education were finally shaken. Therefore, the state monopoly after 1949 was broken at the end of 1980s. The first breakers of state monopoly were private schools. They had been banned after 1949, but they re-emerged at the end of the 1980s. Due to their growing significance in meeting various social educational demands, private schools enjoyed rapid development within a short duration. Until the mid-1990s, private schools became an unignorable educational force. From then, the government and social strength both became major powers in hosting schools. The social provision of education began to be performed in two different channels, the public channel and the market channel. These two channels displayed an ever-varying competitive bond with each other. Unlike public schools funded by public financial maintenance, private schools funded themselves via private capital, and market mechanism was their main form of running their institutions, and they provided educational services through a non-market, public mechanism. The co-existence of two parallel mechanisms caused institutional imbalance; the new relationship mode between private schools and the government prompted the differentiation and re-grouping of the government's relationship with public schools and gave the latter a possibility to procure profit. Starting from 1995, a batch of market-enthusiast public school managers raised the issue of remedying the ongoing flaws of the public educational system by importing the power of market economic power. The capital configuration and managerial means offered a new, feasible way to run schools. Some reformative actions based upon this school of belief appeared in some public schools. The pioneers of the reform actively invented a previously unheard-of new school-running system that connected public schools to the market to various extents. They newly founded schools that adopted some measures included in the 1993 *Outline*, but some were not designed and promoted by the central decision-making level; rather, they were promoted by some private individuals, groups, and organizations in the school-running community. These new measures fully benefitted from the space opened by the policies of the *Outline*, and they sought the opportunities brought about by institutional imbalance. On account of the apparent economic interest of the new school-running institution, these measures reached all kinds of schools with remarkable rapidness.

The incoming market factor prompted changes in terms of the original social and interest relations in the educational sector, whereby the reform goal of simplified administration and delegation of power had new connotations; apart from the power delegation from the central government to the local and from the local to schools, the governments continued to be faced with the re-allocation of power with the market. A large part of the functions and jurisdictions that used to belong to the

government during the era of planned economy gradually became the duty of the socialist market and the object of market-based adjustments. In this stage, the reform centered around simplified administration, and power delegation was faced with more issues than center-local and local-school power delegations. With the growth of the market economy, a new power structure concerning the issues of power delegations from the state to society began to arise, pertaining to the general public and to the market.

8.2.2.3 The Post Reform Era

The 10 years after 2005 was the third 10 years, and the concentration and the paths of reforms had experienced profound changes. Some complexities had also emerged, unlike previous reforms. The Post Reform Era did not end the reform; on the contrary, some reformative goals continued to be set in motion. Nonetheless, the problems that the third-phase reform had been facing were mostly triggered during previous reforms. They have emerged during the process of social evolution, deriving from the conflicts that appeared between the old social structure and the new. As far as the nature of these problems is concerned, they were neither historical nor similar to that of other countries. Hence, to some extent, we can consider the Post Reform Era as the reform to the reforms.

In the third 10 years of reform, a new social relationship of free trade emerged, and it had tremendous influence upon public schools. Some public schools effectively utilized their public educational resources; they extended free trade to the public educational sphere by charging fees, school choosing, changing school institutions, adopting two institutions in the same school, and establishing private schools under a public name. Unlike past educational relationships that bore a distinctive nature of power, the educational free trade relationship better reflected the spirit of private-law independence; this created a new right and obligation relationship among schools, teachers, and students: As consumers, students have the right to select schools, contents of education, and even designate teachers based upon their own demands and degree of satisfaction. Conversely, schools and teachers, as the providers of services, are obligated to fulfill their commitments made to the students by the standards of national education. Free trade in education transformed the relationship between learning and studying as an exchange process, and it became gradually rooted in a consumer's culture. Courses and degrees have now incorporated social demands and are provided to the social members who have relevant demands with a fee. This conduct has shifted the concentration of schools on such educational products with commercial value and market effect such as course scores, degree certificates, and popular majors. However, the most instrumental aspect of education, that is, its basic value for individuals and the society, has been largely omitted, the result of which has been the complex phenomenon of education being stripped down to a simple "input-output" or "cost-effect" process.

After the changes made throughout the first two decades, the issue of educational justice was at the center of the stage in the Post Reform Era. In the public-school

sector, some measures in previous reforms parochially accentuated educational efficiency over its social justice. Some actual outcomes of reform clearly leaned toward the rich in society than the poor. Some people were determined to generate profits under the false pretense of running public schools. All these phenomena all indicated challenges against educational justice. Education then became a sensitive subject closely concerning social equality; the public began to fixate on the balance between efficiency and equality, educational charity and its profitability, general education and elite education, and quality-oriented education and result-oriented education. After two decades, the barycenter of educational reform shifted toward how to better understand the fundamental values of contemporary education and how to accurately capture the developmental complexity of educational reform, particularly the complex relations in terms of interest allocation involved therein to boost the moral standards and decision-making quality of educational reforms thereafter. In general, the problems that reform sought to resolve was “what kind of development to achieve and how to develop”; if said problems could not be handled appropriately, the fallout might have impeded the leftover space for Chinese educational reform, or even undermine the overall process of the social progression of China.

8.3 Several Conjectures on the Educational Future of China

In three decades into the Chinese educational reform, how to continue reforms of public education has become the central issue that has a huge stake in the Chinese educational future. Chinese public education ought to re-examine its functions and dynamics, and it ought to promptly respond to the new economic and technological concepts elicited by social development. Although we lack a certain accurate grasp on the ever-varying educational situations in contemporary China, judging from the actual vicissitude of the Chinese society, from the social demand on educational functions and their possibilities, conventional school borders will be broken into a new, substitute educational institutions that can be more diversified and flexible, ones that can provide every student with more developmental opportunities.

8.3.1 How to Handle the Relations Between State and Government and Between Government and School

Before the birth of public education, education had long served the general public. The institution of public education had been cultivated by nationalism; hence, two issues inevitably emerged, namely whether education be hosted by the state or by society and whether it be hosted by schools by private households. Debates and discussions on this issue have made frequent appearances throughout the entire developmental process of education for over two centuries. These questions also

branched out into a series of more specific issues at different stages, such as the issues concerning state and the public, and public and private schools, which patently complicated matters. The reforms after the 1980s could be seen as the logical extension of aforesaid issues that blighted Chinese education for the last two centuries. The reforms of a variety of countries commonly adopted the route of privatization and marketization to reshape public education, which was a critical direction of educational reform and a phenomenon that had been never witnessed in educational history. After 30 years of reform, the relationship between state and education experienced a fundamental change. Schools at all levels were more obviously characterized by nongovernmental and noncorporate features. Public education provided society with a very different type of educational product that, under particular conditions, was transformed into private or semi-private goods through the market channel. This change gradually altered the state–education relationship.

How then should this new trend be construed? The answer lies in the observational perspective of state–school relations. In modern society, the government has two basic functions. The first is to provide products that cannot be provided by the market, and the second is to ensure social justice. When we assess modern public education by these standards, one basic conclusion is that the excessive intervention of government is a problem that is yet to be resolved. This is no individual but an official judgement on account of the constant demand for reformatory consensus of “simplified governance and power delegation” for over three decades. One can understand state–education relations as follows: in modern society, education could not be fully popularized if not for the power and means of the state; hence, education cannot solely be a private enterprise. Nevertheless, education in essence possesses private features, so private contribution cannot be entirely excluded from education. Viewed thus, the core issue of education reform is how to encompass both public and private participation through certain institutional form.

For this reason, future education ought to be diversified with constituting institutions that are both nongovernmental and noncorporate social organizations. Education ought to be charitable and provide public goods. Due to the non-monopolized nature of education, its products can be transformed into private and semi-private goods under certain conditions and offered to the general public via the government and market channels. The institutions that provide education are those possessing independent legal-person qualifications. They can be charitable or profitable depending upon different owners. Apart from merely ensuring allocation of educational opportunities, the government’s function lies chiefly in providing the society with products that cannot be provided by the market such as free obligatory education.

8.3.2 *How to Uphold the Public Nature of Education*

The Chinese educational enterprise, after having undergone 30 years of reformatory development, currently faces a series of contradictions that appeared within the reformatory process with the common theme of enhancing social justice. These

contradictions, fundamentally speaking, pertain to the recent changes induced by educational reform. Confronting said changes, the nature of education has become an inevitable issue. Although the Chinese society is improving by the minute, some ground principles regarding education remain unchanged, nor should they be any different. Education in essence is a social activity aiming to cultivate humankind through the instillation of social productive and day-to-day practices. Education promotes individual physical and mental development, it socializes people, and ultimately prolongs the healthy progression of the entire society. Therefore, hosting schools should not be an activity for economic gain but should be an altruistic act to benefit others, the society, and human civilization at large. It is an enterprise that excavates human potential from cultural, spiritual, physical, and social aspects and creates vital conditions for the existence and advancement of humankind. Hence, public in lieu of private education becomes the foremost value of modern education, unlike any other type of education in history. In particular, in the wake of China's strides into modernity, education has become its grand undertaking that keenly concerns national strategy and people's welfare. Summarizing, the public nature of education is its foremost value unlike any other forms of education that existed in the past.

The marketization and privatization of education is not all positive; it has given rise to unjust problems such as high tuition, random charging, blue-blood schools, trans-institutional schools, restrictive school selection, the dropping-out of underprivileged pupils, and the "citizenship treatment" of socially disadvantaged groups. The said problems directly resulted in the widening of gap between urban and rural education and increased disparity among regions and educational institutions of all levels that in turn induced uneven allocation of educational opportunities and undermined the public nature of education. Under such conditions, governmental interventions that are supposed to buttress social justice, owing to local-governmental negligence of educational responsibilities, have led to distortion of the public nature of education.

The public feature of education dictates that education cannot be fully provided by the market; rather, it must be provided by extra-market resource allocations. In modern countries, education is chiefly provided by government-run public school systems. The reason why public schools are the mainstream form of education is that they can effectively solve the problem of the non-paying consumption of educational products due to their non-selectiveness. Meanwhile, by virtue of producing pro bono or low-price educational services, the government can resolve the pricing issue of education due to its non-competitiveness. Therefore, public educational system is the optimal security mechanism for the realization of the publicity of education. Even though education can be proffered by the market, when market rules are implemented, education, as a public good, shall be transferred into private or semi-private goods. Given this fact, education is bound to possess to divisibility and competitiveness to some extent, which renders education a domain with profitability. As such, if the market is not appropriately restrained, the publicity of education shall be pronouncedly harmed.

It is fair to say that whether Chinese education can break through its reformative bottleneck hinges on whether public schools can adhere to their inherent publicity. Moreover, if public schools are able to maintain their publicity in waves of reform, said reform shall amount to a measure of triumph, and if not, Chinese educational reform shall face recession and defeat.

8.3.3 How to Handle the Relationship Between Education and Market

Owning to the appreciable return that education offers, the original educational system wholly under governmental control and strategically progressed by taking social needs into its consideration is inclining currently toward meeting the demands of private consumption: the emergence of an educational market is in the offing. The impact of the market has led to deep changes to China's educational enterprise, which has yielded bi-faceted ramifications. On the one hand, the general public is now entitled to more choices and is enjoying more opportunities to be educated. On the other hand, as society gradually recognizes the rationality of said consumer's culture of education, it has simultaneously become more sensitive to personal loss and gain. Personal interest has been deemed as a critical gauge of people's satisfaction of social reality. The formation of the educational market has led to the infiltration of consumer culture into schools, which has in turn raised a variety of issues regarding educational ethics. Since the engine of the market is private gain rather than public benefit, if market restrictions prove to be inadequate, education is prone to resort to disorder, which could potentially alter the basic public nature of education. Hence, education cannot be equated to any commonplace commodity; pure reliance upon market channel will not balance educational supply with social demand. To ensure the realization of the publicity of education, appropriate restrictive measures should be implemented in the market.

First, appropriate legal supervision ought to be implemented upon schools, a type of special institution different from any other social organizations, to more explicitly discipline school behaviors. Specifically, due to the publicity of schools, their powers and capacities should also be limited. However, such limitations should adhere to educational regulations and respect their managerial independence. In terms of institutional arrangement, schools should not be equated to private corporations. Governmental influence on schools cannot be attenuated even with strengthening market interference. On the contrary, administrative supervision should serve as an instrumental limiting factor.

Second, profit-seeking school management should be precisely defined. The intervention of profit-seeking institutions should primarily satisfy the diverse educational demands of social participants and realize the public charitable feature of education. Clear laws disciplining profit-seeking host of education can guarantee education's transfer into the market as a public commodity under strict regulations.

As profitable organizations reduce their share of the educational market, their qualifications, capacities, and legal rights are entirely different from those in other markets—in particular, the maintenance of effectual limitations and legal supervision against capitalist profit-seeking. All these features should be reflected with certainty, and the optimal means to achieve so is by law.

Third, the mutual relationship between government and state and their respective functioning territories should also be clearly demarcated. In the educational process of development, both the administration and state could dysfunction; therefore, these two forces are not mutually repulsive but are rather supplementary. In the meantime, in various educational domains, the functions of both the government and market are even more dissimilar with each other. For instance, mandatory education is legally imposed upon every single individual; only after having undergone such an educational phase can individuals fulfill their services to society and fulfill self-worth. As mentioned above, the public character of mandatory education far surpasses other educational domains; it is a main area where the state plays the leading role and this state responsibility should be reinforced. In the mandatory education stage, social justice should be patently reflected, which will make every individual accept the same conditions of education. Therefore, the provision of education can only depend upon the state to an even higher extent. However, extra-mandatory educational forms such as professional training and advanced education are not enjoyed evenly by every member of the society. Here, the so-called educational equality is primarily demonstrable through social equality, that is, the equality of changes, which guarantees solely the equality in terms of procedure and not that of outcome.

8.3.4 How to Design Future Educational Reform

Public educational system is never constant; it reinvents itself according to social changes, public demands of education, and school functions. However, the public is not yet unanimous about how such said reinventions should occur; the general public has to yet reach unanimity. Under these circumstances, how should educational reform react upon social development and how we should design future reforms are all up-to-date issues that we face today.

Roughly, there are two parallel reformative ideologies: the first is pursuant to civic law and the second commercial law. Put simply, the former emphasizes the publicity of education, i.e., national educational duties. In accordance with this, public schools are designed as a public service provider hosted by the state and through public financing, schools obtain the position of public legal person. The latter emphasizes more school independence and borrowed its inspiration from corporate reforms. It attempts to re-structure public school mechanism by means of legal person governance structure and by adjusting different interest relations among different stakeholders.

However, these two routes are all fatally flawed—the public law route might force Chinese public school reforms to backtrack to the situation under planned economy. The commercial law route might prompt public schools to be re-spawned as corporations or profit-seeking social organizations. In terms of the reform and development of public schools, there are two main goals; on the one hand, they should maintain the reformative outcome of the past three decades; on the other hand, they should insist on publicizing public schools. In a sense, this poses a conundrum on account of these mutually conflicting goals. To fulfill both these goals, the design of future reforms cannot make public schools retreat to national monopoly, nor should it push public schools further toward the market. For this, public schools, due to their activity goals and service subjects, should become a special type of institution between public and private law, a nongovernmental and noncorporate social organization. Public schools ought to be entitled their special legal-person position. Their rights and responsibilities ought to be regulated based upon such position, which will render public schools as independent entities and simultaneously reflect the publicity of this type of organization, distinguishing them from any other organizations.

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Chapter 9

From Government to Governance: The Incorporation of Managerial Regulation at the Ministry of Education in Israel



Julia Resnik

9.1 Introduction

The public sector in many countries is changing dramatically from a bureaucratic to a post bureaucratic mode of regulation, a change that also impacts the educational sector (Maroy 2012). Based on New Public Management (NPM) perspectives, governments around the world have been incorporating a marketized view of public services in order to improve them and make them more efficient. Measures of performance that assess the activities of public institutions permit a remote control steering mode instead of the traditional public administration model (Ball 1998). Another important change is the incorporation of a New Public Governance model (NPG) (Osborne 2006) and the shift from “pure” government control to a governance paradigm centered on a stronger partnership between public, private, and civic actors along with a greater use of networks rather than markets or hierarchies and relying on negotiation instead of “command and control” (Ferlie and Andresani 2006).

According to NPM and the post-bureaucratic narrative, public administrations must develop new measures and regulations to be more effective: project-based work, contracts, the creation of independent (or quasi-independent) agencies; benchmarking, decentralization of responsibility to lower level managers, including local councils; use of new management tools and managerial knowledge; and management by quantitative performance indicators. These new regulations imply a changing role (and forms) of knowledge in the policy process and the development of new knowledge-based regulatory instruments. Managerial rhetoric and new tools, inspired by the theory of NPM, not only contribute to a shared cognitive and semantic universe, but also to a new normative order and new institutional referents (Maroy 2012).

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In post-bureaucratic regimes, governments have to develop new skills: new governing skills (Salamon 2002), new “enabling skills” based on negotiation and persuasion along with “activation skills” for activating the networks of actors increasingly required to address public problems (Pons and van Zanten 2007). New knowledge and new skills imply also new knowledge agents and new actors in the administrations (Mahon 2008). Consultants are among the new actors prevailing in public services; they are recognized as external knowledge actors who trade knowledge, expertise, and experience (Gunter et al. 2015).

The question that arises is how these changes actually occur. How bureaucratic-professional administrations are transformed into post bureaucratic entities? What are the NPM and NPG tools and who are the actors that enable the incorporation of a post-bureaucratic narrative and an ethos of governance into public service? How is resistance to changes of administrative units avoided or overcome? It is through the study of the transformation of the Ministry of Education in Israel that we intend to provide an answer to these questions.

The bureaucratic and central governmental model that characterized the Israeli education system since the foundation of the state in 1948 is shifting rapidly to a post-bureaucratic governance. The transformations in the Ministry of Education are part of large reforms in the public sector that focus on two models of public administration management: the NPM model, based on the elaboration of performance and measurement systems, and the NPG model that strives to the inclusion of different stakeholders in public management (public, private, and civic actors).

Reforms inspired by NPM reflect a quasi-market model or an evaluative state regulatory model, whereas each represents a different “post-bureaucratic turn” (Maroy 2012). Which “post-bureaucratic turn” represents the transformations that are taking place in the Ministry of Education in Israel? Because of the significance of the NPG tools along with NPM instruments, Israel’s case may represent a third model, a new post-bureaucratic “NGO-ization.”

Following actors-network theory (ANT) methodology enables us to trace the developments that occurred in the Ministry of Education in the late 2000 and the efforts to transform its mode of regulation. By following the formation of the governance network which comprises the managerial assemblage and the tri-sector cooperation assemblage, including different human actors (General Director and Head of the Cross-sector Cooperation unit in the Ministry of Education, civil society organizations’ CEOs, researchers, consultants) and non-human actors (strategic planning, tenders, roundtables, the Planning Guide, consultations, online external programs database, etc.), we intend to understand how post-bureaucratic rhetoric and policies are introduced in the education administration.

The study of the governance network is based on interviews of officials at the Ministry of Education and the Prime Minister’s Office as well as the analysis of official sites and documentation.

Most of the literature focuses on the results of the incorporation of NPM and NPG into education systems and the different models that emerged from their introduction in the education sector. Instead, this study focuses on the complex process of transformation of a bureaucratic public service into a post-bureaucratic one, on

the efforts to put in place new instruments, mechanisms, rhetoric, and ethic intending to reshape the functioning of the ministry. The Israeli case is of special interest because of the strong bureaucratic tradition of the education administration.

9.2 Theoretical Background

9.2.1 *From Government to Governance: The Incorporation of NPM and NPG in Education*

Scholars agree that the incorporation of New Public Management (NPM) has transformed the public sector in many countries around the world. The reforms that started on the mid-1980s were driven by a greater use of markets and market-like mechanisms, stronger line management (along with weaker trade unions and professional groups), and more elaborated performance management and measurement systems (Ferlie and Andresani 2006). These changes have taken place in the forms and mechanisms of governance, bringing management concepts from the private business into the public realm (e.g., performance measurement, customer and bottom-line orientation, restructuring of incentives) as well as the conditions that would facilitate this process, such as regulation, outsourcing, tendering out, and privatization. The central thrust of public management reforms was the replacement of “rules-based, process-driven” routines by increased emphasis on “result orientation” (Hood and Peters 2004).

Some scholars see these transformations based on NPM as a shift from a bureaucratic professional to a post-bureaucratic regime of regulation (Maroy 2012). This includes reorganizing units by projects through outsourcing and the development of contracts, increasing internal and external competition between administrations through bids, benchmarking, and the development of contracts; improving autonomy and accountability, establishing more rigor in public spending through staff cutting, spending ceilings and definition of goals, favoring successful private management tools, quantifying performance, increasing accountability and stressing the evaluation of results (Pons and van Zanten 2007). A post-bureaucratic shift is associated with a change in the kind of knowledge brought into the policy process and more specifically, with the development of knowledge-based regulatory tools. Knowledge-based regulatory tools are also linked to new forms of knowledge circulation among the different actors involved in the policy process (i.e., researchers, experts, think tanks, policy bodies, professionals, and clients). This form of knowledge circulation is very different from classic bureaucracies that stress legal and other forms of “state knowledge” including the “tacit” knowledge that comes from long experience in the system (Pons and van Zanten 2007).

According to other scholars, the incorporation of NPM in the public administration represents mainly a shift from government to governance. Governance means that the state is a partner associated with other actors (business and civil society) in

order to bring about an action, for which they all share responsibility, authority, risks, and an investment of resources. In other words, governance enlarges the decision-making circle from the state to other actors, sectors or organizations. The cooperation between sectors contributes to the impression of legitimacy of the decisions made and an efficacy and efficiency in the application of these decisions (Lessard and Brassard 2005). Governance involves a shift from the top-down hierarchical political organization to an emphasis on promoting and/or steering the self-organization of inter-organizational relations and a greater use of networks. In this expanding range of networks and partnerships between public, private, and civic actors, official apparatuses would remain at best *primus inter pares*. Public money and law are still important in underpinning their operation, but other resources (such as private money, knowledge or expertise) would also be critical to their success. In this sense the state's involvement would tend to be rather less hierarchical, less centralized, and less *dirigiste* in character (Jessop 1995).

Scholars also view governance as a new model of public administration management—the New Public Governance (NPG)—resulting from the critiques raised against the NPM model and the need to move beyond the sterile dichotomy of “administration” versus “management.” The NPG paradigm combines the strengths of Public Administration and the NPM, by recognizing the legitimacy and interrelatedness of both the policy-making and the implementation/service delivery processes. NPG posits both a plural state, where multiple interdependent actors contribute to the delivery of public services and a pluralistic state, where multiple processes inform the policy making system. As a consequence of these two forms of plurality, its focus is very much upon inter-organizational relationships and the governance of processes, and it stresses service effectiveness and outcomes (Osborne 2006).

Another important aspect stressed in the governance literature regards citizens' participation and involvement, both at the organizational/bureaucratic level and at the communal/political level, which may increase trust in the government and in administrative agencies. Moreover, direct participation of citizens or through civil society organizations at the administrative level can improve public sector performance and urge policy-makers to advance innovative strategies (Vigoda-Gadot and Mizrahi 2007). Seen as a means to restore governments' legitimacy and diminish the erosion of trust in democracy, citizen participation is strongly encouraged by the OECD. For this purpose, the organization published the “[Citizens as Partners. OECD Handbook on Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-Making](#).” The handbook offers a practical “roadmap” for building robust frameworks for informing, consulting, and engaging citizens during policy-making through among others, tripartite commissions and joint working groups that work out concrete proposals for policy-making (OECD 2001).

The shift from government to governance and the adoption of post-bureaucratic regulations in ministries of education presuppose a large array of transformations including new governance structures, new modes of coordination and control, new knowledge, new skills, and a new ethic.

Structurally, in the “professional-bureaucratic” regulation model, education was organized in a more or less centralized and differentiated way underpinned by standardized and identical norms for all components of the system (Maroy 2012). In contrast, the post-bureaucratic administration is characterized by network forms of organization in which hierarchy or monocratic leadership is less important. As part of the networks, we may find advisory boards open to external members, contracts that create links with academic researchers and think tanks, and projects that cut across divisional and departmental lines (Pons and van Zanten 2007). The modes of coordination and control of the typical bureaucratic model ensure that practices conform to rules and procedures. In the post-bureaucratic regime, coordination and control are achieved instead through new complex tools such as external evaluations, audits, goals, contracts, benchmarks, and competitive measures (Maroy 2012). Classic national bureaucracies stress legal and other forms of “state knowledge,” including the “tacit knowledge” that comes from long experience in the “system” that is centralized within the ministry in charge. Post-bureaucracy is characterized by a multidirectional flow of ideas and the use of technical devices that facilitate circulation, access, use, and control of information for many members as well as by the relative openness to other actors, via the use of interactive websites, focus groups, and the like (Mahon 2008). Instead of traditional managing skills (i.e., control, coercion, and command), new governance involves the development of skills such as negotiation, accommodation, concertation, cooperation, and alliance formation. Actors in the new regulation mode should develop specific characteristics: being autonomous, responsible, competitive, and accountable (Pons and van Zanten 2007). The ethics and the common good of the bureaucratic-professional regulation system were justified in the name of rationality and the need of the nation-state scale for the greatest universality possible of rules, thus providing equal treatment and equal access to education (Kersbergen and Waarden 2004). The post-bureaucratic regulation prescribes a new normative system of reference based on performance, accountability, entrepreneurship, users’ choice, etc. (Maroy 2012).

The adoption of a post-bureaucratic regulation regime implies deep transformations of the structure of public administration, the incorporation of new knowledge, new tools, new skills, and new ethics. Changes in the administrations may create resistance among administration units and public servants against the new performance and governance culture and ethics. How are all these changes implemented in the public sector and how is resistance to change handled?

One of the problems raised by the transformations of the bureaucracy concerns the culture changes required, especially regarding the motivation of the administration and functionaries. For instance, the government’s efforts to expand its relationships with the Third Sector in England have been problematic. There have been considerable gaps between policy aspirations and implementation because the necessary culture changes have not occurred within central and local government, and pinch-points over full-cost contracts, accountability, and capacity remain (Kelly 2007). The “motivation problem” arises when targeted groups, or even administrations, refuse to recognize the legitimacy of a reform (Mayntz 1993 in Pons and van Zanten 2007). In order to avoid the motivation problem, it is crucial to secure

support for organizational change among public service employees (Ferlie and Andresani 2006). However, when new actors with new skills take part in the implementation of a new regulation tool, functionaries in the ministry can regard this implementation as a social space for struggle to preserve their own monopoly of action (Buisson-Fenet 2007).

Governments modernize public services through outsourcing to the private sector and recruiting actors external to the bureaucracies, mainly consultants. Indeed, consultancy businesses, mainly big international companies, work on major reforms (Ball 2012). The role of consultancy is threefold: it takes part in the governance model representing business or NGO stakeholders, it disseminates the new regulation culture by incorporating new actors with performance-based ethics and culture, and it bypasses resistance since new actors external to the administrations are regarded as neutral and not involved in old status struggles in the units. Nevertheless, the increasing role and contribution of consultants encourage the growth of the consulting industry (Lubienski 2016) and suggest the emergence of a ‘consultocracy’ (Gunter et al. 2015).

Most of the literature on NPM and governance reforms in education explore the changes conducted in policy processes and the two models of the post-bureaucratic turns that emerged: the quasi-market model or the evaluative state regulatory model. Instead, the research this chapter is based upon intends to understand how the changes are introduced in the ministry and how NPM and NPG are actually incorporated into the bureaucratic body responsible for shaping education policy. As we will see, the study of the transformation of the Ministry of Education in Israel following the formation of the governance network, including the managerial regulation network and tri-sector cooperation network, points to a third regulation mode—a post-bureaucratic “NGO-ization” model.

9.3 Methodology

9.3.1 *Actor Network Approach (ANT) and Governance Network: Managerial Assemblage and Tri-Sector Assemblage*

The methodology drawn on ANT is narrowly connected to its theoretical approach. Developed by Latour (1987) and many others, ANT has only recently attracted the attention of education scholars (Fenwick and Edwards 2010). For ANT, the social is nothing other than patterned networks of heterogeneous materials (human and non-humans), and its central goal is to understand the mechanics of power and organization and more precisely, how size, power, or organization are generated (Law 1992). Networks and assemblages are formed by heterogeneous human and nonhumans things, or entities connected and mobilized to act together through a great deal of on-going work. Following critiques of the boundaries that the concept of “network”

presupposes, later developments of ANT (or after-ANT) have privileged the term “assemblage” as a central concept of analysis (Fenwick 2011). In this study, I use both concepts but differentiate between them. The governance network refers to the more extensive post-bureaucratic regulations in general, and “assemblages” refer to the smaller networks—the managerial assemblage and tri-sector cooperation assemblage that altogether constitute the large post-bureaucratic governance network part of a global governance network.

By tracing the formation of the managerial assemblage and the tri-sector cooperation assemblage first at the central government and then at the Ministry of Education, we intend to understand how the governance education network expanded in Israel and what are its characteristics. We follow the central human and nonhuman actors and the connections established between them based on interviews with senior civil servants at the Prime Minister Office and mainly at the Ministry of Education, analysis of official documentation, and online sites as well as observations of roundtable discussions.

9.4 The Emergence of the Governance Network in the Israeli Public Administration: Governmental Governance Network

The governance network in Israel is constituted by two distinct but partially superposed assemblages: the managerial assemblage aiming at instilling a regime of regulation based on accountability, benchmarking, and quantifying performance and the tri-sector cooperation assemblage aiming at establishing a partnership between the state, business, and civil society. As we will see, international organizations are central actors that encourage both managerial regulation and tri-sector governance. In Israel, as in many countries, the evolution of institutional regulation in education has been fostered by major legislation (Maroy 2012). And indeed, although the changes toward a managerial regulation and tri-sector cooperation had started several years before spearheaded by various actors, two government resolutions that passed in 2008 were decisive in the deep transformation process of the Israeli civil service: (1) Government resolution no. 3190 of 24.02.2008 regarding “The relationships between the government, the civil society, and the business sector that contribute to attain public objectives” and (2) Government resolution no. 4085 of 14.09.2008 concerning “Aspects regarding planning, measurement and control and recommendations for discussion in the government.”

Various interviewees pointed to the Second Lebanon War (2006) as the major turning point of the transformation toward managerial regulation and tri-sector cooperation because the war puts in evidence the lack of coordination of the third sector and the absence of governmental planning. Nevertheless, the formation of the government managerial assemblage and the tri-sector cooperation assemblage started before 2006, and many actors contributed to their reinforcement and

expansion, among them the Aridor Committee (appointed in 2004). As the head of the Committee, Yoram Aridor specified, the reason for the appointment of the committee was that in “the absence of reliable data decision makers become accustomed to operating intuitively and their ability to conform to professional managerial norms is impaired. While nonprofit organization around the world are aided by reliable data in their decision making processes, Israeli organizations fail to meet this standard” (Limor 2004).

9.4.1 The Governmental Managerial Assemblage

An important actor of the managerial government network was the Kobersky Committee that undertook a comprehensive review of the civil service and other bodies supported by state funds. The Kobersky Report, submitted in 1989, was adopted by the Government, but most of its recommendations were not implemented at that time. The main recommendations were the following: to reduce the dimension of the government administration by outsourcing most of its activity and transforming it into “a compact and qualitative body”; to concentrate its decision-making only at its higher level and on shaping central government policies based on professional data and support; to improve dramatically the quality of civil servants and that of the service to the citizens by accelerating the computerization of all the ministries and their services, among other recommendations.¹

The need to implement a managerial mode of regulation and the idea that governments must develop new skills to be more effective were put forward by global actors and mainly the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (OECD 1995, 2000, 2001). According to OECD documents, since the mid-1990s, more than 75% of OECD countries have carried out an initiative in the area of measuring the outcomes of governments’ work and nearly 40% started these type of initiatives 10 years before. An OECD comparative study reports that governments make decisions based on a combination of outputs and outcome indicators but concludes that there is no “correct” way to measure outputs, and therefore, governments choose the model more suitable to their political and cultural context. The OECD specifies that the creation of a governmental general framework of planning and reporting is an important element of the process toward measuring outcomes and that indicators should be the basis of ministerial budgets’ construction (in Limor 2010).²

And indeed, as part of the process of incorporation of Israel to the OECD that occurred in 2010, the central administration in Israel examined a number of mea-

¹<http://csc.gov.il/DataBases/Reports/Documents/Helek1.pdf>, pages 4–5.

²OECD, Performance Budgeting in OECD Countries, 2007. Additional information can be found on OECD GOV Technical Papers: “How and Why Should Government Activity Be Measured,” “Issues in Output Measurement,” and “Issues in Outcome Measurement,” 2006. <http://www.pmo.gov.il/Secretary/GovDecisions/2008/Pages/des4085.aspx>

surements recommended by the organization to assess the outcomes of governmental work. In 2008, governmental resolution (no. 4085 of 14.09.2008) on “Aspects regarding planning, measurement and control and recommendations for discussion in the government” was approved. The resolution states that “The Government of Israel considers important to improve planning, funding and control processes in its work, and in the work of the ministries, in order to turn them accessible and transparent to the public, as much as possible, by presenting them through outputs and outcomes defined in the spirit of the OECD recommendations.”

The governmental resolution also determined that the Policy Planning Section (which later became the Department of Governance and Social Affairs) “should direct the ministries to define targets, organizational indicators, output and outcome indicators in their proposals for resolutions submitted to the government, and through indicators define budgetary resources and their use [...]. The Prime Minister’s Office will lead the process of instilling a planning, measurement and control approach based on outcomes and outputs into the ministries through the Department of Policy Planning [...]”.

The Governance and Social Affairs Department (Policy Planning) is divided into two units: the Governance Division and the Social Affairs Division. The Governance Division conducts several processes aiming at transforming the way the government works, among them:

- Instilling a governmental planning approach through the Governmental Planning Guide, developing planning skills in the ministries and centralizing and monitoring governmental plans
- Enhancing the Civil Service Reform in order to improve its human capital
- Centralizing governmental activity vis-à-vis the OECD regarding governance and public management and participating in the committee of the same name in the organization.³

As mentioned earlier, the Second Lebanon War (summer of 2006) was the trigger that fostered the managerial assemblage. When the Prime Minister’s Office intended to transfer 2,000,000,000 new shekels for the rehabilitation of the North area, damaged during the war, its Director General, Raanan Dinur, realized that no planning existed in the central government. Dinur, along with Ehud (Udi) Prawer, Deputy Director of the Policy Planning Department (at present the head of the Governance and Social Affairs Department), who was transferred to the Prime Minister’s Office in 2006, decided to formulate the Government Planning Guide. The team engaged in the formulation of the first edition of the guide, published in 2007, included representatives of several ministries—Prime Minister Office, Finance, Health, Economy and Industry, Welfare, Foreign Affairs, and Environmental protection. Its main task consisted of translating the British Planning Guide and adding to it the Israeli perspective (interview with a senior civil servant at the Prime Minister’s Office).

³<http://www.pmo.gov.il/policyplanning/mimshal/Pages/mimshal.aspx>

Three main actors participated in the implementation of the managerial regulation based on Government Planning Guide: Strategic Planning (*tochnit estateguit*), Work Plan (*tochnit avoda*), and the “Tender to the integration of a planning, measurement and evaluation culture.” Strategic planning refers to a 3-year plan, whereas Work Plan corresponds to yearly planning. In 2009, both kinds of planning started to be incorporated in the different ministries under the responsibility of the Government Division in the Prime Minister’s Office through the integration of a planning, measurement, and evaluation culture into the ministries. How was it done? A senior civil servant of this division explains:

It was based on an intervention mode. First, through language, the language which is embodied in the Governmental Planning Guide. How did we proceed? We proposed two incentives to the ministries—one was to create a Policy Planning Department in the ministry and the other to use consulting companies. I suggested the recruitment of a consulting firm for the short time... the consulting firm speaks the language.

It is through the “Tender to the integration of a planning, measurement and evaluation culture” that a number of consulting firms were selected at the Prime Minister’s Office. Based on this “generic” tender that took 2 years of preparation, the ministries formulated a new tender adapted to the specificities of their ministries in order to choose one of the pre-selected firms to prepare the Work Plan in their offices.

When asked if the ministries could not deal with the changes by themselves, the senior civil servant explained: “No way!!! It is about a new way of thinking, a fresh view!! And sometimes you need a specialist for a specialized field such as managerial regulation.” He added:

Instilling this language would enable the ministries to communicate with each other on budgeting calculations, thinking based on outcomes and outputs and not on estimations ... it was important to accustom the ministries to this language.

When asked whether the use of consulting was a way to diminish expenses, he clearly stated: “no...it does not reduce expenses ... I don’t think that there was an economic consideration” (interview with Senior Civil Servant at the Prime Minister’s Office). He mentioned nine consulting firms selected, five of them were international ones—Deloitte, Forrest, Pareto, Martens Matrix, and Hoffman.

9.4.2 Governmental Tri-Sector Cooperation Assemblage

Since 2000, governance and the participation of business and civil society organizations in the provision of social services have been strongly fostered by international organizations. The Millennium Development Goals (2000) adopted by the United Nations encouraged the states to cooperate with the civil society and the business community in order to assure a sustainable, just, and equal society (in Limor 2010). The OECD also enhances ‘Citizens as Partners—[Information, Consultation and](#)

Public Participation in Policy-Making” (OECD 2001).⁴ The European Union has promoted the comprehensive and progressive participation of civil society in countries’ development processes and in broader political, social and economic dialogues. “[...] regular dialogue and consultations with Civil Society (CS) is one of the principles stated in the Lisbon Treaty, (December 2009) with a view to ensuring consistency and transparency of EU policies.”⁵

On February 2008, the Prime Minister’s Office passed a government resolution on “The relationships between the government, the Civil Society, and the Business sector that contribute to attain public objectives.”⁶ The resolution states that “The ministries will maintain a continuous dialogue with civil society organizations and members of the business community that contribute to public objectives.” The resolution also creates a special unit that would deal with the cross-sector dialogue: “[...] as part of the process of planning and performing governmental policies the Department of Public Policy will create an ‘Advisory Unit on Cooperation’ that will deal with collaborations and continuous dialogue between the public sector, the business sector and the third sector.”⁷ It is important to note that in 2009, 54% of the total income of nonprofit institutions dealing mainly with health, education, and research was from government transfers, and based on another type of calculation, it could reach even 75–80% (Asban 2010: 29). Compared to the rest of the world, the percentage of “government transfers” in Israel is higher than the average of developed countries in the world (36% Government transfers) (Salamon 2010).

The governmental resolution on cross-sector dialogue drew on a policy paper entitled “Government of Israel, the Civil Society, and the Business Community: Partnership, Empowerment, and Transparency” (2008) that constituted part of the resolution. The policy paper clearly states the vision of the tri-sector partnership: “The government of Israel views civil society organizations and business enterprises operating to promote public purposes as partners in the effort to build a better Israeli society. [...]. The government, having the authority and bearing the responsibility for setting policies, for providing core services, and for supervising them, views interested civil society organizations as partners in the provision of social services. [...] The government calls on businessmen and private firms to continue to act in a way that reflects social responsibility and that recognizes the importance of the community and of society, and for its part will work to encourage activities of this kind.” The resolution specifies how the third sector should look like: “The government is looking for a responsible and independent third sector, which acts lawfully, and follows the norms of proper administration, transparency, and professionalism”. The resolution also defines the role of the government in the

⁴ <http://beinmigzari.pmo.gov.il/Documents/Agol.pdf> (page 15).

⁵ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/Structured_dialogue

⁶ Government resolution no. 3190 approved unanimously on February 24, 2008

⁷ <http://www.pmo.gov.il/Secretary/GovDecisions/2008/Pages/des3190.aspx>

partnership: “As part of its role, the government will continue to carry out its supervisory and regulatory responsibilities.”⁸

Various actors fostered the tri-sector cooperation before the Government resolution of 2008 passed. The tri-sector resolution was mainly based on the work of three public committees. First, “The Review Committee of Government Policy towards the Third Sector in Israel” (Galnoor 2003) headed by Izhak Galnoor, a professor of Political Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem who served as Head of the Civil Service Commission (1994–1996).⁹ The committee was an independent initiative of Prof. Benjamin Gidron, the founder and head of the Center for Research of the Third Sector at Ben Gurion University.¹⁰ The Center was the only institution in Israel holding a database on third-sector organizations. The objective of the Committee was “to strengthen these organizations and allow them to operate in a framework wherein the rules of the game are clear, transparent, and predefined” and to urge the government to devise a policy toward the third sector. The committee’s main recommendation was to regulate the relations between the government authorities and the third sector on the basis of a clearly outlined, transparent, and consistent policy, a policy that does not infringe in any way on the independence of the third-sector organizations (Limor 2004). Among the main recommendations, it included: “Government recognition of the special contribution of third sector organizations to Israeli society and the Israeli economy” and “Recognition of the importance of public funding for third sector organizations and the urgent need to regulate such funding.”¹¹ It is important to note the similarity of the language used in these recommendations and that of the government cross-sector resolution.

The second committee headed by Yoram Aridor, former Minister of Finance (1981–1983), aimed at examining State Assistance to Public Institutions¹² [public institutions = meaning nonprofit organizations, *the author clarification*] was appointed in 2004 by the government in the wake of a State Comptroller report denouncing the lack of professional tools and data for decision-making. “The third sector in Israel” report (Limor 2004) authored by Nissan Limor served as background material for the committee’s work. Dr. Limor, from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, was a member of the first Galnoor Committee and also of the third

⁸http://beinmigzari.pmo.gov.il/Documents/Policy_English.pdf

⁹It is interesting to note that Galnoor wrote a book on “**Public Management in Israel: Development, Structure, Functions and Reforms**” (Routledge, 2011) in which he stated for instance that the collective-oriented mission of government cannot be fulfilled by the private sector or by the nonprofit organizations of civil society.

¹⁰Committee members: Prof. Yitzhak Galnoor, Chair, Ariella Ophir, Adv., Prof. Arie Arnon, Michal Bar, Yoram Gabai, Prof. Benjamin Gidron, Dr. Bassel Ghattas, Sara Silberstein-Hipsh, Ophir Katz, Adv., Rachel Liel, Nissan Limor, Walid Mulla, Amir Machul, Avi Armoni, Prof. Yosef Katan, Dr. Varda Shiffer, and Dr. Emmanuel Sharon. The Committee published its concluding report in June 2003. http://web.bgu.ac.il/NR/rdonlyres/2DB60683-6DCD-4F0A-ABBD-47529F6B395D/14803/TheReviewCommittee_Galnoor2003.pdf

¹¹<http://in.bgu.ac.il/en/fom/Ictr/Site%20Assets/Review%20Committee.pdf>, page 7.

¹²Government Decisions 1506 of 12.2.2004 and 1595 of 4.3.2004.

committee. He also pointed to the need to create the Guidestar site for NGOs in Israel and submitted recommendations for its establishment.

The third committee for the “Review of third sector functions in Israel and their functioning during the Second Lebanon War,” whose recommendations were published in 2007,¹³ was headed by Prof. Gidron, who advocated the establishment of a special committee, which became the Galnoor Committee. This Committee was appointed at the request of Raanan Dinur, Director General of the Prime Minister’s Office (2006–2009), and included heads of the third-sector organizations and volunteer organizations. The committee submitted a number of recommendations “for the development of state policy in the volunteer and third-sector spheres.”

As we mentioned above, interviewees pointed to the Second Lebanon War (2006) that took place during Ehud Olmert’s office as Prime Minister, as the major turning point of the process that culminated in the Government resolution of 2008 on tri-sector cooperation. As one of the interviewees told us:

The state did not provide for the needs of the population in the North of the country and many NGOs assisted them, it was a large voluntary activity. Matan Vilnai (member of the Committee of Foreign Affairs and Security in the Knesset) arrived to the North and asked: “who coordinated all the activity?” He was told that there was not such a thing. Vilnai saw that there was lack of coordination between the organizations and no cooperation existed between them... people saw the chaos. The situation was chaotic, the state did not function and the third sector was not organized at all!!! (Interview with a consultant of Sheatufim)

Upon the approval of the governmental resolution, it was decided that the cross-sector dialogue should be conducted through discussion groups in roundtables. An academic team that included Prof. Galnoor, Prof. Gidron, and Dr. Limor formulated the “First framework documents for the constitution of the tri-sector dialogue.” Based on this document, the first roundtable, which became the Constitutive Roundtable, started to function in 2008 at the Prime Minister’s Office, and it serves to this day as the national platform for “constituting and managing the dialogue between the three sectors.” The tri-sector encounters had to address the government’s policy of support for volunteer organizations, the oversight of the third sector, the transparency of civil society, and the promotion of giving, in Israel (Blum 2009). The First Framework Document specified that an operator in charge of the technical topics would be assigned to each roundtable. The document also clarified that the operator should not take a position in the discussion, the function is mainly technical with the purpose of facilitating the discussion and assisting the group to enable its success. Other specifications about the roundtable functioning refer to the recommendations of the OECD which were added as an annex to the framework document.¹⁴

¹³The recommendations were published in Katz et al. (2007) Civil Society during the Second Lebanon War, Beer-Sheva, Israeli Center for Third Sector Research, Ben Gurion University.

¹⁴Source: OECD 2001 Citizens as Partners—Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-Making, page 15. Cited in <http://beinmigzari.pmo.gov.il/Documents/Agol.pdf>, Annex 2 page 12–13.

This constitutive roundtable became a central actor of the tri-sector assemblage and represents the main infrastructure for cross-sector dialogue in other areas and the model of cross-sector dialogue in other ministries: the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services, the Ministry of Environmental Protection, and the Ministry of Education. Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu appointed the members of the Constitutive Roundtable following the academic team's recommendations. It included senior civil servants, important persons from the business sector involved in philanthropy, and representatives of civil society organizations. The Prime Minister, along with Raanan Dinur, Director General of the Prime Minister's Office, headed the first Constitutive Roundtable that met three times during 2008 and produced the Second Framework Document.¹⁵

The Social Affairs Division in the Governance and Social Affairs Department (Policy Planning) at the Prime Minister's Office is responsible "for the consolidation and implementation of a policy that reinforces tri-sector cooperation and the participation of the public in the government work." The benefit of the cross-sector dialogue is, according to the Social Affairs Division's site, that "it enables the creation of a large and agreed-upon infrastructure for decision making, to develop the commitment of all the partners in the implementation and integration of the products of the dialogue and the ability to look at issues from different points of view."¹⁶

9.5 The Governance Network in the Ministry of Education

9.5.1 *The Managerial Assemblage*

9.5.1.1 The Establishment of the Planning and Strategy Department and the Incorporation of a Managerial Culture

As part of the implementation of the government resolution of 2008, it was decided to create a Planning and Strategy department in all "executive" ministries. The Government Planning Guide included, among others, specific instructions for their creation. And indeed, in 2009, Dr. Zik Tomer, Deputy Director General and Senior Vice President for Administration and Human Resources, created a small Planning Unit during Gideon Saar's office as Minister of Education (2009–2013). Previous efforts to incorporate a managerial culture had been carried out, mainly by Ami Volansky, Deputy Director General for Planning of the Ministry (1986–1988). However, only in 2014, the Planning and Strategy Department was founded in the Ministry of Education. A culture of measurements already existed in the ministry, developed mainly by RAMA (acronym for National Authority for Measurement and

¹⁵<http://beinmigzari.pmo.gov.il/Documents/Agol.pdf>

¹⁶<http://www.pmo.gov.il/policyplanning/shituf/Pages/dafrashishituf.a>

Evaluation in Education)¹⁷ but according to Official 2 of the Planning and Strategy Department a culture of planning did not exist.

Political or social events can accelerate processes that are slow and complex by nature such as the integration of managerial regulation into the administration. The comment of a civil servant shows how the 2011 protest movement¹⁸ hastened the changes in the administration:

Until the Trachtenberg Committee¹⁹ and the government resolution no. 4028 of 2011 that replaced the resolution of 2008 (no. 4085) on planning, measurement and control, our office was really, was rather liminal, completely marginal. The Trachtenberg Committee encouraged and reinforced us [the Planning and Strategy Department] and since then, the Planning Unit became more and more robust in the offices here in the ministry (Official 2, Planning and Strategy Department, interview 2).

Michal Tabibian-Mizrahi, who worked at the Government and Social Affairs Department in the Prime Minister's Office and participated in the creation of many planning departments in different ministries, was appointed head of the newly founded Planning and Strategy Department at the Ministry of Education in 2014, a department that comprises the Planning Division and the Strategy and Policy Division. An official at the department explains: "What is planning and strategy? Planning and learning, it was the basis of the planning section, data-based decisions are areas that we begin to move through, and systemic changes. Strategy—is increasing effectiveness, trust in long-term thinking" (Interview with official 2, Planning and Strategy Department). When asked about the level of cooperation of functionaries in the ministry with the Planning Division's initiatives, the functionary responds: "as a whole, people in central units and the heads of the districts cooperated, they were happy to be assisted in their planning. At the beginning, there was some resistance because they didn't really believe that we would really take their Work Plan seriously" (Official 1, Planning and Strategy Department). Another official at the section expresses his/her view on the evolution of the management culture in the ministry and in the education system in general: "Education planning is something new ... we started three years ago, only in 2014 ...but now the school principal, the regional director and the bodies of the central administration in the ministry, all of them, they know how to plan, how to think during the year and also the following two years" (Official 1, Planning and Strategy Department).

The establishment of the department in the ministry was the initiative of the Director General at that time, Michal Cohen, and it was supported by the minister

¹⁷National Authority for Measurement and Evaluation in Education has been founded in 2005 based on Dovrat Committee (2004) recommendations.

¹⁸The 2011 Israeli social justice protests were a series of demonstrations in Israel beginning in July 2011 involving hundreds of thousands of protesters from a variety of socio-economic and religious backgrounds opposing the continuing rise in the cost of living (particularly housing) and the deterioration of public services such as health and education.

¹⁹The committee for Economic and Social Change chaired by Professor Trachtenberg was appointed as a response to the "tents' protest" in summer 2011, a large and long-lasting protest movement against the high cost of living in the country.

Shai Piron (2013–2014). They appointed new heads for several central units, who shared a managerial culture and would cooperate willingly with the new department and the transformation of the ministry's organization culture. They included the Director of Education Workers Administration, who is simultaneously one of the two deputy directors general of the ministry, the head of the Pedagogic Office, the head of the Pedagogic Administration, the head of Society and Youth Administration, the Acting Chief Scientist and the head of Research and Development.

The approach of Michal Tabibian-Mizrachi, the head of the new department, was to incorporate managerial regulation progressively and gain the support of the central administration's vice-directors-general in order to avoid resistance. She spent the first year in her job learning the terrain and approaching the central administration in order to gain their trust. Their support was essential, since each project launched by the department needed the cooperation of one or several units.

One of the main goals of the department is to foster data-based processes for decision-making. A civil servant of the department explains the difficulty of making decisions without the needed information: “[For instance, in the case of an educational network with many schools, do you think that I can tell you how efficient is this specific network compared to a local authority with the same characteristics? Impossible, because we don't have data.” The division plans to carry out studies to evaluate the efficiency of different kind of schools, networks, and local authorities which will enable, according to the functionary, to make proper decisions in education.

The Strategy and Policy Division is responsible for systemic changes such as encouraging inter-organizational relations. Managerial regulation emphasizes inter-organizational relations, working by projects and horizontal circulation of knowledge between the units of the public service (Jessop 1995). It is through the initiative called “Involving Relationships” (*Yachasim Mearvim*) that the Strategy and Policy Division attempts to encourage inter-organizational relations and the cooperation between units in projects. By instilling a common managerial language and promoting inter-organizational relations, the Strategy and Policy Division aims at rationalizing the ministry's activities. An official of the Planning and Strategy Department tells us how they intervene in order to rationalize the ministry and eliminate unnecessary parallel activities. “Both units, the Pedagogic Administration and the Pedagogic Office, work on students' competencies but one speaks about “Skills of the 21th century” and the other about “Learner abilities”; we are working on the unification of the language used in both units. The Strategy and Policy Division leads this activity since as the official explains: “we have the skills for conducting workshops, leading thinking processes, that's what we know to do, in this case, leading to a common approach, a common language on meaningful learning.” He/she adds:

I think ... the units understand our value and our contribution to their decision making and also the fact that they get information about other units. Through us people get a systemic picture and it is important since they want to function systemically in order to succeed.

Another perspective on the language unification process, a dissenting view, was shared by a senior functionary (2) of the Pedagogic Office. Regarding the Pedagogic Administration's language she/he claims:

They speak about ideas, nothing to do with disciplines. We do not really believe in this separation between generic ideas and subject matters. If you talk to a teacher and you speak to him/her about 'meaningful learning' and tell them all the bombastic words but don't connect them to their disciplines it makes no sense for them!! But [the process] is a struggle, it is a power struggle!

When asked about the activity of the Planning and Strategy Department, he/she responds: "I think it's nice to have goals and to plan... but the attempt to quantify pedagogical issues is terribly difficult. It is not clear that they know how" (former senior functionary 2, Pedagogic Office, interview 2).

A civil servant of the Planning and Strategy Department discusses the evolution of the managerial culture in the Ministry of Education and in the public service in general. He/she used to participate every year in the Public Governance Committee (PGC) of the OECD "that helps countries strengthen their capacity to govern by improving policy-making systems and the performance of public institutions."²⁰ And according to the civil servant, it was "in order to learn from other countries' experiences, mainly from countries such as Denmark, Austria and the Netherlands which are similar in size and population to Israel." In 2010, Michal Tabibian-Mizrahi, working then at the Prime Minister's Office, coordinated a committee that dealt with the acceptance of Israel to the OECD and a sub-committee on the public service. The civil servant comments: "We felt very bad about the situation in Israel. But now when I attend the PGC, I feel much better; people learn from us, for instance, the Government Planning Guide has been translated into Norwegian" (Official 1, Planning and Strategy Department).

The functionary stresses the significance of the managerial culture in the eyes of the central government and tells us about the ceremony that takes place every year at the end of the planning conference organized by the Prime Minister's Office. "General Directors of the different ministries are invited to the podium, to speak to the audience"; she/he specifies, "this act aims at reinforcing planning and performing as the new skills" (Official 1, Planning and Strategy Department).

9.5.1.2 Main Actors: "Education Picture," "Present," "Work Plan," and "Strategic Plan"

The first projects the new department conducted were the "Education Picture" (*Hatmuna Hachinuchit*) and the "Present" (*Matana*—acronym for compilation, planning, and management). The Education Picture is an index to measure schools' quality through indicators such as students' achievements, volunteering, enlistment in the army, quality of graduation certificates, integration of special education, and

²⁰<http://www.oecd.org/gov/public-governance-committee.htm>

so on. It was developed after a process of online consultation with 3500 different persons, including focus groups in which education networks and nonprofit organizations participated. The Present is a yearly guide for schools and kindergartens; it includes the Education Ministry's planning framework and is handed to schools in order to plan and attain specific targets and outcomes accordingly.²¹ The Present was developed in closed collaboration with the Pedagogic Administration and involved a complex process based on dialogue with a large number of school principals and district directors all over the country (former head of Pedagogic Administration).

The "Education Picture" and the "Present" became main actors in the managerial assemblage, but other actors such as "Planning Days" and the "Evaluation of the Situation" contributed also in instilling regulation by numbers into the ministry.

Every year, the Planning Division organizes common Planning Days for all the bodies of the education system in which officials of the central administration, directors of district offices and representatives of principals take part. As the senior civil servant comments: "these planning days in common represent the highly integrative character of our planning work and the integration we want to attain in the whole system." The "Evaluation of the Situation" (*Ha'arachat Mazav*) of the education system, a document that has to be produced every 3 years, is a 2–3 months process in which the Planning and Strategy Department's staff learn about the Israeli education system based on research in Israel and in the world, through parameters defined by the Section.

The Strategy and Policy Division's responsibilities include the development of the Work Plan (*Tochnit Avoda*) at the ministry. Each unit sends its Work Plan to the Strategy and Policy Division and receives feedback on the plan. At present, the Strategy Division works with 19 units including 10 units at the central administration and 9 districts. The Strategy and Policy Division built a forum of "Planning appointees" who corresponds in fact to the second person in the hierarchy of all the units mentioned. As a civil servant from the Planning and Strategy Department explains: "very soon they understood that those who do not participate in the forum would not be involved in the ministry's Work Plan nor in the Strategic Plan of the Prime Minister's Office." Work Plans are a tool for constructing new skills but also for creating alignment among the different units at the ministry. As the civil servant comments: "If in the past people used to plan their work according to what they thought was good, today you have to plan in light of common objectives, targets and in cooperation with other units."

Another important actor of the managerial assemblage is represented by the Strategic Plan (*Tochnit estrategit*). In order to build the Strategic Plan, the Strategy

²¹ "It is a tool for effective management of your school, helping you and your team define the goals you want to reach together and enabling you to see what are the most effective actions to achieve these goals, from building a curriculum, to managing resources to teaching team development". (Source: http://matana.education.gov.il/%D7%9E%D7%93%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%9A_%D7%9C_%D7%9E%D7%91%D7%95%D7%90)

and Policy Division gathered all the central administration functionaries along with a number of teachers and principals. Together, they conceived a strategic plan with objectives, targets, and tasks, and the following year they also added indicators. When asked about the past, the functionary responds: “Indeed, there were also targets in the past, but they were targets formulated in the way education people like to think about them, in a very holistic manner,” and he/she adds: “Only the last year we added an indicator to almost each target. We have ten key indicators and several more that are optional.”

The Planning and Strategy Department is in charge of the “Atudot Program for the Senior Level in the Education System” an in-service training program for middle rank officials. It is part of the *Atudot Israel*, the program conceived at the Prime Minister’s Office in order to prepare a pool of professional civil servants for the public administration.²²

9.5.1.3 Young Officials with Public Policy Background, Forum of Planning Appointees, and Consulting Firms

As we have seen, the incorporation of a performance-based culture in the Ministry of Education is first and foremost the responsibility of the recently created Planning and Strategy Department. It is a senior-level department outside of the ministry that as a civil servant in the department explains: “is a young and energetic body inside the ministry but it does not depend on it and is not involved in its internal idiosyncrasy and politics” (Official 1, Planning and Strategy Department). As a senior department, it enjoys independence, and as a new unit, it can bypass traditional power struggles in the ministry and foster the new regulation.

The section attempts to instill their performance-based culture without the use of coercion: “we tried to lead a process of learning, a process of development and change through learning, but this only suits some people, I think this is a more modern kind of management that corresponds to the new generation of functionaries (Official 1, Planning and Strategy Department).” The officials in this section believe in a dialogical, non-coercive, and progressive mode of action, and this managerial culture makes it hard to ally all the workers of the ministry into their projects.

The functionaries at the new unit—the Planning and Strategy Department which includes the Planning Division and the Strategic and Policy Division—have a similar profile: they are relatively young, and most of them graduated from Public Policy university departments. Evaluation, performance measurement, and outcome-based planning are the basis of the language students acquire in their public policy studies. Many people in their 30s or 40s with public policy background have been recruited as heads of departments ensuring that the new generation in the ministry shares a managerial culture. But as a functionary of the Strategy and Planning Department comments: “there are still many heads who belong to another generation.” In addi-

²²<http://cms.education.gov.il/EducationCMS/Units/Planning/atudot.htm>

tion, the young section heads are aware of the limitations of their training: “we do not have any pedagogical knowledge, nevertheless, over time we are developing an education expertise” (Official 1, Planning and Strategy Department).

What is the dynamic employed to advance managerial regulation in the ministry? First, the officials working in the new department and other close collaborators discuss projects and exchange ideas. The work team elaborates the main ideas of a project, and then the Planning Appointees Forum mentioned above disseminates the project to the units. An official of the section explains that the Planning Appointees are the vehicle to spread the managerial language.

It began with the fact that they are responsible for planning in their units and we work on planning the project with them. But the idea is to also leverage them to influence the processes of change. So, let's say, now we want to launch a process on school autonomy, so we will incorporate them into the process and through them, school autonomy or another process will reach their units. We hardly stand on the front, that is, we work only through other central units (Official 2, Planning and Strategy Department, interview 2).

The Planning Appointees Forum comprises 35 members who are deputy directors of the different units. They meet on average once a month, and the Strategic and Policy Division organizes a whole learning day for them. “Each year they work on another issue and they come in order to disseminate the new approaches elaborated in the forum and incorporate them into their units” (Official 1, Planning and Strategy Department).

Besides being the vehicle of dissemination of the managerial language, the Planning Appointees Forum participates in a socialization process aimed at instilling the work team and dialogical spirit among officials of the different units. The head of the Planning and Strategy Department explains:

The main thing, if you ask me, is that a very strong network of people was established here. It is the first time that suddenly someone from Informal Education sits with someone who is responsible for Children and Youth at Risk, and they talk because they never have this interface point. Someone from the Central District learns something from someone from the Southern District, because they never had this forum in which people sit and learn together. This is something that has really strengthened the system.

In spite of the huge task transforming the organizational culture of the ministry entails, the two divisions of the new Planning and Strategy Department rely only on less than ten workers, and part of them are temporary workers, student jobs. This means that the task of instilling a managerial regulation into the ministry is mainly conducted by consulting firms. A civil servant of the department comments that “consulting service is less about thinking and more about technology” and specifies that, for instance, the “Evaluation of the Situation” of the ministry—that, as we have seen above, is about learning about the Israeli education system compared to those of other countries—will be managed by an external firm, *Tack-Tovanot*, an Israeli firm that won the tender. “*Tack-Tovanot*, they provide us with a platform that we do not possess, *Tack-Tovanot* is one of the five consulting firms that participated in the tender of the Planning and Strategy Department in the Ministry of Education, five firms that have been selected from the list provided by the Prime Minister’s Office” (Official 2, Planning and Strategy Department, interview 2).

The use of consultants enables the ministry to launch ambitious projects and at the same time to reduce the number of employees, shrinking the state bureaucracy as fostered by the new managerial culture. Consulting firms provide a temporary workforce, but as the head of the department explains, consultants also provide new ideas and reinforce legitimization of government policy.

When you work with external companies, some of which are non-profit organizations and some business entities, you get more “soldiers” for the work but also more specific value. And I think that with external counsel you have an opportunity to get people from the outside world who are different from you. Consultants... their value is both in their expertise and in their being mediators. Since they are not from the government, it allows them to bridge gaps in trust, thus enabling the implementation of governmental policies.

Part of the work of the Planning and Strategy Department is conducted through consultation with different stakeholders. Since, as a civil servant of the department explains: “We understand that in order to influence education we actually have to involve as many stakeholders as possible, not only principals and parents but also local authorities and central NGOs.” She/he specifies: “such was the case of the Education Picture, it was shaped through public consultation and again, *Tack-Tovanot* provided the platform,” but as the civil servant clarifies, even with the support of the consulting firm, the process of public consultation is a hard and complex task: “a successful consultation requires a thorough preparation that includes well-prepared background papers and the choice of experts who will be involved in the process, this is not an easy choice at all” (Official 1, Planning and Strategy Department).

During the academic year 2016–2017, a large consultation process was conducted around school autonomy. A committee for the examination of school autonomy was appointed by the Director General of the ministry in 2012. The committee headed by Mr. Shimon Harel²³ and led by the Planning and Strategy Department included representatives of the ministry, the third sector, municipalities, and principals. The committee led a large online consultation in which twenty thousand people were invited to participate: all the school principals in Israel, all the inspectors, and a few thousand teachers. Their input was provided through questions formulated by the committee.

The efforts to involve different education stakeholders in policy-making reflect the culture of the managerial regulation and tri-sector cooperation that the Planning and Strategy Department embodies. However, the consultation mode provides additional benefits: “it is a way of getting legitimacy from the public for our moves and avoid resistance from the ground, but also to hinder opposition from the central administration here in the ministry” (Official 1, Planning and Strategy Department).

When asked about the role of the Planning and Strategy Department, the functionary interviewed summarizes: “We are not the brain here but let’s say we are the neurons of this enormous body called Ministry of Education.”

²³ Head of Human Teaching Resources in the Ministry of Education in 2000 and Head of the Jerusalem District at the Ministry of Education in 2006.

9.5.2 *The Tri-Sector Assemblage*

9.5.2.1 External Programs: Unregulated and Uncontrolled Nonprofit and For-profit Organizations' Educational Activities

The involvement of the third sector in the education system in Israel has increased significantly since the 1990s, a trend that continues until the present. The Central Bureau of Statistics reported that in 2009, the third sector was responsible for funding educational projects equivalent to 17% of the total of national expenses on pre-elementary education, 13% of the total expenses in elementary education and 44% of the total of national expenses on post elementary education. In 2010, nonprofit and commercial organizations funded 7% of the total national expenses on education in Israel, a percentage considerably higher than in other OECD countries (OECD 2003).²⁴

In 2007, 353,000 workers were employed in nonprofit institutions, about 13% of all jobs in the Israeli economy. Most of the jobs were concentrated in education and research (49%) (Asban 2010: 15).

For decades, we have witnessed a growing participation of nonprofit and for-profit organizations in the provision of education programs, nevertheless national policies for the regulation of these external programs were not established until recently. The Attorney General pointed already in 1988 to the lack of control and regulation of NGOs and disseminated a "Procedure for cooperation between ministries and NGOs."

Since 2000, the Ministry of Education has made several attempts to map and regulate external programs. Some attempts had meager success, but others contributed to the reinforcement of the tri-sector assemblage.

In 2003, the Pedagogic Administration requested from the directors of departments and units a list of all the programs operated by the Ministry's units or by external entities. The list obtained was partial due to the difficulties in collecting the necessary information. In 2004, the Director General demanded the heads of ten units at the ministry to produce a list of the external programs, but the information provided was still incomplete. In June 2006, the Director General instructed units' and districts' directors to submit a list of external bodies with whom the Ministry was in contact. Again, the instruction was only partly fulfilled. In 2007, a public committee, the "Committee for determining criteria for the entry of intervening bodies, and the activities of the third sector in the education system" (Zailer Committee) submitted its report. Among the main recommendations: a comprehensive mapping of the existing programs and the establishment of a procedure defining the criteria according to which those interested in operating in educational institutions will be authorized.²⁵

²⁴External education programs in the education system. Research and information center, the Knesset, July 29, 2014.

²⁵http://www.mevaker.gov.il/he/Reports/Report_117/ReportFiles/fullreport_2.pdf?AspxAutoDete

Since the submission of the report, a number of attempts to implement its recommendations have been made. First, two surveys on external programs were carried out, one published in 2008 and the other in 2009; second, the publication of a circular by the Director General in 2010 with clear instructions and criteria for the introduction of external programs into schools; third, the establishment of a unit in the Ministry of Education for the approval of external programs as a result of the circular.

The first survey mentioned above was a report published by the Chief Scientist of the Ministry of Education in August 2008. This report summarized a survey conducted on his behalf to examine the activities of external programs in elementary and junior high schools. The report recommended, inter alia, to proceed with the monitoring and regulation of the activities of external bodies operating in educational institutions and to establish a database including the information about external programs.²⁶

The second survey was a mapping of external programs which the ministry assigned to the Institute for Educational Entrepreneurship, headed by Bat-Chen Weinberg at Beit Berl Academic College. The survey, an important actor of the tri-sector network, was completed in 2009 and gave an idea of the dimension of the nonprofit and for-profit organizations' activities in the education system. The survey found that associations, foundations, and business organizations operate up to three educational programs in 68% of schools and at least six programs in 21% of the schools. They also found that most of the programs were integrated in educational institutions without any supervision or control by the Ministry (Weinberg and Shifman 2008). In addition, the survey showed the lack of transparency of the external bodies and the pedagogical and budgetary distortions resulting from the inability to manage the resources on a systemic basis which should guarantee an equalitarian social distribution (Dagan-Buzaglo 2010).

The main recommendations of this survey were as follows:

- Formulation of a policy by the Ministry of Education about the partnership with external bodies operating in educational institutions in conjunction with the different stakeholders.
- Development of a detailed common database of existing external programs.
- Definition of responsibility areas for cross-sector cooperation.
- Systematic and professional evaluation.
- Encourage and direct cross-sector cooperation (Weinberg and Shifman 2008).

The survey conducted by Weinberg and her associates is a key actor of the tri-sector assemblage. It is the first official document issued in collaboration with the Ministry of Education that clearly emphasizes the need for cross-sector cooperation reflecting the Prime Minister's Office resolution of 2008.

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²⁶External education programs in the education system. Research and information center, the Knesset, July 29, 2014.

The circular, disseminated in 2010 by the Director General, adopts a similar discourse in favor of the cooperation with the third sector: "The entry of third sector organizations and the business community into the education system can contribute to the realization of education policy, the mobilization of external resources and the creation of new professional knowledge. Therefore, the Ministry of Education is encouraging programs that originate from these organizations."²⁷ The DG's circular set out a set of clear criteria and an orderly mechanism for approval of external plans and established the founding of a new body in charge of the task: the "Unit for approval of programs from the third sector and the business community" under the "Professional Training and Development of Teaching Staff Administration" in the ministry. The circular also mentions the Ministry's intention to build a computerized database of programs.²⁸ The latter, as we will see further on, evolved into the online database of external programs inaugurated a few years later.

In the 2012–2013 academic year, the booklet *Tafnit* (acronym of "pedagogical infrastructure for selecting programs" in Hebrew), mapping more than 211 external programs operated in partnership with representatives from the Ministry's headquarters, was distributed. It includes pedagogical and organizational criteria that define a proper program, tools, and models designed to help school principals with an informed choice of programs.

The lack of regulation of external programs and the public echo about it, fostered the State Comptroller to examine these programs and in the Report no. 62 published in 2012, he concluded: "Thousands of external programs are taking place in the education system every year. Various programs were integrated into schools, many times without any regulated request, examination and authorization proceedings. Due to the lack of clear policy regarding the functioning of these programs, what has been going on in educational institutions during the last few years has been defined by third sector's and business sector's actions on the ground [...] The findings of this report demonstrate that the central administration has to proceed with a comprehensive and deep regulation of the entire external programs topic and first of all to finalize the formulation of a ministerial policy."²⁹ The comptroller found that for years ambiguity had existed regarding who in the Ministry of Education was responsible for the examination and approval of external programs.³⁰

Thus, the State Comptroller and his annual report became a significant actor in the tri-sector network since the harsh critiques expressed in the report spurred the foundation of a new and innovative unit in the Ministry as a tool to remedy the long-lasting disorder and uncontrolled functioning of the external programs.

²⁷ Circular of the Director General of the Ministry of Education, 2010/4 (A) 63-1.3, para. 1.1).

²⁸ External education programs in the education system. Research and information center, the Knesset, July 29, 2014.

²⁹ http://www.mevaker.gov.il/he/Reports/Report_117/ReportFiles/fullreport_2.pdf?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1

³⁰ External education programs in the education system. Research and information center, the Knesset, July 29, 2014.

9.5.2.2 Cross-Sector Programs and Cooperation Unit: Consultation, Roundtable, and Wisdom of the Masses

At the end of 2012, the Cross-sector Programs and Cooperation Unit was founded at the Pedagogic Administration in the Ministry of Education as the unique body to deal with the regulation and monitoring of external programs. The founding of the unit was the initiative of Michal Cohen, who was Deputy Director General at the time and later became Director General of the ministry. A school principal with no previous experience at the ministry was appointed head of the new section. From the outset, the new unit's mode of operation was different from the traditional ministry's mode; it aimed at formulating a policy on external programs based on a cross-sector dialogue. The tools chosen were consultations, roundtables, and work teams, all of them technically supported by consulting companies.

The first step undertaken was a large consultation with different stakeholders, including the participation of the Deputy Director General. The consultation consisted of four meetings held during 2013, with hundreds of CEOs of nonprofit organizations, foundations, and the business sector as well as inspectors, principals, and representatives of the ministry's administration. The aim was listening to nonprofit's and foundations' CEOs to try to understand what they thought about the functioning of the ministry on external programs and what were their expectations from the ministry on the topic. And indeed, the consultation clarified the main problems of the interaction of the ministry with bodies operating external programs. As the head of the unit tells us:

They said about us, about the Ministry of Education, you are slow, until you move...we... the associations... we are already in the field [...] every office, every section in the ministry speaks a different language, tell us what language to use, what you want. You are the Ministry of Education, we really want you to be a guiding hand, you need to grow up a spine ... we want you to be strong ... be a beacon for us.

When asked about their desired goals, nonprofit CEOs stressed two main issues: first, “one entrance door to the ministry” meaning that only one unit at the ministry should be responsible for the external programs and, second, “let the school principal ... be a professional gatekeeper ... give him professional tools to choose a program by mapping out what already exists” (Head of Unit, interview 1).

The second step was the organization of cross-sector roundtables. Four roundtables were organized in 2014, chaired by the Director General of the ministry and with the participation of representatives of the Ministry of Education (from the central administration, districts, principals, and teachers), municipalities, third-sector organizations, and the business community. The main recommendations of the roundtables were as follows:

- A. The external programs' database—policy recommendations and characterization of an Internet database for external programs in the education system, in cooperation with the ICT Section of the Ministry of Education.
- B. An agreed-upon process for building an optimal partnership at the school level—An agreed-upon work process for integrating external programs in

schools was presented. The process was based on knowledge gathered from all members of the planning team, including the heads of the education departments of local authorities, school principals, managers of nonprofit organizations, and others.

C. Formulation of a tri-sector convention for establishing the rules of the cross-sector dialogue and cooperation (Director General, Ministry of Education).³¹

The third step was the organization of work teams comprising different stakeholders to discuss each one of the tasks decided upon in the roundtable. In mid-2014, the three tasks were accomplished: database's principles were defined, the process for integrating external programs in schools was delineated, and the cross-sector convention formulated.

The online database was a complex and costly high-tech project. Initially, third-sector representatives demanded outsourcing of the task because of their lack of trust in the ability of the ministry units to efficiently and rapidly fulfill a major task. Nevertheless, the project was completed satisfactorily and in a short period of time by the computerization unit in the ministry.

It was decided that during the first stage of its functioning, every program operating in the education system by a profit or nonprofit organization should be registered in the database. Each program would contain professional feedback, in some cases feedback from the ministerial staff, but in most cases from school principals. Principals were supposed to provide feedback on the programs operating in their schools, assessing the quality of the program. This regulation, based on the wisdom of the masses (the principals), helps address the lack of the ministry staff needed to control and assess thousands of programs already circulating in the education system. The idea was that for the 2015–2016 school year, principals would be able to choose only programs that appear in the database and that in the following year unregistered programs would be forbidden from operating (Head of the Unit, interview 3).

The online database was an innovative way to regulate the programs and monitor nonprofit and for-profit organizations. By November 2017, 2365 external programs had been registered in the database,³² but only 230 had been rated and gotten feedback.³³ “Principals claimed that they have no time, but in my opinion the problem is that in Israel we don't have a culture of posting your opinion, it will take some time” (Head of the Unit, Interview 3).

Due to the success of the process undertaken by the cross-sector unit, the Director General of the ministry encouraged the head to extend their activity to other units.

³¹ <https://sheatufim.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/%D7%9E%D7%A1%D7%9E%D7%9A-%D7%9E%D7%A1%D7%9B%D7%9D-%D7%94%D7%A1%D7%93%D7%A8%D7%AA-%D7%AA%D7%9B%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%91%D7%9E%D7%A2%D7%A8%D7%9B%D7%AA-%D7%94%D7%97%D7%99%D7%A0%D7%95%D7%9A.pdf>

³² About 798 of which are in the green track (accompanied by a representative of the ministry) and 1567 on the blue track (without a representative of the ministry); <http://cms.education.gov.il/EducationCMS/Applications/TYH/hp.htm>

³³ <http://cms.education.gov.il/EducationCMS/Applications/TYH/hp.htm>

“We became experts on processes, experts on cross-sector dialogue and experts on collaborations. We help other units plan and organize cross-sector projects.” The head of the unit mentioned the different roundtables they were organizing, among others, the Health project which depends on the Health Department of the Ministry of Education and intends to involve many bodies (health foundations, dietitians, sports centers, health NGOs, mental health organizations, etc.), and the LGBT project requested by the Psychological Service Administration.

In addition, the expertise developed in the Cross-sector Programs and Cooperation Unit engendered a project outside of the Ministry of Education. The inter-ministerial “Government and Civil Society Initiative” chaired by the Director General of the Ministry of Education and the participation of six “social” ministries (among them Health, Education, Welfare and Justice) intend to transfer the successful experience of cross-sector dialog in the Ministry of Education to other ministries. “The Ministry of Education is the leading ministry on the topic and the only one to possess a special cross-sector cooperation unit” (Head of the Unit, Interview 2).

In addition, the Cross-sector Programs and Cooperation Unit plans to expand its activity to new areas: training and investigation. As the head of the unit explains: “we also want to develop a cross-sector cooperation course for school principals and we plan to undertake surveys and studies in order to understand the geographical layout of external programs, the relationship between their quantity and quality and their impact on school’s performance.”

9.6 “Who Manages Whom?”: “NGOization” and “Consultization” of Policy-Making

The growing involvement of nonprofit and for-profit organizations in the production of education reflects the *NGOization* of the Ministry of Education (Yacobi 2007) and represents new challenges to the ministry. As a senior functionary in the area of sciences explains: “working with NGOs is a very delicate ‘game’ between people who want to give money under their conditions and our needs, the needs of the ministry.” And she/he specifies: “One of the problems with NGO programs is that most of the foundations work with matching, they ask for matching from municipalities and sometimes the municipalities that accept the matching (or have the money for it) are not those to whom we want to provide the program” (former senior functionary 2, Pedagogic Office, interview 2). This is an example of the decreasing control of the ministry on policy decisions. Since functionaries are not the sole actors in the scene, their policies have to take NGOs’ conditions into account.

The regulation of the external programs through the wisdom of the masses might work for most NGOs. However, it is more difficult to exert control on big organizations such as the Rashi Foundation and the Trump Foundation. These and other philanthropic organizations that invest millions in education in Israel can bypass the Pedagogic Office or the need to register in the database. The Rashi Foundation

functions at the district level, and it “enters certain districts directly, they don’t pass through the ministry” (Former senior functionary 2, Pedagogic Office, interview 2). Similarly, the Trump Foundation is not subjected to the Pedagogic Office’s control, a fact that makes the senior functionary wonder about “Who manages whom? We manage them or them us?” She/he explains:

The Trump Foundation is an extremely strong foundation and his director, Eli Hurvitz³⁴, has direct contact with the Minister of Education and the Director General here and they can ‘do business’ without consulting us [the Pedagogic Office] at all. On some issues they ask our opinion, sometimes they only inform us about their activities but in others they decide directly with the Minister and the Director General. In some cases when the Director General lacks ten million then she knows that the foundation will provide. And as you know, whoever pays gets to decide what goes on, and sometimes we have the feeling that they became the Ministry of Education, in my view they have too much power.

And indeed, the literature points to the evolving role of philanthropists who decide and control to what and how to donate. This evolution increases their influence in education policymaking through seeding and shaping the nonhierarchical structures (Lubienski 2016).

The problem of who controls education policy is even more acute if we realize that when referring to civil society organizations, it is increasingly difficult to differentiate between nonprofit and for-profit organizations. And that is because some of the largest business entities operate in the public sphere, including in education, through NGOs; hence, the motivations underlying NGOs’ activities are not always exclusively philanthropic, but may also be economic (Rose 2009). The increasing use of tender for service provision in the ministries means that the third-sector organization has to conduct itself as a business, preparing proposals, arranging guarantors, etc. Thus, as the use of the tender system increases, the line between voluntary and commercial action becomes blurred (Limor 2004). Moreover, the growing prominence of social impact investment (SII), a variant of venture philanthropy or philanthro-capitalism, blurs even more the difference between nonprofit and for-profit organizations. SII operates with the belief that doing well by doing good or, more literally, “doing good by doing good business” is the best approach to solving entrenched social problems (Mitchell 2017).

Setting in motion the tri-sector dialogue demands complex and sophisticated human and technological platforms. These tools are provided by consulting companies that are in charge of the functioning of roundtables and consultations in all stages of the process. Consulting companies were selected by tenders among the companies selected (also by tender) by the Prime Minister’s Office. It was *Sheatufim* (literally = collaborations) that won the tender to put in place the tri-sector dialogue in the Ministry of Education. It is interesting to note that *Sheatufim* and its Executive Director, Shlomo Dushi, led the first constitutive Prime Minister’s Office roundtable³⁵ (interview with a *Sheatufim* consultant). Moreover, Bat-Chen Weinberg who

³⁴ Between 2000 and 2011, Hurvitz served as the Deputy Director of *Yad Hanadiv*, the Rothschild Family Foundation, another very big foundation operating in education.

³⁵ The organization site mentions that “Sheatufim has been leading public participation processes

headed the Institute for Educational Entrepreneurship and prepared the external programs survey, a key nonhuman actor of the tri-sector cooperation assemblage, became a senior consultant in *Sheatufim* and led roundtables at the Ministry of Education.

Consulting companies are main actors in the tri-sector cooperation assemblage as we have seen is the case of the managerial assemblage at the ministry. This reflects the ***consultization*** of the Ministry of Education, meaning an increasing involvement of consulting companies in the different activities carried out by the ministry. Among the companies that have operated and operate in the ministry, we find several well-known international consulting firms such as TASK, TACK, Deloitte, De Levitt, Trigger Forest, and also various Israeli ones such as *Lotem*, *Tefen*, *Arbiv Management*, *Tovanot* (literally = insights), *Tovanot Bechinuch* (Insights in Education) (Official 1, Prime Minister's Office). The increasing demand to provide advisory services to ministries contributes to the expansion of consulting as a distinctive economic sector in Israel. The number of consulting firms—international, international firms with a local branch, and Israeli—has been multiplying in Israel.

One of the consequences of the development of business consultancy is the transfer of educational professionals into private businesses which is also a means to use the public service experience at the service of the consulting industry (Ball 2008). Indeed, in Israel, many professionals who left the civil service have been attracted to the consulting industry. Such was the case of Dr. Gal Alon who used to work in the Prime Minister's Office and later founded *Tovanot*, a very successful consulting firm.³⁶ When asked about the different consulting firms that submit tenders, an official of the Prime Minister's Office responded: "our country is not that big, I know all the companies and their head managers, they also used to work in government offices" (Official 1, Prime Minister's Office).

Another consequence of outsourcing ministry's functions concerns long-term influences of consultancy on policy-making. In the outsourcing process, there is the understanding that the public body holds the main responsibility and the private body only implements the policy on the basis of predefined criteria. Supporters of privatization assume that it is possible to truly separate fields of knowledge in a hermetic manner, and to deal effectively on a case-by-case basis, detached from the general, systemic, institutional, or chronological context. However, they ignore the damage that outsourcing processes cause to the overall knowledge of the system. In areas where knowledge is important, such as planning, outsourcing leads consulting firms to accumulate more expertise over the years than the public body that is supposed to guide it has. In such a situation, the administrative unit finds it increasingly difficult to plan and supervise policy (Paz-Fuchs 2012).

and cross sector roundtables for the government since 2008." <http://sheatufim.org.il/en/subject/cross-sector-dialog/>.

³⁶<https://www.insights.us>

It is important to note that the officials at the Planning and Strategy Department are aware of this problem and try to overcome it:

The subject of knowledge preservation and knowledge development, we are really aware of it. If you look at the tender we published then you'll see that it's in there, and that we're really telling the ministries and telling consultants, people who are service operators, that there's a duty to keep the knowledge in the ministry, because the knowledge is ours. They have to train people in the units for them to develop that knowledge in the government, and that they [the units] will not be dependent solely on them [consultant firms]. (Head of the Planning and Strategy Department)

The former Head of the Pedagogic Administration, the biggest unit in the ministry, clarifies that the tendency is to leave “sensitive” matters such as pedagogical questions or supervision of different types of student populations, in the hands of the ministry in order to avoid the handling of sensitive data outside of the ministry (Interview, former Head of Pedagogic Administration). In spite of the efforts to incorporate the knowledge in the units, experience has shown that Israel does not excel, to put it mildly, in regulating and supervising privatized bodies. As a result, increasing outsourcing and policy-making through consulting firms causes the state to detach itself from its duty to determine policy (Paz-Fuchs 2012).

Officials under NPM (and also NPG) lose their top-down authority over public bureaucracies and managers because it prioritizes performance over accountability to citizens and also because it is difficult to maintain and increase the bottom-up control of all officials, including those employed on contracts (Kersbergen and Waarden 2004). The failed control of the ministry along with the loss of officials in favor of the edu-business and the loss of managerial-education expertise—all these processes weaken the Ministry of Education institutionally. Instead, the new actors, particularly private business and philanthropists, give rise to the global education industry that seeks to set policy agendas, frame policy problems, and refashion regulatory regime to their advantage (Verger et al. 2016).

9.7 Conclusions: The Post-bureaucratic NGOization Regulation Model

A rich literature deals with the shift in the mode of regulation of public administrations in the world to a performance-based model inspired by New Public Management (NPM). However, empirical studies that explore the way new regulations are incorporated in the public bureaucracies are scant.

The aim of the study presented here has been to understand the complex process of transforming a bureaucratic public administration into a post-bureaucratic one through the incorporation of a mode of regulation anchored in New Public Management (NPM) and New Public Governance (NPG). Drawing on actors-network theory (ANT), we followed the formation of the governance network first at the Central Government and then in the Ministry of Education in Israel by tracing the different human and nonhuman actors that participated in the formation of the

managerial assemblage and the tri-sector cooperation assemblage. The literature points to two kinds of post-bureaucratic turns—a quasi-market model or an evaluative state regulatory model (Maroy 2012). Since the introduction of NPM in the ministry was tightly linked to a growing participation of NGOs in education provision and policy, we conclude that the Israeli case represents a third type of post-bureaucratic regulation, the post-bureaucratic NGOization model.

Three main strategies have enabled the adoption, still in progress, of a post-bureaucratic regulation in the Ministry of Education. First, the creation of two new units with an autonomous status and a relatively clearly defined intersectorial mandate: the Planning and Strategy Department, as a senior department and the main actor of the managerial assemblage, along with the Cross-sector Dialogue and Programs Unit, the main actor of the tri-sector assemblage. Second, the appointment of officials with public policy background who did not belong to the Ministry of Education bureaucracy to head main units. We have noted that the incorporation of the post-bureaucratic regulation has been possible not only because the new actors embodied NPM and NPG cultures and did not have vested interests in the ministry but also due to the bureaucratic tradition of ministry officials. Even if they were not convinced about the advantages of the new culture of planning and measuring performance, most officials respected hierarchy and rules and felt they could not refuse or criticize decisions coming from their superiors. Third, the creation of a new inter-sectorial, prestigious forum that included deputy directors of the different units—the Planning Appointees Forum—responsible for the dissemination of the managerial culture at the different levels of the ministry.

In addition to the main actors mentioned above, the Planning and Strategy Department whose main target is the incorporation of a planning and evaluation into the ministry and the Planning Appointees Forum, the managerial assemblage includes also The Present, a planning tool published every year that transfers the ministry's objectives to the school level, and The Education Picture, an evaluation tool of the quality of schools.

The main actors in the tri-sector assemblage are the Cross-sector Cooperation and Programs Section, specially created to promote nonprofit and for-profit organizations' cooperation with the ministry and the schools and the Online Database of External Programs, a tool to regulate and control programs operating in schools by NGOs or commercial firms.

In addition, important actors common to the two assemblages are represented by consulting firms chosen by tenders that instill the managerial culture and governance mode into the ministry and operate new nonhierarchical and dialogical techniques such as roundtables and public consultation.

The implementation of managerial regulation and the governance mode in Israel reflects the global education governance's ideology on the need to increase education quality on the one hand and efficiency in public service delivery on the other (Sellal and Lingard 2013). However, policy recommendations are highly conditioned by how national societies define social efficiency and by the historical paths of national politics (Carnoy 2016). And indeed, the incorporation of NPM and NPG into the Ministry of Education in Israel was promoted by the central government

through governmental resolutions and under the direct responsibility of the Prime Minister's Office around the time of acceptance of Israel as a member of the OECD in 2010. Although, national states have "control" over their policies, they are inexorably driven to "conform" to global institutional norms in order to meet a particular, global elite-defined conception of a "well-functioning, modern" state (Carnoy 2016). In fact, Israel was accepted by the organization after an assessment of Israel concerning OECD instruments, standards, and benchmarks.³⁷

As the literature indicates, the adoption of global education policies is locally mediated (Carnoy 2016; Mundy et al. 2016). Particularly in Israel, the adoption of a managerial regulation in the Ministry of Education entails the NGOization and consultization of the ministry, which both respond to the NPM's mandate to reduce the size of public administrations. Consulting firms, as external bodies disconnected from the bureaucratic culture of the ministry, can "efficiently" work to instill a performance-based language without the need to recruit new permanent workers. NGOs have been important actors in education since the inception of the State of Israel.³⁸ Their growing influence resulting from the governmental encouragement of third-sector participation linked to the new managerial regulation, engendered an idiosyncratic Israeli regulation mode—a post-bureaucratic NGOization regulation model—in which NGOs play an increasingly significant role in education provision but also in education policy-making.

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³⁷“10 May 2010—The OECD issued an [invitation](#) to Israel to become a member of the OECD. The invitation resulted from the OECD Council's positive assessment of Israel's position with respect to OECD **instruments, standards and benchmarks**” (emphasized by the author. Source: <http://www.oecd.org/israel/israelsaccessiontotheoecd.htm>).

³⁸Even before the foundation of the State of Israel, it was a developed education systems regulated by civil society organizations. See Gidron et al. (2003) and Young (2000).

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Chapter 10

Governmentality: The Notion of Progress in the Brazilian Political Educational Discourse



Márcia Aparecida Amador Mascia

10.1 Introduction

Taking into account that the discourse of progress is at the basis of our current educational policy, this chapter aims at exploring the foundations of this concept in education using as tools the discursive framework in the convergence with Foucault's studies of power and governmentality. For the discussion of progress and curricula, this study relies on Popkewitz. The questions that mobilize the discussion refers to the rules upon which the discourse of progress in education is constructed and, also, how these rules are linguistically materialized in a local example.

The materials that are analyzed are excerpts of documents of Brazilian Curriculum Discourse, focusing on curricula reforms that took place in the 1980 and 1990. My great argument here is that this discourse operates under dichotomies of progress/regression, success/failure, and inclusion/exclusion, naturalizing them. I wish to demonstrate that these dichotomies should not be accepted as naturalized but should be considered a social construction and part of the effects of power in the education system of reasoning.

This chapter is intended to be neither the origin nor the last word about the relations of progress in education, instead it should be viewed as a continuity and/or discontinuity in the discourse on education. The intention is to deconstruct some concepts often related to education: Liberalism, progress, power, and truth. This investigation does not discuss what includes or excludes, but how the discourses create a system of reasoning of inclusion and exclusion in education.

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My experience as a teacher in Brazil has been that there is a constant concern about the issues of exclusion and failure in schooling, in a sense of qualifying and disqualifying students, teachers, approaches, and curricula proposals. For decades, we have watched movements of democratization and redemocratization of education, with countless curricula reforms. But we have noticed that there was something wrong: the reforms were implemented, but the school remained the same. “What could be the matter?” I asked. My discomfort as a teacher and researcher made me start thinking that we had probably been asking the wrong questions. Instead of pursuing what works or does not work in education, as a linguist and discourse analyst, I realized that we should try to look at education discourses and examine the systems of reasons that enable us to think education in a dichotomous way, of inclusion and exclusion. The great argument of this chapter is that this system is a historically constructed discourse.

All research involves theoretical background that points not only to the analysis but also to the data. When we look for and at the data, we cross into theoretical considerations that head our process of selecting, viewing, and interpreting.

In the next section, we pursue the main concepts in which we will inscribe our arguments.

10.2 Theoretical Background

The theoretical background lies on post critical thinkers. We are presenting in this part the notion of progress; object and subject from the discursive point of view; power and governmentality for Foucault.

10.2.1 *Liberalism and Progress as Discourses*

One of the greatest challenges of the modern State is to develop strategies for social inclusion; yet as inclusion strategies are sought, patterns of exclusion remain prominent in social policy and education. These mechanisms of inclusion are embedded in the Liberal thought which underlies the Enlightenment claim of equality of men. Enlightenment believed that systematic knowledge was the motor by which “reason” could direct social action and guarantee a good future in society.

According to Mehta (1997), although Liberalism claims, from the theoretical point of view, a politics of inclusion, in practice, it has actually been exclusionary. This occurs because:

Liberal theoretical claims typically tend to be transhistorical, transcultural, and most certainly transracial. (...) What is meant by this is that the universal claims can be made because they derive from certain characteristics that are common to all human beings. (op. cit., p. 63)

But the exclusionary bases of liberalism, I believe, derive from its theoretical core. (...) It is not because the ideals are theoretically disingenuous or concretely impractical, but

rather because behind the capacities ascribed to all human beings there exists a thicker set of social credentials that constitute the real bases of political inclusion. (op. cit., p. 61)

In this sense, what Liberalism forgets is that men are social beings and that they are embodied in power relations.

Taking into account the notion of progress in Liberalism, it can be said that liberal theory assumes scientific knowledge and, in liberal thought, progress is obtained through managing social change. Popkewitz reinforces this idea, postulating for the American educational system that “in contemporary school reforms, these fundamental assumptions are deeply embedded as part of the doxa. Dominant and liberal educational reform discourses have tended to organize change as logical and sequential” (Popkewitz 1997a: 291).

According to Popkewitz, it is possible to postulate two different ideological forms in contemporary social and educational theory: the critical and the liberal traditions, both of which relate to the nineteenth century view of Enlightenment. In terms of Popkewitz (id., ibid.):

For critical and liberal theorists, change was premised on identifying the subjects who gave direction to change, either by locating the origins of repressive elements that prevented progress or the groups that would bring about a redemptive world.

If we think of Brazilian schooling models, we can say that critical and liberal traditions provide foundational assumptions of progress.

We will now pursue some fundamental concepts that will help understand history as a theoretical activity. In this work, when we talk about history, we are talking about discourses, as Foucault defined and was adopted by the French Discourse Analysis:

(...) a body of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in the time and space that have defined a given period, and for a given social, economic, or linguistic area, the conditions of operation of the enunciative function. (Foucault 1972: 117)

Thus, discursive formations are constituted by discursive practices that determine the objects, the enunciative modalities of the subject, the concepts, and the thematic choices. Discourses could be viewed as discontinuity practices that intersect with each other, juxtapose one another, but also sometimes ignore or exclude each other.

In light of the above, we inscribe the study of Liberalism in education in a study that should contemplate the discourses, that is, the historically constructed principles of classification and ordering of the world. Those who inscribe their researches in the post-modern studies broadly adopt this concept of history as discourses. For post-modern studies, the object does not pre-exist; it is actually constructed according to certain social and historical rules, the rules of discursive formations. These rules dictate what and/or how we are to interpret the world, transforming some things into data to the detriment of others.

But, apart from this interpretation of history as discursive practices adopted by post-modernity, there is another interpretation that we could label as traditional history upon which the Liberalism is based. Popkewitz (1997b: 136–139) focuses on these two systems and the differences between them. He makes a distinction

between what he calls the historicism or philosophy of consciousness and the “linguistic turn.”¹ The former, which has dominated social studies, sees events as “real” and performed by “actors”; the latter, which was adopted by genealogical studies and social epistemology, focuses on language as a constitutive element in the construction of social life and “identity.” The difference between them most interesting here is their concepts of progress. For the historicist view, progress is an *a priori* concept and is conceived as a movement from evil to good, applied to the social conditions of life. The task of social science in this perspective is to detect bad conditions, analyze them, and propose ways of improvement. However, for the “linguistic turn,” which we are adopting in this work, “progress” is seen as change, and it is constitutive to social practices and does not pursue an ideal world. The “linguistic turn” (Usher and Edwards 1994) focuses on the language, assuming that our relation with the world is crossed by language, that is, the rules that tell what, when, and in which way we should say, act, and see the world and ourselves.

The way we see change is as a social constructed image intermediated by language. The images of liberalist change in education through the improvement of curricula involve not only education but also the politics of knowledge of the world, that is, our relation with language.

In the same line of thinking, Bakhtin (1973) works with the meaning of the sign crossed by the language:

Meaning is the expression of a semiotic relationship between a particular piece of reality and another kind of reality that it stands for, represents, or depicts. Meaning is a function of a sign and therefore inconceivable outside the sign as some particular, independently existing thing. (op. cit., p. 28)

In short, anything and everything occurring within the organism can become the material of experience, since everything can acquire semiotic significance, can become expressive. But all the same, it is the word that constitutes the foundation, the skeleton of the meaning of every outside sign. (op. cit., p. 29)

Bakhtin distinguishes between two philosophies of language: “Abstract Objectivism” and “Individualist Subjectivism.” One of the fundamental positions of the former is that the linguistic system constitutes an external and objective fact beyond the individual consciousness and non-dependent on it. On the other hand, the individualist subjectivism, related to romanticism, places the origin of language in the consciousness of the individual. For Bakhtin, both positions are equivocal; the philosophy of language is the philosophy of ideological signs and vice-versa. In this sense, our consciousness of the world is intermediated by language which not only constitutes a link but also works as a component in the construction of this consciousness.

¹ “Linguistic turn” refers to current methodologies in social studies that take the language as its center. For Popkewitz, “the linguistic turn centres on the opacity and figurative character of language, the manner in which subject positions as well as reality-effects are created within language” (2001: 50). The term “linguistic turn” was introduced by Rorty in the reader he edited in 1967, *The Linguistic Turn*, and this marked an ongoing break within analytic thought, moving from the object of language to language itself. For further details, see Rorty 1967; Popkewitz 1997a, b, among others.

To summarize, if we talk about progress in education, we talk about discourses, in other words, a dynamic bundle of power–knowledge interactions that take part in the understanding of the subject (the “self”) and objects (things in the world).

10.2.2 Subject and Object: Discursive Construction

Each discursive formation has some objects, which vary historically, that we understand as the ordering of the world, that is, the “data.” We define data as a collection of objects that have their place and their rule of creation inside each discursive formation. For Foucault:

(...) it is not enough for us to open our eyes, for new objects suddenly to light up and emerge out of the ground. (...) the object does not await in limbo the order that will free it and enable it to become embodied in a visible and prolix objectivity, it does not pre-exist itself, held back by some obstacle at the first edges of light. It exists under the positive conditions of a complex group of relations. (Foucault 1972: 45)

These relations are not inside the objects, they do not pre-exist; they are, somehow, within the limits of discourse, which offers the objects that can be talked about. It is not possible, therefore, to talk about everything in a discursive formation, but only about those things that are allowed for by the rules of object formation. For example, the discourse of Liberalism embodied in every social change, as a pursuit of the objects of truth, talks about the principles of ordering of what is understood as problem and how we classify the society. When one discursive formation classifies some objects as progressive and denies others, it is managing issues of power in order to classify the knowledge. Thus, objects related to the concept of progress should be understood within the rules of a discursive formation. What one discursive formation understands as progress is not the same for another. That is what Kuhn (1970) calls incommensurability among paradigms. Kuhn (op. cit.) provides a view of progress that should be understood inside the same paradigm: what is progress for one paradigm is not for another. He defines progress not cumulatively, but within rules that are historically and socially delimited. His work raises profound questions about the common image of progress, specially related to science as a process of cumulative evolution. For him, “we may, to be more precise, have to relinquish the notion, explicit or implicit, that changes of paradigm carry scientists and those who learn from them closer and closer to the truth” (op. cit., p. 170).

For Kuhn, we should understand progress in another way, by learning “to substitute evolution-from-what-we-do-know for evolution-toward-what-we-wish-to-know [this way], a number of vexing problems may vanish in the process” (op. cit., p. 171).

However, Kuhn does not go further, his conception of progress is positive and idealistic, and he does not de-construct the subject and object and still presupposes an agent.

The notion of agency is relevant to our work. The discourse of progress presupposes a subject of consciousness (an agent) who is the owner of his actions, capable

of deliberately reaching his aims and transforming the world. On the other hand, as we question his intentionality, relating it to the historical context and, therefore, not to the origin of his actions, we are questioning and de-constructing this basis.

In brief, this chapter argues that the subject is decentered, a conception that is stated by Pêcheux and Fuchs (1975) and Pêcheux (1988) when they talk about the two illusions in which the subject and meaning are inscribed: the first is the illusion of the origin of discourse and the second is the illusion of only one meaning. We adopt a notion in which the subject is decentered, historical, and affected by ideology; incapable of “consciously” transforming the world, he can provoke changes, but does not have control over the meanings of these changes.

10.2.3 Power and Governmentality

If we look at the issue of progress through Foucault’s lenses, we would challenge the social sciences, interrogating the conditions upon which modern society is constructed and constituted by power relations. For Foucault, power is produced by and produces discursive practices. If we think about schooling as a discursive practice, we have to recognize the power embodied in its relations.

Foucault’s studies try to analyze the mechanics of power, how it works in daily struggles, or what he calls the “micro-physics” of power. Before Foucault, the studies about power were interested in detecting and denouncing the other, the opponent: capitalism or socialism, for example, but these studies did not analyze the functioning of power.

On the other hand, from the post-modern point of view, power is not only concentrated in the upper classes, the dominant ones. It penetrates the whole society, constituting itself as a diffuse bundle of micro-powers in the discourses of daily life.

The author offers us three significant hypotheses about power: the first is that power does not exist as an *a priori* element, it is only conceived in practices or relations; the second is that power does not only work repressively but is also productive, it produces knowledge which produces more power; and the third is that power does not apply only to macro-relations, but also (and mainly) to micro-relations. For the author, “there are no relations of power without resistances” (Foucault 1980: 142). In this sense, Foucault’s strategy for studying power does not relate to the subject but to its historicization. He describes this way of studying as genealogy:

(...) a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of object, etc., without making reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs its empty sameness throughout the course of history. (op. cit., p. 117)

This decentering of the subject enables us to problematize the reason upon which the notion of progress is constructed. From a genealogical point of view, we can see possibilities of change, which could be understood as “breaks, or “movements” in the discursive field. Differently from the traditional history, which constructs prog-

ress as a linear movement toward the truth, we now have genealogy, which conceives changes as breaks within particular discourses and as power/knowledge struggles. If we transport this idea to schooling, we should study the social and conceptual conditions through which we have come to reason about schooling progress the way we do.

Most of the research that focus on the progress in educational curricula assume that progress is an *a priori* notion and that students and teachers are stable categories. Taking into account the picture above, critical studies detect a problem, which is avoiding to walk in the direction of an ideal school, analyze this problem within given categories, and finally try to interfere suggesting a possible solution. But, on the contrary, we argue that the notion of progress and the categories of teacher and student are social constructs, and they work as discursive practices in constructing the “self.”

Related to Foucault’s notion of power, we can quote what he calls “governability,” which interests us in this study. For the author, it can be understood as:

The ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security. (Foucault, in: Burchell, Gordon and Miller (eds), 1991, pp. 102–103)

In Modernity, there was a change in the art of governing, from the sovereignty that governed a territory to a government model focused on population. We can consider governmentality as a diversity of government practices that have the population as the target and the knowledge of economy as action strategy.

The notion of progress in political education discourse can be inscribed as a form of governmentality in the way that the target is the population and the curricula are the apparatuses of security.

After showing the paradigm in which we stand, the following section is dedicated to describe the methodology, that is, the conditions of production of the corpus and take into account the French Discourse Analysis as an analytical tool.

10.3 Methodology and Conditions of Production

The *data* of this research is constituted by curricula documents published between 1980 and 1990, in the state of São Paulo, Brazil.

Discourse analysis methodology requires the examination of the social historical context within which the discourse is constructed followed by a micro-analysis of the texts. The description of the social-historical context, also understood as “conditions of production,” aims putting the social representations of the curricular documents, in this case, into focus, as well as the place occupied by the subjects in this discourse. After contextualizing the production of a certain discourse, the analyst concentrates on the properties of the discourse. Discourse is characterized as

possessing constitutive heterogeneity, which implies that doing discourse analysis is fundamentally trying to find the interdiscourses that are at the interior of a certain discourse. Any discourse is taken as an event inside some discursive formation, or in Pêcheux's words:

(...) any given discourse is the potential sign of a movement within the social historical filiations of identification, inasmuch as it constitutes, at the same time, a result of these filiations and the work (...) of displacement within their space. (Pêcheux 1988: 648)

The conditions of production of our *corpus*, the curricula documents, involve the social historical moment related to the late 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, both in the state of São Paulo and the world.

Globally, we had a process of globalization with a consequent domination by the industrialized countries, mainly the United States, during the last decades of the twentieth century. This process resulted in a scientific, technological, cultural, and linguistic domination by the first world countries in relation to the emergent ones, like Brazil. This installed a sentiment of excluded country that will be felt in education.

In Brazil, at the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, we could see a process of political opening after the falling of the dictatorship that operated with the raising of many political parties and a feeling of democratization of Education. The great problem of this period was that at the same time new schools were being opened, the quality of education was falling, especially the public ones as the quality is directed to the elite that attend private schools.

In the political sphere of the state of São Paulo, in 1982 the Governor Franco Montoro, from the PMDB (Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro, Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement), was elected. The workers in education expected democratic improvements from the new governor, taking into account his democratic political discourse. His motto was "Caminhando para o fim do quadro-negro," that is, "Walking to the end of the blackboard," or alternatively, "walking to the end of a bad situation." It is important to call the reader's attention to two possible meanings for "quadro-negro" in Portuguese. It is a compound word, and the first word "quadro" can also be understood as "picture" or in a metaphorical sense as "situation" or "context." This way, "quadro negro" can relate to both the blackboard where teachers usually write during their classes and the terrible situation in which Montoro found education when elected, which he implies is "negro" (black). We can say that the interlocutor was using this double sense as a strategy of persuasion, in this case, of political change in education. This discursive strategy of using a word that belonged to both discursive formations, that of the school and that of the social situations, caught the readers' attention, in this case the teachers, to point out the terrible conditions of the schools. Of course he, the governor, would come to the rescue.

It is within this feeling of change that the curricula documents appeared from which we chose excerpts to analyze.

10.4 Micro-Analysis

For the Discourse Analysis, we analyze excerpts of the discourse, the micro-analysis, in a way to identify the effects of meanings and point to the linguistic materiality. These excerpts are considered inside the conditions of production, that is, the social-historical moment in which they appear. In our case, as specified in part 2, the moment is of change, in politics and education.

If we take, for example, the discourse of curricula reforms in Brazil, we will see that it is constructed upon dichotomies: the old and the new. The “old” is seen as the bad, the evil, the one that failed, and the “new” is associated with the modern, the complete, in short, “hope.” Reforms are always initiated by the government, they are top-down reforms and the discourse of reforms is embodied in the Political Discourse.

Political Discourse works in the way of political engagement: the speaker (X) intends to engage the listener (Y) in a political ideology (Z). For example, curricula reforms, in Brazil, frequently happen when the government changes, as a way of establishing a mark, a feature, and a style of governance. Political issues mean action and action in education means curricula change, among other changes.

One of the characteristics of the Political Discourse of reforms in Brazil is the use of metaphors. These metaphors are constructed upon dichotomies. Education as a “process” is one example of metaphor. Below, we present some parts of two introductory letters that appear in a Curriculum signed by two secretaries of Education of São Paulo state.

The curricula proposals that are being delivered now to the teams of public schools are the product of a long process of construction that has been forged into successive versions by the decisive collaboration of countless educators.

By debating, disagreeing and sending suggestions, specialists from different regions of São Paulo state, in different moments, provided the technical team of the Coordenadoria de Estudos e Normas Pedagógicas—CENP—the backgrounds needed for the modification and improvement of this set of guiding teaching documents.

Therefore, it is a proposal that has been collectively built, but has not been finished. (Modern Language Curricula Proposal, 1988)² (...)

The public school should distance itself from the current model (...) It should transform itself into a living and active organism and part of the life of the society. (Modern Language Curricula Proposal, 1992)³

² My translation of part of a letter addressed to the teachers.

As propostas curriculares que estão sendo entregues, neste momento, às equipes da rede estadual de ensino são produto de um longo processo de construção que foi se forjando, em sucessivas versões, através da colaboração decisiva de inúmeros educadores. Debatendo, discordando e encaminhando sugestões, professores especialistas, das mais diferentes regiões do Estado de São Paulo, em diferentes momentos, forneceram às equipes técnicas da Coordenadoria de Estudos e Normas Pedagógicas—CENP—os subsídios necessários à modificação e aprimoramento deste conjunto de documentos norteadores do trabalho docente. Trata-se, portanto, de uma proposta coletivamente construída, mas não acabada. (...) (carta do Secretário da Educação Chopin Tavares de Lima - P.C. 1º g., 1988)

³ My translation of part of a letter addressed to the teachers.

A escola pública deve se afastar do modelo atual (...). Ela deve se transformar em organismo

In these two examples, the metaphor of education reforms as a “process” is constructed along two axes: a) a spatial and b) a temporal one. In space, education is seen as a “building,” and the reform is one step forward in its construction. We can visualize the spatial image of constructing the building step-by-step toward an ideal in the use of the words: *construction, process, forge, successive versions, collaboration, and collectively built*. It seems that everyone could go there and add a brick in order to raise that building. The other axis is the temporal one. We can see that there is a “before time” (*the current model that should be changed*) and an “after time” (*alive and active organism*) related to the curricula reform. The images associated with the previous time are always of incompleteness, as it is advised that the new model should *distance itself from the current model*, that is, the school is supposed to change, in time.⁴ On the other hand, the images related to the time that comes after the reform are visualized as a social progress: *alive and active organism in the society*.

Another characteristic is that the curricula reform is addressed to teachers and other people in education who are not supposed to be familiar with the new educational concepts. This kind of discourse aims to facilitate the philosophical trends of the reform to the addressee.

As part of this image of construction, another step is presented in the curriculum discourse: its dissemination to the teachers and their subsequent training. We can see here an ideological point of view: the teacher is seen as unprepared and unable to understand, so he/she is in need of training; the role of the government is to empower the teacher. This ideology is based on the illusion that both share the same ideas and justifies, at the same time, the government power. Example:

Now begins a new step in the work: training the educators in the new curricula as part of the educational politics of the Education Secretary, with the aim of the re-qualification of Fundamental Public School. (Modern Language Curricula Proposal, 1988)⁵

One of the columns of this building is the rescue of quality in public school. Notable in this excerpt is the desire to “pursue the lost quality,” an argument that consists of not completely denying a certain quality in the previous education system (this is supposed to be politically incorrect), and instead using the prefix “-re” added to the deverbal noun “qualification” to simultaneously imply two different meanings: that it is necessary to change—by constructing some columns in this building—and that, even though in the past the quality was not desirable, it was not

vivo e atuante na vida da sociedade (...) (carta do Secretário da Educação Fernando Moraes - P.C., 1º g. 1992).

⁴“Current” understood as the old one, considered, in opposition to the new one, as “dead” (non-alive) and “stuck” (non-active).

⁵My translation of part of a letter addressed to the teachers.

Agora inicia-se uma nova etapa de trabalho: a da divulgação das Propostas e capacitação dos educadores, dentro de uma política educacional da S. E., com vistas à requalificação da escola pública de Primeiro Grau. (carta do Secretário da Educação Chopin Tavares de Lima - P.C. 1º g., 1988).

always bad. It is necessary to reinforce the foundations and give continuity to the process of construction.

The image of progress, as conceived through the metaphor of construction, is based on a linear and cumulative action toward an ideal of completeness. This concept of completeness can only be understood in opposition to incompleteness, in our context applied to the previous curriculum documents. This is what Derrida calls “the play of differences” (Derrida 1968: 140) in which our western rationality is inscribed. When exalting the new, this discourse shows traces of inadequacy and failure in relation to the old. The positive meaning regarding the curricula reforms is constructed with the voice of negative failure implied by the previous curricula, and in this discursive game, the two meanings end entwined: the new inscribes in the sphere of the old and one depends on the other to signify.

In the line stream of thinking, the excerpt below is based upon dichotomies. For example, in favor of a change in the linguistic approach, the curriculum proposal quotes the following extract from a book published in English by G. Brown:

Are all classes dead? No, not all. But too damned many are... What's the difference between a dead and a live classroom? In the dead classroom, learning is mechanistic, routine, over ritualized, dull and boring. The teacher is robotized and the children are conceived as containers or receptacles whose primary function is to receive and hold subject matter... The live classroom... is full of learning activities in which students are enthusiastically and authentically involved... Each student is genuinely respected and treated as a human being by his teacher... the learning involves living. (Brown 1975: 1–2, cited in Pedagogical Practice, 1993: 22)⁶

The explicit dichotomies upon which the argument is constructed are the images of death and life. The image of death is related to the previous (or old) approach and the image of life (alive) is associated with the new one. Reform means the passage from *death* to *life*. In order to create the illusion of death, the author uses the following adjectives and nouns: *mechanistic, routine, ritualized, dull, boring, robotized, containers, and receptacles*. The image of life is created by the phrases: *enthusiastically and authentically involved, genuinely respected, and treated as human being*. This image of passage from death to life has its origin in the religious discourse, especially the one related to Catholicism, the most common religion in Brazil.

We could point to other images of incompleteness related to curriculum reforms: the image of the teacher as a person not prepared to understand the curricula or to work with the syllabus and to deal with the student. The image of the student as an empty individual who needs to be constructed, who has no past and no history. The notion of student is considered in a homogeneous way, because there is no space in the educational discourse for heterogeneity. The image of teaching is seen as an act of using strategies and the image of learning is to incorporate behaviors (Pennycook 1994).

⁶From: Brown, G. I. *The live classroom*. New York: The Press Viking, 1975: 1–2. It has been quoted inside “Pedagogical Practice” according to the original, in English. In: SÃO PAULO (Estado) Secretaria da Educação. CENP. *Língua Estrangeira Moderna—Inglês: 1º grau*. São Paulo: SE/CENP, 1993. v. 1 (Prática Pedagógica). P. 22.

But what does this discourse of incompleteness imply? It implies that there is a silent referent of completeness, as it was said by Chakrabarty (1992: 337) when referring to the first world, upon which the discourse of incompleteness is constructed. This desire of completeness generates reforms in education based upon an *a priori* concept of progress toward an ideal school. The concept of Liberalism presupposes a centered subject that is able to transform this world consciously, and reforms in education are seen as the march of progress.

According to Popkewitz (2013), “modern pedagogy is a major example of producing human kinds in the new republics” and progress is inscribed in modern pedagogy as fabricating “the kind of person who orders and calculates the paths of the present to the future in organizing biography will bring individual and social happiness and progress” (Popkewitz 2013: 136).

10.5 Final Remarks

We started this research with the hypothesis that the curricula reform discourse is constructed based on the ideal of completeness that characterizes the Liberalist philosophy in the search of progress, freedom, truth, and social wealth, characteristics inscribed in the notion of Foucault’s governmentality. However, this same discourse excludes even as it includes the more discourses are created to promote the inclusion in Education, the more it seems to appear the excluded subjects in Education (Kontopidis 2012).

Our point here was not to argue what does or doesn’t work in curriculum reforms related to pedagogical practices. By using Foucault’s belief (Foucault 1980) that knowledge is power, we wanted to show that power is embodied in the discourses we produce about ourselves, which intervene in social affairs. The curriculum discourse, seen as discursive practices of schooling, does not only transmit ideas or produce instrumental pedagogy, it creates principles of reality by comparing, differentiating, hierarchizing, and dividing the subjectivities of the teachers and the students. Our approach was to examine how the discourse functions, especially the power–knowledge relations, inscribed in the notion of governmentality, responsible for the reasoning of Brazilian schooling.

The main effect of meaning in the data analyzed was the conception of this document as a construction, that is, with many educational subjects (governors, teachers and others) democratically involved. This is also the main argument of the curriculum reform discourse, based on the images of the Liberalist philosophy of our current time, as we have seen in the conditions of production of the discourse. However, the analysis examined the discourse in light of the social historical context. Within this, the analysis tried to deconstruct some naturalized images and see the discourse as a historical construction, in this case related to education.

In relation to this, we quote Foucault’s ideas about the systems in which we are prisoners:

My problem is essentially the definition of the implicit systems in which we find ourselves prisoners; what I would like to grasp is the system of limits and exclusion which we practice without knowing it; I would like to make the cultural unconscious apparent. (Foucault, *Rituals of Exclusion*, cited in Butler 1997: 83)

Any progressist point-of-view of Education is based on a liberalist concept of universal freedom in the world. But, behind this idea of universality, in its local application, as we have pointed in the examples above, Liberalism shows another face: it sustains politically exclusionary practices. These are the effects of Liberalism: inclusion in a universal view and exclusion in a local one (Mehta 1997). This happens because the concept of Liberalism is taken as transhistorical, transcultural, and transracial, but in practice, relations among people are crossed by power.

In Foucault's words, we would say that "schooling systems," conceived from the principles of Liberalism, are systems of prison and exclusion. The above considerations bring us to consider the Brazilian Curricula Discourse as an example of local exclusion. We conclude that the discourse of incompleteness in the Brazilian example works against itself; when it affirms the other, it really denigrates itself, naturalizing the dichotomies upon which the discourse is constructed. This is what Bourdieu (1991: 146) calls "the return of the repressed."

This search of completeness, which feeds the discourse of progress, can be understood in light of governmentality, as inscribed in the new mode of state regulation which takes into account the individual self-regulation in the search of success and excellence, which was made possible in liberal societies.

But what is the role of research in a discursive paradigm? Not to tell the readers what they have to do or how they have to see, but to raise new and unthinkable questions and make new ones come to the minds of readers. To understand without having to be told, to read between the lines. To look at the evidence, decentering, problematizing, and questioning it. To look at what is familiar and make it strange. To disturb people's mental habits. To reexamine rules and institutions. To see educational reforms as discourses constructed according to certain social historical and ideological rules. To destabilize the reasoning of education. By questioning, not by answering, as the positivist philosophy conceives, is the only way, in my point of view, to open up the possibility of different ways of thinking education and starting a movement of transformation.

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Chapter 11

The Logic and Practices of Governments Providing Financial Support for Non-government Education



Hua Wu and Xi Wang

Government funding for private education is a global phenomenon (Glenn and Groof 2012). Non-government (Minban) education is literally private education in China. Passed on December 28, 2002, the *Non-government Education Promotion Law of People's Republic of China* affirmed the legitimacy of government funding for non-government education (Chap. 7: Support and Reward). However, the content of this law was primarily focused on funding for private schools and contained numerous limitations in terms of specific concepts and policy design (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China 2002).¹ While the 2010 *Outline of National Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010–2020)* sought to improve the situation of public funding for non-government education through the provision of supporting policies, the funding only targeted private schools (State Council of the People's Republic of China 2010). Despite clarifying the modes of providing financial support, the funding target delineated by *On the Revision of the Non-government Education Promotion Law by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress* (adopted on November 7, 2016) remained confined to private schools (National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China 2016). Essentially, narrowing the concept of funding for non-government education to that for non-government schools constitutes a major flaw in the legislation and policy practice of educational finance policies for non-government education. It also indicates that the government lacks a comprehensive

¹Funding for non-government education includes funding for both non-government school students and schools. As such, funding for non-government schools is only one of the two ways to financially support non-government education and includes direct financial allocation, sharing of school costs, and sharing of teacher resources. While tax breaks, commissioned schools, and government procurement are not typical means of financial support, they may be discussed in the general sense.

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understanding of the logic of policy design with regard to the financial support of non-government education.

11.1 The Rationale of Government Financial Support for Non-government Education

In Mainland China, there remains a widespread dispute regarding whether the government should provide non-government education with financial support and how to do so. In terms of the law, the legitimacy of and policy framework for providing such support has been made abundantly clear, and there are various policy practices across the country. Indeed, local governments' policy design can differ significantly in terms of whether they provide such support, as well as the ways and degree to which they do so. Connected to the local socio-economic development, these differences suggest that local governments think differently with regard to the necessity and rationality of financial support for non-government education. It is necessary to systematically elaborate the rationality for the government to financially support non-government education, which may also facilitate the formation of policy consensus and improve policy design. This section explores five reasons in greater detail.

The First Reason to Financially Support Non-government Education Concerns the Equal Rights of All Students in Receiving Compulsory Education According to the *Constitution of People's Republic of China* and *Education Law of People's Republic of China*, all students have the same rights of access to education, regardless of whether they attend public or private schools. Therefore, funding non-government education through the provision of financial support for the students in non-government schools is legally and constitutionally justified.²

However, the provision of financial aid based on the equal rights of students in various local practices is minimal. Influenced by the ideology of planned economy and public ownership, people have long equated public education funding with public school funding and considered the public funding of public schools and private students as dependent upon the relationship of power rather than function. This misconception of the functional departments in question has resulted in the complete lack of funding for private school students—even compulsory private education—for a very long time (Wu 2006, 2007b). Fortunately, there was a shift in policy in 2015. In the *Notice of the State Council on Further Improving the Urban and Rural Educational Expenditure Assurance Mechanism* (State Council issued [2015]67), the State Council included private schools in compulsory education under the scope of public funding for the first time. They also differentiated between

² See Article 33 and Article 46 in *Constitution of People's Republic of China* and Article 9, Article 37 in *Education Law of People's Republic of China*, and Article 5 and Article 27 in *Non-government Education Promotion Law of People's Republic of China*.

the funding in terms of exempting tuition fees and that of providing public funds for students in non-government schools on a per capita basis. The publication and implementation of this notice has transformed educational finance from public school to public education finance. Moreover, the government since formally placed the financing of non-government education based on student rights on its agenda.

The Second Reason to Financially Support Non-government Education Is Based on Its Financial Contribution According to the *Communiqué of National Education Development Statistics 2015*, there were approximately 162,700 non-government schools or institutions, with some 45.7 million enrolled students, in mainland China in 2015 (Table 11.1). Moreover, according to the *Communiqué of the Ministry of Education, National Bureau of Statistics, and Ministry of Finance on Execution Statistics of National Education Funds in 2015*, the average public education finance budget was CNY 8838.44 per primary school student; CNY 12,105.08 per junior school student; CNY 10,820.96 per senior secondary school student;

Table 11.1 Estimated 2015 national finance contribution by non-government education

	Primary schools	Junior secondary schools	Senior secondary schools	Vocational secondary schools	Regular HEIs	Preschool education institutions	Total
Students of non-government schools (thousand persons)	7138.20	5029.30	2569.60	1833.70	6109.00	23,024.40	45,704.20
Average finance budget for public school students (CNY)	8838.44	12,105.08	10,820.96	10,961.07	18,143.57	7248.43*	68,117.55
Money saved by non-government education for public education finance budget (CNY in billion)	63.09	60.88	27.81	22.93	110.84	166.89	452.44

Resources: *Communiqué of the Ministry of Education on National Education Finance Statistics 2016* (MoE 2017), *Communiqué on National Education Development Statistics 2015* (MoE 2016a), *Communiqué of the Ministry of Education, National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Finance on Execution Statistics of National Education Funds in 2015* (MoE 2016b). *The statistics of preschool education were summarized from the *Communiqué of the Ministry of Education on National Education Finance Statistics 2016*, prior to which there are no available preschool education statistics.

CNY 10,961.07 per secondary vocational school student; and CNY 18,143.57 per student in a regular higher education institution. As such, non-government education saved the 2015 public education finance budget over CNY 280 billion (excluding preschool education); if preschool education is added into account, this figure increases to some CNY 450 billion (see Table 11.1). This accounted for 15% of the national public education finance budget and matched the ratio of students enrolled in non-government schools (17%), indicating that if all education services were provided by public schools, the state may need to increase the public education finance budget by a further CNY 450 billion.

Thus, from the government's perspective, the most acceptable reason for the state to increase its direct financial allocation for private education is based on its contribution to the public education finance budget. This is also a popular idea among scholars (Wen 2004; Guan and Xiao 2006; Xie 2009; Lu 2011; Li and Zhang 2012; Wu and Wei 2012; Fang 2017).

The Third Reason to Financially Support Non-government Education Concerns the Externality of Education The government should provide financial support for public schools because that education may benefit both the students and the society, which means that education has a positive externality. Since non-government schools also provide such educational services and activities and have the same kind of social function and value, they should receive the same financial support provided to public schools.

The Fourth Reason to Financially Support Non-government Education Is Based on Its Efficiency The compulsory education sector illustrates this point. Approximately 12.17 million students studied in non-government schools in 2015; if public schools were required to take in these students, more than CNY 123.97 billion would be needed from the public education finance budget. However, non-government schools provided the same, if not better, educational service at the cost of only 10% of the public education finance budget.³ Since there is no doubt that non-government education can provide the same public goods for society, it is reasonable to provide financial support for those non-government schools—or at least no less reasonable than providing financial support for public schools—on the basis of improving the efficiency of the allocation of public financial resources.⁴

³In the most optimistic estimated situation, if the *Notice of the State Council on Further Improving the Urban and Rural Educational Expenditure Assurance Mechanism* (State Council issued [2015]67) was fully implemented by all local governments, the financial support for non-government education would not exceed that for public school education. As such, the actual situation would likely be worse.

⁴The contribution by non-government education to improving education equity was often overlooked or misunderstood. As a matter of fact, the development of non-government education made it possible for the government to increase investment in education in less-developed areas, low-performing schools, and disadvantaged groups. This means that the development of non-government education has helped to form the *Pareto Improvement*. In the meantime, the parents and students who willingly chose to attend non-government schools to obtain better education have

The Fifth Reason to Financially Support Non-government Education Is Based on Maintaining and Improving the Educational Competitiveness of the Nation In countries around the world, the singular public school education system has proved unable to meet the needs of a developing modern society and education. With the reform and opening up of China, ensuring the healthy and sustainable development of non-government education has become an important part of the national macroscopical strategy beyond the needs of education itself. As noted in the *Outline of National Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010–2020)*, non-government education constitutes an important growth point in the development of education and an important force in the promotion of educational reform (State Council of the People's Republic of China 2010). Moreover, since the cost of education activities is continuously increasing, if the government does not commit to covering part of the cost of running non-government schools, the majority of those schools may face closure (Wu 2007a). As such, using public funding to support the development of non-government education may be regarded as necessary to maintain the healthy operation of the modern education system.

While there are many reasons to provide financial support for non-government education in the policies and practices across mainland China, the aforementioned reasons cover the important aspects for the purposes of this analysis.

To better understand these reasons, however, it is worth considering the opposing views. The value of non-government education in improving the quality of education and social development has been recognized since the implementation of the *Non-government Education Promotion Law*. Arguments against the financial support of non-government education based solely on ideological conflict are no longer common; rather, opposition is predominantly based on questioning the necessity and rationality of doing so.

The First Reason to Oppose Financial Support for Non-government Education Is the So-Called Waiver of Rights This view holds that the current education finance system does not discriminate against non-government education and that public schools have provided open access to all students—including those in non-government schools, who can receive the same financial support if they choose public schools. As such, the students themselves opted to give up their rights when they chose to attend a private school. Consequently, there is no need to financially support non-government education based on the equal rights of students. However, this view fails to consider that the right of students to receive public financial support is not based on the premise of studying in public schools. Moreover, there is no legal ground for this viewpoint in the Constitution, Education Law, or the Non-government Education Promotion Law.

contributed to equity in the educational outcome in terms of benefitting students' personal development.

The Second Reason to Oppose Financial Support for Non-government Education is Called the *Insufficient Financial Resources theory* This viewpoint is particularly popular in education administrative departments. This view typically asserts that, “Even public schools are currently underfunded, where can more funding be found to support non-government schools?” This kind of statement, and which is a clear discrimination or violation of the law, makes people wonder why financial support for non-government schools need to wait until the funding for public schools is adequate. It also prompts questions of when public schools will be adequately funded, and why non-government schools are not treated equally when they produce the same social value.

The Third Reason to Oppose Financial Support for Non-government Education Is Called the *Non-Profit Principle* While this viewpoint is not opposed to the provision of financial support for non-government education on the surface, it emphasizes that financial support should be given on the premise of the classified management of non-government schools—inferring that public finance should only be provided and increased for non-profit non-government schools. With regard to for-profit non-government institutions, in addition to never funding them, this perspective holds that the government treat them like common enterprises and levy turnover and corporate income tax from them. This view is common among fiscal and taxation departments of the government. The *Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress on Amending the Non-government education Promotion Law* was passed on November 7, 2016; although there is no direct stipulation that local governments not provide financial funding for for-profit non-government schools, a similar tendency has already been shown.⁵ However, if we understand that financial support for non-government education cannot be confined to the financial support for non-government schools, then the *non-profit principle*—which confines financial support for non-government education to that for non-profit non-government schools—would lose ground.

The discussion of the pros and cons of this issue shows that both the supporters and detractors have their own reasons. As such, it is necessary to search for a position that is beyond the special interests of certain groups and reanalyze this issue from the perspective of public interest. In addition to providing a logical stance from which to discuss the question of whether the government should provide financial support for non-government education, an analysis based on public interest also serves as a starting point from which to evaluate the rationality of all public policies.

⁵Article 7 of the *Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress on Amending the Non-government Education Promotion Law* states that: “People’s government at or above the county level could support non-government schools through means of service purchasing, student loans, scholarships and lease or transfer of state-owned assets; for non-profit non-government schools, the government could also support their development by providing subsidies, reward funds and donation rewards.” This implicitly reflects the *non-profit principle*.

11.2 Policy Logic of Public Finance Support for Non-government Education: Public Interest

In modern democratic society, a reasonable public policy should be based on the purpose of increasing public interest—otherwise it would be unreasonable or unnecessary.⁶ From the perspective of public policy design, there are three basic types of public interest (Wu and Wei 2012). First, public interest that benefits all. In China, this includes the overall improvement of the social development environment due to institutional change, the transformation of the market economy through China's reform and opening up, China's joining in the World Trade Organization (WTO), as well as the establishment of social security system and free compulsory education system. A public policy can be considered reasonable if it helps form such public interest. Second, public interest that benefits part of the population and imposes no good or harm on others, and which forms the well-known *Pareto Improvement*. This includes the unifying of separate pension systems, provision of social assistance for disadvantaged groups, and all kinds of industry support policies. Although the rationality of such policies is likely to be controversial, they are reasonable if they can be explained in terms of basic social values, as well as the overall and long-term interests of social development. Third, public interest that benefits some yet harms others, such as price control and progressive tax systems. This kind of policy is highly controversial—except in situations where the rich are robbed to feed the poor. In terms of normative analysis, the legitimacy of a policy will be called into doubt if it cannot be explained by any one of these three types of public interest. With regard to the issue discussed in this chapter, the analytical framework of public interest is also applicable.

Does providing financial support for non-government education help generate the first kind of public interest? To better illustrate the point, another one should be asked first: Does non-government education generate the first kind of public interest? Indeed, the emergence of non-government education has greatly increased education resources, improved the efficiency and equity of education, expanded the scope of educational choice, and promoted the innovation of education system—thus making the education system more dynamic and vigorous overall. Therefore, financial support from the government would benefit the healthy and sustainable development of non-government education and improve the likelihood of generating more public interest.

Does providing financial support for non-government education help generate the second kind of public interest? The most unique characteristic and significant advantage of non-government education is that both the schools as well as the parents and students who chose to attend the schools were free to do so, thus ensuring the satisfaction of those parents and students and increasing their educational

⁶This does not mean that the government should introduce public policies for all kinds of potential public interest, which is neither necessary nor possible. Rather, public interest should be the basis of policymaking for each and every public policy introduced by the government.

interest. Moreover, their decision to attend a private school had no impact on those in public schools, making this process a typical case of *Pareto Improvement*.

Finally, does providing financial support for non-government education help generate the third kind of public interest? The answer is also positive. On the surface, if the government provides financial support for non-government education, the financial resources for public schools would be bound to decrease—making public school education a victim of this policy. However, a more critical understanding of this situation reveals that most non-government schools struggle to maintain sustainable development without financial support from the government. Ultimately, if these non-government schools are closed, the government would have to build more public schools, and the average financial assistance to all these schools would be even less as a result. Moreover, if the government provided more financial support for non-government schools for migrant children from rural to urban areas, the third kind of public interest generated from this kind of policy would be particularly self-evident.

The discussion above does not distinguish between the specific sectors of non-government education, which may raise the concern that it is unnecessary to delineate between formal and informal education, early childhood and higher education, or non- and for-profit institutions when talking about providing financial support for non-government education. While such concerns are common, the dispute here is about whether the government should financially support non-government education and the degree to which they should do so, as well as the legitimacy and rationality of this idea. Whether a certain local government in mainland China should introduce and implement such supporting policies and how these may be subject to elements—like the local economy, social development, local politics, and culture—lies beyond the scope of this chapter. Furthermore, this chapter discusses an issue that is not influenced by the differences between specific sectors of non-government education; therefore, the conclusion is not influenced by its failure to distinguish these aspects.

Thus, in narrowing the scope of our discussion, it is sufficient to assert that all non-government education sectors corresponding to public education sectors should be in the place to receive public financial support from the government. After all, the government supports public schools due to the public interest they produce, and non-government schools could produce the same—if not more—public interest. While many people pay much attention to the issue regarding whether for- and non-profit schools should be treated equally in terms of state financial support, the quality of educational services is not influenced by whether the school was non-profit. As such, it should not be reasonable to deprive the rights of students in for-profit non-government schools.

Moreover, in terms of industrial policy, the government's financial support of for-profit educational institutions is merely the concrete application of its strategic industry supporting policies, like those concerning tax relief. Furthermore, the government does not necessarily choose to provide financial support whenever public interest exists. As evidenced throughout the reform and opening-up over the last three decades, public interest is more likely to be obtained through the construction

of a legal system and the positive effects of the market mechanism, rather than solely through financial support. In short, discussing financial support for non-government education from the perspective of public interest may have little to do with the distinction between different educational sectors.

As discussed above, the answer to whether the government should provide financial support for non-government education is quite clear: it is not only necessary but essential for the government to financially support non-government education. However, there are two more problems to be solved before this idea can be transformed into practical policy.

The first problem concerns the question of how much money the government should provide. This problem is relatively simple. In theory, the financial support for non-government education can be considered reasonable as long as it is not higher than the average public school student's share of financial resources. In terms of policy design, the financial contribution of the local non-government schools at various levels can be seen as the ceiling for state financial support. Considering the complexity of local interest patterns, game playing of local social forces, and differences in opinion at the local level, it is reasonable to start with a relatively low level of financial support in practice—such as 10% of the total financial contribution of local non-government education, increased on an annual basis.

The second problem is more complex and concerns how financial support should be provided. This chapter makes some suggestions. As noted, regardless of which type of financial support we choose, it must benefit the generation and expansion of public interest. Since real or potential public interest is only possible when non-government education develops healthily, the answer to this question may be that the choice of the specific forms of subsidization should be realistic and reasonable for promoting the development of local non-government education. This means that the policy feasible in one city or period may not be suitable for another. As such, two kinds of policy design should be considered when discussing financial support from the perspective of facilitating the development of local non-government education: namely, the guaranteeing of student rights and the sharing of non-government school costs. We should also place greater attention on financial support policies that aim to subsidize students in non-government schools.

From the perspective of juridical logic, public education funding should be shared by all people and should not exclude those who choose to study at non-government schools. However, this is the current situation faced by students in non-government schools, who are excluded from public education finance as a result of their school choice. Therefore, endeavors for the provision of more financial support for non-government education must be based on students' rights. Failure to do so will result in the legitimacy of such proposals being questioned and the construction of a healthy policy environment for non-government education losing its most important conceptual ground. Although Section 2, Article 43, of the *Outline of National Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010–2020)* (State Council of the People's Republic of China 2010) reiterated that non-government schools, students, and teachers should have the same legal status as those of public schools and ensured the autonomy of non-government schools, the

discriminating policies toward non-government schools embedded in this government document should be removed. Since it appears that the policymakers were not overly concerned with such discrimination, the policies that require refinement are those pertaining to non-government schools.

Meanwhile, emphasis on understanding non-government school students as the object of financial support policies also has a direct market value. Compared with public schools, the high charge of non-government schools is a typical market characteristic that has greatly weakened the competitiveness of non-government schools. However, if the government provides financial aid for non-government school students in an amount no higher than that for public school students, it could offset the tuition and fees of non-government school students and greatly relieve the economic pressure on their families. Since more families will not surrender the opportunity of studying in high-quality non-government schools because of economic reasons, this could also improve the structure of student enrollment and expand the market space for non-government schools.

In addition to the two aspects mentioned above, the financial support policies for non-government education could also be combined with other policy objectives—such as rewarding non-government schools of different types according to their quality and efficiency, introducing industry-oriented policies to guide the adjustment of industry layout, and promoting the survival of the fittest among non-government schools. Government procurement from qualified non-government schools able to provide educational products (like school places) could also be regarded as financial support in terms of sharing school costs. As it has the least degree of conflict with the current fiscal system, this policy practice could be worth promoting.⁷

11.3 Case Studies on the Public Financial Support for Non-government Education: Zhejiang Province, China

While the question of whether the government should subsidize non-government education remains contentious, policies and practices have been actively promoted by local governments. To illustrate the dynamics of these policies and practices, this section uses Zhejiang Province in mainland China as a case study (Non-government

⁷Strictly speaking, government procurement of school places is a type of transaction rather than financial assistance. Moreover, the current actual payment of government procurement is usually below average student costs in non-government schools, and even below those in public schools (in other kinds of government procurement, the government is usually willing to pay more than the market price of certain products). Thus, it is clear that the government has received financial support from non-government schools rather than the other way around. However, the *Halo Effect*, which non-government schools received through government procurement, made it tempting because it showed that the educational products it provided were highly recognized.

Education Association of Zhejiang Province and China Non-government Education Research Institute Zhejiang Branch 2011). As a microcosm of the policies and practices across the country, Zhejiang Province also evidences what we have discussed above.

There are three kinds of policies regarding the provision of financial assistance to non-government educational institutions by local governments in Zhejiang Province.

The first is voucher based on the guarantee of student rights Represented by various voucher programs, the philosophy of this policy model is that all students share equal educational rights, as guaranteed by the *Non-government Education Promotion Law* and the *Compulsory Education Law*. This policy model is essentially characterized by the allocation of public finance for education through vouchers given to students in non-government schools, showing that the government is willing to provide financial support for non-government school students based on their educational rights.

Adopted from the United States, this education voucher program was first introduced in Changxing County. In 2001, as stipulated in *Notice of the Education Commission in Changxing County on How to Use an Education Voucher*, every freshman who attended a non-government compulsory education school could receive an education voucher to the value of CNY 500, while every freshman who attended a vocational school could receive one with the value of CNY 300. As stipulated in *Rules for the Implementation of Financial Aid for Poor Students in Changxing County*, from the autumn of 2002, poor students in primary schools could get an education voucher of CNY 200 per semester, and poor students in junior secondary schools could receive one of CNY 300. Influenced by the success of this program in Changxing, other cities, and counties began introducing various education voucher programs—such as community education vouchers in Shangcheng District, Hangzhou City; Migrant Workers Training Vouchers in Quzhou City; Preschool Education Vouchers in Beilun District, Ningbo City; and Education Subsidies Vouchers in Rui'an City, Wenzhou City. Although the amount of those vouchers was not particularly large and most have since been cancelled, these programs spread the idea that all the students have equal educational rights and that non-government schools could also share in public financial resources, thus playing a positive role in improving public opinion (Wu and Wei 2012).

The second policy practice is based on sharing of school costs Represented by the *Ningbo Non-government Education Promotion Act* and the *Provisions on Implementation of the Ningbo Non-government Education Promotion Act by Ningbo Municipal People's Government, Zhejiang Province* (Ningbo Municipal People's Government issued [2007]58), this policy reflected a philosophy that public and private schools play the same role in education and that the reasoning behind the government provision of financial support for public school education also stood for non-government education. With the provisions in the *Non-government Education Promotion Law* and the *Compulsory Education Law*, this model was characterized

by the allocation of public education funding directly to non-government schools according to specific standards. As such, this policy model supported non-government schools by sharing their costs.

As stipulated in *the Ningbo Non-government Education Promotion Act* of 2006, city and county governments (county-level cities or districts) must set up special funds to support the development of non-government education. There are currently two kinds of supporting policies for non-government education in Ningbo. The first is intended for compulsory and secondary vocational education schools that meet the prescribed requirements, with the government providing a quarter of the finance assistance given to the same kinds of public schools. The second policy is directed toward non-government formal education schools and preschools that pay social security fees for teachers with professional or technical positions, with the government supplying half the total payment given to their public counterparts. The government provided CNY 10.1 million in 2007, CNY 12 million in 2008, and CNY 14.3 million in 2009, for five municipally approved non-government schools.

The aforementioned policy design was also applied in other cities. For example, *Suggestions of the Anji County People's Government on Promoting the Development of Non-government Education* (Anji County People's Government issued [2010]62) stipulates that the county government provides financial subsidies based on the amount of social security fees paid by non-government institutions that meet the prescribed requirements. This results in their subsidizing up to 30% of the total amount paid by non-government junior high schools, and 50% of that paid by non-government compulsory education schools and preschools.

Moreover, *Suggestions of the Lishui Municipal People's Government on promoting the Development of Non-government Education* (Lishui Municipal People's Government issued [2010]41) mandates that the government covers 30% of the costs involved in providing social security fees for teachers with professional or technical positions at non-government schools that pay for various kinds of social insurance for their staff. For instance, the government provides 30% of the amount paid by kindergartens for the prescribed social security fees for their teachers, qualified healthcare workers, and cleaners who meet the employment standards of the administrative departments of education, were examined and approved by those departments, and held a teacher's certification.

The third policy practice involves rewards based on performance The government provides a monetary bonus for excellent non-government schools, thereby facilitating a policy of the survival of the fittest among non-government schools. This policy model is characterized by assessment of the quality and efficiency of non-government schools in order to judge whether it merits the corresponding performance reward. This has been a primary means of providing financial support for non-government education in many Chinese cities.

In 2001, the Taizhou Municipal People's Government declared that all non-government schools or institutions elected as outstanding institutions at the national, provincial, or municipal level would receive a reward from the government based on

the number of teachers employed, the annual amount of a public school teacher's salary multiplied by a third, two thirds, or half the number of the teachers. Moreover, non-government schools that own their premises and provide formal or preschool education could receive financial support from the government as a reward rather than subsidies if they recruit students and run the schools according to the laws and regulations. Consequently, non-government schools with more than 1000, 1500, or 2000 students could receive an annual reward of CNY 50,000, CNY 100,000, or CNY 150,000, respectively.

In 2005, the Lishui Municipal People's Government declared that non-government schools elected as national quality schools could receive a one-time reward of CNY 500,000. Meanwhile, those elected as the first, second, and third rank provincial and municipal quality schools could receive a one-time reward of CNY 300,000, CNY 200,000, and CNY 100,000, respectively. Additionally, they would receive an annual reward based on the number of teachers used, with an average amount of public school teacher's salary multiplied by one third, two thirds, or half the total number of teachers employed.

In 2010, *Suggestions of the Anji County People's Government on Promoting the Development of Non-government Education (Anji County People's Government issued [2010]62)* stipulated that the government set up a special fund of CNY 1 million to reward well-managed, high-quality, and unique non-government institutions, as well as groups or individuals who contributed significantly to non-government education courses. Non-government schools elected as outstanding institutions at the national, provincial, or municipal level would receive a one-time reward of CNY 500,000, CNY 300,000, and CNY 100,000, respectively. It further stipulated that the amount of the reward increased annually according to the increase of municipal fiscal avenue. As such, the financial support policy in Anji County has replaced subsidies with rewards since 2010.

In 2011, the government of Wenzhou City set up an annual special fund of CNY 30 million yuan for financial subsidies and rewards for non-government schools. This fund has since been used to reward non-government schools, investors, principals, and teachers ranked "excellent" in the annual inspection; subsidize teacher training sessions, teacher recruitment, as well as loans and interests for non-government schools; and reward the graduates of vocational junior and senior high schools.

In addition to the aforementioned policy practices of financial support, government procurement could constitute another means of subsidizing non-government schools. Indeed, the practice was observed in Wenzhou, Ningbo, and Taizhou, among other cities. However, government procurement is only feasible in a handful of high-quality non-government schools. Moreover, while the general financial support benefits non-government schools, government procurement is more of a market transaction between government and non-government schools. Nonetheless, these two types of financial support could be complementary and guide the healthy and sustainable development of non-government education.

11.4 International Experience of Financial Support for Non-government Education: The US, Australia, and The Netherlands

As in the case of mainland China, there are numerous types and names for private education around the world—including the various independent, non-governmental, non-state, and private schools in the western countries, which are often related to religion. Since most western countries have a tradition of freedom of education and generally recognized the right of parents to choose non-government schools for their children, financial assistance policies for the government support of non-government education dates back to the early twentieth century in some countries. Demands regarding school choice have intensified in many countries over the past two decades, compelling governments to adjust public finance frameworks and develop increasing numbers of policy designs and practices to provide financial support for non-government education.

11.4.1 Policy Logic of Public Finance Support for Non-government Education on a Global Scale

As discussed earlier, the policy logic of public finance support for non-government education is based on public interest. According to the study of policy practices in other countries, this policy logic predominantly concerns two aspects: first, the promotion of equal education and reduction of socio-economic stratification; second, ensuring the freedom of school choice for citizens, especially those from disadvantaged groups. There have been several empirical reports and articles on both kinds of policies.

With regard to the promotion of equal education, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) examined data from 65 countries and regions that took part in the 2009 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), analyzing the management and funding of schools. This assessment is useful in understanding the policy logic of this practice. The OECD divided schools into two categories—namely publicly and privately managed schools, which may correspond to the complex situation of non-government education in mainland China. This report studied the relationship between public funding and socio-economic stratification, concluding that the level of public funding for privately managed schools correlated to socio-economic stratification and that countries and regions that provided more public funding for privately managed schools tended to have less socio-economic stratification. The report further advances that it is essential to choose the most suitable means of providing public funding for privately managed schools (OECD 2012a, b: 47).

With regard to the second kind of policy practice, the OECD report analyzed the education voucher program—an important means of providing public support for

non-government education—and introduced different policy practices in many countries. The result indicates that if there is no distinction in the distributing of vouchers, the policy practice will compound socio-economic stratification of the country (OECD 2012a, b: 36). This is why so many countries distribute education vouchers specifically to disadvantaged children, low-income families, and children in need of special education—thereby ensuring the freedom of school choice for all citizens.

11.4.2 International Policy Practices and Guidelines for Public Funding to Support Non-government Education

According to the OECD (2012a, b) report, while the level of public funding for non-government or privately managed schools varies across OECD and partner countries, the average amount of public funding accounts for approximately 58% of the school's total funding. In Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, and the partner economy of Hong Kong-China, some 90% of privately managed school funding comes from the government. In contrast, 1% or less of the funding for privately managed schools in the United Kingdom, Greece, the United States, and Mexico comes from the government; while between just 1% and 10% of funding is provided by the government in New Zealand, Brazil, Chinese Taipei, and Shanghai-China (OECD 2012a, b: 21). These public funding policies do not include flexible supporting policies like the cost covered by the governments through tuition tax credits; they merely reflect the general level of a country's financial commitment to private schools (OECD 2012a, b: 32).

In summation, there are four main kinds of financial support for non-government education:

1. The allocation of direct public funding with reference to the form and amount of public funding for public schools.
2. Sharing of school costs through tax deductions for non-government schools.
3. Performance rewards according to the quality and efficiency of non-government schools.
4. Alternative funding policies that provide financial support for students and their parents, such as the education voucher program and tuition tax credits program.

Policy practices around the world tend to be a combination of the aforementioned policies. Certainly, all the four types of funding policies are observable in the case of Zhejiang Province, China. In addition, we selected three other countries as representatives to analyze the policy practices and guidelines for public funding to support non-government education: the United States, Australia, and the Netherlands. The ratio of non-government school funding provided by the government in these countries is almost 0%, 55%, and 97%, respectively (OECD 2012a, b: 21, Fig. 1.3).

11.4.2.1 The United States

In the 2013–2014 school year, private schools accounted for 25% of all schools in the United States, while private school enrollment from pre-kindergarten to twelfth grade accounted for 10% of all the US students (Council for American Non-government education 2015). Although the OECD data showed almost no financial funding for non-government schools, the financial support for non-government education in the United States involved the second and fourth means of public funding: sharing the costs of non-government schools through tax deduction policies and providing alternative financial support—such as education vouchers for students and their parents—who chose to attend non-government schools.

For non-profit private schools in the United States, the *Internal Revenue Code (IRC) 501(c)* stipulated that charitable educational organizations were eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions, providing that no part of their net earnings benefitted any private shareholder or individual (Internal Revenue Service of the United States 2017). With regard to for-profit private schools, according to the *State Regulation of Private Schools*, there are 21 states—including Kansas, Colorado, and Illinois—that exempt real and personal property used solely for schools from taxation; some states exempt private schools from taxation in terms of the sale of food, textbooks, and service of school commuting buses. Funding for public schools mainly came from local tax revenue until in 1960s, when local tax revenue equaled state tax in the funding of public schools and property tax was the most important source of local tax revenue. In the 2013–2014 school year, 45.5% of the funding for public schools came from local property tax (Snyder et al. 2016). Therefore, as a main source of funding for the public education system, the exemption of property tax indicates the financial support of local governments for non-government schools—especially for for-profit private schools that rarely enjoy tax cutting policies.

Moreover, although the US Constitution and other laws prohibit the use of public education funds for religious and other types of private schooling, there were numerous ways of financially supporting private schools in practice. These include education voucher, tuition tax credit, and education savings account programs—all of which aim to protect the freedom of school choice for parents and children.

The education voucher program was the earliest and most influential program for providing financial support for non-government schools and ensuring the freedom of school choice. Education-based vouchers were first introduced in the city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1990, to help children in failing public schools access better education. Fourteen states, as well as the District of Columbia, currently run education voucher programs. The main targets of these programs are students from low-income families, failing public schools, those with disabilities, and students living in rural areas (National Conference of State Legislatures 2017). Several states have opened the education voucher programs to middle-income families. For example, in Milwaukee, the number of students who have benefitted from the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP) has increased annually since 1990. In the 2015–2016 school year, 117 non-government schools participated in the MPCP,

while more than 27,000 students from families with an income lower than 300% of the federal poverty level have benefitted from this program. Indeed, the average amount of financial aid provided through a voucher is about \$7,537 (with a difference of about \$600 between students in grades K4–8 and students in grades 9–12) (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction 2016).

The second kind of policy practice is a tuition tax credit program, which appears to have originated in Arizona in 1998. Since this program can use tax revenue for school choice before it is turned into public education funds, thereby incurring less governmental regulation for non-government schools, it has become a particularly popular policy practice in many states. In Arizona, for example, taxpayers can donate part of their income tax to School Tuition Organizations (STOs), which turns the taxes into tuition fees. Indeed, they may even receive a larger amount of money than they donated and use it as a means of paying the tuition for private schools. In addition to personal donations to STOs, there are chances for certain social groups—like families with children who have disabilities—to donate taxes and receive scholarships from STOs. In the 2014–2015 fiscal year, the donations to STOs totaled \$140 million, and every couple or joint taxpayers could receive an income tax credit for a donation of up to \$1070. At the same time, the Arizona Department of Revenue stipulated that 90% of the income of STOs should be used to provide scholarships for more than one non-government school and that the receivers of those scholarships should come from families with an income lower than 185%, 185%–342.25%, or above 342.25% of the federal poverty level. The average amount of a scholarship that year was \$1,846, with each of the three income brackets receiving a third of the available scholarships. By 2015, STOs in Arizona had received donations of about \$950 million, with \$780 million used to provide scholarships to support study at private schools (Arizona Department of Revenue 2016).

Founded in 2001, the Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program (EITC) allows corporations to donate to non-profit Scholarship Organizations and Educational Improvement Organizations in order to provide scholarships for students from low-income families, thereby enabling their access to any public or private schools. With the maximum donation amount of \$750,000, approximately 75–90% of the donation can be used as a tax credit (Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development 2017a). Pennsylvania introduced another tuition tax credit program called the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program (OSTC) in 2012. The OSTC allows eligible businesses to contribute to a Scholarship Organization in order to provide scholarships to eligible students residing within the boundaries of a low-achieving school, thereby enabling them to attend another public school outside of their district or a nonpublic school (Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development 2017b). As such, in 2015, 17 states transformed up to \$830 million in personal and corporate income tax into financial support for non-government schools in the form of tuition fees and scholarships, benefitting more than 234,000 students (The Foundation for Opportunity in Education 2013).

The education savings account program is the latest financial support program for non-government education. Started in Arizona in 2011, five states—including

Florida and Mississippi—have introduced this program, while North Carolina is set to introduce the program and begin providing funding to students in the 2018–2019 school year (EdChoice, 2017). This program is typically targeted toward children with special needs, such as those with disabilities or various kinds of learning disorders, as well as children in failing public schools. Some states, including Nevada, have expanded the scope of this program to children who have been enrolled in public schools for more than 100 days, but felt unsatisfied with or could not be accommodated in the schools in question. With the permission of the government, this program allows parents to remove their children from their current school and for the quota of public education funds they have not used to be deposited into a restricted-use debit card. The family can then use this card for approved educational expenses, submitting the receipts to the approved administrative agent for quarterly audits. Approved educational expenses include costs of approved private schools, accredited and licensed therapists, tutors, online courses, and text books. Although this kind of program predominantly targets children with special needs, some states—like Arizona—have expanded the scope of support to all children enrolled in public schools (EdChoice 2016).

11.4.2.2 Australia

According to the data from the Australian Curriculum, Assessment, and Reporting Authority (ACARA), in 2016, there were 9414 primary, secondary, and special education schools in Australia. Approximately 30% of these were non-government schools (ACARA 2016a), accounting for 35% of all students (ACARA 2016b). The Australian government supports a wide range of public and non-government schools through public funding and favors the direct allocation of funds to the schools. As stipulated in *Australian Education Act 2013*, government schools are approved and managed by the State or Territory authority and receive the majority of their public funding from their state or territory governments, with the Australian government providing supplementary funding. In contrast, non-government schools receive the majority of their public funding from the Australian government, with state and territory governments providing supplementary funding. Since 2014, public funding for non-government schools has been based on the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) and the school's total loading for the year, including the extra costs incurred by students with disabilities, those with a low socioeconomic status, and those with poor English proficiency (Australian Government Department of Education and Training 2017). According to the provisions in *Australian Education Act 2013* and *Australian Education Regulation 2013*, the Australian government provides public funding for participating government and non-government schools in accordance with the same guidelines. The funding formula is as follows (Australian Government 2013):

$$\{[\text{The number of students at the school for the year} * \text{The SRS funding amount for the year for a student at the school} * (1 - \text{The school's capacity to contribute}))]$$

percentage)] + The school's total loading for the year} * The Commonwealth share for the school

The allocation for education from the Australian government and all state and territory governments totaled AUS\$ 50.4 billion for the 2013–2014 year. Funding from the federal government accounted for more than 27.2% of this amount and most was used to support non-government schools. The total amount of funding allocated to government schools was \$38.5 billion, which amounted to AUS\$ 16,177 on a student-per-capita basis—an increase of 4.5% compared to the previous school year. The total amount of funding for non-government schools was AUS\$ 11.9 billion, with AUS\$ 9,327 provided on a student-per-capita basis—marking an increase of 7.2% (ACARA 2014). Although there is a significant gap between education funding for government and non-government schools on a student-per-capita basis, there is a bigger increase in the amount of public funding received by non-government schools than by government schools.

11.4.2.3 The Netherlands

The Netherlands has one of the highest education performances in Europe. Indeed, PISA 2015 showed that 15-year-old teenagers in the Netherlands ranked 17th in science, 15th in reading, and 11th in mathematics—indicating that the cognitive abilities of Dutch students are among the highest in the world (OECD 2016a: 35). The Dutch education system is also superior in terms of equal educational opportunity and freedom of education. In the Netherlands, anyone is free to set up any type of school providing that it meets the standards of the Dutch education system. With due respect to individual right to freedom religion or belief, all non-government schools—including religious and secular schools—receive the same kind of public funding from the government. Derived from Article 23 of the *Constitution of the Kingdom of the Netherlands*, this policy dates back to 1917, when the Dutch education system was no longer monopolized by public schools. A century later, Dutch private schools outperform public schools with overwhelming advantages (Patrinos 2010). In 2013, about one third of students in primary education attended public schools, while the remaining two thirds were enrolled in Catholic, Protestant, and other types of private schools (OECD 2016a: 29–30). In other words, non-government education has acquired the dominant position in the Netherlands.

While all public and private schools in the Netherlands receive per capita funding, financial aid is adjusted according to various elements, including rural location, as well as the number of students with poor socio-economic backgrounds and special education needs. Based on the student population, block grants are given to school boards for staffing and operating costs. Schools can also receive additional funding for special educational purposes, such as students at risk of dropping out those in poor socio-economic conditions (OECD 2016a: 34). As such, public funding for non-government schools in the Netherlands favors the first type: money

follows the students and each school receives a sum equivalent to the per capita cost of public schooling for each student enrolled (Patrinos 2010).

With regard to the decision-making for and management of schools, the Dutch education system is highly decentralized. While the education systems are decentralized in both the Netherlands and Finland, for example, most of the decision-making in the Finnish system is decentralized to local municipal authorities and the schools have little autonomy as a result. In contrast, Dutch schools make approximately 86% of all decisions for themselves, which is the highest degree of independence among OECD countries (OECD 2012b: 500). Moreover, there is no national curriculum in the Netherlands: schools make all of the decisions with regard to issues concerning the organization of instruction, personnel management, and allocation of resources. This is also grounded in the principle of “freedom of education” guaranteed by the Dutch Constitution of 1917. In addition, private schools have even more autonomy than public schools insofar as public schools must admit any student, unless there is no place left, while private schools are in the position to refuse students who do not meet their standards or principles (OECD 2016a: 29). While this policy grants private school significant autonomy, it has also deepened the gap in student performance between schools to some extent, resulting in premature divergence among students and schools (OECD 2016b: 226).

Generally speaking, the approaches adopted by governments in the United States, Australia, and the Netherlands toward the funding of non-government schools were predominantly one or a combination of the first, third, and fourth type; it is rare to find policy practices in which the government provides rewards to non-government schools based on their performance. In the Chinese context, the amount of rewards based on performance was relatively small and given on an irregular basis. While most countries seem to disagree over whether the government should take responsibility for the funding of schools that are not founded or managed by the government, policy practices and programs concerning financial assistance for such schools were universal. Examining the freedom of education around the world, Glenn and Groof (2012) found that, in addition to cases of the Netherlands and Australia mentioned above, public funding is used to support recognized non-government schools in Austria, Belgium, Luxemburg, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Ireland, Norway, Iceland, Germany, New Zealand, Russia, South Africa, as well as most provinces in Canada. Meanwhile, numerous western countries—including the United States—have programs aimed at promoting education equity, reducing and eliminating socio-economic stratification, and ensuring the freedom of education. Moreover, these programs are continuing to expand their influence, as illustrated by the development and spread of education voucher programs. Although studies on the development of these programs over the past two decades have shown no significant advantage of vouchers for students attending private schools in terms of academic achievement, there is evidence indicating that students receiving vouchers graduated from high school at a higher rate than their public school counterparts and that parents of children who have received vouchers are generally more satisfied with their child’s school (Center on Education Policy 2011). Studies on tuition tax credit and education savings account programs have come to similar conclusions,

proposing that people are more satisfied with local education through their participation in these programs. These positive effects advance the promotion of policy practices and programs of financial support for non-government education around the world.

11.5 Conclusion

Non-government education has been shown to cultivate a wide range of public interest, make the education system healthier and more dynamic, provide various kinds of educational products and diversified educational opportunities, actively contribute to the equity of education, help make efficient use of public resources, and make education meet the needs of social and economic development. In short, non-government education is an indispensable part of the adaptation of national education to social development. As such, it is essential to provide financial support to non-government education in order to facilitate its healthy and sustainable development.

A well-designed financial support policy for non-government education will serve to increase the public interest generated by non-government schools. Ensuring the rights of non-government school students in governmental policy design will help in the construction of civil society and expand the ability of those schools to survive—as illustrated in Zhejiang Province. Moreover, the government provision of better insurance and social security care for non-government school teachers may result in those schools providing high-quality education services more efficiently than public schools—as in the Netherlands, where private schools dominate and education standards are superior. In conclusion, well-designed financial support policies will help governments achieve multiple policy objectives more effectively.

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Chapter 12

The Transformation of Government Responsibility and the Development of Educational Policies for Early Childhood Education Reform in China



Jieqiong Fan and Lin Li

Currently, China is undergoing a social transformation driven by its government transformation. During this critical period, the development of nearly all social issues is closely tied to the role and accountability of the government. The development and reform of early childhood education (ECE) are no exception. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), almost all of the development trends of ECE can be attributed to the government's performance in terms of its function and accountability. Exploring the reform and development of ECE in China from the government's changing responsibility could lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the bigger picture. The *World Development Report 1997: The State in a Changing World* reminded that “far-reaching advancement in the global economy has us revisiting basic questions about government: what its role should be, what it can and cannot do, and how best to do it” (World Bank 1997: 25–26). In this chapter, we will introduce the status quo of ECE and government transformation in China, focusing on the influences of value orientation, the division of responsibility, and the impact of government accountability on the development of ECE. Furthermore, we will build a preliminary framework of ECE for the future, based on emerging issues and problems.

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12.1 Background and Focus: The Responsibility Shift of the Government Based on the Status Quo of ECE Development in China

Given great progress of ECE achieved in China, there are deep-rooted problems and causes behind. Government responsibility in ECE is one of such salient causes. The following section outlines the background of ECE development and the key issues relating to the responsibility shift of the government.

12.1.1 *Pushing Forward Universal-Beneficial Kindergartens and Improving Quality: The Status Quo of ECE Development in China*

Along with more than 60 years of changes and growth since the establishment of the PRC, much progress has been made in ECE. According to the latest statistics released by the Ministry of Education, as of 2016, there were 239,800 kindergartens across China, with a total enrollment of 44,140,000 children, an increase of 20.6% and 13.3%, respectively, compared with 2013 (Ministry of Education 2017a, b). Gross kindergarten enrollment of preschool education¹ across China increased at an annual rate of 4% over a 3-year period, reaching 70.5% in 2014. The *Outline of National Education Reforms and Development Programs (2010–2020)* (hereinafter referred to as the *Outline* (Ministry of Education 2010)) set a goal, whereby 70% of pre-school children would be enrolled in kindergartens throughout China before 2020. This goal was realized 6 years earlier than articulated in the *Outline*. In 2016, overall kindergarten enrollment totaled 77.4%, 27% higher than that of 2009, when the *Outline* had not yet been published (Ministry of Education 2017a, b).

At the same time, along with the launching of the *Professional Standards for Kindergarten Teachers* (Ministry of Education 2012a, b), *Professional Standards for Kindergarten Principals* (Ministry of Education 2015), and the *Guidelines for Learning and Development of Children Aged 3–6* (Ministry of Education 2012a, b), the teaching–research guidance has been strengthened, and the quality of childcare has improved considerably. However, the ingrained problems in institution remain disparities of ECE between urban and rural areas and in different regions and groups still prevail. Challenges from new trends of population growth and urbanization have not been lifted.

The responsibility shift of the government is key to understanding and deciphering ECE development in China. How government defines and enacts its responsibility

¹ Gross kindergarten enrollment of preschool education is calculated by dividing the total number of children aged 3–6 years by the number of children who are actually enrolled in kindergartens. This age group is called “the three years of preschool education.”

for ECE matters positively or negatively in ECE development in China. Positively, the growth of ECE benefited from supportive high-level policies and regulations by increasing financial support for ECE, reforming the management systems, as well as enhancing professional development of ECE teachers. Negatively, however, problems emerging in ECE are also closely linked to the current impaired governance and mechanisms, and the unfulfilled government roles in developing ECE.

12.1.2 Government Transformation and the Responsibility Shift: The Origins of the Reform and Development of ECE in China

Government transformation contextualizes government responsibility. Globally, governments tend to transform from “domination” to “administration” and then to “service-oriented.” The focus of government responsibility moves accordingly from controlling to serving. A service-oriented government prioritizes public services as its goal and value orientation, aiming at an “equality-oriented” mode. Furthermore, a service-oriented government stresses shared governance by both the government and stakeholders to practice its duties (Gao and Wang 2009).

The Chinese government has vaguely evolved from domination-oriented to administration-oriented, and then to service-oriented. In the early stages of the PRC, the government was mainly domination-oriented. After Reform and Opening up,² along with six major restructuring, the Chinese government has been shifting from an omnipotent controller under a planned economic system to a bounded servant under the market economy (He 2008).³ The major responsibility of the government has gradually shifted from political dominance to economic construction, and then to an equal emphasis on economic and social functions. Finally, government responsibility has gradually moved toward a focus on social management and public service. During this process, the government has continued to diminish its degree of interference with the economy, while improving its performance in social management and public service. By restructuring and adjusting its responsibility, governance mode, and operational mechanism, the government has been striving to

²In 1978, the Chinese government started to reform the country and began to open up to other nations. This policy included adjusting the relations of production to conform to the level of productivity, as well as opening the country to catch up to the world's developmental trends and to facilitate modernization.

³From the initial years of the PRC to the time before reform began, the government was mainly domination-oriented. Between 1979 and 1994, it was an omnipotent, administrative government under a planned economy. From 1995 to the beginning of the twenty-first century, it was a limited government under the market economy. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, it has been in the process of becoming service-oriented. Of these types of government, the omnipotent, administrative, and limited types differ in terms of scope and mode when it comes to management, but can collectively be referred to as “administration-oriented.”

develop education, healthcare, culture, and other enterprises. The overall goal is to build a public service system that is fair, inclusive, reasonable, and sustainable. The context of this transformation is crucial to exploring the Chinese government's responsibility, as well as the formulation of policies and their impact on the reform and development of all social undertakings in the country.

The impact of government transformation on ECE development will be elaborated below, mainly from the shift in the government's values, the identification of government responsibilities, and the government's systems and mechanisms with respect to the expansion of ECE, together with the analysis of ECE policies promulgated by the government in different periods. Moreover, based on new problems faced in the current stage of development, the government's response and future trends will also be discussed.

12.2 Metamorphosis and Transformation: The Government Precisely Identifying Its Role to Pursue Significant Growth of ECE

The impact of government transformations since the founding of the PRC on any social undertaking can be summarized as follows: (1) the shift of the values that the government uses to guide the expansion of a social undertaking; (2) identifying the scope of government responsibilities assumed to develop a social undertaking; and (3) approaches to carrying out the government's responsibilities (the systems and mechanisms that the government establishes to further a social undertaking). With regard to ECE, the discussion will be elaborated based on the three aforementioned aspects.

12.2.1 From “Efficiency Prioritized” to “Equality Foremost”: The Shift of Government Values in Developing ECE

Government's values refer to its political beliefs and pursuits, mainly embodied as its value goals. The formation of a value goal is shaped by the priorities of political, economic, cultural, and national construction at the time. Once the ideological basis is formed, it becomes a restrictive and incentive mechanism of the government's activities and directly impacts its functioning. Furthermore, ideological value usually manifests in specific policies and policy implementation. In a word, policies can reflect government "values" (Shang 2002).

During the course of China's governance mode transforming from domination-oriented to service-oriented, values have played a fundamental role. For example, a domination-oriented government privileges the interests of the ruling class and may completely restrict or sacrifice public interests to fulfill them. Meanwhile, an

administration-oriented government focuses more on the common interests of the ruling class and the public, but its basic values still safeguard the interests of the elite. Ideally, a service-oriented government usually upholds the values of protecting the public interest, thereby benefiting all citizens. With public interest, equality, and justice as its fundamental value pursuits, such a government truly practices the idea of “serving the public” (Li 2004: 30). In ECE, such values turn to be “equality and balanced development, while prioritizing support for the disadvantaged.”

12.2.1.1 Shifting Priority from Urban to Rural Areas

In different times, the government held a different understanding of the value of urban and rural ECE, leading to different developmental goals. For a long time, the Chinese government prioritized the expansion of urban zones over the growth of rural areas, not only in terms of economics, but also from social, cultural, and educational angles (Wang 2015). In the course of China’s transformation from an agriculture-dominant society to a nation where industry prevails, urban construction has always been deemed important and favored over rural construction. Either in a domination-oriented or administration-oriented period, the Chinese government focused on “administrative absorbing” with taxes at its core or the policy of “taking more, giving less” to strengthen the supply to urban areas over rural areas (Xu 2009: 15–17).

This orientation has also been reflected in ECE. For example, in terms of financial investments, the government adopted a strategy whereby urban ECE was funded by the district-level and county-level governments, while rural ECE was supported by nongovernmental sectors.⁴ In terms of the development priority, the government preferred urban growth to rural areas. For instance, the *Opinions on Strengthening Early Childhood Education Work* in 1988, which was promulgated jointly by eight ministerial departments (including the Ministry of Education and forwarded by the State Council), specified that “early childhood education work should focus on urban areas and rural areas with faster economic development and better educational resources.” Guided by such policies, ECE development in rural areas has been neglected since then. During the Eleventh Five-Year Plan period,⁵ gross

⁴The most typical policy was as follows: Article 1 of the *Opinions on Strengthening Early Childhood Education Work*—jointly promulgated by the Ministry of Education, State Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Personnel, Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Construction, Ministry of Health, and State Price Bureau, and forwarded by the State Council on August 15, 1988—states: “For collectively-owned kindergartens opened in the sub-districts of urban areas, local governments may appropriately allocate finances regarding their establishment, the addition of large equipment, and housing repairs. [Such funds are to come] from the local government’s self-raised endowments. For collectively-owned kindergartens started in townships and villages, kindergartens shall self-raise the required finances, and the guardians of the enrolled children could be charged pursuant to relevant regulations.”

⁵The Five-Year Plan is an abbreviation of the *Outline of the five-year plan for national economy and social development in the PRC*. The government makes this plan every 5 years to prepare for

kindergarten enrollment during the 3 years of ECE was 55.6% in 2007 in urban regions, but only 35.6% in rural areas, with a gap of nearly 20%. It seems this disparity has been widening across time (Pang 2009). In 2009, there were only 27,600 universal-beneficial kindergartens in rural areas, a decrease of nearly 3/4, compared with 106,700 universal-benefit kindergartens in 1995. Around 2/3 of preschool children in rural regions had no access to ECE at the time (Zhang 2010). Moreover, most kindergartens in rural areas were small in size, with limited security and hygiene conditions. Even worse, the teaching content and methods assembled with those adopted in primary schools. The quality of ECE in rural areas did not match its proportion and its status in educating the largest number of children. This severely hindered the sustainable growth and the quality improvement of ECE.

In recent years, China has seen an “expansion...of public service functions,” characterized by prioritizing the development of public education services (The Research Group of the Chinese Academy of Governance 2008).⁶ During this period, the transformation of government functions has centered on broadening the scope of public services, allocating educational resources in a rational manner, and the delivery of public services to rural and remote regions with ethnic minorities. The Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Chinese government have attached great importance to ECE in rural areas. The 2010 *Outline* proposes “prioritizing ECE in rural areas.” The *Opinions of the State Council on the Current Development of Early Childhood Education* (hereinafter referred to as *State Council’s Ten Opinions*), issued by the State Council in 2010, provided further regulations on how to organize ECE in rural education, such as incorporating it into the construction plan of the new socialist countryside, increasing the government’s financial aid, and promoting nationwide ECE programs to support the expansion of Midwest China. Since 2011, to effectively implement regulations from the State Council’s Ten Opinions, three phases of the Three-Year Action Plan for ECE have been implemented. Along with efforts made by the central and local governments, it is inspiring to see that ECE in

major construction, the distribution of productivity, and the proportion of national economics. These plans played an important role in guiding the development of social undertakings. The Eleventh Five-Year Plan is the blueprint for the period of 2006–2010.

⁶While Western capitalist countries built their public service systems, they underwent three periods: (1) *A free competitive market economy* (before the first half of the nineteenth century, with per capita GDP less than USD 1000) when the government interfered to a minimum. The market economy was underscored as the core tenet, and the government mainly provided sustainable public services. Thus, the government was called the “night watchman” government. (2) *The mixed economy* (1930s–1960s), when per capita GDP was between USD 1000 and USD 8000. This time is also called the period of public service-oriented government construction, characterized by the rapid expansion of public service functions and an increase in the proportion of public expenses in relation to GDP. The growth of public education services was prioritized. This was the golden period of the establishment of welfare states and economic growth. (3) *Market economy globalization* (since the 1960s, when per capita GDP over USD 8000), when core public services (such as education and other human resource capital) began to be provided. A “core public service-oriented” government marks this period. According to the State Statistics Bureau, per capita GDP in China was CNY 46,629 (equivalent to USD 7092) in 2014, indicating that China was experiencing a mixed economy characterized by public services (especially core ones).

rural areas has achieved unprecedent growth which is significantly linked to equality and equilibrium, the foremost goal of China's service-oriented government.

12.2.1.2 From Model Kindergartens for Elite Groups to Universal-Beneficial Kindergartens for the General Public

Since the PRC was founded, the establishment of kindergartens has followed the policy of "walking on both legs," namely the government joining hands with social forces (such as enterprises, institutions, social organizations, neighborhood committees, villagers' committees, and citizens) to promote ECE. At that time the government's responsibility was defined as "establishing model kindergartens." The 1956 *Circular of the Ministries of Education, Health, and Civil Affairs on Issues Regarding Kindergartens* pointed out, "The education authorities should establish some kindergartens in a planned way where possible," and "The health and education authorities should open some high-quality nurseries and kindergartens for purposes of demonstration." The *Opinions on Developing Rural Preschool Education*, promulgated by the State Education Commission in 1983, stated, "Each county-level government should take measures based on its actual conditions to create one model kindergarten, and gradually develop town-level (township-level) central kindergartens."

Nevertheless, the government still had administrative power over kindergartens opened by nongovernmental sectors. During the transition from the planned economy to the market economy, and the period when the market economy system was established and refined, the administration-oriented government upheld the principle of "efficiency prioritized and equality considered." The creation of a small number of "model kindergartens" to drive the expansion of other ones was a strategy designed by the government to develop ECE in an efficient way. A typical policy is the *Circular on the Request for Defining the Leadership Management Division in Early Childhood Education*, jointly promulgated by the Ministry of Education (and other ministries) and forwarded by the State Council in 1987. Another example is the *Opinions on Achieving the Development Goals Specified in the Ninth Five-Year Plan for Early Childhood Education Nationwide*, issued by the Ministry of Education in 1997. The former document saw the "establishment of model kindergartens" as the responsibility of educational authorities for the first time, while the latter document further emphasized that the government's responsibility was to "create public model kindergartens and make them gradually become local examples and models." However, since ECE follows the principle that "whoever opens kindergartens, takes responsibility for them," for a rather long time, the government invested limited public resources in a small number of public model kindergartens, which only served elite groups. For a certain period, launching model kindergartens became the only job of local governments when they attempted to develop ECE, which led to almost no support for a large number of kindergartens of other types. Unfortunately, the scant number of model kindergartens failed to play an exemplary role, resulting in great unfairness.

As the service-oriented government has risen in recent years, the government's values have shifted to "public-oriented and equality foremost." The establishment of service systems for urban and rural public ECE focused on "wide coverage, basic ECE guaranteed, and high quality." Privileged and luxurious public-funded kindergartens have been replaced by standardized and practical kindergartens (Wang 2015). For example, the *State Council's Ten Opinions* emphasize that, "The government's resources are forbidden to charge families high-tuition for their children to attend over-standardized kindergartens." This document also indicates that, "Support shall be provided for the development of private kindergartens with a relatively low charge, and oriented to serve the general public (i.e., universal-beneficial private kindergartens)." Such action helps to promote an ECE system "dominated by public and universal-benefit private kindergartens." In terms of specific measures, the three phases of the Three-Year Action Plan for ECE provided aid for universal-benefit private kindergartens, as specified in the State Council's Ten Opinions. This plan set forth regulations that the government should develop favorable policies and guarantee investment in terms of "purchasing services, reducing and exempting people from paying rent, replacing subsidies with rewards, dispatching publicly-funded teachers, training teachers, comprehensive awards and subsidies, and guidance on teaching and research." The overall goal is to implement policies that reflect the government's new values.

To sum up, the transformation of the government, its functions, and governance mode (underscored by the change in the government's values) determines the evolution of a series of policies and measures, such as the shift from "urban-prioritized" to "rural-prioritized" and from "model kindergartens" to "universal-beneficial kindergartens." Such policies are mixed and center on the principle of "realizing educational equality and benefiting the public." The implementation of these policies and measures aims to create social equality and a system characterized by equal rights, opportunities, and rules, which help guarantee people's rights in relation to development and participation.

12.2.2 From Involvement to Withdrawal and Finally to Leading: A Gradual Clarification of the Service-Oriented Government's Responsibility in Developing ECE

The second aspect of how the government's transformation influences ECE development lies in "the identification of government responsibility." Regarding the joint efforts between the government and all possible social forces in expanding ECE, the government takes responsibility to a certain extent and plays a specific role. Given the nature of ECE, the changes in the government's capacities, and social and economic growth, the responsibility of the Chinese government in expanding ECE has shifted from involvement to withdrawal, and finally to leadership.

12.2.2.1 The Government's Overall Planning and Social Involvement: Joint Efforts Between the Government and Society in Developing ECE

Since the PRC was founded, it has experienced various social and political turmoil, including reform and opening up, and the establishment of the socialist market economy. China has gone through turbulence and tortuosity in its beginning to the stable development of all causes during the period of reform and opening up. Similarly, the relationship between the government and the society in which ECE has developed has also gone through a series of changes. These shifts can be divided into two stages.

Stage 1 was designated from the founding of the PRC to the beginning of reform and opening up. During this time, the core task of ECE was to “guarantee women’s re-engagement in work to the largest extent possible.” The government realized that ECE was “local and mass-oriented” and concluded kindergartens should be “run by the masses under the overall planning of the local government” (Wei 1951). In 1979, this idea was once again reinforced as the policy of “walking on both legs.” One “leg” refers to “actively recovering and developing kindergartens run by educational sectors,” while the other “leg” refers to kindergartens run by community groups, institutions, factories, mines, sub-districts, and individuals. During this period, although the government emphasized social participation. On the one hand, the government required administrative departments for education at all levels to “include a special fund for ECE,” “incorporate ECE projects into educational infrastructure investment,” and ensure that the sources of educational expenditures were secured and that the budget was strictly implemented (The State Education Commission 1983). The government also provided support to social forces—such as industrial and mining enterprises—to run kindergartens by allocating teachers or funds (The State Council 1955). On the other hand, social forces participated more collectively than individually, and most of the collectives (e.g., government-operated enterprises like factories and mines, and rural community groups) were closely related to the government’s regulation and control, so they were still publicly owned.

Stage 2 ranged from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s. During this period, the most significant revolution that China went through was establishing the new idea of the socialist market economy system and the comprehensive promotion of Reform and Opening up. The government’s main focus shifted from political struggle to economic construction. Social forces at this time were not only publicly owned “collectives” but also included individuals or private groups that became wealthy along with economic growth. For example, the *Opinions on Reinforcing Early Childhood Education Work* (jointly issued by eight departments including the Ministry of Education and forwarded by the State Council in 1988) stated that “kindergartens should not only be restricted to national ones. Most kindergartens should be run by collectives and individuals, in compliance with national law and relevant regulations.” The government started to rely primarily on social forces to run kindergartens. In terms of policies and systematic management, the government still played a role as the central coordinator and planner in the development of ECE

during this period, but the trend of the government devolving power to society became increasingly apparent. Objectively speaking, this period was a golden age for the fast rise of ECE in terms of enrollment rate and the number of enrolled kindergarten children. Meanwhile, the ECE management system was still in its early stages, and the system of regulating and managing all kinds of kindergartens run by social forces (mainly collectives and individuals) had not yet been established.⁷ These fast-emerging kindergartens faced multiple issues regarding administration and quality.

12.2.2.2 Government Giving Society a Role: The Government Devolves Responsibility for ECE Development to Society

This period started from the mid-1990s and lasted until the first few years of the twenty-first century. China entered its ninth Five-Year Plan, a crucial time when political structural reform got reinforced and economic structural reform was deepened. Generally speaking, the government's economic function transformed from intervening in a microsystem ("direct regulation and control") to a macro-system ("indirect regulation and control"). The government followed this reform idea in the field of social sectors as well. This means that the government backed off from certain fields in which it deemed did not need a lot of intervention and devolved responsibility to society.

In education, the government was retreating from ECE as it was neither the compulsory education nor the social focused area. Two policies were unveiled at the same time: *Opinions on Enterprises Running Kindergartens*, issued by seven ministerial departments (including the Ministry of Education) in 1995, and *Opinions on Implementing the Ninth Five-Year Plan Development Goal for Early Childhood Education Nationwide*, issued by the Ministry of Education in 1997.^{8,9} These two

⁷In 1989, the Ministry of Education issued the *Administrative Regulations on Kindergartens*, stipulating that ECE in China was "under the responsibility of the local government and the system of hierarchical management. All relevant departments shall cooperate accordingly." In the same year, *Kindergarten Work Regulations (Draft)* was promulgated, which set forth the standards for running kindergartens but did not establish any administrative system for various types of kindergartens specifically.

⁸One of the most influential points of this policy is to "actively and steadily promote ECE in society." It created provisions for the systematic transformation of public kindergartens "based on the principle of stable transition...under the overall plan of the government, kindergartens can be handed to the local administrative education departments, which can continue to run them in multiple ways, such as handing them over to the care of communities, or qualified organizations or individuals." Although this stipulation mentioned that such a transformation should be stably conducted under "the overall plan of the government" and the plans of "educational departments," it was common for kindergartens to be regarded as "burdens" or "profitable instruments," and they were thrown into the market.

⁹One of the most influential points of this policy is to "actively and steadily reform the system for opening kindergartens, further clarify government responsibility at all levels, explore an establishment mode and an internal management mechanism of kindergartens, and promote ECE in society

policies played an important role in accelerating the devolution of ECE responsibility from the government to society. In cities, state-owned enterprises deepened their reform to break the shackles of “enterprises burdened with social responsibilities.” Many kindergartens that had been run by state-owned enterprises were considered “burdens” and thrown into the market. In villages, kindergartens that had been run collectively over a long period of time were stepping into a “privatized” sector. On the one hand, the government backed off almost completely from its joint efforts with society in the field of ECE, including those in the rural areas. On the other hand, the government did not create any corresponding management strategies in response to the rise of private kindergartens. Therefore, this was also the start of a massive, difficult, and arduous decline of ECE in China. The situation was especially severe in rural regions: The numbers of kindergartens and enrolled kindergarten children in rural areas declined by 54.23% and 30.48%, respectively, from 1997 to 2002.

12.2.2.3 Led by the Government and Co-governed by Society: Joint Efforts of the Government and Society to Co-govern ECE

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, along with the reform of China’s economic and administrative systems, the country’s overall national strength has rapidly enhanced. The government has been prioritizing public to private and service-oriented, which means that its functions will become more clearly defined. The responsibility of such a government is to “steer” more than to “control.”

Since 2010, the trend of the government recovering its leading role has become increasingly apparent. That year, the *National Outline for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development* (2010–2020) summarized the blueprint for educational development. The government saw this as an opportunity and, that same year, issued the *State Council’s Ten Opinions* on ECE, which has supreme legal authority on educational affairs. In order to realize the recommendations of the *State Council’s Ten Opinions*, in 2011, the government formed a task force consisting of directors of 11 departments/offices, including the Department of Basic Education II of the Ministry of Education, and led by the vice minister of the Ministry of Education.¹⁰ The main goal was to carry out the *Three-Year Action Plan for Early*

step by step.” This has accelerated the socialization of kindergartens.

¹⁰The Circular on Establishing the Pre-school Education Leading Group to Promote the Three-Year Action Plan by the General Office of the Ministry of Education [Z], March 8, 2011. The leading group mainly consists of directors from the following departments: The group leader will be the vice minister from the Ministry of Education. The other team members include the director of the Department of Basic Education II, the vice director of the General Office of the Ministry of Education, the director of the Information Office, the vice inspector of the Department of Policies and Regulations, the vice director of the Department of Development Planning, the vice inspector of the Department of Personnel, the vice director of the Department of Finance, the vice inspector of the Department of Basic Education I, the vice director of the Ministry-based Supervision Bureau, the vice director of the Department of Minority Education, the vice director of the

Childhood Education. Thus far, the first two stages of the plan have been fulfilled, and the third stage is being promoted. Hence, the government has attached great importance to ECE and taken back its responsibilities.

First the government recognized that the nature of ECE was a public welfare and reinforced its leading role. For instance, the *State Council's Ten Opinions* states that "ECE is a significant part of the national education system, and an important undertaking of social public welfare." The document also emphasizes that the "government's leading role" must be upheld, and "the responsibility of government at all levels must be fulfilled."

Second, in terms of financial investment, the policy declares that "government at all levels should increase investment in rural ECE" and that "spending on ECE should be included in the financial budget. Newly increased educational funds should be allocated toward ECE." Furthermore, "the central government should set up special funds to support ECE in central and western rural areas, areas with ethnic minorities, and border regions." From 2014 to 2016, the central government invested CNY 51.8 billion to support the expansion of universal-beneficial education resources, leveraging local investment of more than CNY 200 billion. In 2016, the national funds for ECE accounted for about 4% of the total budget, more than twice that of 2010, which was 1.6% (Ministry of Education 2017a, b).

Third, in terms of establishing the system of kindergartens, the policy stipulates that "public and universal-beneficial private kindergartens should be the main part of [this] system" and that "public kindergartens should be promoted, especially in rural areas." In addition, the government focused on strengthening the construction of supervision and evaluation. Local governments as well as kindergartens will be supervised and evaluated. For instance, the *Opinions on the Implementation of the Second Phase of the Three-year Action Plan for Early Childhood Education*—jointly issued by three departments (including the Ministry of Education) in 2014—states that, "The Ministry of Education, the National Development and Reform Commission, and the Ministry of Finance should inspect the implementation of the action plan across the country. All local authorities should carry out supervisory inspections, enforce accountability mechanisms, and incorporate the implementation of the action plan and policy into the evaluation index local governments' educational work at all levels." From policy-making to supervision and assessment, the government has clearly assumed its responsibility of leading.

To sum up, along with social, political, and economic growth and the government's gradually deepening understanding of ECE, the government experienced involvement and withdrawal, and eventually took over ECE once again. This change is in line with the development of ECE in China and efficiently promotes ECE's healthy and sustainable development.

12.2.3 Ongoing Improvements in the Government's System and Mechanisms for Developing ECE

How the government's transformation influences the development of social undertakings lies in "how the government fulfills its responsibility." In terms of ECE, this refers to what kind of system and mechanisms the government establishes to promote ECE expansion. In other words, how the government performs its responsibility and the role that it plays. According to the government's functions in terms of public utilities, the government has played an omnipotent role since the PRC was founded in the mid-1980s. The government comprehensively intervened in the development of public utilities, adhering to the principles of equality and unity. During the abovementioned time period, the government aimed to ensure equality and fairness among public utilities and to support public welfare social services by means of macro control and resource allocation (such as policymaking, planning and management, financial investment, supervision, and evaluation) (Gao and Wang 2009).

In the course of ECE development since the 1990s, the two roles of "steering" and being "service-oriented" co-existed and were inseparable. In contrast, in the present day, the government is transforming from being "steering" to "service-oriented." The government's "steering" and "servicing" functions are mainly reflected through the construction and improvement of the two systems and two mechanisms.

12.2.3.1 System Reform: The Government's "Steering" Function, Highlighted by the Systems for Managing and Establishing Kindergartens

The government's "steering" function in the spread of public utilities means that instead of being an omnipotent government, the government plays a guiding, leading, and decisive role in the core functions of this undertaking. In the field of ECE, the government's "steering" function is mainly reflected in the construction and renovation of the systems for managing and establishing kindergartens.

Currently, the government further clarified its division of power and responsibility at all levels and gradually built mature administrative system step by step. These measures founded the basis for the government to lead ECE. For the first time, the *Administrative Regulations on Kindergartens* in 1989 declared that China should implement a management system, characterized by "local accountability, hierarchical management, and cooperation within relevant departments" in ECE. In the context of decentralization and devolving power to local authorities, this system spurred local initiative to develop ECE. However, the definition of this management system was not clear enough in the sense that "local accountability" did not specify which level of government should assume the main responsibility, and "hierarchical management" failed to define government responsibility at different levels.

Moreover, the section on the “cooperation of relevant departments” did not specify which departments were pertinent or the kind of cooperation mechanisms needed. As a result, while implementing this management system, the responsibility for developing ECE was shifted from cities to the districts and sub-districts and from villages to townships. There were difficulties at the level of districts and townships in terms of coordinating or guaranteeing financial and human resources, which hindered the growth of ECE. In recent years, the vague definition of the ECE management system has been amended. For instance, the *Opinions on the Implementation of the Third Stage of Early Childhood Education Action Plan* was promulgated in 2017 by four departments, including the Ministry of Education. The document states that, “An ECE management system, led by the State Council, planned by the provincial/municipal governments, and oriented by counties, should be established and improved. The overall planning of provincial and municipal governments should be strengthened, and support for poor areas should be increased. The responsibility of county governments should be fulfilled, and the functions of village and town governments should be made full use of.” This document further defined the rights and responsibilities of government at all levels and greatly strengthened its “steering” function in terms of administration. This was a milestone for ECE development.

In terms of the system for establishing kindergartens, the government has specified a distribution pattern in which public and universal-benefit private kindergartens are the main focus, and all kinds of social forces jointly participate in ECE governance and development under the government’s leadership. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the government has learned from developmental mistakes caused by having abdicated responsibility for ECE during previous periods. In regard to the system for establishing kindergartens, the government’s “steering” function has been especially strengthened. For instance, the *State Council’s Ten Opinions* and the *Three-Phase Three-Year Action Plan* both point out that “public kindergartens should be vigorously developed.” In rural areas, an important government task is to set in motion a trend of opening public kindergartens. Meanwhile, “it is essential to guide and support private kindergartens to provide universal-benefit services.” This trend moves forward practically in the third phase of the Three-Year Action Plan. The plan further states that “all provinces/districts/cities should establish accreditation standards for universal-benefit private kindergartens, and license a specific number of them each year” and that government should effectively support their development at all levels through a series of strategies called government purchasing services, such as “reducing rent, giving awards as subsidies, allocating public teachers, training teachers, providing comprehensive awards and subsidies, and providing guidance on instruction and research.”

12.2.3.2 The Mechanism Innovation: The Government’s “Service” Function, Highlighted by the Teacher-Cultivating and Cost-Sharing Mechanisms

The “service” function refers to supporting the development of public facilities by providing basic conditions and resources. Regarding ECE, the government’s service function is mainly reflected in manpower and material resources, which serve as the innovation for the teacher-cultivating and cost-sharing mechanisms.

In terms of teacher-cultivating, various levels of governments have realized that adequately qualified teachers are crucial for ECE to move forward from basic coverage to quality improvement. This is especially critical in the present time as China is facing a much larger need for kindergarten enrollment that calls for unconventional ideas and actions. First, the *State Council’s Ten Opinions* stipulates that “staff of public kindergartens shall be checked and ratified” and that “the status and treatment of kindergarten teachers shall be ensured in accordance with laws.” The latest *Third Phase of the Three-year Action Plan for Early Childhood Education* states that “various measures shall be taken to solve the problem of the low salaries of non-tenure public kindergarten teachers, and equal pay for equal work should be gradually realized. Private kindergartens shall be guided and supervised on being equipped with adequate teachers, and their salary shall be secured in accordance with the law. According to the law, kindergarten staff should be included in the social security system.” This helps to stabilize the status of non-tenure teachers in both private and public kindergartens.

Second, regarding improvement assurance, the *Third Phase of the Three-Year Action Plan for Early Childhood Education* indicates that “the scale and quality of the ECE major in colleges, universities and secondary schools shall be determined according to the requirements of popularizing the three-year ECE, and efforts to cultivate kindergarten teachers in colleges and universities shall be reinforced.” In the meantime, the scale of recruitment for student teachers should be broadened through hierarchical exams. Student teachers should be trained accordingly and assigned to different positions after they achieve the relevant qualifications. Through position transfer training, the requirements of the 3-year ECE shall be popularized, the scale and level of the ECE major in colleges, universities and secondary schools shall be determined, and efforts to train kindergarten teachers in colleges and universities shall be reinforced. Furthermore, all kinds of complementary mechanisms for teachers who have already been demonstrated to be effective in practice shall be continuously promoted, such as the complementary mechanisms for teachers in special positions and “directed enrollment, education, and employment” (Pang et al. 2017).¹¹

¹¹The complementary mechanism of “directed enrollment, education, and employment” refers to targeted cooperation between local kindergartens and normal universities, vocational colleges, and kindergarten schools based on the quantity, level, and type of teachers in the specific region, which comprises directional enrollment, development, and position-taking.

During non-compulsory education, cost-sharing is a reasonable mechanism whereby providers and beneficiaries of educational resources jointly shoulder educational expenses. Regarding ECE, this mechanism refers to households paying for part of the costs, while the other part is covered by the government's (or the investors') financial investment. Households have borne ECE costs for a long time, even in rural areas. In the 1980s, under the political principles of "people shall be in charge of their own education" and "what comes from people shall benefit the people," in rural areas, it was mostly farmers and parents who raised their own funds for ECE. The cost-sharing mechanism has gone through substantial transformation, dominated by the government in the new era. For example, the *State Council's Ten Opinions* declares that "households shall bear a reasonable proportion of ECE costs" and that an "ECE subsidy system" has been established for financially disadvantaged families, orphans, and disabled children. The *Second Phase of the Three-Year Action Plan* specifies that "the standards of childcare and fees for education shall be adjusted in compliance with regulations to maintain the household burden within a reasonable range." Meanwhile, efforts to subsidize disadvantaged children shall be reinforced. However, one of the most significant changes in the *Third Phase of the Three-Year Action Plan* is that the proportion a household shall cover is not contingent upon a kindergarten's fee standards, but rather "based on economic development status, operational costs of kindergartens, and household affordability." This reflects the government's determination to perform its functions, and its orientation toward benefiting the general public and serving families.

In conclusion, the government is using the systems for managing and establishing kindergartens through two strategies: the teacher-cultivating mechanism and the cost-sharing mechanism. Not only is this trend closely related to the shift from a domination-oriented to an administration-oriented and service-oriented government; it is also linked to the different demands of ECE in China throughout different periods. This change has been demonstrated to be both scientific and effective.

12.3 Responding to Challenges: Government Responsibility and System Construction for Future ECE Development

Since the PRC was founded, especially since the twenty-first century when the service-oriented government attached great importance to and seriously undertook its main responsibilities, ECE in China has made enormous, critical breakthroughs. However, as put forward in *The Third Phase of the Three-Year Action Plan for Early Childhood Education*, "ECE remains the weakest part of the whole education system." A lack of educational resources to benefit the general public and the unbalanced distribution of public and private kindergartens are persistent common problems. ECE in rural regions remains underdeveloped, a situation that has not been comprehensively or fundamentally improved. ECE is "still in a critical period full of trials, efforts, and lessons." Due to the aging population, the execution of the

universal two-child policy, and the migrant population's growing need for kindergarten enrollment, ECE is experiencing unprecedented pressure as well as opportunities.

12.3.1 New Problems and Challenges That ECE Is Facing During the Development of Social Undertakings

In recent years, new circumstances have emerged in China's economic and social development, bringing new challenges to ECE. Typical problems include the under-supply of effective labor resulting from the accelerated aging of the population, which has led to the promulgation of the universal two-child policy. Furthermore, new educational obstacles for left-behind and migrant children have appeared due to the ongoing acceleration of urbanization. These two issues are discussed below.

First, China's fertility rate has greatly declined. Along with this trend, the demographic dividend is gradually fading, the population is aging, and the imbalance of the sex ratio at birth is becoming severe. To cope with these difficulties, the government decided to adjust the population policy. China began to implement its universal two-child policy since October 2015, which officially allowed all couples to have two children. As of 2011, couples, both of whom are the only children in their families, are allowed to have two children. As of 2013, couples, either of whom is the only child of his/her family, are allowed to have two children.

The widespread implementation of this policy is expected to have an extensive influence on all aspects of society. The most affected field of all is undoubtedly ECE. Many researchers have made forecasts about future population growth. For example, some believe that the number of kindergarten children will "substantially rise from 2019 onward, and [that this] increase will last until 2021, when it reaches its peak (around 57,508,200). After that, the number will start to gradually drop to about 42,547,800 in 2035" (Yang et al. 2016). Other researchers have estimated that the population of preschool children will grow in a certain region (Beijing), with three potential sub-schemes (high, middle, and low) of population prediction. They also found that "the number of preschool children would reach its peak at around 2023 or 2024, and then gradually drop, forming an inverted U-shape curve" (Hong 2017). Correspondingly, scholars have estimated that in 2021, there will be a shortfall of 110,000 kindergartens and more than three million kindergarten teachers and childcare workers. Furthermore, the public financial budget for ECE in 2021 is predicted to be CNY 303.087 billion more than that of 2013 (Yang et al. 2016). A growing population will not only enlarge the shortfall in terms of resources but also be highly likely to amplify the imbalance of resource distribution.

Second, the phenomena of left-behind and migrant children have created new obstacles for the government. The phenomena of such children are rooted in the migration of labor from rural to urban areas during urbanization. As of October 1, 2015, the total number of Chinese migrants reached 247 million, which means that

1 out of 6 people were “migrants.” There were about 100 million migrant and left-behind children in the migrant population (Yang 2017).

Based on dynamic monitoring of China’s migrant population data and analytical reports in recent years, the number of migrant children is shifting. First, the proportion of young migrant children is gradually rising. Of all migrant children aged under 14 years, the average age is 7.02 (± 4.525) years. The percentage of children aged 2 and 3 years is at its highest (Huang 2015). Second, the time that migrant children spend traveling is increasing, especially children aged 0–4 years. Most of their life is spent migrating.

Third, in terms of educational opportunities, of all school-age migrant children who were not attending school during the sixth Demographic Census, preschool children comprised the highest proportion (40.2%). As they grow older, the risk of them being deprived of education rises (Huang 2015). Research has found that these children have developed clear characteristics of the migration destination and have become estranged from their culture of origin. However, due to various reasons (such as a lack of social welfare), they cannot genuinely integrate in the migrated cities. This may lead to multiple social issues.

12.3.2 Government Response and Reflection on the Construction of the Future ECE System

Confronted with a series of new problems, the government has tried to learn from the successful experiences of some areas as well as other countries and constantly makes adjustments and innovates. The government is making all efforts to ensure that China’s ECE goes through healthy, sustainable development. The following section will focus on the government’s responses to these new problems and put forward some suggestions for the construction of the ECE system in the future.

12.3.2.1 Government Leadership and Commitment to Public Service: The Core Values of a Service-Oriented Government in Developing ECE

The core value of a service-oriented government lies in the pursuit of maximizing public interest. As for ECE, this means that the government acknowledges ECE is public welfare and that investment in children is a basic strategy to strengthen the nation’s future competitive power. Based on the above recognition, the government inevitably plays a leadership role and takes responsibility for expanding ECE. Such a consensus can also be found in the international arena, which has led to many countries having successful experiences of developing ECE.

The United States, a developed nation, issued the *No Child Left Behind Act* in 2001, which stipulated that the government should “ensure that all children have

fair, equal, and important opportunities for access to high-quality education" (The US Congress 2001). India, a developing country, issued the *National Policy for Children* in 1974, which stated that the "objectives of national policy shall be to provide equal opportunities to children at all developmental stages, reduce inequality, and promote social justice as much as possible" (Indian Social Welfare 1974). Many countries have not only identified the leading role and relevant responsibility of governments in ECE through policies and laws (Pang et al. 2014) but have also established large numbers of public kindergartens, provided free caring and education services to children, and executed other political measures to ensure the government's dominant status in ECE.

Statistics shows that over 80% of the countries in North America, Latin America/Caribbean, and Europe have more than 50% (or even higher) of children in public kindergartens. The corresponding proportions in OECD countries such as Luxembourg, France, and Hungary are even close to 100%. Many countries also highlighted government responsibility by building a free system of preschool education. For example, the more developed countries and regions—such as Sweden, Belgium, France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and China's Macao special administrative region (SAR), as well as some developing populous countries such as Mexico, Brazil, and Cuba—have included the preschool stage into the coverage of free education (Pang and Xia 2013). Therefore, the government assuming leadership and executing relevant policies, regulations, and specific strategies is an international trend of developing ECE.

12.3.2.2 Universal-Beneficial Education, Equality, and Equilibrium: Government and Social Forces Build a New Pattern of Co-supply for Disadvantaged Sectors

A service-oriented government keeps the public-welfare nature of ECE in mind. Therefore, the government's primary goal for developing ECE is to construct a system for universal benefits and equal public education services; this provides an important guide for the government to identify the boundaries of its responsibility. The government should focus on structural reform on the supply-side of ECE and make efforts to expand universal-beneficial resources. The existing gap between supply and demand in ECE should be effectively covered; simultaneously, the government should be proactively prepared for the massive, emerging demands of ECE triggered by its new universal two-child policy.

There are two suggestions for the government to achieve the above goals. Data that indicate population changes should be comprehensively collected, classified, and analyzed, and a sound system for monitoring and predicting population growth should be set up. Based on the number of preschool-aged children estimated from the above work, the government should adjust kindergarten enrollment quotas accordingly to meet need. Moreover, the government can alter the distribution of resources in time to balance the magnitude and quality of ECE across various regions (Hong and Ma 2017).

There should be vigorous support for social forces to run universal-benefit private kindergartens, forming a new co-supply pattern for both public and private kindergartens. During the *Two Sessions of 2016 on Measures to Expand ECE Resources*, the Minister of Education stated in a press conference that “the government should make a robust effort to expand public kindergartens, actively support enterprises and institutions to establish kindergartens, and give aid to private kindergartens through government purchases. The development of preschool classes attached to primary schools can also be taken into account if their conditions permit.” This policy signals that, in response to the pressures of increasing demand, it is a natural trend to build a system for establishing kindergartens, led by the government and coordinated by multiple sectors of society. In this context, a large number of universal-benefit kindergartens based on public–private partnerships, as well as enterprise-owned kindergartens, are gradually opening up. In the meantime, service agencies for early education based on the needs of communities and families are emerging.

The government should play a greater role in “strengthening the weak and helping the disadvantaged” by prioritizing the expansion of preschool education in poor rural areas and placing more importance on disadvantaged groups’ right to education. In recent years, the State has been highly concerned with rural ECE, which has received strong support from the central government through national projects. Furthermore, some local governments have promoted grassroots undertakings through international cooperation. While intensifying its efforts to enhance less developed rural preschool education, in the future, the government should also pay attention to the education of disadvantaged groups, such as left-behind and migrant children. As for left-behind children, the State Council issued the *Opinions on Strengthening the Care for and Protection of Left-Behind Children in Rural Areas* in February 2016, and formed an inter-ministerial joint meeting led by the Ministry of Civil Affairs, and joined by 27 departments, to carry out a thorough investigation on left-behind children. This is the first high-level policy on left-behind children and the broadest government action in China to study and assist left-behind children, reflecting the country’s progress in safeguarding children’s rights. As for migrant children, many local governments have taken innovative measures. For example, the Shanghai municipal government set up and regulated level III private kindergartens specifically to enroll migrant children, to strengthen the management and development of such kindergartens with government purchase services (such as offering a subsidy to each child, assigning public teachers, arranging teaching supervisors, and providing curriculum resources). Through all these actions, the Shanghai municipal government bears the baseline responsibilities of education.

12.3.2.3 Legislation-Based and System First: Constructing an Effective ECE Mechanism Under Policy and Legal Frameworks

Contemporary society is undergoing a strategic transformation from centering on economic development to focusing on institutional construction; that is, making efforts to solve social inequity and other increasingly prominent problems during reform and development through global construction, innovation, and implementation, as well as other measures on institutional modernization. The purpose of these efforts is to represent public interests and maintain social harmony and stability to the greatest extent possible (Hu et al. 2003). This is also the case in education. In January 2016, the Ministry of Education issued the *Implementation Outlines for Administering Education by Law* (2016–2020), putting forward that “By 2020, an educational and legal system that is systematically organized, reasonably classified, scientifically regulated, and effectively operated, should be formed. By the same token, to support and supervise the growth of education, a law-based educational practice mechanism and an educational supervision system should be formed as well, whereby it becomes possible to realize law-based administration by the government, law-based education by schools, law-based instruction by teachers, and law-based evaluations by society. Therefore, the construction of an ECE mechanism should be included in the framework of the legal system in order to maximize its functions.”

First, we should accelerate the legislative process of ECE to fundamentally guarantee and promote the development of education with rigid laws. One primary cause of restricting substantial breakthroughs in preschool education in China is the absence of a *Law on Early Childhood Education* that aims to solve deep-seated problems in the reform and key mechanisms. Currently, preschool is the only stage of education that is not accompanied by a separate law. Legislation on ECE is not only necessary to solve long-term problems in reform and development but is also essential to expansion under the universal two-child policy, poverty alleviation, and other new situations. At present, the Ministry of Education has incorporated ECE legislation into its focus on work, organized experts, and local governments to carry out investigations and commissioned two local governments to draft legislation. For now, more than 20 provinces and cities have explored legislation from a practical angle. Given the rich accumulation of experiences on legislation, the law of ECE is expected to be passed in the near future (Pang et al. 2017).

Second, the construction of a country-appropriate, scientific, and effective ECE mechanism in the context of corresponding policies and laws should be intensified. Reforming mechanisms and systems is key to ECE development in China; it is more like a systematic project. This issue is discussed from two angles. One aspect is that a government-led management system of “administration, operation, and evaluation separately” can be explored in new situations. Under the policy of “walking on two legs,” China’s ECE has always been a community of interrelated—but relatively separated—“organizers, operators, and administrators.” Currently, all participating subjects in ECE are growing gradually, and the government proposes building governance structures. In this context, it is the right time to further explore a new path

for developing ECE, which includes government management, operations involving multiple subjects, and assessments by third parties.

The other aspect is that an investment system based on per capita financial support and a differentiated cost-sharing mechanism should be actively established. In the second phase of the *Three-Tier Action Plan* for ECE, the Chinese government has begun to advocate for “equal work, equal pay” as a solution among tenure-track and non-tenure teachers through financial allocation, based on the number of students enrolled. This is a powerful measure to break the gradual inequality caused by financial investment according to the number of tenure-track teachers. Meanwhile, the government should actively examine and form different cost-sharing structures between urban and rural zones among families with different incomes. In different regions, nationalities, and groups, financial investment is usually meant for disadvantaged areas and groups to the maximum extent possible (Wang 2015). The active trials of some local governments, such as the differentiated cost-sharing mechanism in urban and rural areas in Guizhou Province, can be summarized for learning and generalization.

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Part IV

**Globalisation, Education and Policy
Reforms**

Chapter 13

Globalisation, Education and Policy Reforms



Joseph Zajda

13.1 Explaining Globalisation as a Meta-Ideology

The topic of globalisation and education reform has assumed immense importance in the discourse and policies of many bodies and agencies across the international arena. An increasing number of countries and governments have concluded that globalisation, education and policy research approach to learning and teaching should be instituted and deployed as one of the main lines of attack on some of the major problems needing to be addressed in the future. The policy documents and statements of the UNESCO, OECD, the European Parliament, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation Forum (APEC) reveal a commitment to globalisation and education reforms. There are other regional alliances that are grappling differently with issues of anti-globalisation trends of Brexit, in the Global South and in developing and underdeveloped nations also.

Globalisation is one of the most complex and contested concepts (Guillén 2000; Stiglitz 2006; Norris 2015). As a dominant ideology, globalisation was associated with neoliberalism and technocratic solutions to economic reforms (Saunders 2010; Zajda 2015). Saval (2017) argues that it is not only the globalisation discourse that has changed, but ‘globalisation itself has changed, developing into a more chaotic and unequal system than many economists predicted and that overall benefits of globalisation have been largely concentrated in a handful of Asian countries’ (Saval 2017).

Carnoy (1999) and Friedman (2018), on the other hand, stress the informational dimension, as a result of the quantum-like growth in the Information Communication Technologies (ICT) of the global economy. Globalisation, according to Friedman (2018), went from ‘connected to hyper-connected and from interconnected to inter-dependent’ (Friedman 2018). Norris argues the strongest evidence for *hyper-*

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connection, or a perfect storm of IT innovations, where ‘each is gathering speed, while interacting with and amplifying each other: mobile devices, cloud computing, Internet of Things, social networks, and Big Data and analytics’. At the World Economic Forum in Davos, in January 2018, Moyo, otherwise a well-known supporter of free trade, suggested that ‘there have been significant losses from globalisation’ (Moyo 2018).

Globalisation, according to Ampuja (2015), is now the ‘most important keyword’ of the global triumph of neoliberal capitalism. He argues that these concepts have become ‘dominant in the social sciences, to the point of establishing a new theoretical orthodoxy that we can define as globalisation theory’ (Ampuja 2015: 18). Consequently, globalisation has also acquired, argues Duan, a new meta-ideology that carries strong elements of Western ideologies:

.... principally individualism, the uniqueness of the individual, and so on, which are among the elements that neo-liberalism and modern communitarianism share, and this common denominator may be called the *global hegemonic meta-ideology*. Among other things, this meta-ideology largely consists of market ideas and ideas derived from human and citizen rights. Ideological adaptations towards this meta-ideology are taking place.

Apart from the multifaceted nature of globalisation that invites contesting and competing *ideological* interpretations, numerous paradigms and theoretical models have also been used, ranging from structuralism to post-structuralism, to explain the phenomenon of globalisation (Held et al. 1999; Hicks and Holden 2007; Steger 2009; Rizvi 2017; Zajda 2018). When, for instance, a writer or a seminar speaker uses the word ‘globalisation’ in a pedagogical and educational policy context, one wonders what assumptions, be they economic, political, social and ideological, have been taken for granted, and at their face value, uncritically, as a given, and in this case, as a *globocratic* (like technocratic) phenomenon.

The politics of globalisation, particularly the hydra of ideologies, which are inscribed in the discourse of globalisation need to be analysed critically, to avoid superficial and one-dimensional interpretation of the term (see Zajda 2014a, b). We need to debate new transformative concepts of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, the Fourth Industrial Revolution and Knowledge Democracy (2017) that are emerging, and going beyond ‘reforms’ and OECD model, given that the future globalisation and educational imperatives will be based on the 17 SDGs, as the key thrust ahead. Furthermore, recent research findings on globalisation, education and policy, demonstrate that continued access to quality education and training for all citizens, both locally and globally, is perceived to be an investment in the future, a pre-condition for economic advance, democracy, social cohesion, social justice, equality, personal growth and peace. Yet, the on-going globalisation of schooling and higher education curricula, together with the accompanying global standards of excellence, globalisation of academic assessment (OECD 2018; PISA 2018; The World Bank 2018), have resulted in global academic achievement syndrome and global academic elitism and league tables. Together, they define and position distinction, privilege, excellence and exclusivity.

13.2 The Impact of Globalisation on Education Policy and Reforms

There is no doubt that economic, political, cultural and social dimensions of globalisation have a profound effect on education and society, both locally and globally. The on-going economic restructuring among nation-states and the current education hegemonies shaping dominant discourses as to how education policy and curriculum need to be reformed, in response to the ubiquitous global monitoring of educational quality and standards, are some of the outcomes of the globalisation process (PISA 2018; OECD 2018; The World Bank 2018). In critiquing globalisation and its impact on education, we need to know how its ‘ideological packaging’ affects education practices around the world (Carnoy and Rhoten 2002; see also Zajda 2018). As Carnoy and Rhoten (2002) wrote, there was a need to assess a possible nexus between globalisation, ideology, education reforms and their impact on schooling:

In assessing globalization’s true relationship to educational change, we need to know how globalization and its ideological packaging affect the overall delivery of schooling, from transnational paradigms, to national policies, to local practices. (Carnoy and Rhoten 2002: 3)

Recent changes in the world economy have resulted in at least **four** macro-social policy responses of the higher education sector globally to the market forces and competitiveness:

- Competitiveness-driven reforms (reforms due to shifting demands for skills, commodities and markets)
- Finance-driven reforms (reforms in public/private sectors, budgets, company income, cuts in educational spending)
- Market force–driven reforms for dominance globally
- Equity-driven reforms (reforms to improve the quality of education and its role as source of upward social mobility) to increase equality of *economic opportunity*

13.2.1 Globalisation and Competitiveness-Driven Reforms

Globalisation, marketisation and *competitiveness-driven* reforms both locally and globally were productivity-centred, involving privatisation, decentralisation, standards and improved management.

13.2.2 Globalisation and Finance-Driven Reforms

Globalisation resulted in increased competitiveness among nations and adjustment to a new globally dictated structural reality—structural adjustment. The main goal is to reduce public spending on education. In competitiveness-driven reforms, the goal is to improve the productivity of labour and efficiency of resource use.

13.2.3 Market Force-Driven Reforms for Dominance Globally

Globalisation resulted in competition for global dominance among nations. It has created economic leagues tables, favouring the few major economies and promoting academic elitism.

13.2.4 Equity-Driven Reforms

The main goal of equity-driven reforms in education and society is to increase economic capital and economic opportunity for all. Because educational attainment is a crucial factor in determining earnings and social positions, equalising access to high-quality education can play a significant role here. Globalisation-driven higher education reforms tend to ‘push governments away from equity-driven reforms’ (Carnoy 1999: 46). This is due to two reasons. Firstly, globalisation tends to increase the pay-off to high-level skills relative to lower-level skills, reducing the nexus between equity and competitiveness-driven reforms. Secondly, finance-driven reforms dominate education and policy reforms in the global economy and consequently increase inequity in education.

13.3 The Ascent of a Neoliberalism in Education Policy Reforms

The ascent of a neoliberal and neoconservative higher education policy, which has redefined education and training as an investment in human capital and human resource development, has dominated higher education reforms globally since the 1980s. The literature relating to human capital theory demonstrates that education consistently emerges as the prime human capital investment. Human capital refers to ‘the productive capacities of human beings as income producing agents in the economy’. Human capital research has found that education and training raises the productivity of workers by imparting useful knowledge and skills; improves a worker’s socio-economic status, career opportunities and income (Carnoy 1999;

Saha 2005; Zajda 2015); and plays a significant role in driving overall economic performance. Neoliberal dimensions of globalisation and market-driven economic imperatives have impacted on higher education reforms in four ways: competitiveness-driven reforms, finance-driven reforms, equity-driven reforms and quality-driven reforms. Global competitiveness was and continues to be a significant goal on higher education policy agenda. Accountability, efficiency, academic capitalism, the quality of education and market oriented, and 'entrepreneurial' university model represents a neoliberal ideology, which focuses primarily on the market-driven imperatives of economic globalisation. The latest higher education reforms focus more on economic competitiveness, academic elitism, quality and standards, rather than on addressing access and equity, in order to solve serious educational inequalities in the higher education sector.

In general, neoliberalism in higher education policy reforms focuses on 'meeting the needs of the market, technical education and job training, and revenue generation' (Saunders 2010: 54).

The continual dominance of human capital theory as a social, economic, educational and vocational paradigm is problematic. On the one hand, with its focus on human beings as income-producing agents in the economy, it seems to offer promising economic returns, by raising the productivity of workers and the imparting of useful knowledge and skills. One could argue that there are both winners and losers in this approach. The goal of economies is to maximise efficiency, quality and profit-driven industries. When the production costs increase due to costs associated with labour, industries, in order to maintain their competitive dominance, shift to other more favourable markets in other regions, where wages and production costs are considerably lower. Thus, many skilled workers and highly qualified professionals become redundant. Global competitiveness reflects the reality of the market forces.

Human capital theory, while focusing on the productive capacities of human beings as income-producing agents in the economy, does not consider other agents and forces, namely the capitalist nature of societies, the profit-driven culture, market forces and the ubiquitous nature of global competition for economic dominance. Above all, the human capital discourse ignores 'the value of education outside of work' (Klees 2016: 658).

While human capital theory continues to exercise its dominance and power in education policy research, it is not infallible. Klees (2016) analyses and critiques the theoretical weakness and the conceptual failure of human capital theory and the logic of rates of return (Klees 2016: 645). Research data on the impact of the quantity of education on earnings and on GNP, argues Klees, tend to be 'completely arbitrary':

...different choices in estimating the impact of education on GNP yield different measures of impact, so their reported results are completely arbitrary and certainly not something policy makers should take seriously. Like measuring the impact of education on earnings, measuring the impact of education on GNP has unfortunately commanded the attention of educators and policy makers for over 50 years, yet, in reality, has been a dead end, providing

no reliable or even approximate information to help a sensible allocation of societal resources.

Globally, neoliberalism in higher education policy reforms has been characteristic of capitalist societies since the 1980s. It resulted in ‘education and training, public debates regarding standards and changed funding regimes’. Hence, the politics of higher education reforms reflect this new emerging paradigm of accountability, ‘globalisation and academic capitalism’ (Delanty 2001: 120), performance indicators and ‘standards-driven policy change’ (Zajda 2010: xv).

Carnoy (1999) was also critical of the role of neoliberal ideology in education reforms, with its imperatives of accountability, competition, performance and efficiency, rather than equity and social justice:

...it should be noted that, because of the present context of globalization, in and through which neoliberal concepts tend to guide economic and social reform, those education policies which are taken up by key international actors and which go global are ones which reflect and which help to advance principles of competition, efficiency and accountability – rather than equity or social justice, for example. (Carnoy 1999)

Globalisation, policy and the politics of higher education reforms globally suggest ubiquitous economic and political dimensions of neoliberalism and *re-invented* cultural imperialism (see Carnoy 1977; McLaren and Farahmandpur 2005; Saunders 2010). As the UNESCO’s humanistic model for education, so influential in the 1960s, was weakening, ‘the economic and techno-determinist paradigm of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) was gaining in prominence’ (Zajda 2015).

Such hegemonic shifts in ideology and policy were likely to have significant economic and cultural implications for higher education reforms and policy implementations globally. Forces of globalisation, manifesting themselves as a neoliberal and bourgeois hegemony, tended to legitimate an ‘exploitative system’ (McLaren and Farahmandpur 2005) and have contributed to the on-going neoliberal globalisation of the higher education sector (Rizvi 2017). This is characterised by a relentless drive towards performance, global standards of excellence and quality, globalisation of academic assessment (OECD 2018; PISA 2018) and ‘global academic achievement syndrome’ (Zajda 2015). Global academic achievement syndrome signifies both ascribed and achieved status and the positioning of distinction, privilege, excellence and exclusivity in education at all levels. In higher education policy documents in the OECD, the World Bank and elsewhere, policy reforms appear to be presented as a given and as a necessary response to economic globalisation and global competitiveness (Rust and Kim 2015).

The impact of globalisation on education policy and reforms around the world has become a strategically significant issue, for it expresses one of the most ubiquitous, yet poorly understood phenomena of modernity and associated politico-economic and cultural transformations. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that forces of globalisation have contributed to a new dimension of socio-economic

stratification, which offers immense gains to the very few of the economic elite in developed nations and in the emerging economies, especially in Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS). At the same time, it creates a growing and visible socio-economic divide between the rich and the poor globally, thus planting seeds of discontent and conflict for the future.

13.4 Global Trends in Education and Academic Achievement

Since the 1980s, globalisation, marketisation and quality/efficiency-driven reforms around the world have resulted in structural, ideological and qualitative changes in education and policy. They include an increasing focus on the UNESCO's concepts of knowledge society, the lifelong learning for all (a 'cradle-to-grave' vision of learning) representing the lifelong learning paradigm and the knowledge economy and the global culture. In their quest for excellence, quality and accountability in education, governments increasingly turn to international and comparative education data analysis. They all agree that the major goal of education is to enhance the individual's social and economic prospects. This can only be achieved by providing quality education for *all*. Students' academic achievement is now regularly monitored and measured within the 'internationally agreed framework' of the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). This was done in response to the growing demand for international comparisons of educational outcomes (see Zajda 2015). To measure levels of academic performance in the global culture, the OECD, in co-operation with UNESCO, is using *World Education Indicators* (WEI) programme, covering a broad range of comparative indicators, which report on the resource invested in education and their returns to individuals.

The 2016 OECD report addresses the importance of achieving equality of outcomes through ensuring equity—defined as a 'fair allocation of resources', giving importance to school inputs. This has become a dominant ideology in educational standards. The report refers to factors which affect educational outcomes, including attending a school with positive student–teacher relations, certified teachers and a strong infrastructure. Furthermore, the significance of inclusive school systems—those that support diversity among all learners—was highlighted earlier in the *Education at a Glance* (2011), which stated that: 'school systems with greater levels of inclusion have better overall outcomes and less inequality'. School systems tend to be inclusive when experienced teachers and material resources are evenly distributed among schools:

...In some school systems, inequality is entrenched through the mechanisms in which students are allocated to schools, including tracks that channel students into different schools based on their prior achievement or ability, private schools and special programmes in the public sector. (OECD 2011: 455)

13.4.1 Comparative View of Academic Achievement

The OECD's PISA international survey presents an encyclopaedic view of the comparative review of education systems in OECD member countries and in other countries. PISA 2018 was the programme's recent survey. It assessed the competencies of 15-year olds in reading, mathematics and science (with a focus on mathematics) in *65 countries and economies* (covering almost two-thirds of the world). At least half of the indicators relate to the output and outcomes of education, and one-third focus on equity issues (gender differences, special education needs, inequalities in literacy skills and income). Only a minority of countries seem to be well on the way of making literacy for all a reality. For the rest, illiteracy, as confirmed by the OECD study, was at the time, largely an unfinished agenda (OECD 2016, *Education Policy Analysis*: 67; see also OECD 2018).

The major focus of the OECD survey was on quality of learning outcomes and the policies that shape these outcomes. It also contained the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the performance indicators which examined equity issues and outcomes—with reference to gender, SES and other variables. The performance indicators were grouped according to educational outcomes for individual countries. The OECD international survey concludes with a set of policy questions that are likely to shape the ‘What Future for Our Schools?’ policy debate. These encompass *cultural* and *political* dimensions (public attitudes to education, the degree of consensus or conflict over goals and outcomes), accountability, and diversity vs. uniformity, resourcing (to avoid widening inequalities in resources per student, as demonstrated by current trends in some of the OECD's countries), teacher professionalism and schools as centres of lifelong learning.

13.4.2 Schools for the Future

One could conclude with six scenarios for tomorrow's schools (*Education Policy Analysis*). The first two scenarios are based on current trends, one continuing the existing institutionalised systems, the other responding to globalisation and marketisation and facilitating market-oriented schooling. The next two scenarios address ‘re-schooling’ issues, with schools developing stronger community links and becoming flexible learning organisations. The last two scenarios of ‘de-schooling’ futures suggest a radical transformation of schools—as non-formal learning networks, supported by both ICTs and a network society, and a possible withering away, or ‘meltdown’ of school systems (*Education Policy Analysis*: 119).

Education policy issues raised earlier by Michael Barber in his keynote address ‘The Evidence of Things Not Seen: Reconceptualising Public Education’ at the OECD/Netherlands Rotterdam International Conference on Schooling for

Tomorrow (see CERI website at www.oecd.org/cer) include the five strategic challenges and four deliverable goals for tomorrow's schools:

Strategic challenges

- Reconceptualising teaching
 - Creating high autonomy/high performance
 - Building capacity and managing knowledge
 - Establishing new partnerships
 - Reinventing the role of government

Deliverable goals

- Achieving universally high standards
- Narrowing the achievement gap
- Unlocking individualisation
- Promoting education with character

The questions that arise from the strategic challenges and deliverable goals framework, and which are useful in delineating the policy challenges and the goals pursued, centre on the issue of equality or egalitarianism (rather than meritocracy) in education. Specifically, one can refer to the different cultural and political environments, which affect the nature of schooling (see Zajda 2010). Diversity and uniformity, with reference to equality of opportunity needs to be considered. Important equity questions are raised by centralisation/decentralisation, diversity/uniformity and curriculum standardisation issues, the unresolved ideological dilemmas embedded in educational policy content and analysis.

13.4.3 Educational Policy Goals and Outcomes

In analysing the discrepancy between educational policy goals and outcomes, Psacharopoulos argued that the reason why reforms fail is that the 'intended policy was never implemented' and that policies were 'vaguely stated', financial implications were not worked out, and policies were based on good will rather than on '*research-proven cause-effect relationships*' (p. 179). Similar conclusions were reached by the authors of *Education Policy Analysis* (2016), who note that the reasons why reforms fail is that policy-makers are 'flying blind' when it comes to policy outcomes (lack of reliable data on the progress made). In their view, it is virtually impossible to measure how well different areas of policy work together as systems of the intended reform program. There are large and critical gaps in comparative data (the cost of learning and the volume and nature of learning activities and outcomes outside the formal education sector). There is also a need to refine comparative data, especially performance indicators, as current outcomes reflect 'biases as to the goals and objectives' of lifelong learning (OECD 2016: 69).

13.5 International Studies of Educational Achievement

Psacharopoulos, and like more recently Klees (2016), questioned the validity and reliability of international comparisons of education policies, standards and academic achievement. In examining the changing nature of comparative education, he offers a more pragmatic educational evaluation of policy, which is based on *deconstructing* international comparisons. He comments on the controversy surrounding the validity of international achievement comparisons (IEA and IAEP studies on achievement in different countries), unmasks an erroneous use of the achievement indicators (including the use of *gross* enrolment ratios, which neglect the age dimension of those attending school, rather than *net* enrolment ratios), and suggests various new approaches to comparative data analysis:

Comparative education research has changed a great deal since Sadler's times. The questions then might have been at what age should one teach Greek and Latin? Or how English schools could learn from the teaching nature in Philadelphia schools? Today's questions are:

What are the welfare effects of different educational policies? ... What are determinants of educational outputs?

In critiquing globalisation and its impact on education reforms there is also a need to focus on such issues as:

- The ambivalent nexus between globalisation, democracy and education—where, on the one hand, democratisation and progressive education is equated with equality, inclusion, equity, tolerance and human rights, and the other hand, globalisation is perceived by some critics to be a totalising force that is widening the gap between the rich and the poor, and bringing domination, power and control by corporate elites.
- The influence of identity politics, gender, race, ethnicity, religion and class politics on education policy research and reforms.
- The significance of discourse, which defines and shapes education policy, reforms and action.
- The focus on the main actors (who participates and how and under what conditions?) who act as bridges in the local-national-global window of globalisation.
- The contradictions of cultural homogenisation and cultural heterogenisation or the on-going dialectic between globalism and localism, and between modernity and tradition and their impact on education and policy-making process.
- Interactions between diverse education policies and reforms and multidimensional typology of globalisation.
- The significance of the politics of globalisation and development in education policy—their effects on cross-cultural perceptions of such constructs as active citizenship, the nation-state, national identity, language(s), multiculturalism and pluralist democracy.
- The OECD model of the knowledge society and associated strategic challenge' and deliverable goals.

- UNESCO-driven lifelong learning paradigm and its relevance to education policy-makers globally.
- Different models of policy planning, and equity questions that are raised by centralisation/decentralisation, diversity/uniformity and curriculum standardisation issues.
- The ‘crisis’ of educational quality, the debate over standards and excellence.
- Education reform trajectories are likely to result in a better understanding of the globalisation process and its impact on educational institutions.

Some critics (see Robertson et al. 2002) have argued that the policies of the Organisation for Economic and Cooperative Development (OECD), UNESCO, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) operate as powerful forces, which, as supranational organisations, shape and influence education and policy around the world. It has been argued recently that understanding the complex process of change and shifts in dominant ideologies in education and policy through the WTO-GATS process—as the key political and economic actors and ‘subjects of globalisation’—can also help to understand the nexus between power, ideology and control in education and society:

Examining the politics of rescaling and the emergence of the WTO as a global actor enables us to see how education systems are both offered as a new service to trade in the global economy and pressured into responding to the logic of free trade globally...the WTO becomes a site where powerful countries are able to dominate and shape the rules of the game, and in a global economy some countries increasingly view opening their education systems to the global marketplace as a means of attracting foreign investment. (Robertson et al. 2002: 495)

The above critique of globalisation, policy and education suggests new economic and cognitive forms of cultural imperialism. Such hegemonic shifts in ideology and policy may have significant economic and cultural implications on national education systems and policy implementations. For instance, in view of GATS constrains, and the continuing domination of multinational educational corporations and organisations in a global marketplace, the ‘basis of a national policy for knowledge production may be eroded in a free-market context of a knowledge-driven economy’ (Robertson et al. 2002: 494). This erosion signifies the corresponding weakening of the traditional role of the university, being the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake (intrinsic):

...the heart of the academic dogma is the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. Knowledge and the processes of coming to know are good in themselves, and the university, above all institutions, is – or used to be – devoted to them. To investigate, to find out, to organise and contemplate knowledge, these are what the university is about....

Globalisation and the competitive market forces have generated a massive growth in the knowledge industries that are having profound effects on society and educational institutions. In the global culture, the university, as other educational institutions, is now expected to invest its capital in the knowledge market. It increasingly acts as an entrepreneurial institution. Such a managerial and entrepreneurial re-orientation would have been seen in the past as antithetical to the traditional ethos

of the university of providing knowledge for its own sake. Delanty (2001) notes that ‘with business schools and techno science on the rise, entrepreneurial values are enjoying a new legitimacy …the critical voice of the university is more likely to be stifled than strengthened as a result of globalisation’ (Delanty 2001: 115). It can be said that globalisation may have an adverse impact on the higher education sector, and education in general. One of the effects of globalisation is that the university is compelled to embrace the corporate ethos of the efficiency and profit-driven managerialism. As such, the new entrepreneurial university in the global culture succumbs to the economic gains offered by the neoliberal ideology.

From the macro-social perspective, it can be argued that in the domains of language, policy, education and national identity, nation-states are likely to lose their power and capacity to affect their future directions, as the struggle for knowledge domination, production and dissemination becomes a new form of cultural domination and a knowledge-driven social stratification. Furthermore, the evolving and constantly changing notions of national identity, language, border politics and citizenship, which are relevant to education policy, need to be critiqued within the local–regional–national arena, which is also contested by globalisation. Current education policy research reflects a rapidly changing world, where citizens and consumers are experiencing a growing sense of uncertainty and alienation. Jarvis (2002) comments on the need to ‘rediscover’ one’s social identity in active citizenship:

Democratic processes are being overturned and there is an increasing need to rediscover active citizenship in which men and women can work together for the common good, especially for those who are excluded as a result of the mechanisms of the global culture.

The above reflects both growing alienation and a Durkheimian sense of anomie in the world invaded by forces of globalisation, cultural imperialism and global hegemonies that dictate the new economic, political and social regimes of truth. These newly constructed imperatives in educational policy could well operate as global master narratives, playing a hegemonic role within the framework of economic, political and cultural hybrids of globalisation (Zajda 2014a).

13.6 Standard-Driven and Outcome-Defined Policy Change

One of the effects of forces of globalisation is that educational organisations, having modelled its goals and strategies on the entrepreneurial business model, are compelled to embrace the corporate ethos of the efficiency, accountability and profit-driven managerialism. Hence, the politics of education reforms in the twenty-first century reflect this new emerging paradigm of standard-driven and outcome-defined policy change (Zajda 2015, 2016a, b). Some policy analysts have criticised the ubiquitous and excessive nature of standardisation in education imposed by the EFA framework (Carnoy 1999; Burbules and Torres 2000; Zajda 2018):

Whether one focuses on their positive or negative effects, at the bottom line, there was an agreement that the policies and practices of educational development had converged along the consensus built at the multilateral forum. (Carnoy 1999)

Globalisation and the competitive market forces have generated a massive growth in the knowledge industries that are having profound effects on society and educational institutions. In the global culture, the university, as other educational institutions, is now expected to invest its capital in the knowledge market. It increasingly acts as an entrepreneurial institution. Such a managerial and entrepreneurial re-orientation would have been seen in the past as antithetical to the traditional ethos of the university of providing knowledge for its own sake (see also Zajda 2015). It can be said that globalisation may have an adverse impact on education. One of the effects of globalisation on education in all spheres is that it is compelled to embrace the corporate ethos of the efficiency and profit-driven managerialism. This is particularly evident in higher education. The new entrepreneurial university in the global culture succumbs to the economic gains offered by the neoliberal ideology (Zajda 2014b).

The emerging challenges for education and policy reforms include a drive towards improving academic achievement in secondary schools. Our key findings indicate that current trends in most BRICS countries' treatment of governance in education rely on the discourses of accountability, performance and output-driven schooling and that they are characterised by the new high-stakes testing through the final year tests in secondary schools. The drive for global competitiveness means that recent education policy reforms in secondary education tend to be standard- and (global) accountability-driven. BRICS governments' and MoEs' push for high academic achievement in secondary schools has been influenced by the emerging standardising regimes of global educational governance such as the OECD PISA assessment.

13.7 Globalisation, Marketisation and Quality/Efficiency-Driven Reforms

Globalisation, marketisation and quality/efficiency-driven reforms around the world since the 1980s have resulted in structural and qualitative changes in education and policy, including an increasing focus on the 'lifelong learning for all', or a 'cradle-to-grave' vision of learning and the 'knowledge economy' in the global culture. Governments, in their quest for excellence, quality and accountability in education, increasingly turn to international and comparative education data analysis. All of them agree that the major goal of education is to enhance the individual's social and economic prospects. This can only be achieved by providing quality education for *all*. Students' academic achievement is now regularly monitored and measured within the 'internationally agreed framework' of the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). This was done in response to the growing

demand for international comparisons of educational outcomes (OECD, *Education policy outlook 2015: making reforms happen*; Global education monitoring report 2017). Yet, not all schools are successful in addressing the new academic standard imperatives, due to a number of factors, both internal and external. Cohen (2011), for instance, attributes failure of education reforms in the USA due to fragmented school governance and the lack of coherent educational infrastructure.

To measure levels of academic performance in the global culture, the OECD, in co-operation with UNESCO, is using *World Education Indicators* (WEI) programme, covering a broad range of comparative indicators, which report on the resource invested in education and their returns to individuals (OECD 2016 *Education at a Glance—OECD Indicators*; see also OECD 2018).

Since the 1980s, higher education policy and reforms globally have been influenced by the grand narratives of globalisation, neoliberalism, human capital and economic rationalism (Sabour 2005; Zajda 2018). Higher education policy reforms in the 1980s represented a drive towards economic rationalism, where the increasingly traditional role of the university was replaced by a market-oriented and entrepreneurial university. It has led to entrepreneurial university awards. For instance, the University of Huddersfield has been awarded the prestigious *Times Higher Education* Entrepreneurial University of the Year award for 2013. The neoliberal university, as noted by Saunders and others, emphasises the ‘role of the faculty not as educators, researchers, or members of a larger community, but as entrepreneurs’ (Saunders 2010: 60). Accordingly, the current redefinition of academics into ‘entrepreneurs is widespread and is consistent with neo-liberal ideology as is the commodification, commercialization, and marketization of the fruits of faculty labour’ (Saunders 2010: 60).

13.8 Globalisation and Social Inequality

The need to address economic and social inequalities was discussed by Dervis (2007), who argued that globalisation has changed the world economy by creating ‘winners’ and ‘losers’:

Globalization has fundamentally altered the world economy, creating winners and losers. Reducing inequalities both within and between countries and building a more inclusive globalization is the most important development challenge of our time ... Addressing these inequalities is our era’s most important development challenge, and underscores why inclusive development is central to the mission of the UN and UNDP. (Dervis 2007)

Globalisation and social inequality were critiqued by Christine Lagarde (2018), the head of the International Monetary Fund, when she suggested the need to ‘more redistribution’, a radical economic policy change for the IMF (Lagarde 2018). Saval (2017), using data from Milanović’s (Milanovic 2016) book, indicates that in relative terms, the greatest benefits of globalisation have accrued to a rising ‘emerging middle class’, based preponderantly in China:

But the cons are there, too: in absolute terms, the largest gains have gone to what is commonly called ‘the 1%’ – half of whom are based in the US. Economist Richard Baldwin has shown in his recent book, *The Great Convergence*, that nearly all of the gains from globalisation have been concentrated in six countries. (Saval 2017)

Klees (2016), in his informed critique of the human capital discourse, and its use in the logic of rates of return, or the impact of the quantity of education on earnings, demonstrates that human capital theory and its connection between education and productivity is defined and driven by the ideology of meritocratic capitalism, and neoliberal ideology, where its ‘rewards are more or less deserved’ (Klees 2016: 259). Consequently, it has been fashionable since the 1980s, to use the human capital and skill discourses to ‘blame individuals’, rather than social structures and organisation, for lack of education and job opportunities:

...for their lack of ‘investment’ in human capital, for their not attending school, for their dropping out of school, for their not studying the ‘right’ fields, for their lack of entrepreneurship. (Klees 2016: 259)

The very ideology of capitalism, conveniently legitimised by human capital theory, could never solve social inequality and poverty, because greater economic equality, employment and social justice are not the goals of capitalism. Capitalism, driven by the profit-maximisation incentive, makes social inequality, lack of full employment and endemic poverty inevitable (Bardhan 2005; Franzini and Pianta 2015; Klees 2016).

Rizvi (2017) also suggests that the current discourse of educational reforms, driven by a neoliberal ideology, has resulted in the intensification of ‘social inequalities’ (Rizvi 2017: 10). He argues that globalisation while bringing ‘great benefits to most communities’, at the same time reinforces inequalities:

Global mobility of people, ideas and media has brought great benefits to most communities, but clearly in ways that are uneven and unequal. (Rizvi 2017: 12)

One of the effects of globalisation is that the higher education sector, having modelled its goals and strategies on the market-oriented and *entrepreneurial* business model, which reflects neoliberal ideology, is compelled to embrace the ‘corporate ethos of the efficiency, accountability and profit-driven managerialism’ (Zajda 2014b). This necessarily produces both socially and economically stratified societies and education systems.

The dimensions of inequality and implications for social justice are due to the impact of privatisation/marketisation, and the rising inequity in the availability of funds among local education/regional authorities, because of differentiated economic and social differences between rich and poor regions. Regional inequalities in educational funding have an adverse effect on access to quality education. Some poorer rural regions are socially, economically and educationally disadvantaged, with little access to high-quality education. Current government policy of supporting best-performing schools, based on National examination results in secondary schools, will continue to have an ‘adverse effect on access to quality education for all in those regions’ (Dervin and Zajda 2018: 7).

From a critical theory perspective, globalisation has contributed to a new form of entrenched social stratification between the rich and poor economies (Milanovic 2016). The dimensions of social inequality are essentially due to the impact of capitalist economy, privatisation/marketisation and the rising inequity in the availability of funds among local education/regional authorities, because of differentiated economic and social differences between rich and poor regions. Regional inequalities in educational funding have an adverse effect on access to quality education. Some poorer rural regions are socially, economically and educationally disadvantaged, with little access to high-quality education. Current government policy of supporting best-performing schools, based on national examination results in secondary schools, will continue to have an ‘adverse effect on access to quality education for all in those regions’ (Dervin and Zajda 2018: 7).

The above critique of globalisation, policy and education reforms suggests new economic, social and political dimensions of cultural imperialism (see Zajda 2015). Such hegemonic shifts in ideology affecting policy are likely to have significant economic and cultural implications for national education systems, reforms and policy implementations.

13.9 Conclusion

Recent policy documents in the education sector, the UNESCO, OECD, and the World Bank reflect the following themes: The emergence of an awareness of the importance of the knowledge society and the learning society; an acceptance of the need for a new philosophy of education and training, the necessity of ensuring that the foundations for global education are set in place for all citizens during the compulsory and post-compulsory years of schooling; and recognising that emphasis upon globalisation, education and policy reform may challenge the existing patterns of social stratification of inequality, power and privilege (Apple 2004; Franzini and Pianta 2015; Global education monitoring report 2017; OECD 2018; UNESCO 2017a, b, c; World Bank 2017, 2018; Zajda 2018).

The above analysis of education policy reforms, and the resultant social stratifications in the global culture, demonstrates a complex nexus between globalisation, ideology and education reforms—where, on the one hand, democratisation and progressive pedagogy are equated with equality, inclusion, equity, tolerance and human rights, while on the other hand, globalisation is perceived, by some critics at least, to be a totalising force that is widening the socio-economic status (SES) gap and cultural and economic capital between the rich and the poor, and bringing power, domination and control by corporate bodies and powerful organisations (Milanovic 2016). Hence, we need to continue exploring critically the new challenges confronting the global village, in the provision of authentic democracy, social justice and cross-cultural values that genuinely promote a transformative pedagogy (Zajda 2015). We need to focus on the crucial issues at the centre of current and on-going education reforms, namely equity, social justice and human rights, if genuine culture

of learning and transformation, characterised by wisdom, compassion, equality and intercultural understanding, is to become a reality, rather than a policy rhetoric (Daun 2015; Zajda and Ozdowski 2017).

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Chapter 14

Interdependency in Transnational Education Governance



Sotiria Grek

14.1 Introduction: Interdependence in a Complex World

The dominance of International Organisations in the production of global metrics has not only penetrated the transnational social and policy fields; numbers have become an integral part of the fabric of International Organisations themselves. However, amidst avid critics and unapologetic fans, surprisingly little is known about the ways in which global processes of quantification are reconfiguring the field. Metrics have infiltrated not only organisational cultures and the environments these organisations inhabit; crucially, they are reshaping the ways International Organisations co-exist, compete and survive in an increasingly quantified yet uncertain world. Recent decades have seen fervent activity by International Organisations to build working collaborations and broad alliances for finding ‘global solutions’ to ‘global crises’. Financial investment in these collaborations is increasing and so is hope: *If only we had known, we could have acted.* Given the moral dimension that these new indices of progress have taken, as well as the enormous human and environmental cost of their failures, there is growing recognition for the need to examine the interplay of International Organisations in producing quantification for transnational governance.¹

Building on International Relations (IR) theory, Science and Technology Studies (STS), and using theoretical strands from Organisational Sociology, as well as the newly emerging field of the social studies of metrics, this paper examines the inter-relationships of International Organisations (IOs) in constructing the global

¹Here we follow Djelic and Sahlin-Andersson’s preference of the term ‘transnational’ versus ‘global’ governance, since ‘the label “transnational” suggests entanglement and blurred boundaries to a degree that the term “global” could not’ (2006: 4—for a more developed argument see also Hannerz 1996).

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metrological field. Education is the focal case for this examination since IOs have been central to processes of standardisation, de-contextualisation and performance management through numbers; as a result, they have been instrumental in commensurating, and therefore transforming the policy field. In addition, Education has been attracting larger policy significance, as it is increasingly considered central to both economic prosperity and social cohesion. Thus, it is a productive arena to examine how quantification impacts on the ways IOs reconfigure their governing work.

Thus, a central focus of this chapter is the—concomitant with the lure of numbers, albeit less spectacular—recent moves of large IOs not only to establish collaborative partnerships through connections with governments and local agencies, but crucially with one another. The encoding of data processes and organisational cultures that these collaborative endeavours require (in order for data to be shared and co-produced), allows a comprehensive analysis of the workings of quantification for transnational governance. In other words, the examination of the interplay of IOs at their first formative state (rather than later, when they are more established), is a unique opportunity to open, rather than stack yet another ‘black box’ in the field of global monitoring (Bhuta 2012).

This is a novel, problem-driven perspective that goes beyond the role of IOs in ‘governing by numbers’: instead, the chapter brings together diverse bodies of knowledge in order to cast light on the role metrics play in reshaping the relationships between the data collectors themselves. It focuses on the impact of quantification in altering the ways IOs co-exist, compete and survive in an increasingly quantified yet uncertain world. Although there have been some in-depth studies of the impact of measurement on reforms in various policy fields, little attention has been paid at those early, yet crucial, venues, actors and activities that determine processes of problematisation (the construction of the ‘problem’) and institutionalisation (the moment the ‘problem’ enters institutional agendas). Third, and most important, the chapter’s starting point is that numbers and (international) organisations have come to be mutually constitutive. Numbers move: this seemingly simple, yet unique quality has created fluidity between internal organisational arrangements and external environments, as well as amongst IOs themselves. Hence, going beyond classic organisational sociology’s distinction between internal structures and external contingencies and environments, this chapter purports that numbers—with their qualities to simplify, stabilise and travel—reconfigure relationships, dependencies and structures of organisations and fields in fresh and politically salient ways; in other words, they come to govern them.

Despite the renewed prominence given to the need for alliance-building by IOs, collaboration has always been central to their operation, since they have traditionally needed to work closely with governments, NGOs and the private sector. Yet, the complexity of ‘wicked’ problems, ‘donor duplication’ (Ringel-Bickelmeier and Ringel 2010), resource-pooling and data overload have become some of the most common reasons that IOs are increasingly compelled to work together. Indeed, most major global strategies, such as the Millennium Development Goals (2000–2015), the post-2015 Development Agenda or major education testing regimes, such as the

OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), are collaborative endeavours, dependent on pooling of resources and expertise. How do these IOs learn from one another? In the making of numbers, how do they negotiate financial resources and knowledge controversies? How do they actively produce collective sense-making (Weick 1995) and issue-framing strategies (Baumgartner and Jones 1993)? How much do we know about their expert networks? Ultimately, if rating and ranking practices are a ‘zero-sum’ game for the assessed, how much do we know about the rules of the game for the assessors?

Empirically, as already suggested, the chapter examines two separate cases from the field of Education; education policy, both in the global South and the global North, has increasingly been dependent on the measurement of its performance for the improvement of human capital. Education can be a productive vantage point, since assessment and quantification of performance have a very long history in education. It is a key element in the newly emergent well-being and ‘better life’ strategies that have prevailed the statistical governing project post financial crisis. Education is closely congruent with the efforts to use ‘softer’ data sets for calculating the social. Last but not least, it is one of those policy areas that large IOs like UNESCO, the OECD, the European Commission and the World Bank have invested large amounts of data and expertise from the mid-twentieth century on.

The chapter is informed by current research in the European Research Council funded project ‘International Organisations and the Rise of a Global Metrological Field’. It begins with a short review of the literature of the politics of quantification; it then moves on to a consideration of the theoretical underpinnings of the analysis and continues with the presentation of the two case studies under examination. Finally, it is concluded by a discussion of international organisations, interdependency and metrology in the field of transnational education governance and beyond.

14.2 ‘Governing by Numbers’ in Transnational Governance

Scholarship on the role of numbers in governing societies has been abundant and has attracted multiple fields of study, including sociology, history, political science, geography, anthropology, philosophy, STS, and others. Prominent authors have written lucidly about the role of numbers in the making of modern states and the governing role of measurement regimes in various areas of public policy and social life (Alonso and Starr 1987; Hacking 1990, 2007; Porter 1995; Power 1997; Desrosières 1998; Rose 1999; Espeland and Stevens 2008). Similarly, anthropologies of numbers suggest that ‘our lives are increasingly governed by—and through—numbers, indicators, algorithms and audits and the ever-present concerns with the management of risk’ (Shore and Wright 2015: 23; see also influential work by Merry 2011; Sauder and Espeland 2009; Strathern 2000). Further, important insights and perspectives on indicators in particular come from STS (Bowker and Star 1999; Lampland and Starr 2009; Latour 1987; Saetnan et al. 2011), including actor network theory (Latour 2005). Finally, there is a small but growing body of studies

relating to specific uses of indicators and quantification in transnational governance contexts (for example, Bogdandy et al. 2008; Palan 2006; Martens 2007; Fougnier 2008; Bhuta 2012).

Nonetheless, despite the burgeoning number of publications on the global ‘governing by numbers’, our understanding of the relationship of the politics of measurement and the making of transnational governance is less well-examined; as Djelic and Sahlin-Andersson (2006) suggest, due to the fluidity and complexity of the intense cross-boundary networks and soft regulation regimes that dominate the transnational space, transnational governance is a particularly productive field of enquiry on the role of numbers in governing. This lack of attention could be due to disciplinary boundaries; for example, scholars of IR and international law have not paid much attention to the field so far, although there is a rise in some interesting literature of the role of numbers in global political economy (for example, Palan 2006; Martens 2007; Fougnier 2008).

What are the properties of numbers that would suggest such a central role in the production of transnational governance? By contrasting numbers to language, Hansen and Porter (2012) suggest that, although it took scholars a long time to recognise the constitutive nature of discourse, we are now well aware of the role of language in shaping reality. However, they suggest that numbers are characterised by additional qualities that make their influence much more pervasive than words: these elements are order; mobility; stability; combinability and precision. By using the example of the barcode, they lucidly illustrate ‘how numerical operations at different levels powerfully contribute to the ordering of the transnational activities of states, businesses and people’ (2012: 410). They suggest the need to focus not only on the nominal qualities of the numbers themselves but, according to Hacking, ‘the people classified, the experts who classify, study and help them, the institutions within which the experts and their subjects interact, and through which authorities control’ (2007: 295).

It is precisely on international organisations as data experts that this chapter focuses upon; following the literature on the capacities of numbers to both be stable yet travel fast and without borders, the chapter sheds light on what Latour called ‘the few obligatory passage points’ (1987: 245): in their movement, data go through successive reductions of complexity until they reach simplified enough state that can travel back ‘from the field to the laboratory, from a distant land to the map-maker’s table’ (Hansen and Porter 2012: 412).

14.3 Theoretical Frame and Key Intermediary Concepts

The chapter follows a ‘constructivist-institutionalist’ approach (Smith 2009), as it works with Lagroye’s definition of governing as ‘a set of practices which participate in the organisation and the orientation of social life’ (1997: 25). Thus, it builds on the premise that far from being a system composed uniquely of ‘national’ and ‘transnational’ bodies, *governing the transnational* is an ‘Institutional Order’ made

up of all the actors who participate in the construction and institutionalisation of global problems (Smith 2009). In turn, transnational ‘governing’ is conceptualised as those ‘assemblages of apparatuses, processes and practices’ that make governing happen (Clarke and Ozga 2011).

As already suggested, a considerable body of research has already focused on the work of IOs in transnational governance. Yet this research has often seen them as monolithic institutions, or actors with similar interests in a similar context, without attention to the complex set of realities that bring them together and apart over time (with notable exceptions of course, see for example Cini 2008; Cram 2011). IOs are often also seen as *internally* stable—this means that divisions of authority, institutionalised norms, expectations and values are thought to be commonly shared by all actors within an IO. Nevertheless, ‘most of the time, [...] at least some of the actors within an IO will be seeking to change at least some of its institutions, whilst others will work to retain their stasis’ (Jullien and Smith 2010: 4). The examination of actor alliance formation and mobilisation is hence vital in order to understand these relations—both upstream, i.e. the setting of rules and problem framing, as well as downstream, namely the application and maintenance of rules amongst the actors who are all engaged in competitive relationships (Jullien and Smith 2010). Indeed, some of this actor mobilisation and alliance-building is achieved not internally but through networking with other IOs.

Thus, one of the key concepts that mobilises this research is the notion of ‘political work’ (Smith 2009), as it is very rich at a number of levels relevant to the proposed project’s research agenda. When one studies political work, institutions themselves are not the objects of study per se; rather, the focus of the investigation is on the continual cycle of institutionalisation, deinstitutionalisation and reinstitutionalisation of ideas and values within the organisation in question. The study of quantification as a policy instrument, can become a particularly fruitful context for such an analysis as one can examine ‘political work’ as those processes that engender the construction of new arguments and the activation of new alliances; subsequently, they either produce change or reproduce institutions, namely actors’ rules, norms and expectations (Jullien and Smith 2010).

Before moving on, two intermediary concepts used need more explicit attention: these are the notion of the ‘field’ and the concept of ‘knowledge controversies’. To start with the latter, Barry (2012) uses the notion of ‘political situation’ to explain the ways that STS could have been misguided in their definition of knowledge controversies as conflicts that relate principally to a clash of scientific evidence and ideas. Instead, he suggests that ‘the significance of a controversy needs to be understood in relation to a shifting and contested field of other controversies and events that have occurred elsewhere and at other times’ (2012: 324). Whereas STS initially mostly focused upon the ‘black box’ of science by looking at issues of credibility, objectivity and reliability (Shapin and Schaffer 1985), it then moved on to the analysis of public knowledge controversies, where expert knowledge would clash with public, lay knowledge (Wynne 2003). Yet, Barry argues that despite the growth of transnational standardisation processes, the issue of knowledge controversies has not been addressed either by the IR or the STS literature, as if the simplification of

data (and the consensual expert practices it involves) decreases rather than increases the possibility of knowledge disputes and failures. However, it is widely known that achieving transnational standards is infinitely difficult; and political contestation often gets submerged and hidden behind the popular imagination's oddity of the expert, 'geek' professor. Knowledge contestations are then seen as an impediment to the call for urgent action—and IOs are swiftly required to form another committee, reach consensus and quickly move on. In fact, it appears that it is precisely in the knowledge controversies that one has to focus upon, if one aims to understand the very process of simplification and the exclusion of unwieldy or awkward data (or awkward experts for that matter). To return to Barry then, 'what the concept of political situation captures, is how the significance of a controversy is not so much determined by its specific focus, but needs to be conceived in terms of its relations to a moving field of other controversies, conflicts and events, including those that have occurred in the past and that might occur in the future' (Barry 2012: 330).

Second, the chapter suggests the need to examine the interplay of IOs as they construct the 'global metrological field'. Emanating from physics, the notion of field has been used in the social sciences in order to broadly refer to actors' relational topographies. Nevertheless, it is often reduced to merely looking at specific geographical and relational spaces. Yet, as Djelic and Sahlin-Andersson also suggest (2006), such a conceptualisation of fields misses a vital ingredient from the way fields operate; that is an understanding of the field as a field of power. Drawing on Bourdieu, transnational governance appears as a field of actors who constantly negotiate and push their own agendas forward; according to Bourdieu (1993), the logic of positionality is what gives the notion of the field meaning. In other words, the positions occupied by the different agents in the field, their advances and withdrawals, relate to their efforts for distinction within this field as an expression of their professional, educational or other interests. Meanwhile, the structure of the field is neither static, nor does it change in any systematic way. On the contrary, it is endlessly reformulated, according to the agents' struggles for recognition and improvement of their situation. Agents use the force of their economic, social, cultural, or in the case under examination, knowledge capital, to raise their game and advance their front. It is the relational nature of these advances that gives the field its explanatory significance. Thus, following Bourdieu, the chapter uses Djelic and Sahlin-Andersson's idea of fields as 'complex combinations of spatial and relational topographies with powerful structuring forces in the form of cultural frames or patterns of meaning' (2006: 27). An examination of the interplay of IOs in the rise of the global metrological field is therefore necessary, as it is vital to examine transnational governance not only as a field of numbers or as a field of actors, but as both.

Thus and to conclude, the chapter adopts a constructivist standpoint by focusing on the social and political conditions that influence the production of numbers, adopting the ontological position that their existence is not organic but rather the product of the interconnectedness of IOs, as outlined above. It examines those for whom this transnational game exists and it is their life ('what keeps them running' as Bourdieu would put it) and those who just utilise it as an instrument in their local political battles.

14.4 Education and Metrology

The field of Education is a rich arena for the examination of the interplay of IOs. Education has had a long history of measurement by establishing the first international networks for the development of testing back in the 1930s; IOs, like the OECD, began developing international comparative data on education performance as early as the 1960s. The recent couple of decades have seen an explosion of indicator development by all major IOs in education, as it is increasingly associated with the development of human capital and economic prosperity. From global university rankings (Kauppi 2013), to the development of global testing of adult competencies (Grek 2014), this is a field which despite the national legal frameworks that *prima facie* rule it, is largely dominated by the measurement agendas of IOs.

Similar to their commensuration processes, the ideological swings and alliance-building strategies of large IOs in the field of education are striking. The OECD openly uses an economicistic education discourse suggesting that comparisons are essential if education systems are to be competitive in the global economy. Interestingly, because of PISA's success, the OECD has begun expanding its work in the global South, which previously was in the sphere of influence of the World Bank and UNESCO. All three major IOs have been working together on a series of large statistical projects, despite competition for scarce resources and their clashing worldviews. For example, in contrast to the OECD, UNESCO prides itself in its humanistic approach to education, yet it was the UNESCO Institute of Statistics that turned to the OECD to 'learn' how to do education statistics. In Europe, similar alliances are being built between the European Commission and the OECD. Both organisations signed a memorandum of cooperation in 2013, suggesting that they are going to collaborate in adult skills analysis and forecasting, country analyses and international assessments; indeed, as we will see further, the Directorate General Education and Culture has been the prime funder of OECD work in Europe for at least a decade now.

In order to study the IOs' interdependence in developing quantification projects, the chapter focuses on the development of two co-constructed data and indicator projects: this is the emerging collaboration between the European Commission and the OECD in the field of European education governance; and the construction of World Education Indicators, co-produced by a range of expert actors as we will see below.

14.4.1 *The 2013 Education and Skills Cooperation Arrangement*

In 2013, the European Commission (EC) and the OECD signed the 'Education and Skills Cooperation Arrangement', whereby, according to the EC, 'the Commission coordinates political cooperation with and between the Member States... The OECD

values the Commission's expertise and capacity for analysing and assessing education systems. The OECD's work also comprises countries outside Europe which are of strategic importance for the EU as partners and peers. *The aim is to align efforts in order to help both organisations to provide a better service for member countries, and enable the avoidance of duplications*' (2013; my emphasis). A result of this memorandum of cooperation was the development of Education and Skills Online, a data portal that will allow 'intensified cooperation in three key areas: skills strategies; country analyses; and assessments and surveys' (2013).

ESO is the evolution of the Programme for the Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), an OECD project funded mainly by the European Commission; as we will see, the collaboration was fraught with conflict for which organisation's expertise would 'count' more, as well as, ultimately, which actor of the two would have more policy influence in the member states (Grek 2014). Nonetheless, instead of folding the cooperation back, the EC is now entering a new phase in European education governance by signing a memorandum of cooperation with the OECD and agreeing to share expertise in most (if not all) key policy areas. But how did we get there?

The analysis of ESO developed here builds on previous research (Ozga et al. 2011) which suggested that European Commission (EC) and OECD recommendations are often received at the national level as homogenous (Grek 2009). Thus, questions about the relationship between the two organisations in terms of policy direction emerge. More specifically, the case in question points towards moving beyond top-down accounts of the mere and one-directional transfer of policy from the international to the national, towards more attention to the *interaction* and *mediation* across 'levels' and actors. The empirical research focused mainly on the analysis of discourse through an examination of eight key texts, through a focus on their 'texturing' effects and their role in establishing a new 'order of discourse', their chaining, and the extent to which boundary genres were being produced. A firm set of 15 actors from both the Commission and the OECD, as well as other relevant research agencies, was identified and interviewed; the interviews focused on the actors' role in processes of coordination (conferences, meetings, project work); their interactions with other actors within and beyond their organisations; and other relational ties that link them and others through channels of flow of data, ideas and/or material resources. The analysis here is built using mainly this latter work, namely the interviews with the key policy actors. The policy actors interviewed and quoted in this chapter have had positions of power and significant decision-making leverage, and therefore in all cases first-hand experience and participation in meetings and debate between DG EAC and the OECD in regard to the financing and conduct of large international assessments.

Hence, although previous work showed how the OECD became a major Europeanising actor, having not only entered the European education policy arena but in fact monopolising the attention and policy influence within it (Grek 2009), this chapter goes one step further; working with the specific case of international comparative testing, it examines how the OECD became a dominant education policy actor as a result of its deliberate and systematic mobilisation by the European

Commission,² which found in the OECD not only a great resource of data to govern (which it did not have before) but also a player who would be pushing the Commission's own policy agenda forward, albeit leaving the old subsidiarity rule intact. As I will show, testing is important because it produces numbers and consequently ratings and rankings; once the OECD has created this unprecedented spectacle of comparison in European education, no system can remain hidden and separate any longer. The field of measurement becomes instantly the field of the game.

Although the Programme for the International Student Assessment (PISA) has become the brand name for the OECD success, historically there has been a range of such studies that the OECD has been organising since the early 1990s. The majority of these were adult literacy studies initially, followed by PISA, and more recently PIAAC, the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (2011). The first literacy study for example, the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) was the first and largest international comparative testing regime of its kind. Conducted from the early 1990s, it was an innovative study, as it was the first time ever that an international comparative dimension was added to the construction of a literacy survey instrument. As it was an original and new endeavour, slowly at the start but increasingly later on, IALS boosted confidence in the construction of measurement tools of this kind, increased their persuasive power in regard to their validity and transparency and created substantial revenues to the research agencies administering them. Finally, and perhaps above all, it created a circle of like-minded expert communities, who found in these studies a platform for promoting the problematisation of specific issues, their institutionalisation through their exchanges and the setting up of the study, as well as their legitimisation, in the form of advice to failing countries, once the results were published.

Following the successful IALS endeavour, PISA, the Programme for the International Student Assessment, became more than simply a testing regime—it is constructed and operates under a clear and specific policy framework, which is to be adopted by the participant countries if they are to improve their future PISA assessments and thus improve their standing in attracting economic and human capital investment. In other words, the involvement of the OECD with the steering of education policy in participant countries does not stop with the publication of the PISA results; on the contrary, this is perhaps where it begins. Expert groups write expert reports, analysed and taken forward by other national and local experts, while the Commission expert committees are also on board in order to keep the game in sight and keep it running.

Nonetheless, how has the OECD become such a powerful player in education governance in Europe? As some of the people who work there might have argued, the Education Directorate staff who are based in Paris take few decisions, if any; the OECD, as they argue, is no other than the participant countries and the national

²By 'European Commission', I refer more specifically to the Commission's Directorate General Education and Culture (DG EAC).

actors and experts sent to the OECD committees and meetings. Thus, how accurate is to examine the emergence of this new policy arena by simply focussing on a single international actor? This is where the notion of knowledge controversies is helpful, as the story of the emergence of the OECD as an influential actor (mostly on the basis of its large international tests) is yet again a story of tension—a story of the expert loves and expert wars that have been forming the history of international comparisons of performance measurement for over a decade.

So around 2003–2004, we [OECD and Commission] started becoming far more involved. Meetings all over the world, I don't know how many countries I visited but what is important is that the Commission is there.... The European member states should see that the Commission is there because one of the criticisms of the Commission since all this started was that we didn't take into account all the good work of the OECD. Which was wrong but they said it. The way of showing them was to actually be there—not an empty chair. (EC4)

Indeed, although the Commission and the OECD had been leading quite separate ideological paths, a new much closer relationship began emerging. This relationship would gradually strengthen and eventually become the sine qua non for the governing of European education systems. Another interviewee was even more eloquent in his discussion of this flourishing relationship:

We used to have great competition between the two institutions [OECD and the EC] which was that they were research-based, we were policy-based. And we needed that. They needed the policy aspect to mobilise the European consciousness...it was in their interest working with us ...We had some differences but we are working closer and closer together, we are very very good friends now, there is no conflict (EU3).

On the other hand, OECD actors appear also as quite open to the Commission, stressing from their own point of view, the reasons that the DG Education would work closely with them:

First of all I think we've been very lucky that on the Commission side, that they've given a lot of emphasis to skills recently ...and so I think we were fortunate that the work that we decided to do on PIAAC corresponded extremely well with their areas of interest and research priorities....I think they have been attending these international expert meetings that have taken place developing the proposal for PIAAC and so they were already onboard So they made a direct contribution, an actual contribution to the international costs and also eventually agreed to subsidise EU countries, the cost that they had to pay as well to the OECD. So we got just a block of direct funding and indirect funding to countries that they then had to pay us for the international costs. That made a big contribution in financial terms and therefore of course enhanced interest in the project (OECD3).

Another OECD actor also suggested the way that the relationship rather than hostile, has been much more close recently, in fact ‘hand in hand’:

We have the same perceptions like other international organisations that it is important that we work together and that we avoid duplication of effort and that we know what the other organisations are doing and that there are often occasions that jointly we can do more than what we can do individually. I think we were always aware of that but I think that has become increasingly important that we work hand in hand and inevitably because we have some common goals. The OECD has had for some time its own job strategy, the Commission has its own employment strategy and its Lisbon goals and there is a lot of overlap. So I think it is quite normal that we can cooperate on a lot of areas (OECD5).

Finally, another account which describes the conflict and competition for securing contracts for education research in Europe, comes from another interviewee, a key member of staff of one of the Commission's research agencies:

I think because the OECD is very much looking for member states' subsidies and grants and financial support for each separate research activity, they are also keen in showing that they do something unique and innovative in order to get such funding. And so then in a way they are in competition with us. An example is they did a recent policy review which is called 'Learning for Jobs' which basically deals with VET. And they didn't invite us to some national expert groups and so on that are in development—and they did very little use of our work because they wanted to do something that was different and specific so that they could sell it to the member states—this is my interpretation, of course. But I think that there is this kind of competition, differentiation between European institutions because we are in competition for funding. (EC3)

The quotations above suggest that descriptions of a field of actors who come together regularly and on equal terms to achieve consensus for the pushing of might be certain agendas false. On the contrary, they highlight the need to also focus our attention and study on those meetings that never happen, as well as those actors who are consistently not invited to expert meetings. They direct us to an understanding of a field, which is riddled with internal and external competition for funding, especially in times of reducing national budgets in an era of austerity.

14.4.2 INES and the Development of the World Education Indicators (WEI)

As a joint UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS)-OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) collaboration, this program developed education indicators with national coordinators from 19 middle-income countries that comprised over 70% of the world's population. The project was one of the first collaborative endeavours of large IOs. In order to understand this history, we need to investigate some of the historical developments that led to it; and this was none else than the work of the OECD in developing the Indicators in Education Systems (INES) project. This is the history the chapter will turn to briefly here.

The first volume of *Education at a Glance* (the official INES publication) was published in 1992, with the purpose of providing an insight into the comparative functioning of the education systems of member countries. Its 36 key indicators provided information around three areas of interest: the demographic, economic and social context of education; costs, resources and school processes; and outcomes of education. Subsequent volumes continued to provide data that reflected both on the resources invested in education as well as on its returns, illuminating 'the relative qualities of education systems' (OECD CERI 1996a: 9). By 1998, the original categories had been reorganised and expanded around six themes: the demographic, economic and social context of education; financial and human resources invested in education; access to education, participation and progression;

the transition from school to work; the learning environment and the organisation of schools; and student achievement and the social and labour-market outcomes of education.

The OECD argued that this exercise in international comparison was designed in order to assist in the processes of policy formation in member countries and to contribute to the public accountability of education systems:

At a time when education is receiving increased priority but, like other areas of public spending, is facing the prospect of limited public funds, understanding better the internal processes that determine the relationship between educational expenditures and educational outcomes is particularly important. (OECD CERI 1995: 7)

Thus, we see that even in these early days of comparative analysis of education systems, the efficiency and effectiveness perspective provided not only relevant comparative information to member countries, but also aimed at shaping their policy agendas and priorities. Thus, and as argued by Henry et al. (2001), INES provides a useful illustration of the shift in the OECD's role from a technical expert organisation to a policy instrument and forum—that is, the OECD became an international knowledge broker and a catalyst facilitating policy development in member countries and assisting processes of policy dissemination, adaptation and borrowing.

A brief excursion into the history of OECD illustrates the changing attitude to performance indicators within that organisation. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, amid continuing ideological and philosophical debates about the nature and applicability of performance indicators to education, the OECD, and CERI in particular, explored issues of educational reform, social equity and innovation in terms that were more conceptual and philosophical than evaluative and statistical. This was the time of equity taking priority over efficiency. Within CERI, a culture of distrust towards performance indicators had developed over the years. By the mid-1980s, however, even CERI could not easily dismiss the pressures for a new effort to develop indicators. Henry et al. (2001), drawing on interview data, show how the US, in particular, repeatedly called for work on outcomes indicators, particularly in relation to school effectiveness, at one stage threatening to withdraw its support from CERI if its demands were not met. However, Henry et al. (2001) also demonstrate that, from a different ideological direction, France—with its bureaucratic interest in statistical data collection—joined with the US in pushing the OECD towards the direction of developing educational indicators. With both the US and France, there was also probably a republican tradition (and possibly a bureaucratic one in France as well) of numbers used for progressive policy purposes, somewhat akin to a ‘political arithmetic’ tradition within British sociology and social administration. Thus, by the early 90s, the doubters had been won over and the Indicators project had become fully established within the OECD’s educational work.

Interest in education indicators was of course not restricted to the OECD and its member countries. Other inter-governmental organisations such as UNESCO and the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC) have pursued similar agendas—indeed, the OECD and UNESCO’s work on indicators was acknowledged as a context for APEC’s interest in developing indicators of school effectiveness. In

1995 UNESCO, OECD and EUROSTAT (the statistical wing of the EU) joined forces in collaboratively collecting data on key aspects of education, thus consolidating a liaison formed when the OECD adapted the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) Systems originally developed by UNESCO, in turn based on the OECD's earlier developmental work (Papadopoulos 1994: 53–54). This collaboration, though fraught with difficulties as suggested by Henry et al. (2001), explored common definitions, use of criteria for quality control and improved data documentation in order to improve the international comparisons of education statistics. Reflective of this expanded terrain, the 1998 edition of *Education at a Glance* included data from a wide range of non-member countries through the 'World Education Indicators Programme' (WEI) conducted in collaboration with UNESCO and partially funded by the World Bank. World Indicators identified differing outcomes between OECD and WEI countries around matters such as student demography, levels of educational attainment, graduation rates and resourcing per student (OECD CERI 1998: 29–30). By 1998, then, in the OECD's own words, indicators were covering, 'almost two-thirds of the world population' (CERI 1998: 6). Thus, it is to the World Education Indicators Programme (WEI) we will now turn.

The program began as a pilot project in 1997 with an original group of 12 countries which were invited to participate by UNESCO and OECD. Since then, the group expanded to cover every region of the world, through 19 countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Jordan, Malaysia, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tunisia, Uruguay and Zimbabwe. Although the programme was developed through the shared technical expertise between the OECD and UNESCO, since its establishment, the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) was supported by the World Bank through its 'Development Grant Fund'. For the 'World Education Indicator Program', the World Bank provided financial assistance for its organisation and administration, making WEI a collaborative indicator statistical project involving three major International Organisations in the field of education. According to UNESCO, 'from 2001 to 2004 UNESCO received short-term support for project-based work from the World Bank. In 2005, *the mutual trust* that had developed between the two organisations manifested itself through World Bank making longer-term commitments to UNESCO' (2015, my emphasis).

Therefore, the joint nature of the development of WEI suggests fertile ground for an exploration of IOs' interplay in the production of global education indicators. In fact, according to the UIS project homepage, 'the WEI programme serves as a laboratory of ideas. Countries do not just collect data—they design and test innovative surveys and methodologies collectively in this model of South-South cooperation'.

In many countries, this international perspective has been reflected by efforts to strengthen the collection and reporting of comparative statistics and indicators on education. Building on INES, the objectives of the WEI programme were to: 'explore education indicator methodologies; reach consensus on a set of common policy concerns amenable to cross-national comparison and agree upon a set of key

indicators that reflect these concerns; review methods and data collection instruments needed to develop these measures; and set the direction for further developmental work and analysis beyond this initial set of indicators' (OECD CERI 2005). According to WEI reporting, 'during this time, participating countries have advanced the conceptual and developmental work in many different ways. They have applied the WEI data collection instruments and methodology at the national level. In collaboration with the OECD and UNESCO, they have co-operated in national, regional and international meetings of experts, and worked jointly on the development of the indicators, in areas such as governance, teachers and financial investments in education' (OECD CERI 2005).

Periodic statistical reports from the OECD/UNESCO World Education Indicators Programme that include data from the 30 OECD countries and about 20 other UNESCO countries were written. The series focused on trends in education, identifying which countries made progress and the contextual and policy factors that contributed to the different educational outcomes. With the aim to develop a critical mass of education indicators that measure the current state of education in an internationally comparable manner, the group took on special projects that aimed to improve the comparability or broaden the scope of international education indicators. For example, there were special studies on levels of decision-making in education, based on surveys of primary schools conducted in participating countries. Finally, the programme was not only limited to the development of technical competence in comparative measurement; crucially, it also led to high-level ministerial cooperation and political commitment among the partner countries (UIS/OECD 1995, 2001, 2003, 2005).

14.4.3 International Organisations: Interplay and Interdependence in the Making of the Global Metrological Field

Through the analysis of the emergent collaboration between the European Commission DG Education and Culture and the co-production of education indicators by UNESCO, the OECD and the World Bank, this chapter has evidently shown how IOs do not often constitute 'centres of calculation' independently from one another; increasingly we find that they need to collaborate in the production of global education metrics. However, according to Merry (2011), their combined technical expertise does not suggest that IOs are significant only in terms of their knowledge production capacities. By examining specifically the role of indicators in transnational governance, Merry elucidates the governing effects of numbers. Consequently, if we consider IOs central in the production of knowledge, we can infer that their operation—as the knowledge gatherers, controllers and distributors—must have crucial governing impact (2011). These effects empower IOs and set them in a complex and ever-evolving power game for influence and resources.

Through an examination of the interplay and interconnectedness of IOs' data apparatuses, it is precisely this power game and its rules that this chapter tries to cast light upon. Indeed, Shore and Wright argue that, 'while numbers and "facts" have both knowledge effects and governance effects, it is also important to consider how these are produced, who designs them, what underlying assumptions about society shape the choice of what to measure, how they deal with missing data, and what interests they serve' (2015: 433).

In light of this chapter's case studies and in the tradition of the seminal work of Barnett and Finnemore (1999), we need to question the early International Relations' conceptualisation of IOs as passive entities which merely distribute 'principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures', as the more economicistic, rational-theory analysis would have seen them to be. Instead, building on sociological institutionalism, Barnett and Finnemore see IOs as powerful agents which have 'power independent of the states that created them'. Thus, they are purposive actors (Cox 1992, 1996; Murphy 1994; Haas 1992): 'they define shared international tasks (like 'development'), create and define new categories (like 'refugee'), create new interests (like 'promoting human rights'), and transfer models of political organisation around the world (like markets and democracy)' (1999: 699).

However, given the prominence of IOs in IR literature, it is surprising how little attention has been given to the interplay, organisational overlaps and mutual dependencies of IOs. As this chapter has showed, rather than state-bound, IOs are increasingly dependent on other IOs to operate. For example, we find that new IOs are usually founded by other IOs, rather than member states (Shanks et al. 1996). In addition, staff mobility in IOs is very high: 'a large part of staff ...is employed on fixed term contracts which generally run up to three years with the possibility, but not the obligation, of renewal' (Ringel-Bickelmeier and Ringel 2010: 525). In fact, the case of the OECD is particularly interesting, since it has 'annual turnover rates sometimes as high as 40 per cent for certain staff' (Ringel-Bickelmeier and Ringel 2010: 526). The 'revolving doors' of IOs may suggest that staff often move between them, or even occupy multiple positions at the same time.

Hence, the focus of the chapter is on organisational interplay; although, as Brosig (2011) suggests, IOs are dependent on states, the case of the rise of the global education policy field shows clearly that IOs do perform operations that states cannot and will not perform—in fact, most of them were founded in order to operate as cross-governmental diffusers of knowledge and norms. Barnett and Finnemore are again helpful in suggesting that cooperation between IOs may create mutual dependency, a situation that IOs would normally be seen to want to avoid (Barnett and Finnemore 1999). Nonetheless, given the complexity of transnational governance and the technological advances of the last decade, we are facing a different situation altogether: IOs cannot and do not act independently to solve major social problems and challenges. Hence, and as the case of the education policy arena has shown, we see IOs as increasingly mobilising their resources through their interaction with other IOs with comparable knowledge producing abilities and interests—an IO's success may be seen as its power and influence over a larger regime of organisations that work towards specific policy directions, rather than through their complete

insularity and autonomy (Raustiala and Victor 2004). In addition, as we saw above, IOs are characterised by highly mobile workforces; what does this increased actor density and fluidity suggest about the coordination of measurement practices? Indeed, it appears that states ask for the collaboration of IOs as it is seen as a way of increasing efficiency, resource-pooling and coordination of their agendas—the example of the ways that European Commission's DG Education and Culture was in effect compelled to work with the OECD because of efficiency concerns by the member states, is a good one here (Grek 2009, 2014).

The concept of organisational interplay is not entirely new to IR: there has been some stimulating work that has examined the interplay of international regimes and consequent attempts to produce typologies (Gehring and Oberthür 2006, 2009; Raustiala and Victor 2004). Nonetheless, regimes lack precisely what Barnett and Finnemore (1999) suggest above: agency (Rittberger and Zangl 2006). However, even when IR theory has acknowledged IOs constitutive nature as actors, there are other problems. By examining treaty regimes, for example, Young suggested two typologies for organisational interactions: nested and overlapping institutions (1996). But, as Brosig (2011) suggests, ‘research on regime complexes in which relations between institutions are of such density has indicated that disentangling them would compromise the collective character these regimes have acquired’. In addition, most of IR theory that has examined treaty regimes has done so from a rational theory perspective, one that would explain the interactions as serving specific IOs interests and benefit calculations (Galaskiewicz 1985; Oliver 1990; Van de Ven 1976). Nonetheless, even when IOs are assigned with agency, asymmetries and power relations are only explained on the basis of rational, interest-based behaviour. However, as the example of the European Commission’s collaboration with the OECD has shown (Grek 2009, 2014), material resources do not always explain organisational interaction; IOs may actually be very well-off but lack the knowledge and expertise, even legitimacy to promote specific policy agendas. To use the same example again, the notion of subsidiarity would suggest that for the European Commission the OECD could act as a mediator of its own policies in the member states. In other words, DG Education and Culture lacked the legitimacy to enter national policy spaces; OECD, as an expert institution, did not. On the other hand, organisations like the OECD, may well have both the resources and the expertise, but could be lacking in policy direction and influence.

To conclude, it is evident that although important scholarship in the fields of IR, organisational sociology and the social studies of quantification exists, little has it enlightened us about the politics, processes and practices of the interdependence and interplay of IOs in the field of the production of global metrics. On the one hand, IR theory has given emphasis on the role of IOs in transnational governance; initially through an examination of treaty regimes, and later with an emphasis on IOs influence in power play, the field is dominated by rational, interest-based theoretical perspectives. Thus, it has failed to examine qualities of IOs that relate to their constitutive powers as independent, yet interconnected, actors in the shaping of global policy agendas through their expert knowledge work. On the other hand, organisational sociology, although rich in its intellectual history of competing views

about how organisations work, has not as yet examined closely the role of numbers in reshaping organisational behaviour. The insistence on separating the internal from the external organisational lifeworlds, fails to take into account precisely what numbers are able to do (that may have not been possible before): that is, diffuse boundaries and set IOs in a more complex and fluid reality. Finally, studies of quantification, although growing in number and coming from a wide variety of disciplinary perspectives, have largely focused on the role of numbers as agents in themselves; there has been little, if any, attention, to the political work of the actors that organise these processes, that shape and are shaped by them.

Thus, the rise of a transnational metrological field in education is an excellent example of the kind of mobility that the policy-making process requires; however, the in-depth study of the organisation, preparation and delivery of international education comparisons makes a case precisely for a close examination not only of the movement of policy in itself, but crucially of *those who move it*. The role of experts is central as their own in-depth and trusted knowledge allows them to be highly mobile; in the name of their specialised expertise, experts have to be numerous; they are employed by different policy-making and research organisations and are accountable to them alone; their expert knowledge suggests the need for them to be present and offer advice at different stages of the policy-making process, yet it is precisely this same trusted and objective knowledge that renders them invisible. They offer evidence for policy, yet their most important role is symbolic; that of the legitimisation of knowledge.

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Chapter 15

Is Cultural Localization Education Necessary in Epoch of Globalization?



An Analysis of the Nature of State Sovereignty

Tien-Hui Chiang

15.1 Introduction

As neo-liberalism has become a new world value, globalization is fusing more countries into an interlocking body than ever. This fusion indicates that the volume of international trade has enlarged significantly and, thus, contains a considerable amount of capitalist profit. Consequently, the many countries that want to gain such profit need to comply with the new rules of this global market. It is argued that such authority has flowed to international institutions that are controlled by the USA. This situation has assisted America to gain a predominant position, allowing it to export its hegemonic cultures to other countries. It is argued that such exportation will replace the cultures of importing countries and, thus, jeopardize their citizens' national identity. This is because cultures function as the basis for developing identity. In order to diminish this political crisis, the strategy of cultural localization will be employed. In this case, schools are responsible for implementing this national assignment. However, this argument tends to adopt a static approach to defining state sovereignty and, thus, contains considerable weaknesses.

This essay sets out to delineate the dynamic change of sovereignty in historical contexts and its political intentions. It also explores the unstable meaning of territoriality, which is viewed as a core ingredient in the constitution of state sovereignty. The key assumption of this essay is that if sovereignty changes its meaning in different historical contexts and its constitutions are not stable, this dynamic characteristic disintegrates the tight and static connection between sovereignty and citizens' national identity. The remaining value of sovereignty would be political. In other words, although it has shifted from an individualist means serving the monarchy to a collective form operating in the sense of civil society, sovereignty might retain its political essentiality, as manifest in the phenomenon that the rulers/elites firmly

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seize state authority. This unbalanced power relation further suggests that sovereignty will function as a powerful social discourse to diminish citizens' critical thinking. Without an independent soul, they are voluntarily subject to the commands of the state, which are under the control of the rulers/elites.

15.2 Globalization, State Sovereignty and Cultural Localization Education

Globalization has significantly expanded its influence across countries since the 1980s when R. Reagan and M. Thatcher were in power and committed to exporting the ideas of neo-liberalism to the international community (Chiang 2011, 2013). This exportation has significantly contributed to constructing neo-liberalism as a new world value, and to supporting the expansion of globalization. It is argued that being a typical capitalist country (Wallerstein 2004), the USA acts as a transnational corporation in undertaking this construction (Berberoglu 2003; Chiang 2011). This political/economic intention is espoused by the phenomenon of modeling, referring to the inclination of developing countries to imitate developed countries (Veblen 1994). Anyway, globalization has benefited America to acquire a hegemonic status that assists it to export the ideology of neo-liberalism to the international community, through such organs as the OECD (Rizvi and Lingard 2006), the WTO (Robertson et al. 2006), the WB and the IMF (Stiglitz 2002). As globalization has been constructed as an irreversible world trend, neo-liberalism becomes a powerful discourse, convincing people to believe that globalization alone will bring a promising future for its participants (McCarthy and Dimitriadis 2006; Popkewitz 2000; Säfström 2005).

The link between the state as legitimized administrative apparatuses and the state as one of the crucial sites of the production of identities in the body politic leads us to the wide-open spaces of the public sphere, in which civic order is built from discourses that manage the needs, interests and desires generated by them within the socially combatant populations that make up society. (McCarthy and Dimitriadis 2006: 201)

Along with this new world value, globalization has significantly expanded its territory by fusing many countries into a globalized market. It has been argued that this fusion will erode the state sovereignty. Ohmae (2000), for example, contends that this integration triggers the development of region states functioning as economic zones to provide better services and goods. As global economy plays as a primary force to regulate this development, host nations may decrease their influence on region states. Robinson (2004) brushed a similar picture in which international institutions will be established to assist the operation of a global market. Such a transnational arrangement has gradually taken over the authority from the states and remodel their role shifting from a self-decision agent to an administrative implementer delivering the policies formulated by transnational institutes. These changes

indicate that the state has significantly lost its authority in the epoch of globalization.

Furthermore, the development in ICT also re-strengths the force of globalization and, thus, generates a profound influence on the state sovereignty. As argued by Thurow (2000), such development allows enterprises to undertake a new way of operation, which is cost-saving, effective and free from governmental control and interference. This trend has restrained nations to play like an initiator or commander in the market so that globalization assists international economy to be an independent force and, thus, state authority declines within a globalized market. As the advanced technology in internet fleshes capitalists up at a globalized market, trans-national enterprises grow. According to Miyoshi (1996), since this development has become more evident after 1980s, international arena comes to replace domestic domain that used to be the central focus for enterprises. Consequently, they need to be loyal to their international shareholders/clients rather than home countries. This denationalization, as evident in the movement of capital, personal, technology and even the whole system of business, disconnects the linkage between capitalism and its home countries and, in turn, substantially damages governmental authority.

TNCS (transnational corporations) are not beholden to any nation-states but seek their own interests and profits globally. They represent neither their home countries nor their host nations but simply their own corporate selves... at any rate, manufactured products are advertised and distributed globally, being identified only with the brand names, not the countries of origin. In fact, the country of origin is itself becoming more and more meaningless. (Miyoshi 1996: 88–89)

This denationalization also makes the transnational corporation require its employees to be loyalty to the corporate identity rather than to their own national identities. Consequently, the expansion of the transnational corporation spotlights the predominant influence of imperialism that comes to replace its precedent mode—colonialism and push the nation-state into a hollow entity.

All the above arguments delineate a phenomenon that globalization becomes more predominant than ever. As the notion of liberty, one of core elements of neo-liberalism (Friedman 2002; Hayek 2007), subscribes individualism, globalization helps individuals acquire more power to influence both markets and states. This new context fleshes up a new form of elites whose power and wealth are obtained at the international market. Eventually, they internalize free market logic and, thus, firmly support the issue of a globalized market. Such an inclination will facilitate the expansion of globalization and decay state sovereignty. This political crisis is even further intensified by governmental intention to gain the considerable amount of capitalist profit available in a globalized market (Mittelman 1996). This economic need has driven many countries to conform to the rules of globalization voluntarily, as witnessed by the fact that they have reduced their control over tax policy for imported goods (Dale 2003). This deterioration of sovereignty has been reinforced by the establishment of international institutions, created to espouse the expansion of world trade or to deal with transnational problems (Stiglitz 2006).

All these changes indicate that while globalization decreases many states' sovereignty, it actually delivers more power to America. This transmission facilitates the

USA in gaining a hegemonic position that enables it to export its culture as evident with the phenomenon of McDonaldization (Ritzer 2000). Some researchers argue that as cultures are the foundation upon which people construct their identities, such devaluation will jeopardize the cultivation of citizens' national identity. In order to solve such political crises, these importing countries will adopt the strategy of localization to protect their local cultures from such cultural invasion (Lingard 2000; Rizvi 2000). Green (2006) argues that cultural localization will be heavily reliant upon schooling because schools are the main site for cultural cultivation and transmission. Furthermore, global norms and rules tend to affect school curriculum contents because of the conjugation between schooling and globalization (Baker and LeTendre 2005; Cha and Ham 2014).

15.3 Critiques on the Argument of Cultural Localization

Essentially, the above arguments assume that hegemonic culture is able to replace the culture of importing countries. This replacement approach may neglect the interaction between cultures. Chiang (2014) adopts the perspectives of cultural construction to profile cultural localization as a result of interactive development, the process of which—involves cultural assimilation that is mainly determined by consumers rather than political intentions. Therefore, as proactive endeavor is able to transform structural constraints into advantageous texts, this two-way exchange significantly reduces the boundary between self and others. When consumers become the master, commanding the interplay between cultures and identity, Americanization becomes a predetermined ideology. Berghahn (2010) rejects the notion of Americanization by pointing out that blending or creolizations always occur within the cultural flows across the Atlantic in both directions. West Europe used to export high culture to the USA and its influence reached a peak in the 1930s when European refugees from fascism inhabited in America. This situation was reversed after 1945 because American popular culture gained a hegemonic status in Western Europe. As a result, the boundary between high and popular cultures was disappearing. This phenomenon shows that the two-way exchange between cultures assists cultural innovation so that it is difficult to identify where the originality of certain elements of modern culture was first born.

As localization is in parallel with globalization, glocalization is invented to narrate the combination between universalism and particularization (Robertson 1992). Hong and Song (2010) argue that whereas globalization affects the internal structure of state agents, states are the agents implementing global requirements so that such interactions consistently move globalization into new forms. Accordingly, we need to think globally and act locally in order to reconstruct the world into a global society that can help reduce the gap between globality and locality. Glocalization, thus, embraces the characters of cultural interaction and indigenization. As argued by Khondker (2004), Hollywood films and McDonalds are mistaken as the icon of Americanization. In fact, American culture has been reinterpreted and indigenized

to satisfy local needs. This indigenization assists importing countries to engage in dynamic social transformation through cultural fusion and incorporation so that globalization incarnates the interpenetration of contextualized cultures, which subscribes the meanings of macro-localization and micro-globalization.

15.4 The Dynamic Meanings of Sovereignty

According to the constructive perspectives, cultural localization should be interpreted as a result of cultural development rather than that of cultural replacement because the consumers are the master determining the value of texts. Accordingly, globalization opens up a gateway assisting importing countries to engage in cultural elaboration. The notion of glocalization further highlights interpenetration between globalization and localization. This two-way exchange argument clarifies the relation between globalization and localization. Even though the perspectives of construction and mutual relation provide insights into the interplay between globalization and localization, the relation between culture, national identity and sovereignty is largely neglected, which is the core element of the mode of cultural replacement. In order to clarify the relation between globalization and cultural localization, it is important to explore the nature of sovereignty.

Sovereignty is generally viewed as a collective consciousness in civil society for protecting a common good. However, according to Foucault (2003), the original meaning of sovereignty was individual and served the interests of the king. The Franks conquered Gaul and, then, became French rulers in this new territory. In order to legitimize their political interests, they claimed that, like the Romans, they were the descendants of Trojans, so that they obtained the legitimacy to import the Roman's law system that supported the Monarchy system. However, the French king seized this legitimate authority entirely. In order to share this power, some royalties later attacked the latter king's primacy by criticizing his incompetence in ruling France. This political crisis led him to create the system of magistracy, functioning to legitimize state absolutism by creating eulogies to praise the king's merits. One historical description of this is as follows:

Louis XIV ordered his administration and his intendants or stewards to produce for his heir and grandson, the duc de Bourgogne... it was intended to constitute the knowledge of the king, or the knowledge that would allow him to rule. (Foucault 2003: 127)

As its intendants served as a political buffer between the king and royalties, this administrative mechanism gained power and increased its size. Finally, this administrative apparatus became a system of civil servants, serving the citizens. Therefore, governmental authority was gradually transmitted from the king to civil society. Consequently, this transition changed the presentation of sovereignty, recontextualizing its tyrannical form into the idea of civil society, in which governmental authority is created for a common good. Such change also occurred in Britain. State sovereignty was created to protect the system of monarchy, as witnessed by the case

of William, who was not conqueror of England but was assigned as a legitimate heir to its throne in the ‘Laws of St Edward,’ or the laws of the Saxon regime. The laws became an instrument of power serving the interests of the Norman monarchy and aristocracy. They did not guarantee the reign of justice but depressed people’s voices.

The social body is not made up of a pyramid of orders or of a hierarchy, and it does not constitute a coherent and unitary organism. It is composed of two groups, and they are not only quite distinct, but also in conflict. (Foucault 2003: 88)

This governmental injustice triggered rebellions from people. In other words, civil society waged rebellions against the government in order to fight for their rights, and install justice into sovereignty. This historical movement documents a fact that sovereignty is an artificial notion equipped with political intentions, serving the interests of social elites.

... any law, whatever it may be, every form of sovereignty, what it may be, and any type of power, whatever it may be, has to be analyzed not in terms of natural right and the establishment of sovereignty, but in terms of the unending movement --- which has no historical end --- of the shifting relations that make some dominant over others. (Foucault 2003: 109)

This relation indicates that along with different historical contexts, sovereignty has different meanings. Sovereignty now no longer retains individualism for personal gain of either the king or royalties, but is shared and commanded by all social members in a collective will. In other words, the nature of sovereignty transforms from an original individualism to a modern collectivism. Similarly, Mosca (1962, 1971) argues that the concept of sovereignty was originally designed to serve the interests of the ruling group. Significant contributions, such as protecting their country from the attacks of enemies, entitled knights to membership of a political class which had a legitimate authority to rule the state and enjoy privileges. In order to preserve these privileges for their offspring, they created social norms or values, as manifest in their invention of the concept of inheritance, which further led to the establishment of the system of feudalism. This institutional setting assisted the ruling group to maintain their privileged position from generation to generation. Therefore, although sovereignty was now coated in a collective form for citizens, the process of historical construction shows that it embodies political intentions serving the interests of the ruling class. All these relations show that sovereignty changes its meanings in different historical contexts.

This dynamic development indicates that sovereignty may change its composition, such as by changing one of its core elements, territory. Traditionally, sovereignty is determined by boundaries between states that are officially recognized by other countries (Giddens 1990). However, according to Angew (2009), this territorial definition set out to serve the interests of monarchy. This socially constructed fact may change its constitution in the era of globalization again. While the combination between authority and domestic affairs makes sovereignty a state-based or territory-based idea, this territorial approach was associated with the realm in which the king was its head, with supremacy authority to command his people. The operation of monarchy within a defined territory created a tight linkage between state sovereignty and territory. Preventing sovereignty from being deterritorialized

became a crucial way to sustain the authority of the monarchy, so that the states needed to be treated equally. This equal notion symbolically projected on the juridical or legal sovereignty that provided the necessary geographical conditions for the operation of domestic sovereignty. Therefore, state sovereignty is traditionally understood as the absolute territorial organization of political authority. However, strong countries may deny this equal recognition, as manifest in the phenomenon of imperialism or colonialism. Invasions, initiated by western countries, created a non-territorial fusion among states, so that sovereignty was transferred from the personhood of monarchs to discrete national populations. Accordingly, sovereignty can be shared or pooled in the arena of globalization, in which a new global arrangement, favoring the networked system of political authority, transfers sovereignty from domestic to international institutions that are largely influenced by advanced countries. This relation suggests that political control and authority are no longer restrained to the regime of territoriality. Sovereignty needs to be viewed as a social fact produced by the practices of states, and globalization will wipe out the traditional definition of sovereignty—territoriality.

In fact, immigration also blurs the geographic boundaries between states, and in turn may degenerate the political definition of territory for sovereignty.

Thus without territorial restrictions on eligibility, cross-border movements of people would undermine the essentially contractual obligations that underpin both state infrastructural power and the autonomous role of the state that depends on it... however, the tight correlation between territory and state power (both despotic and infrastructural) need not be so close. (Angew 2009: 207)

The development of megacities shows that immigration increases its speed and scale constantly. Globalization further consolidates this phenomenon because it commands many countries to conduct a policy of deregulation of both politics and economy (Florida 2008). As people and geographic space are viewed as the core components in the constitution of a state, massive levels of immigration will decompose the territorial boundaries of a given country. If all or the majority of citizens moved from a country to another territorial space, the country's sovereignty would inevitably shrink, and even be corrupted. The original geographical boundary was opaque, or even meaningless, for the constitution of the state of sovereignty at the stage of barbarous society, in which tribes were predominant. Some tribes didn't inhabit a certain territory because they constantly moved for food. This movement, then, disintegrated the linkages among sovereignty, territory and geographic boundaries. This phenomenon is still vivid in some geographic spaces in the modern age, such as in the case of Eskimos. Obviously, no countries would officially recognize Eskimos' sovereignty, although their inhabitation of the Arctic for thousands of years has created some core components of sovereignty, such as people and territory. This declination implies that sovereignty is an artificial notion equipped with certain political intentions, as noted previously. Perhaps, some skeptics may claim that this is because Eskimos haven't developed their own government. However, such a predetermined viewpoint lacks adequate justification. Although a savage society may lack a centralized form of bureaucratic system, this society still contains

authority and applies it in a different way. The findings of Malinowski's (1926) study showed that power and authority were not seized by the chief, but were shared by his compatriots. Their cooperation was essential, in terms of undertaking the fishing that was the crucial source of food supply for the tribe on an island. Obviously, the authority circulating within such a primitive community was different from the modern definition of sovereignty. However, its usage brought more advantages to its members than that of a modern state.

This difference suggests that sovereignty embodies political intentions serving social elites. Hytrek and Zentgraf (2008) argue that because domestic policies are generally manipulated by state rulers for their political interests, the state becomes a main site of struggle over political policies that affect the interest of capitalists and big enterprises. According to Harvey (2005), a globalized system is different from the state because 'the capitalist operates in continuous space and time, whereas the politician operates in a territorialized space' (Harvey 2005: 27). This difference permits states to adopt an active tactic to empower themselves for maximizing their interests in the new context created by globalization (Olszen 2006). Instead of the traditional role, stewardship is viewed as a workable path in this milieu, which addresses the integration between trust, service and accountability. In the name of efficient governance, central government acts as an initiator, coordinator and auditor in the context of glocalization so that it doesn't lose authority but employs it in a different form (Sharma 2009). The case of Norwegian teachers echoes this transformation. In order to cope with the challenges of knowledge society with technopolitical openness, Norwegian curriculum addressed the importance of students' basic competence. Accordingly, Norwegian teachers were required to improve themselves in rhetorical agency. However, this openness created tensions and feelings of risk in need of control so that the government set out the frame of self-improvement for its teachers in the surveillance of national tests. As the government-controlled agency was masked in a rhetorical form, globalization doesn't substantially deteriorate states' control over education (Trippstad 2016). This phenomenon tends to espouse Krasner's (2006) argument, rejecting a popular discourse in contemporary society, which the expansion of globalization consistently erodes state sovereignty. Such discourse adopts the Westphalian model created in 1648, which addresses institutional settings and rules corresponding to the logic of appropriateness, to define territoriality and autonomy as the core components for the constitution of state sovereignty. Therefore, sovereignty equals an independent autonomy of the state, excluding external actors from internal organizational arrangements, notable as jurisdiction. However, this approach neglects authority, which plays a predominant role in making domestic policies.

As this authoritative power is seized by state rulers, their intentions are the key element in textualizing the nature of sovereignty, as manifest in their participation in international institutes. Some people claim that such global institutional arrangements create international legal sovereignty, coming to diminish state sovereignty because they violate the principle of the independent autonomy, under the Westphalian model. The IMF, for example, is constantly cited as a typical case for arguing this violation because it insists on a legitimated role in domestic policy

formation (Stiglitz 2006). However, most political rulers have devoted themselves to participating in these international institutes. This is because international recognition can promote their political interests, as manifest in increasing the support for them in the domestic agenda.

Hence, international legal sovereignty can promote the interests of rulers by making it easier for them to generate domestic political support not just because they are in a better position to promote the interests of their constituents but also because recognition is a signal about the viability of a political regime and its leaders. (Krasner 2006: 84)

Apparently, they are pleased to see the establishment of transnational institutions that create international legal sovereignty. This relation shows that either Westphalian or international legal sovereignty is decided by the rulers, who are seeking the best outcome in terms of their political interests. Instead of states or the international system, they are the main agents for making choices about policies, rules and institutions that constitute sovereignty. As globalization creates a new context for the cultivation of new rulers, sovereignty proceeds on its dynamic journey. Robinson (2004) argues that globalization fuses many countries into interlocking regions in which international institutions, equipped with a transnational authority, favor international solidarity for capitalists rather than the state independent authority in the domestic sphere. This new economic/political arrangement tends to facilitate the development of a transnational capitalist class. This class will acquire predominant power and behave like the power elites, conceptualized by Mills (1951), who have consistently dominated the operation of states. Therefore, this transnational capitalist class will become the main agents for reshaping of the constitution of state sovereignty. Other factors also contribute to producing the dynamic development of sovereignty. Globalization tends to intensify transnational problems, such as pollution, water supply and drugs, which are transcend territorial jurisdictions, and are unable to be solved by individual governments. This situation requires international cooperation, defined as transgovernmentalism, which facilitates the creation of international institutes. This trend tends to unbundle the relationship between sovereignty, territoriality and political power (Held 2006).

In short, sovereignty changes its meaning and nature constantly, so that its linkage with territory, geographic boundaries and independent autonomy is not stable. This relationship is unable to sustain the core assumption of cultural localization education, which emphasizes the tight connections among culture, territory, national identity and sovereignty. Sovereignty needs to be viewed as an artificial notion, equipped with political intentions that serve certain groups and, thus, impacts the correspondence between national identity and cultural localization.

15.5 Conclusions

In order to obtain the considerable amount of capitalist profit available in a globalized market, its members need to comply with its rules. This loss is interpreted as a declination of their sovereignty. On the other hand, such authority flows to international institutes that are controlled by the USA. This situation further helps America acquire hegemonic power to export its cultures to other countries. For cultural skeptics, this exportation will replace the cultures of importing countries and, thus, jeopardize their citizens' national identity. In order to diminish this political crisis, the strategy of cultural localization education will be employed. Therefore, it has been argued that localization occurs in parallel with globalization.

Basically, this argument assumes that cultural localization is rooted in a static and tight connection between sovereignty and national identity. However, as the analysis above indicates, this assumption does not stand up to scrutiny, because it fails to notice the dynamic nature of sovereignty. Sovereignty is an artificial notion equipped with political intentions serving the interests of social elites. It was originally created in individualism to sustain the systems of monarchy and aristocracy, and later reborn with a collective form, notable as civil society. Such dynamic change also occurred in another core element of sovereignty—territoriality—that was equipped with a similar intention to prevent the monarchical authority from being deterritorialized. However, such authority failed to retain its sacred form in the Westphalian model, excluding outsiders' interferences in domestic arrangements, as manifest in the phenomenon that strong states constantly invade weak countries. This violation indicates that power is the core factor pushing sovereignty away from a static form into a dynamic development. As rulers seize power and authority, their political intentions further intensify this dynamic in the era of globalization, as manifest in their proactive participations in international institutions in order to win international recognition that can work to their advantage in the domestic agenda. As globalization creates an international setting that facilitates the development of a transnational class and transforms them into new elites who favor the issue of globalization, these transnational elites will remold the nature of state sovereignty again. This dynamic change disintegrates the connections among sovereignty, territory and national identity. All the above scenarios indicate that sovereignty needs to be viewed as a social discourse, carrying out political intentions serving the interests of the rulers/elites.

Although sovereignty evolves its forms, meanings and constitutions, its masters are not people but the rulers/elites. This uneven relation is even worse in the era of globalization, because a globalized market stimulates the development of international institutions that assist those rulers/elites to gain capitalist profit and legitimate power, domestically and internationally. This phenomenon shows that sovereignty hasn't freed itself from the shackles of the political domain, but has constantly functioned as a political tool to serve the interests of the ruler/elites. In the past, people were able to identify this political conspiracy, and wage rebellions against the government in order to integrate justice into state sovereignty. Their contributions

finally constructed a civil society in which the state authority would operate in a collectivist form for a common good. However, this transformation doesn't guarantee that the idea of a civil society can be implemented in practice. Its citizens are incapable of discovering their subjection to the state authority that is under the control of the rulers/elites. This is because the ruling group has transformed sovereignty into a civil society notion, educating people to believe that they are the masters of sovereignty, and that sovereignty operates for a common good. This collectivism increases the sacredness for state sovereignty and sustains the neutrality of state authority. This change assists the rulers/elites to engage in the work of schooling to remodel people's souls. Without critical thought, citizens cannot detect the unbalanced power relations in civil society, largely favoring the ruling group, and are unconsciously subject to the commands of the state. This phenomenon further demonstrates a fact that sovereignty needs to be viewed as an artificial notion, exercising as a social discourse which functions in the political/economic interests of the rulers/elites. This political intention also highlights schools as a locus in which these elites intend to secure their personal gain through schooling and this undetected conspiracy comes to undermine the value of cultural localization education.

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Part V

Methodology of Education Policy Studies

Chapter 16

The Politics of Metrics in Education: A Contribution to the History of the Present



Romuald Normand

16.1 Introduction

Policy instruments are linked to the development of new modes of governance. They provide cognitive and normative frameworks for policy-makers to advocate changes, to implement new programmes, and to create new types of public interventions (Lascombes and Le Galès 2007). They contribute to the transformation of the State through the invention of new tools and devices, particularly metrics, which give legitimization to political aims, values, and ideologies. It corresponds to New Public Management which pretends reinventing tools of government and overcoming bureaucracy sometimes by reusing recipes from the past (Hood 1986). The instruments participate also in a kind of depoliticization and re-politicization of decision-making whereas policy-makers face many contestations and oppositions from different interest groups. As Michel Foucault demonstrated, these technical procedures of power and instrumentation are central to the art of governing and the development of a rationalizing State (Foucault 1977). Governmentality is not only based on measuring devices but also on intellectual and scientific technics, ways of thinking, epistemologies which become operational through metrics (Miller and Rose 2008). New relationships are established between science, expertise and politics that impact on the ownership, selectivity and choices of tools and instruments.

As a policy instrument, metrics are invading the area of education. Tests, indicators, and benchmarks are the panoply of New Public Management while teachers and students are daily exposed to accountability technologies. A political rationality is dissimulated behind this frenzy of calculation and comparison across time and space since the creation of modern education systems (Lawn 2013a, b). This posi-

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tivity, to resume Michel Foucault's words (2002), is clearly due to the effort of rationalization achieved through *mathesis* and *taxinomia* penetrating the spheres of the State administration, at least when statistics were used for governing population in education and health as in other economic and social areas (Porter 1996). Today, discourses of truth seize numbers, sometimes in caricatural ways subverting them to ideological and political aims (Berliner and Biddle 1995). Numbers speak by themselves, to reveal a truth while they are exhibited and imposed without any contestation by expertise and centres of calculation (Lawn 2013a, b). As the PISA survey, this methodological rationale is as a guarantee used by policy-makers to reject any criticism beyond the small circle of influential experts (Grek 2009, 2013). However, there is no naturality in the politics of metrics, no discourses and truths that could be established forever in education. Sociology and anthropology have contested these postulates and statements for long showing the relativity of data, their contextual embeddedness, and the cultural differences they tend to erase. But government by numbers appears legitimate for itself and politics of metrics become a new science of government at international and European level (Lawn and Normand 2014).

This chapter is resolutely critical but it is not contesting data or participating in the quarrel of methodologies, nor discussing the rightness of metrological arguments and justifications. It provides a singular argument on the politics of metrics in education through a social and political epistemology as an archaeology or history of the present (Foucault 2012; Popkewitz 1997, 2013). Historicizing the politics of metrics, its ideas and instruments, analytical models and theoretical frameworks, impacts on human beings, is adopting a critical perspective and considering education policies guided by the process of Reason (Popkewitz 2012). The aim is also to show the force of representations and power relationships leading to the adoption of such a scientific theory, an instrument, a methodology, a statistical artefact or metrological convention for States, local authorities and International Organizations.

We have chosen to structure this history of the present with examples characterizing the relationships between metrics, knowledge and politics since the beginning of compulsory schooling. We do not seek to establish continuities but to analyse some historical moments with their internal coherence, built on epistemological and discursive configurations underpinned by a certain kind of instrumentation impacting on politics. We highlight some concepts, theories, objects shaping rules of objectivity and scrutinize discourses of political truth. We look at changes within the areas of science and expertise and the regimes of normativity they introduce in the field of education policies.

16.2 The Politics of Classifications

From Michel Foucault (2002), we know the role played by natural history in the classification of human beings and things which structure the scientific language and announce the venue of the comparative chart. Classifications and comparisons are two elementary acts of any scientific approach and the former is the foundation

of metrics. The continuous, ordered and universal chart, of all the possible differences, is the ideal of *Taxinomia*. In addition, *Mathesis* defines a perspective for understanding the world from single laws stemming from the mathematical method. Since, a part of educational sciences has taken natural sciences as a model in attempting to reach the “perfection” of correspondence between truth and facts (Popkewitz 2012). Classifications are part of a politics which, by force or negotiation, facilitates the convergence between heterogeneous systems and conceptions. And even if they raise some ethical concerns, these modes of classification are finally made invisible and embedded in social and political life routines. Historically, it was the case of the classification of feeble-minded people as a policy instrument.

16.2.1 Classifications as a Policy Instrument of Inclusion and Exclusion

At the turn of the last century, classifications of feeble-minded people were assumed by different social reformers, worried by the rise of poverty, insalubrity and insecurity created by urbanization and massive immigration (Trent 1994). According to their discourses, feeble-minded people represented an important workload for the society and their increase required a political solution at a reasonable cost. Many of them shared the idea of creating colonies to group epileptics, morons, disabled and undisciplined people. Feeble-minded people had to be more productive. Policy-makers, concerned about mental deficiency, began to create specialized schools. With compulsory schooling, a new population was coming in schools and it challenged teachers who were claiming about indiscipline and delinquency. The management of deficient students became an increasing political concern whereas most experienced teachers were not capable of tackling with these “backward children” categorized as “silly, stupid, idiot, simple-minded, scatter brained, clogged, moron, duffer, dizzy, dull, peasant, uncultivated, airhead, squash, etc.”

From a sociological perspective, classifications are linked to key cognitive operations including and excluding human beings (Popkewitz 2013). As it has been exemplified by Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss (2009), “primitive” and “scientific” classifications share a common nature: they make relationships between human beings intelligible. The social function of classifications corresponds to a cognitive order for accessing to knowledge. Classifications between things shared among individuals and groups help to understand the logic of most decisive categories for the human mind: space, time, causality, etc. Following these works, Mary Douglas (1986) explains that the design of classifications is a specific exercise of polarization and exclusion: it implies tracing boundaries and creating equivalences between things which are a priori not comparable. Classifications institutionalize a hierarchy which is not only cognitive but social with important consequences on structuring relationships and power within the society. Indeed, education credentials, diplomas, certifications in modern times have been the mean to classify indi-

viduals according to their knowledge and skills and to position them in the social hierarchy serving the political objectives of sorting and selecting people.

In transferring classification into the issue of social classes, Pierre Bourdieu (1989), by criticizing the realist and Marxist conception of production relationships, has formulated a theory of social fields in which the fight for classifications, particularly through the school system, functions as a mechanism of social reproduction legitimizing certain ranks, titles and hierarchies. Some subtle distinctions are established according to the ownership of economic, social and cultural capitals which determine the ranks of individuals and groups within the social space. From them, incorporated dispositions (tastes, desires, affinities, etc.) are organized which correspond to practices and habitus of a social class with its relational properties. In conceptualizing a model of differentiation based on power relationships, Bourdieu demonstrates that systems of classification are the product of permanent struggles which redefine borders and modes of legitimacy structuring hierarchy and ranks and serving a politics of inequalities. In education, the metrics of inequalities has been extended to international surveys based on other modes of classification of equity and performance disconnected from social class theory.

16.2.2 Global Metrological Policy and Classifications of Inequalities in Education

Classifications have certain stability in time and space. Beyond the symbolic consecration and legitimization of differences, this representation of social order corresponds to a social and political investment. Statistical classifications play a dominant role in the legitimization of politics in education (Thévenot 2011). They guarantee three types of representation: a scientific and technical representation by which statistical tools allow to build and display a simplified reduction of society through charts and graphs. And it is also a political representation in the sense that social actors fight and negotiate for being represented and for representing their interests within the classification. Geoffrey C. Bowker et Susan L. Star (2000) show, from the international classification of diseases, that classification is the result of a compromise between several interests related to national and local systems of information in public health policies. Classification serves also as a cognitive representation and mental picture of social reality which allows to identify ourselves and those with whom we developed relationships.

From this perspective, it is easy to understand what is at stake in the definition of international nomenclatures in education as a global policy. Nomenclatures impose a universal system of classification even if their apparent homogeneity is questionable, according to historical, social and cultural differences between countries. However, The UNESCO's International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) or the regular publication of the OECD's Education at Glance is rarely

challenged from a methodological and political stance. These classifications operate as “black boxes” for which data are legitimized by prestigious institutions and experts without questioning their degree of “harmonization” (Normand 2009). Beyond a realistic vision validating the measurement according to its biased or not biased dimensions, a sociological and constructivist perspective has shown that this policy of measurement itself depends on procedures and comparisons conceptualized according to certain rules of observation, recording and coding. It is the result of a complex networking and material assemblages between human beings and objects particularly when it requires the translation of a language in another or the conversion of “indigenous” cognitive categories into “universal” ones (Gorur 2011, 2014).

What is at stake in these modes of classification can be analysed through the debate on the PISA survey measuring equity and performance. Behind the “grey zone” of international surveys, difference agencies and transnational experts define categories of knowledge and thoughts which are transferred in time and space (Pettersson et al. 2017). This belief in numbers is underpinned by powerful technologies of calculation and entrepreneurial logics promoting “best practices” for education policy. At international and national levels, PISA acts as a “boundary object” opening the field to moral and political entrepreneurs who use the results and media to advocate their representations and interests in the public space challenging the current state of education systems (Normand 2014). Scientists and experts use these classifications to confront their arguments about the means of improving the effectiveness of education systems and developing accountability and New Public Management policies. From these data, journalists and some intellectuals seek to arbitrate their ideological quarrels between doxa and philosophy to influence policy-making. Policy-makers, converted to new forms of a pseudo-scientific experimentalism, find some ideas of rationalization and justification of their unpopular reforms. Some international agencies and experts produce tools, reports and recommendations for them, and they organize peer learning activities and exchange of best practices influencing national policies.

Among these classifications in education, the new born is benchmarking (Bruno 2017). At the beginning, it is a managerial technology implemented by the company Rank Xerox. It has quickly penetrated public policies to guarantee a process of objectivation of “best practices” in developing comparisons of performance and justifying decision-making. Assigning objectives to an indisputable realism, it promotes an art of government by probing data which subordinates public policy to a process of voluntary deliberation without hierarchy and rules. Agents of this policy are engaged in exchanges and debate on facts and numbers which require implicitly a convergence. That is why the European Commission has used benchmarking as an instrument of the Open Method of Coordination for education (Lange and Nafsi 2007). It is a “soft governance” not imposed to the States but leading them to consider their respective rankings for improving their equity and performance under fixed and precise targets. This technology of benchmarking is today used by influent

consultancy groups, like Mc Kinsey, to classify education systems considered as the most performative and equitable and to address recommendations to policy-makers (Gunter and Mills 2016).

16.3 Experiments as Policy Instruments

Experiments come from medicine. By breaking with the principle of dissection of corpses which allowed anatomy to become a science, Claude Bernard proposed a counterfactual experimental approach to highlight functions and symptoms of the human body. Moreover, the experimental method has strongly renewed clinical medicine in giving importance to the laboratory while it has also influenced health policies. Since, experiments on human beings were developed, first on convicts, then on prisoners and disabled people, before campaigns of vaccination on children (Lederer 1995). Then, psychology, inspired by medicine, sought to promote experiments and tests on human behaviour in the field of education politics, not without introducing some eugenicist ideas. The modern policy of experiments has inherited from these metrics to rehabilitate an experimentalism converted into Evidence-Based Education.

16.3.1 *From the Laboratory Study to Eugenics*

In emphasizing experiments and quantitative methods, such as medicine and physiology, psychology determined a division of labour between experimental subjects, the source of producing data, and experimenters who manipulated the conditions of the experiment (Danziger 1994). This method was in competition with another model; clinical psychology in which patients were assessed as “subjects” compared to the performance of other individuals regarded as “normal” or “abnormal”. Clinical psychology aimed at measuring the impact of a particular or abnormal characteristic of a subject, according to his personality, while experimental psychology claimed to set up a universalistic process related to all human minds.

These two methods were different from the one imagined by Francis Galton (Godin 2007). The British psychologist, founder of eugenics, had settled a laboratory in London for testing “mental faculties” among individuals. They were chosen among ordinary people. A map with the inventory of their mental capacities was delivered for 3 pence. The psychologist aimed to build a data bank on human capacities to provide recommendations in terms of social, rational and effective planning of the population. If clinical practice or experimental psychology was concerned by analysing individual processes, Galton and his eugenicist followers, wanted to include experimental data into statistical series to produce metrics of performance at large scale and to facilitate decision-making for social policies, including health and education (Bashford 2007; Lowe 1998).

To meet the needs of educational administrators and policy-makers, psychologists developed different methods: firstly, the experiment in laboratory but it was maladjusted for large-scale studies. Secondly, mental tests which allowed to compare individual differences through statistical series. They gave the opportunity to set up performance standards and categories from which individuals could be ranked according to criteria from the “general intelligence” of eugenics to the required qualities of a “good seller” (Kevles 1985). A third technology, the experiment in classrooms, offered new possibilities for psychologists. It facilitated the study of a group of students exposed to different methods of instruction while their performance was assessed before and after the experiment. Experiments in classrooms allowed to compare the efficiency of different techniques of learning and instruction whereas mental testing allowed to select individuals for adjusted social programs. They were constantly expanded during the 1920–1930s.

The abandon of the individualistic perspective in the collection of psychological data was linked to the building of a statistical rationale and more demanding modes of totalization for governing population (Ramsden 2003; Soloway 2014). The objective was to overcome traditional methods of comparing averages and ratios on population provided by statistical studies. While the dominant psychology relied on the model of experiment, statistical surveys on human conduct tried to study crime, suicide, poverty and health outside the laboratory serving the needs of the emergent and new Welfare State. Statistical societies compiled and analysed data to inform social reformers in guaranteeing them a better “scientific” approach. The study on the work conditions of children could be reinvested in the study of schooling whereas the production of school statistics increased (Travers 1983). The use of statistical charts allowed to reduce social problems to “objective facts”, to locate regularities behind variations of statistical numbers and to explain some mental behaviours. Human conduct was subjected to scientific and quantitative laws which would help psychological science to compile and combine more and more data.

Beyond developing tests to select talents, some ideas were shared in the USA among intellectuals that race and heredity play a fundamental role in the human development. Eugenicists were assuming and advocating restrictive immigration and segregation policies against those they judged unfit. Supporting selective reproduction programmes, they were influent on courts and local authorities while they were requiring sterilization and the dissemination of eugenicist ideas in textbooks and testing practices in schools (Selden 1999). In the UK, eugenicists studied the links between demography and degeneracy and they gave legitimacy to metrics on the quantity and quality of the population (Soloway 1990). It has important consequences in the areas of health and education policies while the Welfare State was elaborating its institutional and legislative frameworks. Issues of protection against diseases, replacement of the working generation, improvement in human capital, fight against waste were discussed whereas new ideas were emerging on economic efficiency and planning, redistribution and social justice in education as well as in other public areas. The *London Schools of Economics* was active in spreading these new conceptions

among scientists, intellectuals and policy-makers and in inventing instruments for a new political arithmetic of inequalities extending social and demographic surveys to educational issues (Normand 2011).

16.3.2 *The Emergency Policy of “Controlled Experiments” and Evidence*

If experts of efficiency expected psychological research developing metrics and comparing student achievement, they also required assessing the impact of different types of policy intervention (Danziger 1994). For the latter, psychologists had to compare groups of students exposed to different programmes (Sharp and Bray 1980). They were subjected to different experimental conditions with measurements taken before and after the intervention. The possibility of exploring the impacts of varied conditions of work within classrooms from outcomes measured by tests was a powerful motive for linking statistical data to experiments. Some studies on groups of treatment emerged in specialized journals, a lot of them dealing mainly with issues of fatigue and learning among students. The “controlled experiment” became a reference for comparing the efficiency of different administrative and political interventions.

Although the official story of “controlled randomized trials” begins with the Fisher’s experiment in agriculture, this technology was adopted before the 1930 in the field of psychology (Dehue 2001). Progressively, the experimental approach was extended to US educational research (Travers 1983). Psychologists, passing contracts with administrators and policy-makers concerned by efficiency, left their laboratories for experiments within local school systems. “Treatments” focused on teaching methods, discipline and punishments, and every teaching and learning behaviours in the classroom. If the *American Journal of Psychology* did not mention much controlled experiments during this period, 14% of the *Journal of Educational Psychology*’s articles were using the method (Danziger 1994).

One of these experiments was led by Thorndike and his student William Anderson McCall. The objective was to randomly assess impacts of fresh or regenerated air on student achievement measured by mental tests. McCall exposed the method in his textbook titled *How to Experiment in Education* (1923). He justified this type of experiments by the economy of dollars for school management. The book presents different methods of controlled experiments and randomization before the publication of Ronald A. Fisher which became a classic (Fisher 1925). But, despite its promising beginnings, the methodology of treatment group and controlled experiment took time to be developed. A certain pessimism surrounded this approach and it suffered from the loss of influence of the movement for efficiency during the 1930s.

Controlled experiments got a new legitimacy during the 1970s while social intervention programmes were discarded in the USA and issues of experiment were coming back. The intervention of the Federal State in social policies and compensa-

tory education programmes was criticized and the diminution of federal expenditures forced public authorities to adopt more short term and narrow interventions. Previous evaluations of these social programmes had been disputed as well as their methodologies (Cook 2000). It provides windows of opportunity for experts advocating new methodologies in metrics. It was the case of Donald T. Campbell who had published in 1969, an influent paper, which was a call for the USA and other nations to adopt “a new experimental approach of social reforms” based on specific treatments of social problems (Campbell 1969). The “true” experiments implied groups of individuals subjected to a treatment and compared to a control group. And if possible, the evaluation of the public policy, to be validated, had to overcome humanitarian and practical objections to expose randomly individuals to treatments during the time of the experiment. It was only for opposed moral reasons that other devices or statistical techniques had to be implemented. “Reforms as experiments” were not the first publication of Campbell, taking McCall as a reference, and he had earlier advocated the idea of extending the “logic of laboratory” to the society. With the statistician Julian C. Stanley, he had published a long chapter titled “experimental and quasi-experimental devices for research on teaching” (Campbell and Stanley 1963). In 1966, this chapter was republished in another book titled *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research* (Campbell and Stanley 1963). This last book was a best-seller promoting a new “standard” for research in social sciences and considering each researcher as the “methodological servant of the experimental society”. In the USA, afterwards, controlled randomized experiments became the “true experiment” and numerous public policies were implemented in education, health and social work following these principles and criteria.

Although the Federal State’s action diminished during the 1970–1980s, Campbell’s ideas were resumed in education by a Right-wing coalition for evidence-based policy who imposed these technologies in US education through an important lobbying beside the Congress (Normand 2016). Inspired by methodologies used in medicine (controlled randomized trials, meta-analyses, systematic reviews of research literature), experiments became a standard for the No Child Left Behind policies (2001) while its principles were resumed by International Organizations and exported in Europe. Evidence-Based Education have been since a reference for policy-making but also New Public Management (Wells 2007). The postulate of developing educational research and practices on “what works” entailed the creation of specialized agencies and international consortiums, such as the Campbell International Collaboration, to produce an influent expertise for policy-makers and putting pressure on researchers and practitioners (Lingard 2013; Trimmer 2016). Controlled randomized trials, largely advocated by economists in education, are today regarded as the “golden rule” for the evaluation of social policies, including education, and for the care of people qualified “at risk”. Controlled experiments and classifications in target-groups became the two pillars of the neo-liberal State’s new modes of social intervention which renounced progressively to universalistic mechanisms of allocation in making individuals accountable for their own behaviours through New Public Management techniques (Cribb and Gewirtz 2012).

16.4 The Politics of Standardization

Standardization allows to build uniformity in time and space in creating common standards and establishing political control on work and communities of practice at a distance (Brunsson et al. 2000). It helps the State and public authorities to compare individuals and groups and to adopt a common language shared by professionals, policy-makers and evaluators. Standards assume a mode of classification and measurement which defines limitations and exclusions in shaping a new policy. They lay on scientific and/or expert conventions and knowledge giving them legitimacy (Busch 2011). Their technicity prevents any reconsideration and controversy particularly when they result in a strong mobilization of expertise in time and space. Indeed, standardization is a policy instrument of power and coercion which effectively replace traditional rules of authority and hierarchy. That is why standards are often claimed on behalf of modernization and modernity which, in overcoming previous regulations, promotes a new Reason. For understanding the foundation and developments of standardization as politics in education, is it useful to consider the US history without forgetting that standards are today globalized through international surveys, the development of assurance-quality mechanisms in education and the promotion of “World Class” schools.

16.4.1 Local Policies, Management of Efficiency and Standardization

Above, we have already shown that in the USA, from 1880s to 1930s, new administrators and policy-makers shared a common expertise and belief in managerial effectiveness thinking that science, based on the systematic collection of data, would be able to create a new educative local and political order (Tyack 1974; Tyack and Hansot 1982). The time of the 3 R (Writing, Reading, Arithmetic) was achieved. All students, according to their innate talents, would be able to acquire standardized knowledge for their success in public education. Administrators wished to promote a new policy based on transparent standards, stratified and hierarchical school organizations, objective criteria to value individual skills. The politics of standardization on behalf of efficiency had to be underpinned by academic research and methods coming from the industrial world.

At that time, the US education debate was split between the Ancients and the Moderns (Cremin 1964). On one side, the generation of Horace Mann and the partisans of the Common School wanted education policy to consolidate the school system on a moral basis in emphasizing civic principles, communitarian consensus and local democracy. On the other side, professionals of management, qualified later as “progressive administrators” or “educative trust”, thought that education policy could be regulated by instruments of scientific progress and expertise guided by the production of standards. They expected “getting out politics from schools” in

subjecting school organization to new engineering (Tyack 1974). In adopting the model of the Taylorian company, school boards, including representatives from different communities, would be replaced by superintendents and managers concerned by effectiveness and the fight against waste in management.

In addition to their proximity with psychologists, progressive administrators were inspired by the scientific management implemented in big industrial companies (Callahan 1962). An effective manager had to collect the maximum of quantitative data to set up policy standards. The purpose was to better know the number of students in each school district, the number of school buildings, test scores, etc. Budgets had to be justified in terms of cost-effective methods. Progressively, these managers and experts imposed their political perspectives on effectiveness and standardization for school curricula. One of their eminent spokesmen, John Franklin Bobbitt, advocated a curriculum policy based on the measurement of efficiency and standards (Callahan 1962). He defined a scientific conception of the curriculum to improve school efficiency and to limit waste. The purpose was to decompose school subjects in precise objectives, then to split them in small units to improve the return of learning and teaching. This policy of standards was resumed by a lot of reformers who were also using psychological research on mental testing.

Considering the developments of the management of efficiency, it is easy to draw parallels with the current New Public Management. They share similarities in providing new opportunities for experts and policy-makers, changing the relationships with local and national authorities and converting professions to new ways of thinking and being accountable through standards (Gunter et al. 2016). They both use Taylorian mechanisms (ex. Quality assurance procedures) and incentives (ex. Performance related-pay) to put pressure and surveillance on educators (Ball 2003). The quest for limiting waste and adopting cost-effective measures is the same even if metrics have been modernized with the development of digital technologies. Rewards and sanctions, according to the meeting of objectives, are constantly a mean to achieve the 3Es: Economy, Efficiency, Effectiveness. What is probably new are the instruments of privatization (contracts, Public-Private Partnerships, outsourcing, etc.) which contribute to weaken and dismantle the Welfare State and the legacy of public authorities (Verger et al. 2016).

16.4.2 Towards an International Policy of Standards and Skills

Even if the movement for efficiency disappeared with the Second World War, the USA sought to maintain their quest for standards. Ralph Tyler, who was one of the psychologists converting IQ tests in knowledge and skills tests was at the root of an attempt of standardization and comparison of student knowledge during the 1960s (Finder 2004). The Kennedy-Johnson administration asked him to develop metrics on poverty in education. From 1964 to 1968, the ECAPE project (*Exploratory Committee on Assessing the Progress of Education*) gathered congress members, interest groups (notably Carnegie and Ford Foundations), representatives of US

States to design and develop the first federal assessment policy based on standards in school curricula (Lehmann 2004). Tests had to cover reading, English, mathematics and sciences, to diagnose strengths and weaknesses in the US education system. In fact, policy-makers were worried by the decline of standards in high schools after the launching of the Soviet Sputnik. It was urgent to train gifted scientists and engineers and to be more rigorous and demanding for curricula in sciences and mathematics. In 1968, the provisory committed became the NAEP (*National Assessment of Educational Progress*) and the first assessments of students was launched.

But there was pressure from the States to limit the extent of federal policy and the use of data was restricted as well as the follow-up of student progress. It is only after the publication of the report *A Nation at Risk* (1983) that the federal government paid attention again to the NAEP which was not producing any comparison between states. Its political and technical structure was completely revised and the US congress appointed a committee (the NAGB: *National Assessment Governing Board*) to develop standards on school achievement, to design tests, to publish scores and to ensure their dissemination at federal level. Since, NAEP assessments has become the benchmarking policy of US students' achievement particularly after the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) (Hursh 2007). The NAGB benefited from the expertise of the Education Testing Service, an agency specialized in the design of tests, created at its beginning by the US Navy to redefine the SAT (the test of entrance for prestigious US colleges) (Lehman 2001).

During the 1980s, while US political pressure on OECD was enhanced to develop and extend international surveys, the NAEP served as a reference for revising the first IEA surveys on mathematics. The *Assessment of Mathematics and Sciences* (IAEP) reused the NAEP items whereas the Education Testing Service imposed progressively its expertise for designing the PISA project. The survey was achieved during three cycles in 2000, 2003 and 2006 aiming to measure student skills at age 15 in reading, mathematics, and sciences. While PISA was resuming the methodological components of the NAEP, the IEA, and the ETS created a consortium (the IERI or *IEA-ETS Research Institute*) to develop research and analyses from international surveys, to train researchers and experts in these issues, and to disseminate standards worldwide. This policy of standards is today disaggregated at school level, with the survey PISA for Schools, and data serve to recommend best practices to potentially failing schools or to those who want to reach a global rank (Lewis 2017).

16.5 Conclusion

We have characterized three concomitating operations in metrics for education policy. Classification, by bringing things closer and ordering the world, make educative facts intelligible while it builds a truth of representation which shapes and guides

politics, particularly from knowledge produced by statistics and the collection of data. Experiments, in leaving laboratory and developing itself at large scale, allow to build statistical series used by experimental psychology and economics to qualify and classify populations according to different features and variables, and to prepare Post-Welfare State politics. While medicine serves as a reference, in education as well as in other areas of social policy, randomized controlled trials legitimize experiments as a cardinal principle positioning it above other methodologies used to produce knowledge. Metrics serve for building large bank of data on “what work” from which algorithmic treatments are considered as sufficient to establish evidence-based reformist proposals. Standardization is a policy by which, from metrics, the universe of practices is harmonized and subjected to standards or “best practices” denying cultural and contextual differences.

If metrics as politics is born with the development of administration of education and it concerns for efficiency, they are also technologies for governing school populations at large scale. In a time of globalization, New Public Management has adjusted Taylorian tools in modernizing them, experimental economics and cognitive sciences have discarded eugenicist assumptions from bio-economics and mental testing psychology, but a same rationalist and scientist temptation remains as it is shown by the success met by evidence-based policies. The process of instrumental Reason, as proved by this short history of the present, is a permanent quest for objectivity and truth through political claims which are constantly disclaimed by the irreducibility of human nature numbers or data (Biesta 2007). In this doomed attempt of reducing contingency and uncertainty to metrics, education politics paradoxically underpins sciences of government which narrows the range of possibilities for action and the plurality of individual and collective choices (Thévenot 2007). Subjected to control and reinforced surveillance by the sophistication of assumed perfectible tools, human beings must confront their potentialities and capacities to what is measurable at the expense of sacrificing their autonomy and self-fulfillment. This subjection of education to the government by numbers limits also the possibility to consider other forms of moral agency beyond figures of individual responsibility and expressions of competitive choice. At the end, it seems these John Dewey's ideas have been completely forgotten by the apologists of metrics:

(...) moral equality cannot be conceived on the basis of legal, political and economic arrangements. For all of these are bound to be classificatory; to be concerned with uniformities and statistical averages. Moral equality means incommensurability, the inapplicability of common and quantitative standards. It means intrinsic qualities which require unique opportunities and differential manifestation; superiority in finding a specific work to do, not in power for attaining ends common to a class of competitors, which is bound to result in putting a premium on mastery of others. Our best, almost our only, models of this kind of activity are found in art and science. There are indeed minor poets and painters and musicians. But the real standard of art is not comparative, but qualitative. Art is not greater and less, it is good or bad, sincere or spurious. Not many intellectual workers are called to be Aristotes or Newtons or Pasteurs or Einsteins. But every honest piece of inquiry is distinctive, individualized; it has its own incommensurable quality and performs its own unique service. (Dewey 1922)

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Chapter 17

An Anthropological Approach to Education Policy as a Practice of Power: Concepts and Methods



Bradley A. Levinson, Teresa Winstead, and Margaret Sutton

Since the introduction to our 2001 edited volume, *Policy as Practice: Toward a Comparative Sociocultural Analysis of Education Policy* (Sutton and Levinson 2001), we have continued to sketch the foundational postulates of a critical anthropological approach to the study of education policy. In 2009, we expanded and deepened many of the points from that introduction, more systematically introducing and defining theoretical terms, and providing a bit of their intellectual genealogy (Levinson et al. 2009). We also discussed certain methodological considerations that accompanied the theoretical approach, and we argued for a type of engaged educational anthropology that goes beyond the mere “study” of education policy to its democratization and transformation. Here we provide an updated synopsis of our approach.

Certainly, our approach bears many resemblances to a host of qualitative approaches to analyzing education policy that have emerged in recent years. Such approaches are all generally characterized by fine-grained accounts of how education policy gets shaped by educational authorities and then interpreted and implemented, often in unintended ways, by a myriad of actors and institutions. We align ourselves with a specifically **critical** take on policy as a practice of power and a tool of governing that entails both domination and resistance (Levinson et al. 2011). Our approach is arguably distinctive in the emphasis we place on three particular elements, which we shall describe in turn: (1) the historical, holistic, and cross-cultural insights that an anthropological lens brings to our understanding of policy as a practice of power; (2) the centrality of a non-dualistic and agentic conception of appropriation in social practice, and (3), an emphasis on social scientific knowledge

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produced democratically—as much for various civic publics as for scholarly communities, in addition to those we call “authorized” policymakers.

17.1 Anthropological Foundations

Arguably more than any other field, anthropology demands that we understand any contemporary social phenomenon in the context of history and the illuminating prism of cross-cultural diversity. What this means practically for our case here is that we must constantly examine and decenter our common assumptions about what “policy” is or does. Policy has only entered the English vernacular within the last 100 years or so, yet it is now invoked across a wide array of social and political contexts, and it has developed numerous variants and cognates in other world languages. So the first step is to realize that policy as both an English word and (post) modern tool of governance has a particular history and a particular cultural location. We can trace its origins most broadly to the Enlightenment’s emphasis on rational social engineering, and over the course of the twentieth century to an increasingly technocratic rendering of liberal democratic governance; we can also trace its spread more recently through other languages and societies, both of the ethno-national and popular kind, where it often acquires new usages and inflections. Indeed, it was only when Levinson’s young daughters used the term “policy” to describe the rules they had created for an invented walking game, “Don’t Step on the Sidewalk Cracks,” that the full scope of its use became apparent.

So what is this thing we call policy, which gets promulgated and negotiated amongst supranational organizations, nation-state provinces, grade-school play-groups, and seemingly everything in between? What are its common traits? We think it best to define policy as a complex, ongoing social practice of normative discursive cultural production constituted by diverse actors across diverse contexts. The resulting *normative cultural discourse* has positive and negative sanctions, that is, a set of organizing principles about how things should or must be done, with corresponding inducements or punishments. Such a discourse may or may not be formalized and codified (it could be stated or unstated, explicit or implicit, *de jure* or *de facto*). In every case, though, it crucially presupposes a view of how things “are”—a model of the world that is being organized, as it were—and how they “should be.” In order to solve practical and existential problems, policy thus *defines reality, organizes behavior, and allocates resources* accordingly.

The anthropological lens insists on policy being a kind of link between the discursive practices comprising larger-scale structures of law and governance and the discursive practices of normative organizing and control in any local-level site or community. Policy, then, lives in the liminal space between cultural norms and laws; it is more actively codified perhaps than norms, less binding and coercive than laws. Importantly, policy organizes social settings whose actors may have quite different levels of awareness or agreement about how they are being organized. The adult who makes a living teaching second grade and the seven-year-old in her

second grade class may not understand the world all that similarly, nor agree on what is supposed to happen in the social environment they share, but they are both nonetheless organized by policy.

Important work in the fields of political and legal anthropology can clarify our approach here. Indeed, what we've just described as the liminal space where norms are transformed or codified has been the focus of the field of legal anthropology, and its evolving concept of legal pluralism. The concept of legal pluralism takes the connections *between* multiple legal systems seriously by focusing on the dialectical relationship between state systems of legal order and other normative social orders, usually at the tribal or community level. Sally Falk Moore ([1973](#)) describes how laws or policies operate in a *semi-autonomous social field* which

...can generate rules and customs internally, but that...is also vulnerable to rules and decisions and other forces emanating from the larger world by which it is surrounded. The semi-autonomous social field has rule-making capacities, and the means to induce or coerce compliance; but it is simultaneously set in a larger social matrix which can, and does, affect and invade it, sometimes at its own instance. (p. 720)

Moore's work speaks to the multi-locality of the practice of policy, and echoes our emphasis on policy as a practice of power as well as a vehicle for potential resistance. Her work calls our attention to both the larger dynamics, created by state-enforceable law, that create and organize social life, and the smaller dynamics—the uncodified orders and scripts or the implicit rules for engagement in a particular social context—operating in between larger social forces. She reminds us that these ordering principles, large and small, are interconnected and cannot be separated in our efforts to understand how law and policy organize social life. Even when policy actors are appropriating policy, acting in informal spaces, and resisting the coercive power of more official forms of policy, they do so within the larger social matrix.

17.2 Practice, Practice, Practice

As we hope to have shown by now, anthropology helps to decenter the seeming naturalness and “normalcy” of policy in the current historical moment. It enables us to question our taken-for-granted sense of policy. We further suggest that the way to unpack policy analytically is to see it as a kind of social *practice*—specifically, a practice of wielding power in modern forms of governance. What might it mean to take policy as social practice? How can we put action and agency back into a seemingly static policy text and conceptualize the entire policy process as a complex set of interdependent sociocultural practices? How might we look *beyond* text to examine critically the ways in which official, top-down policy practices are negotiated, contested, accommodated, or transformed in action?

Even though policy most often takes the form of discourse, or text, we prefer to put this form into motion and always analyze it as one reified instance of a broad

chain of sociocultural practices. On the one hand, policy as normative discourse may be what we call officially “authorized”—that is, backed by enforcement mechanisms of government, organizational, or corporate charter. On the other hand, policy may also develop in more spontaneous and informal fashion, outside the agencies or offices that are officially authorized to make explicit policy. Those subject to the vertical or diffuse power of authorized policy may well assert their own power in response. In either case, policy may be documented and codified, or it may exist in “unwritten” form, through ongoing institutional memory and practice.

In every instance, policy formation is best conceived as a practice of wielding power. Such a practice of power may be more or less democratic, depending on the ways that power elites are formed and legitimated, and the ways that publics are constituted to participate (or not) in policy formation. In its most common and visible forms, authorized policy under advanced capitalism is preeminently modern, characterized often by a rationalist calculus and a representative democratic veneer. Despite the rise of supranational organizations under globalization, the modern state apparatus, of course, is still the supreme authorizer of policy. And state “public policy,” especially, manages to obfuscate its reality as a highly political form because it is effectively disguised by seemingly “objective, neutral, legal-rational idioms” (Shore and Wright 1997).

From the 1950s forward, traditional policy studies, influenced heavily by the political and economic sciences, have focused on the strategic conditions for policy formation and implementation, as well as methods for analyzing policy impact. We problematize this emphasis and foreground instead the social practice that goes into the *formation, negotiation, and appropriation* of policy. A processual practice approach takes less for granted about the presumed rationality of “problem identification” in the formation of authorized policy. It looks more closely, instead, at the social arenas where the interests and languages comprising a normative policy discourse get negotiated into some politically and culturally viable form.

The concept of *negotiation*, of course, has an overt political reference, and we mean to recognize that authorized policy *does* often get “negotiated” between opposing parties and interests. However we also wish to highlight the term’s socio-cultural sense, that is, as a way to account for the processes of meaning-making. In addition to possibly negotiating a “deal,” authorized policymakers negotiate a complex field of meanings and understandings. According to this anthropological perspective, the making of meaning is fundamental to social action, and meaning is therefore always “negotiated” in social life; values are never fixed but rather are contingent on the mobilization of meaning in specific situations. For us, the negotiation of meaning is always a part of policy formation, whether or not actual political negotiation was involved; in other words, the process of normative cultural production requires an active negotiation of meaning.

Beyond the process of policy formation itself, the negotiation of meaning occurs across and within the various institutional and organizational sites where policy flows and takes shape. Instead of using the term implementation to analyze this process, we propose the concept of *appropriation*, which places emphasis on how social actors take something initially external to their social context and make sense

of it. Appropriation is a concept that has a complex history. It has been developed and used in the work of Marxist phenomenologist Agnes Heller, cultural studies of the media, Bakhtinian discourse analysis, legal scholarship on intellectual property rights, and so forth. Across these various traditions, appropriation denotes how the individual or the group reshapes and resignifies in practice some previously existing cultural artifact. Appropriation thus refers to the way that creative agents interpret and “take in” elements of policy, thereby incorporating these discursive resources into their own schemes of interest, motivation, and action, their own “figured worlds” (Holland et al. 1998).

The study of policy appropriation has tended to highlight later moments of the policy process, when the authorized text or “policy signal” circulates, by various means, across the various institutional contexts to which it applies. Admittedly, our earlier work has been read as suggesting that there is an originating policy formation process, with appropriation only taking place during later stages of an implementation cycle (Nielsen 2011). However, we wish to emphasize that appropriation, like negotiation, takes place during processes of authorized policy formation as well. We insist that authorized policymakers are appropriating discourses and narratives through their own practice of power. Appropriation thus should not only be used to characterize the actions of the so-called implementers of a policy that has been formed officially. Rather, appropriation is always part of the practice of power in authorized policy formation, too. It may be that authorized policymakers are freer to selectively adapt, borrow, invent, dissimulate, or otherwise manipulate their policy ideas, but they are appropriating them from *somewhere*, not nowhere.¹ As we say, it’s practice all the way down, up, and through the social world. It’s also resignification all the way down, up, and through.

The concept of appropriation is vitally linked with a broader conception of *social and cultural practice* that in recent years has come to invigorate the human sciences. We see two primary streams of work comprising such “practice theory.” On the one hand, sociological and anthropological theorists such as Giddens (1979, 1984, 1991), Bourdieu (1977, 1990a, b), Connell (1983, 1987), and Ortner (2006) have developed conceptions of practice to resolve perennial antinomies between structure and agency, or society and the individual. In their accounts, social practice is the “site” or “moment” where structure and agency, individual and society, mutually constitute one another. Meanwhile, out of psychology, work on “situated cognition” and “activity theory” has tried to resolve similar antinomies between “mind” and society, or cognition and environment. Influenced by the Russian sociohistorical tradition, especially represented by Lev Vygotsky, theorists such as James Wertsch (1991), Michael Cole (1996), and Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991) have articulated powerful new models of human thinking and learning that account fully for the inherent and emergent social properties of mind. Together these approaches serve to remind us that education policy is simultaneously “inside and outside” of

¹ See, for instance, the burgeoning literature on global policy borrowing and the “global education industry” (Steiner-Khamsi 2004; Verger et al. 2016).

the educators and students who enact it. As participants in an educational system, we can often more easily identify the external signs of policy than those deeply internalized, so our work may need to tack back and forth between visible policy signals and the way such signals get organized as implicit cultural knowledge and then manifest in behavior. Moreover, structures of power, like policy, are not merely imposed from without but often subtly instantiated in everyday belief and practice (Levinson et al. 2011).

By the same token, we cannot say in each instance that policy appropriation by non-authorized actors recursively links back to, or influences, authorized policy formation. Some critics of our work have said that our emphasis on the recursive nature of social practice, and how unauthorized actors form their own localized policies in their own spheres of action, runs the risk of “flattening” our understanding of the full policy process and overstating the power of unauthorized actors to “make policy.” To be sure, we need to keep in mind the distinction between official, authorized policy formation (conducted by elected and appointed officials, bureaucrats, etc.) and the unofficial practices of unauthorized actors, like teachers. We can’t remain innocent of the very real power that authorized policymakers have, and we can’t wax too optimistic about the ability of non-authorized actors to influence consequentially the ongoing formation of official policy. These are empirical questions and matters, to be investigated through research.

Indeed, recent work in the field shows quite trenchantly how even the notion of **who** is authorized, or in **what** authorization consists, is often deeply contested (Lashaw 2018; Sandler 2018). The social dynamics of policy authorization cannot be taken for granted, or simply ascribed to dominant state and corporate actors. Moreover, Bruno Latour’s Actor Network Theory draws our attention increasingly to the role of nonhuman and even nonliving “actors” in the “emergence” of policy (Koyama 2018). Until now, our analytic move has been to theorize the agency of non-authorized actors, to recognize where such agency has progressive consequences, and to explore the conditions that enable interaction between authorized and non-authorized policymakers such that authorized policy that has been ill-conceived or undemocratically imposed can be effectively contested or changed. Yet this more recent work challenges us to keep expanding our understanding of agency, and to stay attuned to the complications of power, especially in collaborative, action-oriented policy studies.

17.3 A Brief Example

Winstead’s recent work, on Indigenous education policy in the state of Washington, U.S.A. (Winstead 2014), provides an example of the multiple meanings differently positioned policy actors may make in the policy process. In this example, some of the state policy makers understood the policy initiative—to include Indigenous

history in high school graduate requirements (HB 1495)²—as based on recognition of the inherent sovereignty and the long political history of the tribes in this region. Another group of policy actors negotiated and interpreted the meaning of the same policy in a different way. Utilizing a liberal multicultural lens, these policy makers understood the objective of the policy as an imperative to incorporate Indigenous history into “the story” of the state’s history. They were advised to delay action on it because legal advisors saw it as a potential precedent for other minority groups’ curriculum to be included in the official policy lexicon. Analysis of the transformation of this bill as it passed through the legislative process, coupled with ethnographic interviews with the policy actors who held competing visions of the purposes of the bill, revealed the complexity of the intersection of state education policy, Indigenous and non-Indigenous understandings of sovereignty, and broader efforts to decolonize American Indian education. We think this example illustrates how the policy process plays out as a complex set of interdependent sociocultural practices informed by differing sociopolitical scripts for meaning-making and cultural appropriation.

In addition, thinking in this way, like the legal pluralists who inform our approach (Merry 1992; Moore 1973; de Sousa Santos 1987), focuses our attention on how unequal but mutually constitutive legal orders interact. This approach is particularly well suited to the study of the relationship between federal and state legal processes and those of subordinate groups: in this case, Indigenous advocates for the inclusion of tribal history in public school curriculum. Situating the proposal made by HB 1495 within this nexus of structural arrangements, it becomes clearer that the initial failure of the bill (in its first form as HB 2406) and the eventual amendment of the bill to remove the mandatory teaching of native history in Washington, can be understood as a process influenced by hegemonic forces of ideological reproduction. That is, teaching native history (as HB 1495 promotes) is counter-hegemonic, and using the lens of practice theory, in the way we suggest here, helps to identify and explain why this legislation evolved in the way it did.

Santos identifies the ways in which law operates like a system of signs that represent and distort reality “through the mechanisms of scale, projection, and symbolization” (de Sousa Santos 1987: 297). In following Santos’ argument, Merry (1992) points out that this approach prompts research which asks questions about the degree to which the dominant system is able to control the subordinate, and to what extent and how subordinate systems evade, resist, or “invade” the dominant system.

When two legal world views interact, radically different views of what constitutes proper government-to-government relations—especially between Native and non-Native individuals—can result. This makes communication about policy intentions fraught with potential misunderstanding, which may be due to differences that are related both to ideological and culturally constituted commitments. A policy as practice approach considers these related factors about how policy actors involved

²HB, or “House Bill” 1495 (2005) is commonly referred to in Washington State as “The Tribal History and Culture Bill” and can be accessed here: <http://lawfilesextract.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2005-06/Pdf/Bills/House%20Passed%20Legislature/1495-S.PL.pdf5>.

in the passage and implementation of H.B. 1495 fit within the ideological and hegemonic structure of the social world, and how that impacts the potential for success of the policy in terms of its goals to foster student success, educate the public, and facilitate government to government relations.

Much of the logic from the state policy apparatus focused on the need to maintain local control over curriculum at the district and school level, and the risk to the integrity of the policy lexicon in terms of representation of one minority group in the state's required curricular content. The rationale for changing the policy from a mandate to an "encouragement," in public testimony and interviews with policy actors, was that the legislature did not possess *the authority to change HS graduation requirements, because Washington is a local control state*. Policy makers at the State Board of Education were concerned that granting this request would "pave the way" for additional requests of this kind from every minority group in the state. That is, they viewed the tribal reform initiative primarily through a *liberal multicultural framework*, and secondarily through a framework recognizing the political sovereignty of tribal nations (see Table 17.1). Senator McAuliffe, the chair of the Senate Education Committee, responded to this testimony by explaining why the language was changed from mandate to encouragement. This explanation is the only one that is offered throughout the discussion of the bill:

The reason we changed Section 3 and have the State Board of Education considering tribal history and culture in the graduation requirements is because the State Board of Education is responsible for graduation requirements, so rather than have the legislature dictate what would be required it is the State Board of Education's responsibility, so we have given it to them to make due requirements... and that's their job... So, it really didn't weaken it, it just sent it to the right body. [Public Testimony, Senate Education Committee, March 25, 2005]

This moment in the process of the evolution of the legislation is pivotal because McAuliffe's perspective points to the official policy reasoning behind the movement

Table 17.1 Policy actors' perspectives on HB 1495

Policy actors (non-native)	Policy actors/indigenous education advocates (native and non-native)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureaucratic resistance to mandate (against representation in the policy lexicon) • Rationale: Adherence to rules and limits of authority • Student Achievement • Graduation rates • Hospitality • Social justice/"right thing to do" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support of mandate (for representation in policy lexicon) • Rationale: Political recognition/sovereignty • Student Identity and Achievement • Bias/Stereotype Reduction • Relationship building between tribes and non-Indian Institutions and communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ≠ Mandate → Local Control, which prevents the state from favoring one minority in graduation requirements over other minority groups • <i>Multicultural framework</i> • Emphasis on <i>legal authority</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ≠ Mandate → Local Control, which supports authentic relationship building between schools and tribes • Representation of Sovereign nation framework • Emphasis on <i>relationship building</i>

from mandate to encouragement; it also points to the bureaucratic vision that this legislative body has about how legislative authority should be used in this case. Senator McAuliffe, here, indicates that this is really the best and only option that they, the authorized policy makers have, to achieve the intentions of the bill, because this falls under the authority of the State Board of Education.

The contrasting framework was promoted by advocates for HB 1495, and emphasized, among other things, the inherent sovereignty of the tribes, and the need for relationship building between tribes and state agencies and school districts (see Table 17.1). This perspective is illustrated in the following quote from Representative McCoy, the bill's sponsor, who introduced the policy's intention to the House Education Committee during a pre-legislative working group:

There are 29 sovereign Indian nations within the state of Washington; each one has a unique and powerful history to bring to the state of Washington, and you have heard me say over and over again if it wasn't for the Stevens treaties this state would have a different complexion...

And we have identified a need, the need to have this history and culture taught in the schools not only to bring forward our history into the school system but also to bring forward the cultural diversity that we have been talking about all day into the school systems...

Because we realize you are not going anywhere, and we are not going anywhere, and it is going to take everybody in the whole community to be successful and that's what we are here about...The tribal leaders will have some specific ideas about how to improve the relationship between the legislature and the tribes...Thank you. [House Education Committee Work session, December 1, 2004]

McCoy's summary is a direct address to non-Native policy makers, and points to the friction between the process-oriented request for the inclusion of indigenous history and culture into the official policy framework, and a more robust political request, for tribes to fully participate in the policy process.

The way indigenous history was initially handled as a possible state-sanctioned addition to Washington curriculum was not arbitrary. It is directly related to the presumptions of the state, and the room allowed for indigenous content in official state policy spaces. This is the logic written by the settler colonial history of this country,³ which underwrites the narratives of American education policies. These narratives delimit the normative range within which conversations about indigenous education can occur. They do not, as such, operate as fully written dominant narratives, but there is a sense in which the Bourdieuan *douxia* (1990a, 1990b)—that which is taken for granted—of the state policy-making field does not admit indigenous agendas into its lexicon or narrative record easily. Each phase of the debate about the inclusion of indigenous education in Washington common schools leaves its mark and contributes to the next phase of coordinated attempts to challenge the state's exclusion of indigenous history into the graduation requirements in Washington State's common schools.

³For more on settler colonial theory, see these recent books: (Veracini 2010; Wolfe 1999).

17.4 Beyond Provocation: Some Final Notes on Methodology and a Democratic Ethics

Until now, much of what we have argued would hold true across many different types and domains of policy: education, but also health, economic, environmental, and so forth. But there is something about education that makes it singularly fraught as a field of human endeavor. Education is universally practiced and deeply intimate. It encompasses the production and transmission of cultural knowledge across generations, and it serves as the crucible by which human beings learn to make their way in the world, first and foremost in the company of kin. Everyone educates, but only some become professional educators, and therein lays the rub. The professionalization of education and the historical rise of schooling as a political tool of the state bring large-scale structural imperatives into the bosom of the family, so to speak. Official state education policy attempts to reach into and organize the family/community and its enculturation of the self. It often does so in pursuit of national “unity” or “security” or “development,” not to mention the specific interests of dominant groups in reproducing the status quo. To speak, then, of democratizing education policy is to envision the ways that ordinary people across a society’s structured inequalities can gain a greater measure of control over their children’s education and challenge insidious forms of assimilation or social reproduction.

Yet even as we offer such a formulation, we must be wary of our penchant for romanticized localism. Just as the state does not always reproduce inequality, local groups do not always liberate themselves or a broader public. Parents and communities, alas, do not always act in their own children’s best interests (Lashaw 2018). An obstinate emphasis on local control or the superiority of local cultural knowledge can lead to the dismissal of valuable, even crucial forms of knowledge offered by schools. There is, after all, good reason for the professionalization of schoolteachers. Thus, education policy democratization goes both ways. Yes, it stands for the promise of empowering parents and other local actors—including teachers themselves, who are rarely consulted—to have a much greater voice in state-level policy formation. But it also means that professional educators must be willing to dialogue with children and parents and community leaders, to temper their assertion of professional privilege with a dose of humility. And it also means that students and their parents must commit to the public good and measure their own particular interests against that yardstick.

We would like to use the distinguished anthropologist Michael Herzfeld as a bit of a foil here to argue for an anthropology of education policy that regularly goes beyond critique and provocation. In the preface to his 2001 book, *Anthropology: Theoretical Practice in Culture and Society*, Herzfeld says that he offers a model for a “critical engagement with the world” (p. x). Such engagement, he says, may take many forms, from critique of policy or professional practice, to “ethnographically oriented phenomenology” (p. x). Most tellingly, Herzfeld argues that anthropology is a “provocation, not a prescription: that is the kind of teaching that anthropology offers, which is why it is so disapproved by normativists of all stripes—official

ideologues, econometric modelers, champions of western (or any other) cultural dominance” (p. xi). To be sure, anthropology can and should play a powerful role in social critique and “provocation,” but we don’t wish to leave it at that. After all, not all “normativists” can be so neatly painted in diabolical terms—some of them are democratic socialists in municipal government, or progressive school reformers and school superintendents, or teacher educators. Some of them, by golly, are *us*!!

So the question that emerges is not whether the anthropology of education should “prescribe” policy changes based on its research; after all, such a move would be presumptuous, and violates our understanding of the importance of context. But in between provocation and prescription, there is the option to provide knowledge that is *normatively digestible*. In other words, the anthropology of education can offer knowledge that is politically and administratively feasible and actionable. If not, there is something all too comfortable about occupying the space of critique in the academy; we either tend to exaggerate the potential power and influence of academic critique, or we wallow, frankly, in a kind of smug self-righteousness about how we can *really* see what’s going on behind people’s backs. Through the way we write and speak, we may reproduce the self-fulfilling prophecy of our own irrelevance to broader worlds of policy and practice, and come to feel comfortable and even *superior* in that irrelevance.

We also mustn’t forget that there’s a whole world of practicing educational anthropologists beyond the academy, and they don’t have the luxury of producing knowledge only for critique (Schensul 2011). But for those of us who *are* located in the academy: What happens when we venture into the messy world of policy, practice, and governance, where we can’t just critique but must *propose*, if not prescribe? What happens when we align ourselves with social movements in outright advocacy or activism? What risks can we take, and what risks *should* we take? More to the point, how can a new, fundamentally ethnographic approach to research on “policy as a practice of power” contribute to democratizing policy formation, in which policy elites must necessarily understand local knowledge and engage local stakeholders, and in which local policy production can be catalyzed? In sum, if policy is a practice of power—that is, of defining reality and organizing behavior—then how can ethnography be a practice of questioning dominant definitions, preferring alternative ones, and reorganizing (transforming?) behavior and society?

The path toward answering these questions, we argue, must be walked with an eclectic, pragmatic vision, informed by values of inclusivity and respect. Such a vision expands the purview of participation and justice in a liberal representative democracy, by making it more possible for a greater variety of voices and perspectives to take part in *deliberation*, and to be *represented* in the formation of authorized policy. Yet we also recognize and critique the limitations of representative democracy and see ethnography as contributing to the empowerment of historically subordinated people, helping to expand the reach of participatory democracy (Sader 2005) by catalyzing popular agency and knowledge for creative policy appropriation and production. In particular, the anthropology of education policy enables us to insert knowledge into different circuits of appropriation and social mobilization. At a time when democracy is threatened worldwide by a neoliberal agenda of

corporate power (Graeber 2009; Kirsch 2014) and the marketization of public resources (Brown 2005; Giroux 2015), critical policy appropriation can bolster the agency of local groups and institutions struggling to restore or expand public power.

In our own field of educational anthropology, there are far too many promising examples of such work to adequately cite. The pioneering work done by Norma González and her collaborators on “funds of knowledge” (Gonzalez et al. 2011) has acted to democratize the prospects for Mexican American student empowerment in Arizona and elsewhere. The deficit perspective informing most school curriculum policy is challenged by the demonstration of rich student and familial funds of knowledge. Angela Valenzuela’s work in the Texas legislature (Lopez et al. 2011) shows how we can intervene with specific ethnographic knowledge to alter important policy debates and reconfigure the calculus of educational resource distribution; it also shows how we can undertake action-oriented ethnography to better understand and change the limits of democratic representation in such policymaking bodies. In a different sphere, pioneers in participatory action research with youth (Ginwright et al. 2006) show how policy can be questioned, destabilized, and in some cases changed democratically through sustained and passionate inquiry. Finally, in Levinson’s work on Mexican secondary reform, his talks and writings across various educational constituencies in that country have attempted to foster greater input and consideration of teachers’, parents’, and students’ voices in the policy process (Levinson 2007, 2008; Levinson et al. 2013). Levinson thereby strives to insert his research findings into the struggle between a neoliberal project of so-called accountability and standardization and a long-lived popular project for democratization from below.

We wish to expand the space of the public—and speak to that public, not just to policy elites. Like some authors (Walters 2000), we believe it is crucial to question the privileged status of scientific or expert views and to reinvigorate public involvement in the policy process. The work of critical ethnographers (Carspecken 1995; Madison 2011) is similarly conscious of power and democracy, and in effect, we also wish to redefine the goals of interpretive research—away from a strictly academic practice of theory development, or an academic practice of “influencing” authorized policy, and toward engagement with the aims of democratic social movements (Appadurai 2000). Such scholarship for popular democracy may well have as one of its goals the development of a cultural critique, theorizing the way that “controlling processes” (Nader 1995) limit and blunt the full possibilities for democratic participation. Yet an anthropology of education policy may also contribute knowledge to alternative democratic projects, to educational efforts aimed at creating plural “counterpublics” for a democratic renaissance (Benhabib 1996; Fraser 1989).

We also relate our approach to the earlier discourse, originally introduced by Laura Nader (1969) about studying “up” the power structure versus studying down. A policy as practice approach takes seriously the need for critical work that “studies up” and uncovers the strategies and mechanisms at work in elite, authorized policy formation processes. Such knowledge can then be circulated to democratic actors situated in other social domains, and in social movements, to foster greater accountability and strategic mobilization. Yet equally important is work that “studies down”

to understand how marginalized, powerless groups, not authorized to make official policy, nonetheless create policy variants through their appropriation of authorized policy. Finally, we must study “through” and “across” both horizontally and institutionally linked groups and organizations, such as the intermediaries studied by Ted Hamann and Brett Lane (2004).

Lesley Bartlett and Frances Vavrus’ (2017) brilliant approach to comparative case study, which urges attention to the “horizontal,” “vertical,” and “transversal” dimensions of education policy processes, provides a comprehensive methodological and meta-theoretical companion to our work here. Like them, we argue for a continual redefinition of the ethnographic “field” away from the earlier conceits of “bounded” cases and places. Because policy is fundamentally a normative discourse, and often intends to order or control relations between groups that may occupy very different social spaces and scales, research must be “multi-sited” and “multi-scalar,” attuned to the production, flow, and appropriation of reified texts across time and place. The new “field” of qualitative research is thus neither the traditional community nor institution, but rather a constellation of social sites, contexts, and networks. To be sure, many of these social sites may be parallel in status (e.g., a set of similar schools that are all subject to the same policy), and thus lend themselves to what Bartlett and Vavrus call horizontal comparison, or what we have called a *comparative latitudinal* approach that enables a kind of sampling of forms of policy appropriation (for instance, Levinson’s strategy in his recent work in Mexico (Levinson et al. 2013), or Winstead’s (2014) work tracking policy artifacts through state legislative processes in Washington State).

Similarly, “vertical” analysis calls attention to policy processes that cross scales of power and governance. There are many techniques for conducting qualitative research across scales: these include observational and interview work in a range of interconnected social sites across such scales (e.g., international organizations, national education ministries, regional education authorities, and individual schools or classrooms).⁴ At the very least, vertical analysis calls for attunement to the structuring power of policy processes that are scaled up and out, even when we are engaged primarily in rather local data collection. Correspondingly, we urge new research practices of institutional and discursive *mapping*, in which policy language is traced across documents (Lester et al. 2017), and in which graphic representations are made of the quality and density of actual relations between institutions and actors that produce policy, and those that appropriate it.⁵

Finally, we believe that now more than ever, attention to the historical structuring of policy processes (what Bartlett and Vavrus call “transversal” analysis) is critical. This can range from the long *dure * to a more compact (3–20 years) unfolding of policy. For the latter, *longitudinal* research designs are necessary to capture the

⁴ See for instance the recent study by Remstad Hook on how global human rights discourses for educational transformation get appropriated and enacted from international organizations all the way through national, regional, and school-level contexts in Peru (Hook 2018).

⁵ This can take the form of social network analysis or approaches like Stephen Ball’s to networked policy (Ball 2012).

fullness of the policy process. When possible, the researcher ought to be present at the early stages of policy formation to observe the relations and interests that emerge; if this is not possible, the practice of policy formation can be reconstructed through qualitative interviewing. Then, depending on the policy in question, the research design should include at least a 3–4 years investigation of the “life” of the policy as it gets implemented across various sites. Such a minimal time frame would enable better understanding of the processual aspects, the unanticipated twists and turns, of policy appropriation; it would bring into view the possible recursive aspects of policy appropriation, which may eventuate in modifications to the authorized policies themselves (i.e., as a form of “policy learning”); and it would foster the forging of deep relationships between the researcher and the subjects of policy, to facilitate the researcher’s role as mediator and translator in policy democratization.

Taken as a whole, such a research agenda can move us beyond provocation and critique. Methodological innovation, long-term commitment, and knowledge for advocacy and democratic policy (re)formation: these are crucial ingredients in any recipe for progressive education reform.

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Chapter 18

Statistics Reasoning and Its “Acting” in Educational Policy



Thomas S. Popkewitz and Sverker Lindblad

In an important book about numbers and social affairs, Theodore Porter (1995) begins by asking: “How are we to account for the prestige and power of quantitative methods in the modern world? How is it that what was used for studying stars, molecules and cells would have attraction for human societies?” To consider these questions, Porter continues that only a small proportion of numbers or quantitative expressions have any pretence of describing laws of nature or “even of providing complete and accurate descriptions of the eternal world” (Porter 1995: viii–ix). Numbers, he argues, are parts of systems of communication whose technologies create distances from phenomena by appearing to summarize complex events and transactions. The objectivity of numbers appears as mechanical, following a priori rules that project fairness and impartiality, numbers are seen as excluding judgment and mitigating subjectivity.

The importance of numbers to contemporary societies is easy to demonstrate, ironically, by citing numbers. In the post World War Two years, American educational research iterated the hopes and fears of society through schools through statistics. The statistical narratives spoke of the breakdown and possibilities of “the demographic restructuring of the American metropolis, technological and commercial expansions” and the “economic agreements about how segregation wasted the potential utility of Black children” (Hartman 2008: 158). The nationally funded Wisconsin Center for Research & Development’s reports at that time, for example, expressed national commitments to equality through statistics that objectified

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particular populations as different. The research was to actualize future hopes, optimistically illustrated in the already increased high school graduates in which 75% of pupils entering the fifth grade in the fall of 1964 graduated from high school in 1972 and 23% of the high school graduates were expected to complete college (Klausmeier 1977: 3–4). With the hope was the fear that “one out of four students has a significant reading deficiency, half of our unemployed youth are functionally illiterate, and approximately 2.5% of our nation’s youth dropout.”¹

Contemporary policy research, as well, deploy statistics as particular rules and standards for ordering problems, and as criteria for making judgments based on the numbers in forming the possibilities of educational change. When national and international statistics are examined, certain indicators of “at-risk” children are used to recognize those populations to be included. United Kingdom’s statistics, for example, use the category “at-risk” to differentiate populational groups that are classified as ethnic minority children, a “high risk” category “since 16% of permanently excluded children belong to it, with nearly half of the high risk category being African-Caribbean, even though they make up only 1% of the population” (Alexiadou et al. 2001). Embodied in the statistics of “at-risk” children are different categories of numbers that overlap educational, cultural, social, economic, and gendered discourses: truancy, school exclusion and crime, and students with special educational needs defined through a populational discourse of African-Caribbean children and children in childcare.

The statistics that appear in the interrelation of science and policy are given plausibility and intelligibility through overlapping and multiple historical practices that are not merely about the logic of the numbers. In this chapter, we focus on the system of reason in which statistical grouping of people into populations as a field of intervention and social planning. Our argument is that the “thought” of populations in educational policy and change entails double gestures and a paradox: the practices to include populations and produce equity doubles back on itself as processes of abjection that produce exclusion (Popkewitz 2019; also, Lindblad et al. 2018).

We proceed in the following way. The first section considers modern statistical reporting as an element of governing modern social life. That governing is through numbers drawn into social affairs as “actors” for policy and change. The second section pursues this argument by examining the inscription of social and cultural principles in numbers that are not merely descriptive but affective in directing attention to change as a process of actualizing what people and society are to become. The third section focuses on the work of numbers to order action that entails making kinds of people.

Our approach is diagnostic and historical: to ask historically how numbers are given plausibility and considered “reasonable” as a way of thinking about policy and research, and the limits of such thought in questions about social inclusion and exclusion. Arguing in such a manner provides a mode of studying educational

¹This is discussed in its broader context in Popkewitz (2019).

questions other than those found in strategies of empiricism (what works!) and the dialectics of critical theories of education. Our argument about educational statistics is not about its “goodness/badness,” usefulness, bias; nor it is to censure or condemn numbers or statistics used in education. It is to place those practices within a broader cultural and political context of rules and standards inscribed in reforms as the political of education; and that political is how the reason of statistics enters into research and policy as practices of normalizing, dividing, and excluding.

18.1 Statistics as Cultural Practices: Political Arithmetic and the Taming Chance

Thinking of people through statistical reasoning is so much a part of our “reason” that we are often unaware of this “belonging” as a historical invention. Statistical reasoning about large groups of people is one of the important inventions of the nineteenth century. Statistics did previously exist, but it was about individual phenomena. It was not possible to “think” about populations or to observe large aggregates of people through numbers until different historical inventions came together from mathematics, statistics, physics, and state administration in the nineteenth century.

This section explores two qualities of modern statistics as a mode of thinking about populations. One is statistics as a particular way of reasoning in the governing of modern societies. Second, the manner in which numbers have affective qualities that is expressed in its grammar about how truth is to be told about people, societies, and change. In thinking in how differences are produced, Hacking (1995) directs our attention to differences between things of “nature,” such as quarks and tripeptides, and those of human kinds, such as teenage pregnancies and adolescence. When comparing “things” such as camels or microbes, what they do is not dependent on how the categories are used to describe them, but this is not so with human kinds. There is the looping that is possible as the classifications and distinctions enter into social life and create the abilities for people adjust themselves to categorization systems.

18.1.1 Statistics as a Technology of Governing

Statistics joins with the idea of the welfare state in the governing of the modern nation. Social histories of statistics locate it in the formation of the modern German, French, and British state. German theorists’ concerns with the science of police in the eighteenth century were about regulating and keeping order.² *Statistik*, the

²There are informative histories of the discipline of statistics for the interested reader. See, for

German term, was historically a method of policing. It was to calculate the administration of the population to secure the ends of wealth, public order, virtue, and happiness. Statistics, for example, ordered populations to control for epidemics and to regulate tax collections. By the nineteenth century, the French word *statistique* and the British statistics, words signifying the arithmetic of the state, were to coordinate the relation of human needs to state interventions. State administrators, for example, spoke of social welfare in terms of biological issues—such as reproduction, disease, and education (human “nature,” individual development, growth, and evolution).

Statistics as a tool of social intervention embodied a particular system of reason that is not merely that of the numbers themselves. It was linked with science where truth was tied to modes of conceptualizing and analyzing a rational order to daily life and the possibilities of human intervention and change (see, e.g., Shapin 1994; Bledstein 1976). By the nineteenth century, state planning for progress entailed intervention in social life to enable the action (agency) of the individual to plan one’s life for future happiness, the latter as a central political theme of the republic and democracy. Statistical knowledge made it possible to conceive of economy and society as modes of intervention.

When people spoke about police, Foucault (1979) argues, they spoke about the specific techniques by which a government in the framework of the state was able to govern so that individuals would be “productive” citizens. Statistics embodied probability theories about populations as a technology that composes people. The creating of populations was a way to think about and plan in order to rectify “harmful” social and economic conditions as well as to enable the individual to become a self-governing citizen capable of acting with freedom and liberty (Hacking 1990; Rose 1999).

Populational characteristics function as associations between statistical groups of people and the attributes of particular children, even though, strictly speaking, statistical predictions have no bearing (or predictive power) on individuals. The War on Poverty in post-War Two United States, for example, entailed the invention of the category of poverty as a schema for social administration and intervention. Poverty existed prior to that, but it was not classified and tabulated as a device of state policy and research to plan for intervention with specified populations for moral and economic purposes. Poverty was conceptualized in instrumental and empirical terms related to statistical aggregates from which specific characteristics could be ascribed to the person and according to which his or her growth and development could be monitored and supervised.

The construction of populations is a social technology for changing of social conditions and, while not often considered, changing people (Castel 1991; Hacking 1990, 1991; In education, Popkewitz 1991). Defining how people “fit into” a group is more than just a way to classify. Populational distinctions in which probability

example, Porter (1995); Desrosières (1998); Hacking (1990); Stigler (1986); and Alonso and Starr (1987). See also Bowker and Star (1999), Hanson (1993), and Gould (1981).

theories are assigned to categories about people overlap with the politics and culture of daily life. From the various characteristics of child development related to age and school grade to social characteristics of children (urban, at-risk, disadvantaged, gifted, adolescent, achievement), contemporary schooling is ordered through statistically derived categories of populations and is heightened, for example, through current American policy discussions of high stakes testing and of international comparisons of student academic performance in Swedish policy and research.

Populational reasoning is no longer deployed solely as state or administrative reasoning, but also as the policy makers “reason” about the quality of the nation, and teacher’s reason about how to identify instruction for children thought of through population categories, such as immigrants, ethnic or minority children (Popkewitz 2017a, b). The statistical categories have a materiality, giving direction to what constitutes the problem, the causes, and the solutions for rectifying social issues. The principles order and structure what matters in school planning, and for individual to think and act about what teachers are to recognize for organizing instruction and programs for remediation of targeted populations; books are written about groups classified as ethnic populations; re-search is organized through concepts and theories of cultural and social patterns of family child-rearing practices among those populations. Categories of school leaver or dropout, minority, or special education, important categories deployed to provide for social inclusion, are administrative categories that presuppose the qualities and characteristics of who the child is and also the potentialities that educational programs are to actualize.

In our own studies, the inscription of populational reasoning is prominent in international comparisons by means of large-scale assessments (see, e.g., Lindblad et al. 2018). During the last decades, this kind of research has expanded radically and it is often used in policy-making in order to identify and find solutions to educational crises; for example, the results on PISA studies in Germany and Sweden have played an important role in policy and research. Similarly, there is an expansion in research publications based on dealing with outcomes of such international comparisons. Lindblad et al. (2015) identified more than 11,000 publications on this topic during the period of 2003–2014. Populational reasoning has played a vital role in determining differences in achievement defined between taxonomic groups that serve to delineate a nation’s educational system—in terms of gender, social, or geographic origin. The differences are compared to social, institutional, and management qualities of school systems to analyze the reason for such gaps in education, culture, or society, as well as in relation to individual characteristics and career directions.

To think through populational reasoning is to engage in a particular consciousness that render domains as representable and applicable for calculation, deliberation, and administration. Statistical knowledge are inscription devices for governing conduct through processes of distancing and re-attach its knowledge to particular national spaces and cultural conditions as sets of rules and standards. The classifications and measurements that accompany the concepts like society and individuals in the nineteenth century, for example, embodied the logic for interpreting distant events that works back into everyday life and human experience. Statistics provided

new ways to think about changing conditions through the abstractions of society, economy, and culture. The new probability theories enabled the codification and standardization of dispersed phenomena under a singular umbrella of population's societal attributes and economics. People were classified within populations to identify or rectify "harmful" social and economic conditions as well as for policing and organizing the security of populations.

18.1.2 Faith in Numbers and Making an Actor of Change

Historically, the truth-telling capacity of numbers to establish values about social and personal life has not always been the case. Prior to the eighteenth century, truth was expressed through the manners and rhetorical qualities that told of the gentleman (Poovey 1998). At a different social arena, statistics was an official part of Swedish governance to register the reading ability of the population, but that register was individual and without the probability reasoning that appears in the nineteenth century. As a state function, considerable numerical information was collected by the British government in the first three-quarters of the eighteenth century. That data, however, was not collected in the context of coherent theory about statecraft (Poovey 1998: 214). Numbers as representative of observed particulars were devalued through the priority given to Newtonian universals and the invisible laws of nature.

Faith in the trust of numbers as a modern "fact" arose with the emergence of commerce in double accounting procedures (Poovey 1998). The innovation of double accounting entailed a ledger that recorded the money received and paid out, what is domesticated today as the check book's register. The double accounting procedures mutated in uneven ways into the sciences of political economy and moral philosophy from the 1790s. British theorists of wealth and society developed a mode of analysis that, at first, had no need for numerical data. Only in the political economic theory of Adam Smith, which we discuss later, did numbers appear as a strategy to actualize the philosophized fictions of markets as performative standards, instead of descriptions.

The trust in numbers for assessing and planning affairs provided a technology of consensus and harmony in a world that would appear, otherwise, as uncertain, ambiguous, and contentious. The use of numbers and social science were to reduce uncertainty in processes of change and continual assertions of crisis. Notions of decision-making, human interest, and problem-solving ordered and regularized the processes of action through numbers in a world where the future had no guarantees, only conditionalities.

The apparently quantitative precision and specific delineations of social and personal life lent authority to the new regimes of government. The uniformity given by numbers brings unlike orders in social life into a system of magnitudes that regularize relations among social and psychological components (Rose 1999: 206). The mapping of boundaries and the internal characteristics of the spaces appear to be

managed was a strategy to make judgments outside of the subjective. The faith in numbers in social affairs makes possible such notions as *transparency*³ through which the performances and outcomes of schools, businesses, and government become visible through graphs and flowcharts presented as statistical factors to measure change.

The invention of modern political polling, for example, was a response to mass government during the 1930s in the United States, where representative government replaced the town hall meeting and there was a need to symbolically reassert agency in the new contexts of governing (Merelman 1976; in relation to methods of science in education, Popkewitz 1981). Varela (2000) argues that the formation of individual personalities, individual subjects, and the idea of society emerge at the precise historical moment when the legitimacy of power was being based on the idea of a general “will.” The individual in the eighteenth-century French philosophé, for example, was bound to the “discovery of society” in a process of disengagement from the religious representations. While the word “society” is used prior to the enlightenment, it emerges to provide a way to think about collective human existence instituted as the essential domain of human practices. Prior to the eighteenth century, society was a notion about associations of people, and not about collective “homes” and belonging. Ideas about progress, civilization, and pluralism are possible only with ideas of society as their implied reference (Baker 1994).

Three further comments are necessary. First, numbers have historically become an actor in processes of change. Their mechanical objectivity enters into and becomes part of the action system of planning, assessing, and making of policy. Second, the inscription of numbers in the reason governing social life was not the logical outcome of disciplinary knowledge; nor was it the result of an evolutionary process from a single origin. Prior to the nineteenth century, as we stated earlier, statistics were concerned with individual phenomena. It was not until discoveries in physics and the needs of statecraft to monitor large groups for taxes and disease that statistical knowledge emerged through probability theories about large groups (Desrosières 1991).

Third, the inscription of statistics in research embodies utopic dreams. The models of change in OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), for example, hold a utopic promise of bringing into existence prosperity, happiness, and well-being to societies and people. But these utopian dreams of administration through numbers are continually fraught with multiple outcomes. For example, the system of household taxes in France that existed into the twentieth century counted the doors and windows in a dwelling. To counter this system, peasants redesigned their dwellings with as few openings as possible, which had a long-term effect on their health. Mono-cropped scientific forestry developed from about 1765 to 1800 to bring an administrative grid of straight rows of trees for more efficient growth; such growth was stunted, however, by the second planting because the nutrients produced with mixed growth were eliminated. And the rational planning of the city in the nineteenth century into grid-like streets created a particular spatial order that also produced abstract social relations produced by that order associated with

concepts such as anonymity, alienation, and feeling of loss of community (Scott 1998: 58).

18.2 Numbers as Affect: The Agency of Numbers as Testimonials of the Future

Numbers are affective. Affective is not merely the emotion evoked attachments that connect us to what is said as “truthful” and reasonable (see, e.g., Ideland 2019; Ahmed 2004). The numbers expressed in the ranking, charts, and comparisons that are found in research reports and international assessments embody affective dimensions. The complexities of the differences among nations and cultures disappear and reappear as standardized and comparable descriptions of numbers that represent singular, universal population of nations from which differences are calculated. The numbers and comparative listings of nations function as a GPS system for national school systems. People and governments can immediately locate themselves and identify differences that engender feelings about what is but also might be. Mosaics of numbers are assembled as truth bearing statements about the effective functioning of schools that appear as a unified abstraction of “nation” and its potentialities (see, e.g., Popkewitz 2018).

The affect of numbers entails a double quality. They appear to visualize social facts that are accessible to all citizens. In ranking of nations that organize the differences in OECD’s PISA, numbers seemed to make possible that even with differences, the pathways are possible to close the gaps and give all equal chance and representation. For a closer look at one of several examples from our research review on ILSA research (Lindblad et al. 2015), Liou (2014) states that international large-scale assessments are used to represent national progress by means of education formulated in terms of globalization and international competition.

Education not only plays an essential role in reducing people’s social and economic inequality, but is also the foundation of a country’s economic and social development... This fact has lead to the globalization of competition in almost every facet of a country’s existence. Developing highly qualified human power in the fields of science, technology, and mathematics (STEM), is one the requirements to satisfy the rapid development of the global economy... The results of such ILSA data are one of the most influential determinants in making educational policies in many countries (Liou 2014: p 2009f)

The affect of numbers as visualized facts brought to change social affairs introduced statistics and populations reasoning as necessary for equality and agency. The Philosophes prior to the French Revolution in the eighteenth century thought that unless there is equal system of measures, there could not be an equality in society. In the nineteenth century, the purpose of objectivizing and standardizing through numbers was to equalize processes and practices of new republican governments. Numbers become attached to the very ideas of the enlightenment cosmopolitanism to embody the hope of human reason and science finding perfectibility to the condition in which people live.

The hope of change, if we return to international assessments of student's performances, become an affect quality of the numbers in models of changes. The ranking and charts become indicators for securing the future. The present and future have no historicity except within cycle of measurement and the changes documented through the ranking of nations, comparing one's location during one cycle of measurement with the following one. The system's modelling visualizes sequences and stages for nations to achieve efficiency, perfection, and equality in the arrow of time defined through cycles.

The descriptive quality of language of the international assessments is not descriptive at all. It is affective, tying the descriptions to design models of intervention. The authors of an OECD national report in Sweden, for example, assert, “We provide external and independent assessments of education policy and practice, from an international perspective, to raise education outcomes” (Pont et al. 2014). Its subtitle is “main issues and next steps” and offers highways for nations to increase performance. The design of processes that OECD declares is tailor-made for each nation context.

Future is told as truism through numbers that is not from any significant general laws that research identifies. Using advanced visualization technologies, truth is projected in the international charts whose images are taken as narratives about what is and also options the available for immediate operationalization (Hansen 2015: 213).

The future of success and well-being of the assessments, paradoxically, are not derived from any causal laws or empirical evidence. They cannot be as the benchmarks and criteria of “successful” performances in international reports, for example, are about the potentialities of the future that has not yet arrived. OECD asserts, for example, that it measures what children will need for their economic success and well-being. The future spoken through the tests that are “to assess to what extent students at the end of compulsory education can apply their knowledge to real-life situations and be equipped for full participation in society” (OECD 2015: 306; also see Gurria 2016: 3). Global competence is, as well, the potentialities of the world-to-be, “to prepare young people for an interconnected world where they will live and work with people from different backgrounds and cultures. ...a new test to be included in the 2018” (Press release, OECD, 15/05/2016a: <http://www.oecd.org/education/OECD-proposes-new-approach-to-assess-young-peoples-understanding-of-global-issues-and-attitudes-toward-cultural-diversity-and-tolerance.htm>).

The statistical knowledge provides the ground for precautionary or pre-emptive actions provided by the models of change (Anderson 2010: 777). Precautionary or pre-emptive actions are affective and of anticipated threats not fully articulated (Massumi 2007) but provide the grounds for finding solutions to the problems that imagined to arise if an action is not taken. The statistical ordering in PISA, for example, is placed in models of change that appear as calls for action in nations.

This precautionary and pre-emptive actions are evident in how some of the most successful economics are organized to respond to the PISA results that “tell” that

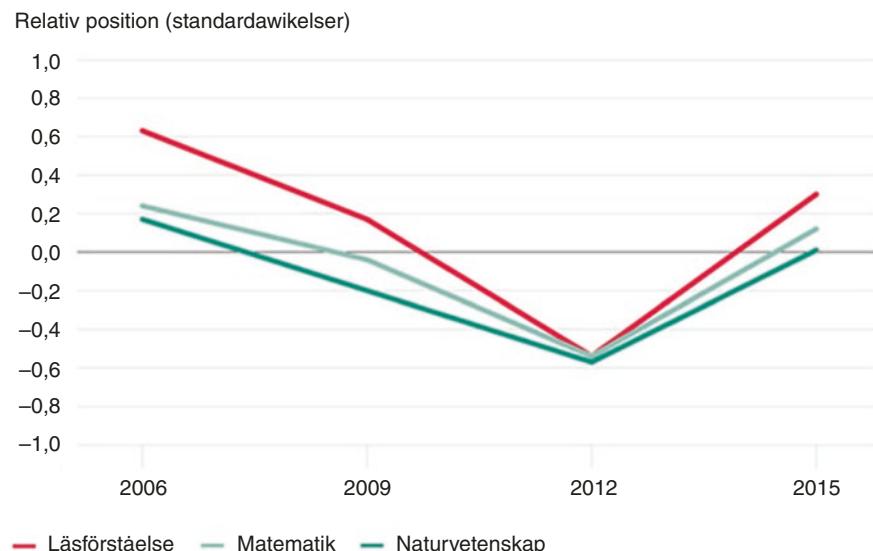
they are in danger. One such country is Sweden which is currently one of the best economies and educated populations in Europe; yet the OECD's PISA ranking continually is read by policy makers with fear that if actions are not taken in relation to PISA results, the nation is in danger.³ For example, based on the OECD identification of declining student performances and increasing school segregation in terms of PISA statistics, the Swedish government asked the OECD for recommendations on how to deal with these problems. This resulted in a number of measures implemented by the Swedish government.⁴

The precautionary and pre-emptive programs are engendered, on the one hand, as fears of the populations and, on the other hand, as to rescue and redeem as the desires of the potentialities of "humanity" to actualize.

The diagram below is presented by the Swedish Agency for Education. It is based on OECD PISA data from a sequence of data collections over time. The Swedish Agency comments it like this:

The figure shows Sweden's relative (standardized) position in relation to the 33 OECD countries that participated in all four of the PISA surveys since 2006 in reading comprehension, mathematics and science

The lines are based on Swedish students' performances ranked in relation to the other OECD countries and are stated by the Agency for Education as well as the Swedish Government to show a decline of education in Sweden from 2006 followed by a progress based on the last measurement in 2015.



³This is not to say that Swedish schools do not face strong challenges in relation to social changes, such as the large populations brought into the country in the face of wars elsewhere, for example. But these changes are not addressed through the models of PISA, in fact they are erased.

⁴Parliamentary Bill 2017/18:182.

* Red line = Literacy Blue line = Mathematics Green line = Science.

** The standardized position (Z-score) for Sweden is calculated as: (Sweden's average-the average of the averages 33 countries)/standard deviation for the 33 countries' averages. The distance to the zero line is thus expressed in standard deviations.

The double qualities of affect produced through numbers are inscriptions of a knowledge that functions as particular principles for organizing human agency. Historically and using the language of political theory, agency entails the movement of the objective order of institutions into the realm of subjectivity that is administered in the name of freedom (Pocock 2003). Agency is, paradoxically, provoked acting on the “truthfulness” and reasonableness given to numbers. European reformation concepts of the person were revised as categories of the human mind whose moral and rational qualities made possible people intervening and changing one's life (Mauss 1938/1979). The agency of the individual was made into the primordial category of progress as human interventions to bring perfection to the future.

The invention of statistics to order and differentiate large groups of people embodies this broader historical and political commitment to human agency. We discussed earlier, for example, the introduction of metrics as viewed as necessarily for an equal society. Statistics brought together large numbers of discrete attributes of the individual into a social whole that could be operated on in order to promote the general good and freedom of the individual. That was, at least in theory, what political arithmetic was to bring to civil society.⁵ Statistics was to enable constituted people as autonomous subjects of motives and perceptions to determine the actions that shape the future (Meyer 1986; also see, Wittrock 2000a, b).

18.2.1 Taming Chance and Ordering Change

The “reason” embedded in statistics is the taming of chance and change (see, e.g., Hacking 1990). Statistical reasoning can be historically thought about as related to the erosion of determinism in the nineteenth century. The history of modern statistics is “the measurement of uncertainty” (Stigler 1986). The particular historical virtue of statistical reporting is that diverse and social phenomena in flux are stabilized to order the phenomena amenable for observation, calculation, and administration.

The taming of chance is important to modern governing. The emergence of democracy, the rise of organized capitalism, as well as social and philosophical

⁵ Staatenkunde, the systematic study of states, an early form of what was called comparative politics, appeared in municipal censuses in Nuremberg in 1449 (Alonso and Starr 1987, p. 13). The English tradition of political arithmetic was the application of rational calculation to the understanding, exercise, and enhancement of state power. In the eighteenth century, it was to reverse the growth of the state. Statistical societies in the nineteenth century were to gather objective facts, mostly numerical, but also data that is today called “qualitative.”

thought made change and uncertainty seems a precondition of life itself. The notion of incessant change, for example, is built into the very idea of progress and the idea of the republic. The future is built through the citizen whose participation is necessary for the government. The ideas of liberty, freedom, and the agency of the citizen are built on notions of the contingency of the present in the development of progress.

The contingency, however, continually embodies certainty that created boundaries about human agency. The child studies of G. Stanley Hall and the connectionist psychologies of Edward L. Thorndike at the turn of the twentieth century embodied images and narratives about the child that was a normalized vision about who the child should be. The universalizing of the child provided comparative principles to reason about differences in the growth, development, and modes of thinking of immigrant and racial populations (Popkewitz 2008). The probability theories allowed the statistical studies in a continuum of difference from what was “natural” for the child at any point in life.

Contemporary international measurements of student performance maintain the relation of certainty and uncertainty in projecting agency, but with a different assemblage of principles about nature and process than those of the turn of the twentieth century. We often do not think of the international assessments of student performances as carrying particular notions of human agency and the paradoxes imposed through the relation of certainty/uncertainty, but they do. That promise is related to the notion of agency students, that is, having the knowledge, skills and “well-being” for future participation, the competence as a global citizen (see, e.g., Popkewitz 2019).

As the international comparisons of student performance are examined more closely, the statistical measures of OECD generate principles of a notion of human agency bound with certainty that what is measured provide students with “knowledge to real-life situations and be equipped for full participation in society” (OECD 2016a; also see OECD 2016b, c). The certainty and uncertainty are embodied in the assessments ordered through the abstractions of the school as a system whose desired qualities are called “international benchmarks” that establish the norm of reference to the theory of effective schools. The benchmarks are what is to be achieved for the successful future of the student and society.

18.3 Making Up People and Biographies

We began the discussion by arguing that statistics embody cultural and social distinctions when deployed in policy-making and school research. In this section, we further pursue how numbers circulate and are connected to give intelligibility to policy and school reforms.

Statistics was important in turning populational categories embodied into biographies as kinds of people. Numbers were augmented with qualitative practices as a script or narrative form of a biography from which to gage the child’s development and growth. The representations in the US census after World War Two, for example, created new biographies of people as populations for policy management that

did not exist previously. The category of Latino emerged, for example, to classify people from, for example, Brazil, Haiti, Argentina, and Mexico as a single population. Today, this category of statistical reporting works into social movements and policy in education to define heterogeneous populations as homogeneous through the system of reason applied.

The profiles and inventories of the kind of children as kinds of people are codified and standardized in international assessments. The statistical data is organized to ask if students are ready for the technological-rich world (PISA, 2015) or the risks and outcomes of social exclusion as insights from longitudinal data (Bynner 2000). The reports identify students who fail; instructional programs were devised for remedial measures of children who fit these categories of “not passed subject” and foreign background. Summaries, charts, graphs, and tables identify the characteristics of youth to provide profiles of the child who did not fit the picture of the successful student.

The kind of child profiled in such reports was then used to invent a plan for intervention through curriculum designs and instructional processes to target groups excluded categorically while simultaneously normalizing and individualizing the categories and distinctions on particular children. In a study that we conducted on educational governance and social exclusion in nine European countries, the distinctions of national and international statistics overlapped with principles generated to interpret experience as different layers of education—among governmental ministry officials, educational system leaders, and teacher interviews. Swedish governmental reports describing categories of educational non-performance of students of “foreign background” or “newly arrived,” for example, circulated with “on-the-ground” planning of reforms and organizing instructional programs.⁶

Numbers and categories enter into the cultural and political spaces of policy, research, and programs to inscribe a comparative style of reasoning. More than we like to think, the fabricated of human kinds as populations are normalizing and dividing practices. We say not to suggest intent of policy or research, but to draw attention to the mode of reasoning whose epistemic rules are comparative.⁷ The classifications of people are the mapping of cultural spaces about kinds of people that form through distinctions and classification that differentiate individ-

⁶Foreign background is an example of the many concepts that form a comparative concept that establishes “deviancy” even when created as a moral/political obligation of a society to ensure equity and justice. In one sense, as we will talk about later with the concept of minority, it is only through certain assumptions about the normal “being” of the citizen/individual that the classification of foreign born is applied.

⁷This is not only a problem of educational theory. From Latour’s (1999) discussion of science to Wallerstein (1991) and Wagner’s (2001) discussion of modern social theory, there is a continual questioning of the ways in which modern social theory has divided phenomena—what Latour calls the modernist settlement which has sealed off into incommensurable problem questions that cannot be solved separately. Latour talks about the relation of human and nonhuman in science, Wagner about the relation of certainty and uncertainty. Also, see Popkewitz (1998) as it relates to the social epistemology of educational research.

ual qualities and characteristics. The numbers perform in educational spaces to normalize and pathologize differences.

The comparativeness is never merely about the numbers that relate purely to the statistical magnitudes and equivalences. The work of statistics entails cultural principles that are embedded in the categories and relations sought to describe how school functions and what are thought of as its outcomes and correlations. The style of reasoning about populations, for example, is not about numbers but formed through cultural principles that are inscribed in the questions asked and the phenomena of schooling and people made to appear under the gaze of statistical measures. The categorizations, associations between groups and norms that organize performances and differences among social and economic groups are to rectify inequities and inequalities on behalf of these groups by means of different education measures. This style of reasoning is translated into educational policy discourses about what to do in order to improve international ranking, to minimize educational deficits, or to address results to matters of increased global competition.⁸

The making of kinds of people generated differences that embodied double gestures. The fabrication of the youth as a particular kind of child, for example, connected discourses of medicine, psychology, and pedagogy to calculate what was normal and pathological for treating the problems that arose from calculable deviations. The discourses embodied the gesture of hope that the transitional stage of youth to being an adult can be managed to ensure the proper development in becoming an adult. Nevertheless, simultaneously with the gesture of hope there were fears of youth as a dangerous population that threatened the moral order through sexuality, criminality, among others (Lesko 1995, 2001). Parents, authors of child-rearing books, or teachers would argue about the need to pay attention to the adolescence of the child in order to produce a productive and self-responsible adult.

18.4 The Desires of Statistics and the Desires of Policy

While there is a disciplinary and political reflexivity about the uses and abuses of statistics, such reflexivity does not examine nor bring into question the rules and standards that are historically mobilized. Contemporary social and educational research rarely asks about the cultural principles that order the theories, concepts, and methods of curriculum research. This is particularly evident where curriculum research takes official categories and distinctions as its framework of investigation—such as the way that states categories of poverty, minority, and ethnicity formed the core conceptual assumptions and the origin of studies to correct inequities. Statistical reason is a site for the deployment of such categories to embody the hope of social planning that a better life can be produced for individuals, but this hope involves tensions and paradoxes. Statistics is never merely its numbers,

⁸For an analysis of ILSA research relevancing, see Lindblad and Pettersson (2019).

magnitudes, and equivalences. We argued that statistical reasoning connects social, cultural, scientific, and political discourses that form a single plane to make kinds of humans—people who are sites for state intervention and as biographies. We focus on populations as fabricating particular “kinds of people” and biographies that inscribe subjectivities through planning people. The differentiating qualities of the populational data have self-referential qualities that not only define the individualities, but also the trajectories that order the problem and solutions for the life that one should live.

We argued further that the making of kinds of people inscribes a continuum of values and double gestures that normalizes and differentiates the efforts toward inclusion. While seeking inclusion, the very principles that are generated for inclusion divide and render certain groups as different, dangerous, and in need of intervention. It is possible to examine the territories marked for the freedom of the child and parent as simultaneously internments and enclosures that divide and exclude.

The argument poses a dilemma when focusing on international assessments of student performance as addressing inequities. The very acts of social administration deployed by statistical reporting to address issues of progress require intervention through a practical causality that differentiates, distinguishes, and divides individual characteristics in a continuum of values about the normal and the deviant. By not questioning the kind of system of reason of statistics as it circulates in policy and research, the social and educational sciences lose their ability to diagnose the present critically.

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Chapter 19

Evidence-Informed Policy and Practice in a ‘Post-truth’ Society



Geoff Whitty and Emma Wisby

19.1 Introduction

Particularly since the British vote to leave the European Union (otherwise known as Brexit) and the election of Donald Trump in the USA, there has been much talk of our living in a ‘post-truth’ society, where ‘alternative truths’ compete with each other and where ‘experts’ are often derided and ‘common sense’ celebrated even where it seems to be contradicted by ‘evidence’ (d’Ancona 2017). Calcutt (2016) has suggested that the origins of ‘post-truth’ lay with academics espousing ‘post-modernism’ and other ‘left-leaning, self-confessed liberals’ who sought freedom from state-sponsored truth and started to discredit ‘truth’ as one of the ‘grand narratives’ that needed to be replaced with ‘truths’—‘always plural, frequently personalised, inevitably relativised’. Although both the political and academic versions of ‘post-truth’ may be criticised for undermining any sense of certainty about how we should proceed in educational policy and practice, we suggest in this article that exaggerated claims about the possibility of establishing consensual answers on the basis of research evidence are equally suspect and to be resisted.

The much hyped ‘evidence-informed’ approach to educational research conjures up a brave new world in which robust research can give us answers to enduring social and educational problems—in other words, clear guidance on ‘what works’. It is often implied that this ‘new empiricism’ will take us beyond the ideological use of research that has hampered collaboration between researchers and policy makers in the past. Thus, it is argued, we can solve educational problems if only we can get the evidence right and it is the role of education researchers to come up with that

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evidence. This has been reflected in rhetoric about ‘evidence-based’ and ‘evidence-informed’ policy and practice, and about the importance of research having ‘impact’ or being ‘impactful’.

What counts as evidence and how it is used has always been contested. Indeed, history suggests agreement between policy makers and researchers (neither of which category is homogeneous, of course) has rarely been easy to achieve. As Gene Glass commented at the time, the Reagan administration’s use of evidence in a review of research entitled *What Works* (US Department of Education 1986) was hardly unusual in its attempt to legitimate an ideological position through an appeal to educational science:

The selection of research to legitimize political views is an activity engaged in by governments at every point on the political compass... *What works* does not synthesize research, it invokes it in a modern ritual seeking legitimization of the Reagan administration’s policies... and, lest one forget, previous administrations have done the same (Glass 1987: 9).

Subsequent US administrations, while also embracing the rhetoric of ‘what works’, have been equally cavalier in their use of evidence. For example, after reviewing a landmark set of *Blueprint* reports from the Obama administration (Obama 2010), Mathis and Welner concluded that:

The overall quality of the [research] summaries is far below what is required for a national policy discussion of critical issues. Each of the summaries was found to give overly simplified, biased, and too-brief explanations of complex issues (Mathis and Welner 2010: 3).

In criticising the ideological use of evidence to support favoured policies, researchers are sometimes in danger of seeming to embrace a ‘hyper-rationalist-technicist’ approach to educational research in which researchers provide evidence to identify policies that, if implemented, will bring about a significant and enduring improvement in teaching and learning (Gewirtz 2003). Some researchers, of course, do embrace this position, as reflected in the current enthusiasm for developing a medical model of educational research in which experimental methods, and particularly randomised controlled trials (RCTs) (Goldacre 2013), together with systematic reviews of evidence (Gough et al. 2012), are used to establish and disseminate evidence about ‘what works’.

Yet, the modern-day cautions about such a position are long-standing. Back in 1974, the then President of the British Educational Research Association (BERA), John Nisbet, claimed that we needed to move away from ‘the naïve idea that problems are solved by educational research’. Rather, he characterised the relationship between research and policy as ‘indirect’ and more about ‘sensitising’ policy makers to problems than solving them. It may be that his warning that educational research may not provide ‘final answers to questions, or objective evidence to settle controversies’, and his support for a ‘spectrum’ of types of research needs to be heeded afresh.

Following Nisbet, we would contend that research advocates of what we will term ‘the medical model’ for shorthand are setting themselves up for disappointment, because politics in a democracy is of necessity driven by all sorts of considerations amongst which the findings of research are often rather low down the list.

Other, often more significant, influences include the vagaries of the moment, the demands of the electoral cycle, and the values and preferences of policy makers and their advisors and constituents. Equally, we would also highlight that researchers are by no means of one mind on the nature of evidence and how it should be viewed and treated. Some want their research to go beyond ‘what works’ and explore why ‘what works’ sometimes does *not* work, as well as asking ‘what works where with whom’ and why. Furthermore, research can also have an important role in deconstructing the assumptions underlying all such questions or in helping people to think about whether what policy makers are trying to do is worthwhile and what constitutes socially just schooling. The ‘what works’ agenda has tended to filter out these more structural and critical perspectives on educational policy and practice and broader understandings of how it develops.

Thus, achieving consensus on what counts as worthwhile educational research and on the right relationship to policy is unlikely to be an attainable goal even if a technicist utopia was desirable. This is not to suggest that there is no role for a ‘what works’ approach to education research, but the notion, implied by some of its advocates, that this is the only type of research that should be encouraged or funded certainly needs to be resisted. It is not necessary to adopt the sort of relativism that is often associated with ‘post-structuralism’ and ‘post-modernism’ to favour a more pluralistic approach to education research, although we would regard such approaches as themselves part of the spectrum that should be supported.

To illustrate our concerns, we present a brief account of ‘evidence-based’ policy in the UK over the past 20 years, where the rhetoric of ‘what works’ was taken up enthusiastically by the incoming New Labour government of Tony Blair in 1997 and has been adopted in various guises by governments ever since. As well as showing the limitations of such an approach to the relationship between research and policy, we also explore whether recent enthusiasm for evidence-informed practice in education is any more viable. Finally, we consider how the ‘new empiricism’ that informs such work will fare in the so-called ‘post-truth’ society.

19.2 The Limitations of ‘Evidence-Informed’ Policy in English Education

Early in Tony Blair’s government, David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education and Employment from 1997 to 2001, championed the cause of evidence-based policy making and looked critically at the research–policy relationship in a lecture entitled ‘Influence or irrelevance?’ (Blunkett 2000). While he acknowledged that there were faults on both ‘sides’, he nevertheless threw down the gauntlet to the social science community as a whole to contribute more directly and ‘productively’ to policy making. Some academics read his lecture as a demand that their research should support government policy (e.g. Hodgkinson 2000).

A consultation paper produced by the Blair government's National Educational Research Forum (NERF 2000) certainly seemed to advocate a particularly limited and instrumental view of research. The view of one education researcher who saw the draft was that it treated research as 'about providing accounts of what works for unselfconscious classroom drones to implement' and that it portended 'an absolute standardisation of research purposes, procedures, reporting and dissemination' (Ball 2001: 266–267). Similar criticisms were levelled at the emphasis on systematic reviewing (e.g. MacLure 2005). The NERF consultation exercise actually led to the acknowledgement of the need for a pluralist view of research, but it also continued to argue for a means of prioritising resources based on research making a 'worthwhile contribution' to education and 'maximising impact' (NERF 2001).

David Blunkett himself recognised the need for government to give more serious consideration to 'difficult' findings. But how realistic is this in practice? Even if research were of the highest quality and provided robust evidence on a given issue, would governments consistently seek it out and make good use of it so that it was genuinely informing—above all else—their decisions on policy? Various examples from the New Labour administration would suggest not, and few would suggest so unequivocally. In the process, they illustrate how in politics other factors will often take precedence over what the research evidence says even when it seems clear (Wilkes 2014).

One example is the use that New Labour made of evidence on class size during the 1997 general election. Evidence on the effects of class size is notoriously contentious and difficult to interpret, and the controversies continue to this day (e.g. Blatchford et al. 2004; Blatchford 2015). Even so, New Labour's commitment to reduce class sizes traded quite consciously on research findings accepted by most researchers and most teachers—evidence that if smaller classes have an unambiguously positive impact anywhere it is most marked in the very early years of schooling and in the most socially disadvantaged areas. So, the manifesto commitment to cut class sizes in the early years of schooling to below 30 using monies that had formerly been used to send academically able children to private schools looked like a socially progressive policy based on robust research findings. As a policy, however, it was probably driven as much by the findings of election opinion polling as those of educational research: most classes over 30 were in marginal suburban constituencies, not in inner-city areas where class sizes were already below that level. Some even more robust findings on the beneficial effects of cutting class sizes to 15 in disadvantaged areas did not influence the policy at all, presumably because this would have been extremely expensive, but possibly also because additional votes in these inner-city constituencies would not swing the election (Whitty 2002).

The battle to gain office is one thing, and perhaps research evidence being used in this way under those circumstances is a case apart. Once in power, though, New Labour continued to make quite selective use of research evidence, and it was not always especially concerned about the quality of a research study if it served its policy purposes. One example was the way in which research was used in the English White Paper of 2001, *Schools achieving success* (DfES 2001). A central plank of the White Paper was to encourage secondary schools to specialise in certain

areas of the curriculum to boost achievement. In making its case on ‘specialist schools’, the White Paper made much of research carried out for the then Technology Colleges Trust, which claimed to show that these schools added more value to their pupils’ achievements than other schools. The problem was that the research had not been submitted to peer review and indeed was subsequently subject to public criticism by education statisticians. As one of those statisticians commented:

It is not clear whether the authors of the White Paper sought views on the adequacy of the research before using it, but...there are those within the DfES itself who would have cautioned against taking the results of the study at face value. Given that the research supported what was already Government policy, it would seem that this is what drove the decision to use it as ‘evidence’ (Goldstein 2001).

Another example was provided by the academies programme, where a political commitment to autonomous schools as the solution to academic underachievement in disadvantaged areas meant that the New Labour government again strayed from its avowed commitment to evidence-based policy. After largely disregarding a critical report it had itself commissioned from PricewaterhouseCoopers (DfES 2005), it went on to ignore critical questions raised by academics about the way in which it had used performance data to claim that these schools were, in general, performing better for equivalent pupils than the schools they had replaced—thereby justifying continuing with the policy. Gorard (2005) commented that ‘to expand the [academies] programme on the basis of what has happened so far is so removed from the evidence-based policy making that is a mantra of government today that it is scarcely worth pointing out’ (p. 376).

The House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee (2005), whose role it was to hold the government to account on education policy and spending, similarly used both the specialist school and academies programmes to argue that, despite the government’s proclaimed attachment to evidence-based policy, expensive schemes were being rolled out before having been adequately tested and evaluated compared to other less expensive alternatives (p. 17).

In a 2005 presidential address to BERA (Whitty 2006), we expressed some scepticism about the Blair government’s policy agenda and highlighted the dangers of letting it drive the future direction of educational research. Nevertheless, government enthusiasm for the rhetoric of evidence-informed policy in education continued throughout the New Labour era and on into the next government, the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition that was in power 2010–2015, and the Conservative government elected in 2015.

In 2016, we published *Research and Policy in Education: Evidence, ideology and impact* (Whitty et al. 2016), which opened with a chapter entitled ‘Education(al) research and education policy in an imperfect world’ that examined the situation some 10 years after our BERA presidential address. We concluded that, during that decade, the rhetoric had, if anything, grown stronger, as advocates of evidence-informed policy encouraged educational researchers to adopt the medical model of RCTs and systematic reviews.

The over-claiming we had identified in terms of the potential for a closer relationship between policy and evidence—and the push for particular kinds of research to that end—remained both unrealistic and undesirable in our view. We argued that many of the impediments to a close and unmediated relationship between education research evidence and policy debates in education, let alone policy decisions, remained, and that there was therefore a need to guard against a narrowing of the scope of educational research in accordance with this model.

This seems to be even more important in the post-Brexit context where Theresa May, who replaced David Cameron as Prime Minister after the vote to leave the European Union, announced the creation of some new academically selective grammar schools. In this case, some highly selective if not downright misleading use of research evidence seemed much less important in policy making than the personal experiences and preferences of the Prime Minister and the need to satisfy some of her backbenchers. As the BBC Education Editor put it at the time, ‘the symbolic status of grammars as a chance to better yourself has trumped the expert consensus’ about the weight of evidence, so that the debate about what (the extensive and robust) research told us about grammar schools had become ‘almost irrelevant’ (Jeffreys 2016). In the end, the policy itself, whatever the evidence for or against it, became irrelevant as, after losing her majority at the 2017 general election, Theresa May concluded she could not get the necessary legislation through parliament.

So, while we are supportive in general terms of the principle that evidence of various sorts should be a part of policy making, our concern here has been to draw attention to the risk that unrealistic expectations of what this could or should look like in practice would skew research funding and commissioning in unhelpful ways. In particular, we see a risk that the relatively narrow range of methodologies associated with the ‘evidence-informed’ and ‘what works’ bandwagons—RCTs and systematic reviews—could come to be favoured disproportionately, and that this would leave funding for other types of research in education as ‘the remainder of a growing series of subtractions’, to use Dijkgraaf’s turn of phrase in the 2017 pamphlet *The Usefulness of Useless Knowledge* (Flexner and Dijkgraaf 2017). This, we suggest, would be problematic in and of itself, narrowing the kinds of research being conducted. It would also, in turn, provide a less rich resource with which the policy community itself might engage. Taking the example of the sociology of education (although it might equally apply to the philosophy of education), often now regarded as irrelevant to the business of policy, as opposed to its critique, we would do well to remember the warning of Sir Fred Clarke in the 1940s that ‘educational theory and educational policy that take no account of [sociological insights] will be not only blind but positively harmful’ (quoted in Whitty 1997: 4).

19.3 The Shift to ‘Evidence-Informed Practice’

Since *Research and Policy in Education* was published in 2016, there has been a growing shift away from that emphasis on influencing policy towards influencing the professions instead and bringing an evidence-informed approach to professional practice. This was exemplified recently in the UK by the ‘Evidence Declaration for Professional Bodies’ initiative in November 2017 (AfUE 2017).

Advocates of an evidence-informed approach have themselves conceded that this shift is being driven at least in part by the difficulties in joining together policy and research communities. For some, this reflects the difficulty in finding positive examples of evidence-informed policy and the many examples of poor use of evidence by policy makers (Halpern 2016); others have concluded that the grand claims of evidence-informed policy need to be replaced by more modest ambitions, at least for now, partly because researchers are often ‘more interested in indulging their academic interests than providing useful and practical results’ (Turner 2015). More significantly, Jonathan Breckon, Head of the Alliance for Useful Evidence, has recognised that ‘while politicians shouldn’t be ignorant of the evidence, they have the right to ignore it’, that ‘technocracy should not trump democracy’, that ‘it is right and proper that politicians “use their gut”’ and even that ‘other ways to make decisions are all really valuable’ (Breckon 2016). Some in political circles are being more vocal about the limits to evidence-informed policy—one noting that being known as an ‘evidence-based politician’ is regarded as an insult, suggesting as it does a lack of interest in the *politics* of governing (HEPI conference, April 2017).

Nevertheless, in part, the shift of focus to evidence-informed practice is a project to embed a more evidence-informed approach to *policy* by ‘getting the professions on board’ and building a wider coalition. In his 2016 lecture at the Institute of Education in London, David Halpern, chief executive of the Behavioural Insights Team and What Works National Advisor, stated that his goal was for a ‘golden age of empiricism’, so that the next generation asks ‘why on earth wouldn’t you test that out before setting policy?’ (Halpern 2016). Admittedly, Halpern’s focus is often ‘policy with a small p’—the practicalities of implementing a policy programme that has already been decided, very possibly on largely ideological grounds. The problem is that the evidence-informed/what works rhetoric rarely distinguishes between the two.

The emphasis on practice is also about evidence-informed practice per se—sidestepping the politicians altogether, even if its growth in education has been facilitated by an early decision of the 2015 Coalition government to provide seed funding for an Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), a grant-making charity ‘dedicated to challenging educational disadvantage in English primary and secondary schools’ by sharing evidence on effective practice.¹ One of the ways in which the EEF has

¹Founded by the education charity the Sutton Trust, as lead charity in partnership with Impetus Trust (now Impetus—The Private Equity Foundation), the EEF received a founding grant of £125m from the Department for Education. With investment and fundraising income, the EEF intends to award as much as £200m over its 15-year lifespan.

sought to achieve this is through its Teaching and Learning Toolkit. The toolkit synthesises the findings from systematic reviews and trials into an online facility allowing school leaders to compare the estimated impact and cost of different types of educational intervention. It already encompasses over 10,000 pieces of research, and remains a ‘live’ resource that is regularly updated (EEF 2012).² The EEF also commissions research, where it is largely committed to funding and evaluating RCT-type studies.

However, any suggestion that the concept of evidence-informed practice has greater traction than that of evidence-informed policy (as least in the terms envisaged by its most enthusiastic advocates) remains to be tested—or evidenced. The EEF is itself aware of the issues around knowledge mobilisation and evidencing the impact of evidence-informed practice (Collins 2016). One of its own studies has highlighted the challenges in demonstrating a causal link between evidence use and improved pupil outcomes (Speight et al. 2016). Similarly, after reviewing the available evidence for government, Coldwell et al. (2017) concluded that we still ‘know relatively little about the effects of evidence-based approaches on schools, teachers and pupils, and how to increase the likelihood of better outcomes for learners in particular’ (p. 22).

Kevan Collins, CEO of the EEF from 2011 to 2020, has noted that even when research evidence is clear it does not necessarily influence decision-making in schools. He has also noted how school leaders (just like politicians) can often use research selectively to justify decisions already made (Collins 2016). As with policy, research evidence is likely to have greater traction where it chimes with assumptions and beliefs already held within contexts of practice.

There is a strand in the literature on evidence-informed practice that reflects on the possible reasons why it is not more firmly and widely embedded within the schools system. It identifies some now well-rehearsed barriers/enablers to evidence-informed practice. The main factors seem to be:

- access to the research literature (now arguably much less of a barrier than it has been in the past),
- relevance, credibility, usability of the research literature,
- willingness of practitioners to engage,
- practitioners having the time, skills and confidence to engage,
- organisational support for practitioners to engage.

To the above list, Brown and Zhang (2016) add the findings from psychological research about how individuals make decisions—namely, the tendency to make do with ‘good enough’ solutions and rely on intuition or perceptions rather than analyse the data, as well as the power of emotion, feeling, snap decision-making and unconscious motivation.

²The toolkit itself resonates with the work of John Hattie and, in particular, Hattie (2008).

Yet there remains a view that such issues detract from rather than raise fundamental questions about the rational-linear model. Collins (2015) repeated the call for more evidence of the kind that some would see as aiming to offer a prescription for teachers: ‘For too long, too many teachers have been as guilty as politicians of acting on what they believe to work, rather than what has been shown to work’. There still seems to be, then, an underlying assumption that, given time, evidence-informed practice on a rational-linear model will ‘come of age’.

While some continue to press for efforts to bring the schools system as close as possible to a model where practice leads off from trial-based evidence, others are calling for recognition and acceptance of a broader view—emphasising that the findings from local, small scale action research are closer to teachers’ experience and more engaging and useful to them. A BERA-RSA (2014) report, for example, focuses more on teacher-led inquiry than teachers working with evidence created elsewhere/by others. Saunders (2017) also regards such ‘inquiry-led teaching’, based on knowledge created in the teacher’s own context, with the teacher co-creating new knowledge based on professional experience and expertise, as equally valid to teachers working with external evidence. She cites the value of teacher engagement with/in research as making the implicit explicit such that teachers can articulate the precise reasons—ethical, emotional, intellectual—for the decisions they have made during any given lesson. Whatever the methodology, this requires teachers to be part of the research in question, not simply the subject. Nutley et al. (2008) concur that simply engaging in a research project, not just as a research subject but as an investigator, can lead to change in ways of thinking and behaving.

Nevertheless, advocacy of and the pursuit of something supposedly more robust—centred around teacher engagement with and in external trials and the translation of those findings into practice—continues. The EEF is currently focused on issues of knowledge mobilisation to this end. Early signs, though, are not especially encouraging. While the more immediate, practical hurdles to this approach have been addressed (e.g. access to research summaries), teacher skills and confidence to engage are still not securely embedded (Sharples 2017).

It is not, though, just a matter of overcoming barriers to the implementation of an impoverished model of evidence-informed practice. As we argued in the 2005 BERA presidential address referred to earlier, the professional literacy of teachers surely involves more than purely instrumental knowledge. Others have pointed to the dangers of eschewing the moral purpose of education and overstating the promise of a particular form of ‘evidence’ in determining the direction of educational practice (e.g. Biesta 2006; Hammersley 2005). Chiming with this perspective, Winch et al. (2013) emphasise three interconnected and complementary prongs to a richer notion of teacher professionalism: practical wisdom, technical knowledge and critical reflection.

In the face of official support and funding for a narrowly instrumental approach to the role of research in educational practice, it seems that educational researchers themselves will need to make the argument for maintaining a broad church of education research—and make greater effort to show external audiences, not least education practitioners, how their professionalism can grow by engaging with a breadth

of material. Just as some are keen for teachers to be better able to engage with and judge the findings of quantitative research, so there remains a place for qualitative approaches and critical perspectives in their repertoire. This should not necessarily be seen as a problem, and the constant slippage back to a rational-linear model and related over-claiming needs to give way to a more inclusive approach to evidence-informed practice.

19.4 Concluding Comments: Some Lessons from Post-truth

Ironically, then, there is little evidence to date that a rational-linear model of evidence-informed practice is proving any more feasible or desirable than a close link between research evidence and policy. In our closing comments we argue against subordinating a broader view of evidence to the immediate demands of establishing ‘what works’ and we also reflect on the ‘post-truth’ phenomenon as it relates to the issue of research evidence and the cause of evidence-informed policy and practice.

In a free society it is surely important that we have a dialogue about what constitutes appropriate ends as well as the means, the why as well as the how. This applies as much to the teaching profession as it does to civil society in the round. We need a teaching profession that is engaged in such questions, seeing new issues and how they might be addressed. In that process, scholarly perspectives are important. As Biesta (2007) sets out, the ways in which practitioners or policy makers present problems—and hence articulate an alleged ‘research need’—may not necessarily be the best way in which the problem should be understood. Researchers need to challenge what questions are being asked and why, to bring a broader viewpoint. In this, their view is as valid as that of policy makers and practitioners. As part of this, Biesta argues, researchers need to keep a critical distance between themselves and their ‘audience’: they have different kinds of *expertise*, and different *responsibilities*.

Equally, society—and policy makers in particular—need to understand the added purpose and value of looking at the world through the lens of (high quality) scholarship. Like the arts, unfettered scholarship ‘uplifts the spirits, heightens our perspective above the everyday, and shows us a new way to look at the familiar’ (Flexner and Dijkgraaf 2017). Missing from the ‘what works’ and evidence-informed policy and practice agenda has been a celebration of that added purpose.

This is a case that needs to be made at an interesting juncture in terms of the evidence-informed policy/practice agenda. When CEO of the EEF, Kevan Collins himself questioned how secure political support is for the rhetoric/practice of taking an evidence-informed approach: would this be merely another policy phase or fad, he asked (Collins 2016). Meanwhile, the context, at least in the UK and the USA, seems to have grown a little less hospitable. On the one hand, we have seen a move away from the ‘end of history’, centre-ground and focus-group led politics of the Clinton and Blair years to something much more ideological and class-based. That has combined with a growing disregard for evidence within political debate and

political rhetoric, and possibly also in policy too, something that has been particularly pronounced in the USA. Perhaps evidence-informed policy/practice will turn out, in its current form at least, to be a turn of the century aberration. Another possibility is that the claims of the evidence-informed movement, as well as the voice of its critics, fare better amidst a more obviously ideological battle of ideas.

In *The Death of Expertise*, Tom Nichols expresses the concern that ‘the average American’ is not simply ‘uninformed’ but moving towards being ‘aggressively wrong’. As well as showing ignorance, Nichols asserts, they are actively resisting new information that might threaten their beliefs. He talks about the conflation of information, knowledge and experience, and how this has been reinforced by the ubiquity of Google. He also talks about the triumph of emotion over expertise. He links in a culture that cannot accept the inequality implicit in someone being more knowledgeable than someone else (Nichols 2017). This publication is just one of many to reflect on what has become known as ‘post-truth’, a term that came to the fore following the vote for Brexit in the UK and the election of Donald Trump in the USA (e.g. d’Ancona 2017; Davies 2017).

This literature suggests that post-truth is different to political spin in terms of the acceptance of untruths, which is termed ‘cognitive resignation’. This results in politicians and the public paying little regard to whether what they are saying is true or not, just to whether others are persuaded. It contrasts truth vs impact; facts vs story/connecting with people emotionally; the honestly complex vs the deceptively simple; the rational vs the visceral; veracity vs solidarity/identity. Perception is all and the battle becomes one of defining reality. This is accompanied by the discrediting of traditional sources of authoritative knowledge. The mainstream media is usually what is being referred to here, but it might also encompass academia—so called ‘experts’. One could even argue that, in Michael Young’s terms (Young 2013), the ‘powerful knowledge’ generated by communities of scholars is being challenged by a new ‘knowledge of the powerful’ where the powerful are not the ruling elites of the past but various ‘populist’ movements (Muller 2017). In this context, the ‘truth test’ is ultimately popularity rather than the agreed conventions of academic disciplines.

Once again, the impact of the internet, but particularly social media, is implicated, for exacerbating people’s tendency to retreat to echo chambers and filter bubbles. Algorithms are now compounding this. Also implicated are Freud and the paradigm of therapy, behavioural economics and the emphasis on psychological impulses in decision-making, as well as the emphasis on emotional intelligence and the role played by emotional competencies in social relations. As intimated earlier, post-modernism and social constructivism, leading to cynicism, relativism and hyperreality, are sometimes said to have had their own corrosive effect in terms of ‘putting the ideologically driven layman at the advantage of the scholar’. Calcutt (2016) argues that ‘those responsible include (postmodernist) academics, journalists, ‘creatives’ and financial traders; even the centre-left politicians who have now been hit hard by the rise of the anti-factual’. What all this adds up to, d’Ancona argues, is emotional necessity trumping the need for adherence to the truth.

However, Nichols, d'Ancona and others arguably put too positive a gloss on science and academia, ignoring academia's own tendency towards echo chambers and filter bubbles, as well as the limitations of scientific research itself. Thus, although one response to post-truth might be a retreat to facts and technocracy, seemingly justifying the ambitions of the evidence-informed movement, this would be to adopt an unrealistic and unattainable—even undesirable—prospectus. In practice, the response will need to be much more nuanced. As d'Ancona sets out, the 'backfire effect' (ill-informed opinion becoming more entrenched in the face of evidence to the contrary) illustrates how post-truth will not crumble under the weight of freshly verified information repeated relentlessly and ubiquitously. Data should not be confused with truth; it cannot capture the complexity of public policy issues, nor values or emotion. Purveyors of evidence will need to be emotionally intelligent as much as rigorously rational—scientifically credible charismatic leaders, able to communicate around biases and heuristics, to speak to experience, memory and hope.

In *Research and Policy in Education* we argued for more public intellectuals in education and social science, given that politics often follows public opinion rather than expert advice. Academics need, therefore, to be part of the wider dialogue that goes beyond policy makers and professionals. This recognises that the task of academics seeking to impact upon policy and practice is much more complex and uncertain than advocates of evidence-informed policy and practice so often imply. In its present form, the evidence-informed movement exaggerates the possibility of 'expert' answers to enduring educational issues and plays into the hands of those who are prone to be suspicious of all research. Other traditions of research better reflect some of the uncertainties that are implied by the post-truth phenomenon. Recognising this does not mean that 'anything goes', but that a range of different research traditions, with different truth tests and quality criteria, need to be taken seriously. When conducted to a high standard, various types of research can offer important insights to policy makers and practitioners as well as the wider polity. But none of them are ever going to be the only—or even the main—determinant of education policy and practice.

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