

World Society and the Globalization of Educational Policy¹

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The discursive and organizational structures of educational policy have importantly and rather steadily shifted to a global level in recent decades. There is much more global educational discourse, and many more organizational settings for it, than in any previous period. A number of factors are involved:

First, there are the obvious facts of multidimensional globalization in both realities and perceptions. On every front – economic, political, military, social, and cultural – there is increased worldwide interdependence and awareness of interdependence. National societies are embedded in, and influenced by, their wider contexts. This generates the formation of global models of change and directions of change, and national tendencies to become isomorphic with these models and the directions they emphasize. But beyond this broad cultural influence there are also the direct pressures of increased dependence, as national systems come to be organized to deal with the supra-national environment. Consequently, there is an explosion of efforts at social engineering on a global scale. Supra-national structures arise, and national ones actively participate in them. Shared world goals – most prominently progress and justice – come to the fore. They are frequently framed as complementary goals. And notably, education comes to seem increasingly central to the accomplishment of both of these core goals. Thus, education is globally cast as the key to progress, or excellence, and justice, or equality (Chabbot and Ramirez 2000). Much educational reform discussion insists that one cannot have educational excellence without educational equality (cf. Darling-Hammond 2010).

Second, much of the resultant global structuration focuses on the formation and diffusion of policies and policy talk. Globalization has generated nothing by way of a world state with imperative authority and a monopoly of violence. Even the

European Union (EU), the most advanced of the supra-national structures, is a pale imitation of a state. So instead of the binding authority of hard laws, we find multiple social engineering efforts, responding to interdependence, organized around shared policies, soft laws, and the rise of common standards and rankings. These tend to be organized around the authority of actual or putative scientific knowledge, rather than the constitutional dominance of a state. They tend to be justified by normative global standards like human rights, the environment, or transparency, rather than historical, religious, racial, or dynastic state agendas. In this sort of stateless but culturally integrated system, world standards articulated in international conferences and organizations constitute an influential form of governance without government. In this system, education becomes a central motor through which world standards are to be attained; education is thought to operate both to promote egalitarian norms and to foster rational progress (Meyer *et al.* 1997).

Third, the emerging world society is built on a changed ontological base. Throughout the modern period, two central social units have been constructed as primordial bases for collective action, broadly reflecting a dualism of the Western religious tradition: the national state and the individual person. These entities, as cultural constructions, reinforce each other (though in practice they may compete), and the political forms of modernity find various balances between individualisms and statisms. The events of the first half of the 20th century undercut such balances: after two world wars, a massive depression, and stunning violations of human rights and welfare, all attributed to aggressive nationalisms, the national state as the charismatic locus of both power and right lost some legitimacy. “My Country, Right or Wrong” lacks currency in the current wider world of transnational standards. In this context, educational reforms are grounded on the premise that countries can learn from other countries and their “best practices.” All sorts of educational conferences and workshops (often international in character) are designed to upgrade the quality of schools and universities. Thus, since World War II, an extraordinary explosion in conceptions of society as rooted in individual human persons occurred. The newly imagined person carries both a greatly expanded set of rights (across group identities, like gender and age; and across topics, like health and education and the right to cultural choices). Moreover, this person is imagined to carry enormous capacities, so that whole political systems (with democracy), economic systems (with deregulated choice), and cultural systems (with religious and linguistic freedom), are thought to be the product of empowered choosing persons.

If society increasingly is seen to rest on individual persons, and if society becomes more and more supra-national in character, then it should follow that education becomes a most central global institution. And this has, most dramatically, been increasingly the case over the decades since World War II. National policy agendas have increasingly emphasized education (Jakobi 2011), in part in direct response to globalization (Rosenmund 2006), and a whole supra-national arena of educational policy discourse and organization has arisen. The mantra “Think Globally and Act Locally” emerges in a world in which the activities of individual persons are supposed to be both informed by world society and influence world society developments.

This increasingly institutionalized world society perspective emphasizes the authority of global educational frames and standards and their increasing influence

on national educational developments. From this perspective issues of legitimacy and identity are central. Much educational talk and action at the national level is conceptualized as an exercise in the enactment of the legitimate identity of the nation state and of its schools and universities. Such exercises often appear to be ill attuned to the local circumstances or needs that many functionalist theories would emphasize. Nor are these enactments easily accounted for by the power dependency ties emphasized in coercion theories.

To illustrate, consider the plight of Chinese rural school teachers who face ministerial guidelines that call for progressive pedagogy even as they prepare students to cope with a conventional exam structure (Wang 2013). Not surprisingly, the result is an extreme degree of loose coupling. Yet what brings this about is the increasing extent to which Chinese educational policy-makers become more linked to world educational models. In this instance, the increased linkages and their educational ramifications are clearly not driven by economic or related dependencies but instead reflect the deeper embeddedness of China in the wider world of educational reform.

To be sure, local and national factors continue to be important in shaping educational developments (see the papers in Anderson-Levitt 2003, for example; see also Schriewer 2012, and elsewhere). But it is precisely the authority and influence of global educational policy that generates the loose coupling so often noted. Were educational structures and policies only national or local in character, there would be less observable loose coupling (Ramirez 2012). And, it is authority and influence, not solely power and coercion that is often the crucial dynamic (Schofer *et al.* 2012). Of course, there are powerful organizations that wield extraordinary influence (see, for example, Verger 2010; Dale and Robertson 2002; Edwards 2013). However, these organizations are most influential when they endorse educational reforms that enjoy professional legitimacy; their influence is not solely a matter of muscle flexing. Chinese educational reforms are thus influenced by the legitimacy of ideas about what “quality education” looks like, not compelled by economically powerful actors.

Talk and Action at the National Level

We focus here on the rise of global educational discourse and the organizational frames within which this discourse occurs. However, it is important to emphasize that in the case of education, discursive expansion has been accompanied by, and is in a reciprocal causal relation with, an explosion in practice.

Enrollments

Raw enrollments have expanded rapidly, worldwide. Primary education has expanded almost to universality, even in peripheral countries, in just a few decades, and is now treated as an essential human right (in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), and one of the least controversial human rights. The old “school leaving” has become “dropout,” and even “pushout” (Bradley and Renzulli 2011), and is everywhere seen as a major social problem. Secondary education has expanded even more rapidly everywhere, and in many countries is essentially

universal: again, a social movement arises to define it too as a human right. Expansion in higher education is even more extreme, and characterizes every sort of country in the world. Earlier efforts by communist countries to slow it down failed miserably (Lenhardt and Stock 2000), so that enrollment reaches more than 20% of a global cohort of young people (Schofer and Meyer 2005).

All this represents a dramatic change in policy frames, around the world. In the early post-war decades, there was an emphasis on education, but a good deal of concern remained from an earlier modernity about the problem of over-education, especially at the tertiary level (Freeman 1976; Dore 1975). It was understood that education beyond social needs would be inefficient, destructive of stabilizing culture, and inflationary in character: a responsible and authoritative political system would block this inflation. Such concerns have almost completely receded in the world, and low enrollments – for example, of females – are now seen as major social problems.

Curricula

Beyond enrollments, the cultural content of education has expanded greatly, covering more domains of human life and acquiring a globalized character. This is a normative matter, and nationalistic education is strongly criticized (see for instance critiques of nationalistic textbooks in Japan (Nozaki 2002) and Turkey (Çayir 2009)). Schooling touches on a greatly expanded set of domains – sexuality and family life, personal self-expression, multiple cultural frames, and so on. Schooling is notably globalized in content: the universalized sciences are prominent, the universalizing social sciences tend to replace traditional instruction in history, and culture, and cultural and historical materials transcending old civilizational and national boundaries are routinely employed (Frank and Gabler 2006; Wong 1991; Meyer *et al.* 1992).

Thus, notions that a primary function of education is to create national loyalty are in considerable disrepute. The child should learn to be a good citizen, certainly, but a good citizen of the country is now seen as a good citizen of the world. Dying for one's country is not a main educational goal. Humanity is valorized; respect for diversity within and between countries is emphasized. These normative shifts are reflected in intended curricula, as cross-national textbook studies amply demonstrate (Ramirez *et al.* 2009; Meyer *et al.* 2010). The national does not simply disappear but increasingly co-exists with cosmopolitan and multicultural schemas. Global citizenship emerges as a textbook emphasis around the world and is strongly associated with the extent of national linkages to the wider world (Buckner and Russell 2013). These developments are observed and critiqued by scholars with a more nationalistic orientation (Huntington 2004). But it is increasingly evident that the earlier educational transformation of people into national citizens now also emphasizes their transnational personhood (Ramirez 2006; Lie 2004).

Organization

Education has, everywhere, become a main institution. Systems of organizational control become increasingly dense. Local education is tied to national standards, rules, and programs, though often not in a bureaucratically centralized form (Baker

and LeTendre 2005). Rather, webs of coordination, testing and measurement, curricular development, teacher training, and the like expand to construct an institution with both national and supra-national missions. Increasingly, these organizational systems link the local and national educational missions, policies, and structures to global ones. This pattern is obviously an ongoing development. A world educational superstructure emerges and impinges on even the once highly localized system of schools in the USA. This superstructure also influences regional and global educational developments. Below we stress the development of the world educational superstructure, filled with organizations and associations and globally legitimated professions.

Global Structure and Discourse

The national-level changes emphasized above are closely linked to the rise of explicit global structures in the educational field. Hegemonic countries (in our period, especially the USA) may operate independently, and indeed may be important sources of global structuration. But for most countries in the world, the global field operates as a set of important sources of influence on the directions of local change. There are endless variations, of course, and every local and national setting has its own history, influence structure, and political or economic agendas. To some extent, the expanding world order encourages and legitimates appropriate localizations – Robertson (1992) coined the useful term *glocalization* to depict the situation. For instance, now more than in any previous period, we might expect students to receive instruction related to their immediately local community. But of course the pictures of the local world they are taught are likely to be highly edited: traditions of child and sexual abuse, for instance, are unlikely to be stressed, and more exotic ones like headhunting are likely to be greatly distanced. Viking raiders, for example, now appear as traders in Scandinavian textbooks and museums, and their raids are seen as intercultural exchanges. On the other hand, textbook emphases on local environments are likely to be framed in global ecological terms (Bromley *et al.* 2011a).

Global Educational Organization

A most striking feature of the emergent global educational policy field is the rise of a dense system of international organizations, each of which may be an arena of policy discourse, and each of which is likely to be a participant in networks of such discourse. Over and above the nationally rooted organizations focusing on international goals, a great many of these are explicitly international, representing multiple national societies.

Most of the organizations involved are non-governmental in character, reflecting religious, or charitable, or more recently, professional missions (Boli and Thomas 1997; Bromley 2010). Figure 2.1, taken from the data of the Union of International Associations, reports a simple count of the international non-governmental education-related organizations (INGOs) over time. For comparison, we also include an overall count of INGOs of all sorts.

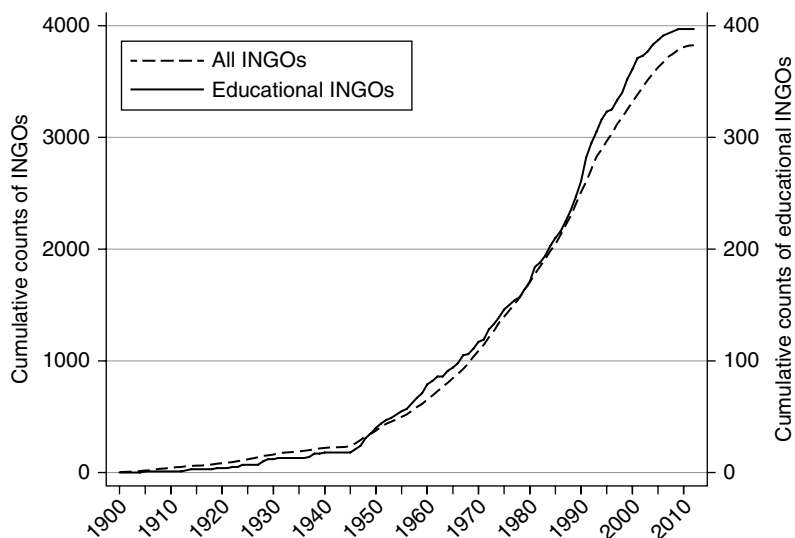


Figure 2.1 Growth in international non-governmental organizations.
Source: Data from UIA (2013).

The count in Figure 2.1 shows explosive growth. Of course, much of this growth parallels the expansion in international organizational life in general. But there is clearly a special dramatic focus on education as a central institution in world society. For both INGOs in general and for educational INGOs in particular, the explosion is especially evident during the latter decades of the past century. Modest increases in foundings earlier on are intensified later.

Bromley (2010) studies this set of organizations, classifying them on their primary missions. She finds a steady shift from traditional religious missions to a more scientific logic. In practice, this means that such organizations are increasingly involved in the policy process, as opposed to simple service delivery. Mundy and Murphy (2001) convincingly show that the international non-governmental system is increasingly involved in transmitting and enforcing policy commitments. The world shifts from a mostly inter-state system characterized by national educational systems to one in which international organizations, with some legitimacy, influence educational developments directly and globally.

Even more central in globalizing policy is the dramatic rise in international governmental organizations. We chart overall figures, also taken from the Union of International Associations, in Figure 2.2. Many of these organizations prominently display education among their foci. And increasingly, as we discuss below, these organizations come to be aggressive in defining proper educational policies worldwide (e.g. in the Education for All movement). This sort of expansion is especially dramatic in Europe, where the EU and related organizations play significant roles and are influential worldwide. The European Bologna Process has had extraordinary impact on a world, not simply a continental, scale.

To summarize, the post-World War II era, and even more the late neo-liberal period, is one in which there has been a sharp increase in international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental. Many of these organizations have a

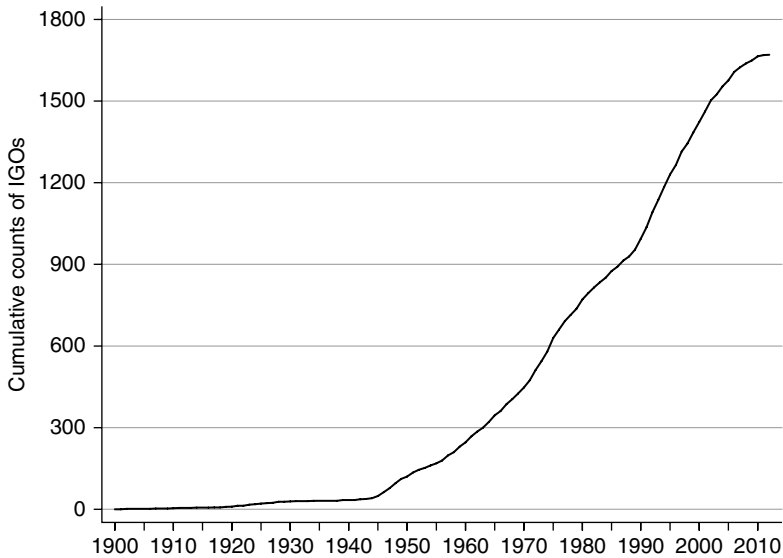


Figure 2.2 Growth in inter-governmental organizations.

Source: Data from UIA (2013).

strong focus on education. The world educational revolution involves both global enrollment growth and the growth of education as a policy domain in international organizations. Increasingly linked to basic goals of progress or justice, education has become a taken-for-granted institution worldwide.

Global Educational Discourse

Organizational expansion generates and reflects discursive expansion. Much of this takes the form of high professionalism, which now occurs in world arenas. Educators of all sorts now function in global communication circles. This is of course greatly facilitated by the rise of modern technologies that lead to the traversing of spatial boundaries. But there is more to it than technological globalization. There is also the growing sense that it is good, perhaps even necessary, to link and “network” across the boundaries. Thus, national educational systems and national professional associations become more receptive to what goes on in other countries and structure themselves accordingly. A strong “best practices” ideology emerges and permeates the world; best practices in turn are often cast as realistic instruments for upgrading education through benchmarking. As one indicator, in Figure 2.3, we track the expansion of the “World Council of Comparative Education Societies.” In the 1960 to 1969 period less than ten countries were affiliated with the World Council. Forty years later there are nearly 40 members. These societies themselves have greatly expanded, of course, but the figure shows the growth in the ways they are linked together. Notably, membership in the World Council has also become less exclusive, with more non-Western countries now on board.

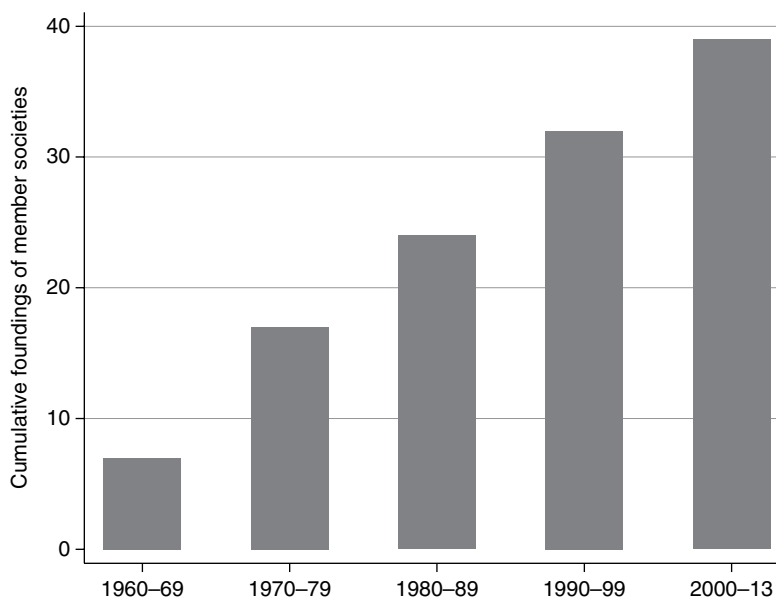


Figure 2.3 An expanding World Council of Comparative Education Societies.

Source: Data from Bray *et al.* (2008); WCCES (2013).

Notes: Numbers are based on the founding year of societies, not their year of joining WCCES.

Beyond the expansion of the general field of comparative education, we can also note the expansion of global professional discourse in particular educational fields. The economics of education, science education, education for literacy, social science education, educational technology, education for refugees, education in transitional or post-conflict societies – all these sorts of fields come now to be structured supra-nationally, with conferences, journals, and the other apparatuses of professional development. Table 2.1 illustratively lists some of the relevant associations in various educational fields, and their dates of foundation. Some of these associations have organizational aims attuned to the goal of excellence, emphasizing science and technology, for example. However, others seem more linked to equity, focusing on human rights and peace. We reiterate that excellence and equity are diffuse goals that nation states are expected to pursue with education as a driving force.

Professionalized discourse at the global level is structured in an expanding array of academic journals concerned with comparative education. Figure 2.4, based on a limited data set, tracks this growth. The growth pattern is very similar to that displayed in Figure 2.3. For the first time periods there are very few international and comparative education journals. By the 21st century there are many journals in this domain. Education, once imagined in mostly national terms, increasingly evolves to become more comparative in its scope. Furthermore, the reports of the central international governmental organizations increasingly emphasize education. For example, the World Bank generates increasing numbers of reports concerned with education. So do the various

Table 2.1 Associations in various educational fields

<i>Year of foundation</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Organizational aims</i>
1973	International Council of Associations for Science Education	“Extend and improve education in science and technology for all children and youth throughout the world; provide a means of communication among associations of science teachers; foster cooperative efforts to improve science education.”
1979	International Organization for Science and Technology Education	“Promote science and technology education as a vital part of the general education of all people of all countries; provide scholarly exchange and discussion and encourage informed debate, reflection and research in the field; continue and strengthen its tradition.”
1994	International Association for Citizenship, Social and Economics Education	“Advance theoretical and practical knowledge about children in the areas of their social and economics understanding and learning.”
1999	Global Campaign for Peace Education	“Promote the implementation of peace education in both formal and non-formal educational settings around the world.”
2000	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies	“Create an accessible network through which education practitioners working around the world in emergency contexts can interact and engage with one another through the exchange of resources and information which will assist in their individual and organizational efforts to ensure quality education for all persons affected by emergencies, crisis, or chronic instability.”
2003	Democracy and Human Rights Education in Europe	“Promote understanding and commitment to human rights and democracy within the enlarged European Union through education.”

Source: Data from UIA (2013).

branches of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). And so does the EU. Relevant trend data are reported in Figure 2.5. Not surprisingly, UNESCO publishes more educational documents throughout this period. Education is after all a core feature of its mandate. This was not the case with the World Bank, but nevertheless the publication gap between UNESCO and the World Bank shrinks by the period of 2005 to 2009, as education comes to be seen as essential to national and global economic growth. The World Bank has always enjoyed vastly greater resources, but it is only more recently that its resources are substantially focused on education. Again not surprisingly, the EU has a more modest output. Its distinctive mandate was less education-centric. But it, too, experiences dramatic growth in the years since the beginning of the “Bologna Process.”

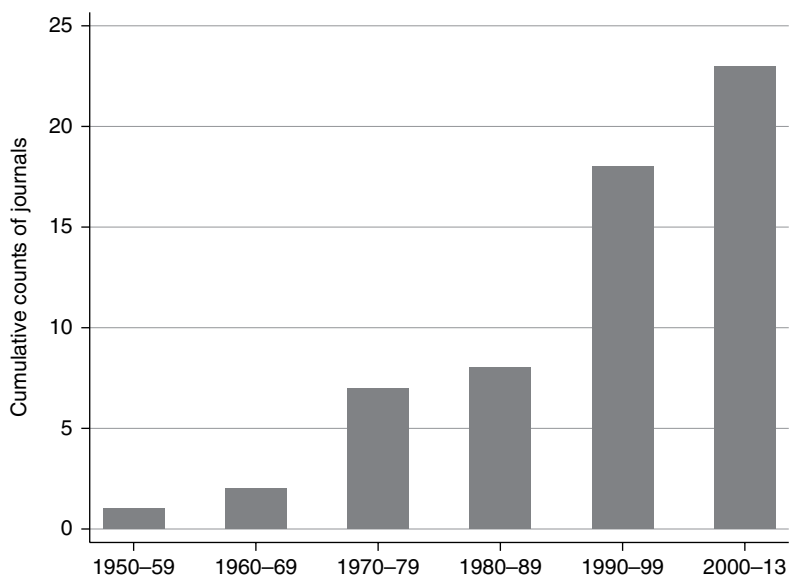


Figure 2.4 Growth in comparative and international education journals.
Source: Data from Bray *et al.* (2008); Stanford University Libraries (2013).

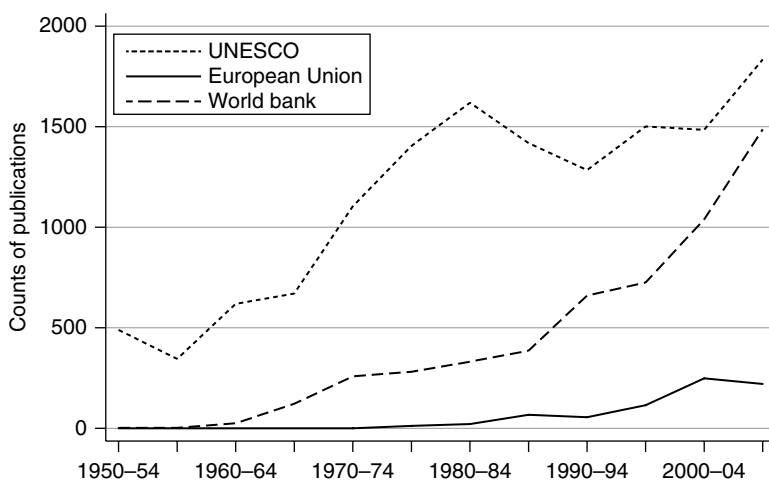


Figure 2.5 Publication trends of education documents.
Source: Data from UNESCO (2013a); World Bank (2013); EU (2013).
Note: Counts represent five-year averages of publications containing the word “education” in the title.

Impact: Global Educational Policies

The sweeping expansion of global-level educational organizational and discursive frames has reflected and produced a great expansion in explicitly global educational policies. By global policies, we mean rules and standards depicting proper national educational systems. Some of these, such as those rooted in human rights treaties, have a standing close to hard law, though of course decoupling is common and enforcement

weak. Many others have more of a soft law character, offering prescriptions and models defining proper or best practices. Still others simply lay out standards of virtuous practice and conduct – criteria defining better and worse education, not standards of pre- and proscription.

An important point here is that the contemporary world has generated pervasively influential models defining what a good educational system is. A second point is that these models are formed rather universalistically – good education is good education everywhere. Global discourse often gives lip service to the virtues of local adaptation, variation, and diversity. But uniformity is the general rule – a most striking fact in a world of very great cultural and socioeconomic diversity. It is hard to find international organizations and discourses, for example, that now suggest that impoverished countries delay the creation and expansion of higher education. This was an idea well established just a few decades ago. Earlier World Bank recommendations to restrict the growth of higher education in less developed countries have receded (Heyneman 1995). National salvation outside higher education is now unimaginable.

Much globalized educational policy is ultimately justified under contemporary human rights norms, which are organized universalistically. The child – everywhere covered by such norms – is entitled to education, and will benefit from it. There is no clear depiction of a global social order that functionally requires the child to be schooled. In this the global system differs from the early nationally focused one, in which schooling was both the right of the child and a compulsory obligation to the national state. Thus the world has norms supporting the child's right to an education, but has not yet constructed itself as a corporate body that can make education compulsory. Global society operates to infuse national societies with the sense that they should be embracing education for the widest range of approved goals.

Educational Enrollment

Global policies have increasingly stressed the importance of educational enrollment. Education is forwarded as a human right (in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). Table 2.2 depicts some crucial dates in the development of this principle, culminating in the worldwide Education for All movement. The Jomtien conference is the first major international educational conference in which non-state actors are given a place at the table. The conference was fostered by an unusual collaboration between the World Bank and UNESCO, a collaboration facilitated by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (Chabbot 2003).

Table 2.2 also shows that this general right to education principle is increasingly applied to more and more components of the human population: females (Ramirez and Wotipka 2001), ethnic minorities, refugees, indigenous people (Cole 2011; Tsutsui 2004), pre-school children (Wotipka *et al.* 2013), post-schooling adults and lifelong learning (Jakobi 2009), disabled persons (Powell 2011), and so on. The universalistic reach of the educational principle is best appreciated by recalling the historical debates about whether this or that category of person was educable – peasants and workers, for example. These debates, in the contemporary context, would be difficult to imagine.

Table 2.2 International instruments recognizing the right to education

<i>Year</i>	<i>Instrument</i>	<i>Adopting body</i>
1948	Universal Declaration of Human Rights	General Assembly of the United Nations
1959	Declaration on the Rights of the Child	General Assembly of the United Nations
1960	Convention against Discrimination in Education	General Conference of UNESCO
1965	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	General Assembly of the United Nations
1966	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	General Assembly of the United Nations
1974	Recommendation on Education for International Understanding and Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms	General Conference of UNESCO
1978	International Charter of Physical Education and Sport	General Conference of UNESCO
1979	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)	General Assembly of the United Nations
1989	Convention on Technical and Vocational Education	General Conference of UNESCO
1989	Convention on the Rights of the Child	General Assembly of the United Nations
1990	Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs	World Conference on Education for All
1997	Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning	International Conference on Adult Education
2000	Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments	World Education Forum
2001	Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education	General Conference of UNESCO
2003	General Comment 13 on the Right to Education (Art. 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights)	UNESCO and United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
2006	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	General Assembly of the United Nations

Source: UNESCO (2013b).

Educational Curricula and Quality

A dramatic aspect of educational policy globalization is to be found in the formation and expansion of curricular and learning standards. The former tend to be implicit, and the latter very explicit.

With respect to mass education, there is the rapid modern expansion of international testing (Kijima 2013; Kamens and McNeeley 2010). PISA tests, rooted in the OECD, have expanded in number. So have the tests of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). Recently, some regional associations

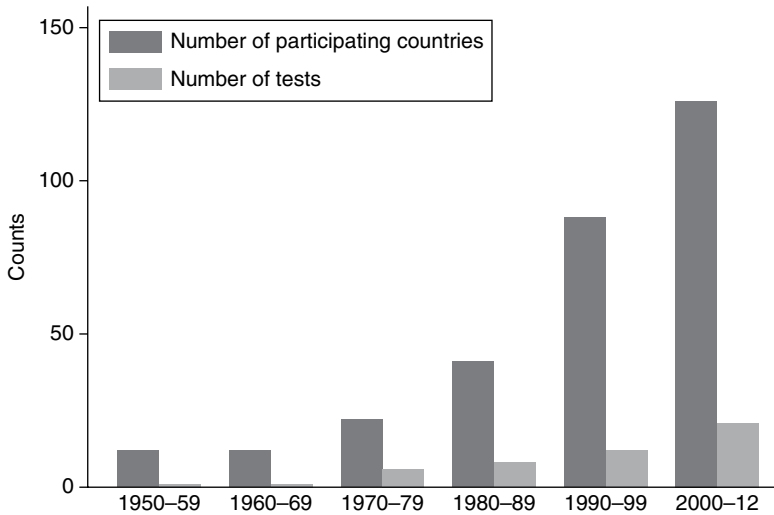


Figure 2.6 Expansion of international testing.
Source: Data from Kijima (2013).

have also constructed tests. Of course, the testing – especially since the results are commonly discussed as scores on single dimensions – carries considerable force in implying a globally common set of standards. In Figure 2.6, we report the expansion in numbers of such international tests, and the expansion in the numbers of countries participating in them. The figure shows the extraordinary increase in testing. Both numbers of tests and the numbers of countries participating in them grow dramatically over time.

International testing has produced an extensive literature at both international and domestic levels. In many countries, national results on international tests have had considerable policy impact. For example, in the USA, a whole policy regime embodied in the document “A Nation at Risk” followed on some test score results. Similar impacts have characterized a despondent educational discourse in Germany and an upbeat one in Finland (but see Rautalin 2013 for a more nuanced assessment of the Finnish educational triumph). New heroes clearly emerge from the widely publicized results of these tests, from “Asian tigers” (Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan) to Finland (Takayama 2008) to Shanghai (Sellar and Lingard 2013). It is widely argued, or even assumed, that the country winners in these tests will undergo greater economic development than the laggards (Hanushek and Kimko 2000; but see Ramirez *et al.* 2006, for an alternative perspective).

A similar pattern characterizes the rise of international comparisons in the field of higher education – there is an explosion in the rankings of universities and the formation of national policies to enhance the creation of “world class universities.” Table 2.3 reports global rankings that have received attention, and the dates of their creation. Table 2.4 shows a selective list of countries discussed in the literature as having policies related to the creation of world class universities.

The rankings are often and justifiably criticized. But it will not do to pretend that they are inconsequential. The rankings influence higher educational discourse and organization in ways parallel to the influence of the international tests for lower levels of schooling. Both systems, at least as they are commonly employed,

Table 2.3 Global university rankings

<i>Year of launch</i>	<i>Ranking name</i>	<i>Produced by</i>
2003	*Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities	Shanghai Academic Ranking Consultancy, China
2004 (ended in 2009)	*Times Higher Education-QS World University Rankings	Times Higher Education and Quacquarelli Symonds, UK
2004	Webometrics Ranking of World Universities	Cybermetrics lab, Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales, Spain
2007	Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers for World Universities	Higher Education Accreditation and Evaluation Council, Taiwan
2007	International Professional Classification of Higher Education Institutions	École des Mines de Paris, France
2008	Leiden Rankings	Leiden University, The Netherlands
2009 (one ranking)	Reitor Global Universities Ranking	Reitor (Peŭmop), Russian Federation
2010	*Times Higher Education World University Rankings	Times Higher Education and Thomson Reuters, UK
2010	*QS World University Rankings	Quacquarelli Symonds, UK
2013	U-Multirank	Funded by the European Commission

Source: Rauhvargers (2011).

Note: The most influential rankings are starred. In 2010, the *Times* and QS ended their collaboration and started producing the Times Higher Education World University Rankings and the QS World University Rankings, respectively.

presuppose universalistic standards that order the standing of local and national schools or universities in the wider world. National policy reactions often imagine that improvement is both possible and necessary. National educational goals are set forth in a comparative mode, to upgrade what one's students know in mathematics and science relative to what students around the world know or to plan to have world class universities like those in other countries (see the papers in Shin and Kehm 2013; Wedlin 2006, as regards business schools).

The Knowledge Society

Central attention to the expansion and quality of both mass and higher education is closely linked to the rise in global discourse of conceptions of society itself as a sort of educational construction, and a product of educational development. Far from an earlier modern depiction of education as producing people for a given (or later, a planned) society, contemporary discourse has a very open-system character. Society – and now, including the economy – is to be built out of creative and entrepreneurial education-produced innovations. This is the “Knowledge Society,” or “Knowledge Economy.” The conception of society and economy involved is far removed from earlier emphases on material production, material resources, and material human needs. The central

Table 2.4 Selected national excellence initiatives related to world class higher education

<i>Country</i>	<i>Year of launch</i>	<i>Initiative name</i>
Canada	2009	Canada Global Excellence Research Chairs
China	1996	China 211 Project
	1999	China 985 Project
France	2006	Opération Campus
	2006	Pôles de recherche et d'enseignement supérieur (PRES)
Germany	2004	Germany Excellence Initiative
Japan	2002	Japan Top-30 Program (21st Century Centers of Excellence)
	2007	Japan Global Centers of Excellence Program
Republic of Korea	1999	Brain Korea 21 Program
	2008	World Class University
	2008	Humanity Korea Project
	2010	Social Science Korea
Malaysia	2007	National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2020
Saudi Arabia	Opened in 2009	King Abdullah University of Science and Technology
Singapore	1997	Campus for Research Excellence and Technological Enterprise (CREATE)
	2007	Research Centers of Excellence
Taiwan	1998	Program for Promoting Academic Excellence of Universities
	2006	Development Plan for World Class Universities and Research Centers of Excellence

Source: Salmi (2009); Shin and Kehm (2013); Wildavsky (2010); Ramakrishna (2012).

institution in constructing this new world is education – mass education for building both human capital and the expanded human person in general; and elite education, presumably in world class universities, that will generate the innovations and technical developments to enhance competitive progress. In this new model, education, once thought to serve religious and political ends, becomes relevant to every aspect of life and progress, now including an expanded version of the economy.

The Global Educational Model

The literature in comparative education tends to follow its traditional pattern of emphasizing diversity. Case studies abound, and naturally emphasize the unique features of the particular case. This tends to understate the extent to which educational systems reflect common forces – and forces that have become increasingly common through the current period, as we discuss above. Thus, we may here note what seem to be fairly consensual educational virtues in contemporary world society. Of course, as virtues, they are routinely violated in practice, and education is a notorious site for extreme versions of decoupling between policy and practice (Meyer and Rowan 1977; note that Brunsson 1989 speaks of it as hypocrisy). But it is worth attending to the virtues themselves, and what they indicate about world society.

1. Clearly, a virtuous educational system is an expanded one. Mass education should be universal, and secondary education should be near that. Higher education should in some form be available to almost anyone. Particular attention should be given to supplying education to groups earlier barred or discriminated against, for females, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples, the disabled, very young children, and so on. Almost everyone will benefit from more education (Hout 2012).
2. Education should stress cognitive achievement in all sorts of standard subjects. It should not emphasize ritual knowledge, especially very parochial ritual knowledge in a local culture. The right to education is now framed as the right to learn. This in turn gives rise to a renewed interest in effective teaching that is supposed to lead to deep understanding, not merely rote memorization.
3. Education should be participatory and progressive. Traditional conformity to the rules is not so important. Rote memorization is debunked. The student should develop a capacity for creative initiative and for problem-solving.
4. Education should be emancipatory. The student should learn tolerance for much diversity, including international diversity. The student should become a member of national society, but also a global society within which the nation is to be seen as embedded.
5. Educational systems should be transparent and accountable. Of course, these are faddish terms but they capture the underlying sense that everyone has a right to know what is going on in schools and universities. The latter are under pressure to submit to “report cards” that often take the form of international tests and university rankings.
6. Lastly and most importantly, the virtuous educational system is attuned to world educational standards. These inform the virtues it needs to realize. These also point to successful cases (educational heroes) and cross-national best practices. Educational consulting is increasingly a multi-national enterprise. The emergence and expansion of international tests and transnational rankings facilitates the rise of educational consulting without borders.

Uncertainty, Fashion, and Variations

We have outlined what seem to be consensual features of the contemporary globalized model of education. Yet there is a great deal of variability within and around this model. Some of this arises because of enormous uncertainty in the realities involved. It is not clear what the ideal Knowledge Society is. And it is very unclear what dimensions of education might enhance it: even the established notion that education produces hard-line economic growth rests on very shaky theory and evidence. There is, thus, no good empirical reason to assume that having one world class university is better than having several good ones – or indeed less tertiary education at all. Nor is it clear that it is more important to improve PISA scores than to expand access to more education.

In this context education is understood to be central, but it is unknown what dimensions are important – so waves of fashion arise. These reflect realities or perceptions about dominant or successful countries – here a Finland, there a Singapore, and sometimes a Cuba, but commonly the USA as regards higher education – which should be emulated. And the realities and perceptions involved are the substantive meat of the discourse and organization in the supra-national world. A wave of

fashion makes instruction in science and mathematics important, and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) becomes an international acronym. A related version stresses the importance of female participation in education generally or in engineering particularly. Elsewhere, social movements emphasize expanded participation of marginal populations. Sometimes the focus is on mass education, but currently the attention goes to higher education as the putative source of the golden eggs of “innovation” and “entrepreneurship.”

Given all the uncertainties involved, the one certainty is that the whole global educational policy system changes with waves of difficult-to-predict fashion. But another related consequence is a measure of pluralism: ideal models vary, and emulators can copy varying versions. Both the varying international linkages and the domestic policy structures of countries produce variations in what is copied, and in the interpretation of the core models involved. American linkages and models are central in some places, while related European ones dominate elsewhere: and always, path dependencies rooted in earlier (e.g. colonial) systems can retain some effectiveness. Globalized forces may dominate, but they by no means have a unified character: the world society is a stateless one.

Conclusion

In the 18th and 19th centuries mass schooling emerged and expanded as a project of the nation state (Ramirez and Boli 1987). This was a contested project but the advocates of mass schooling triumphed again and again. After 1945 the newly independent countries embraced this project with few of the earlier reservations about who was educable. A contested terrain became an institutionalized domain: all were educable. National education ministries and compulsory school legislation diffused worldwide, creating links between nation states and citizens.

Higher education had earlier medieval roots in Europe, but in the 19th century universities also became laboratories of nation-building (Reisner 1927). Both mass schooling and elite education became closely attuned to the nation state; the production of good national citizens and leaders was their goal. Despite many differences in the organization of schools and universities across countries, these adhered to a nationalizing script that unfolded during the 19th century (Anderson 1991). The script called for the homogenization of the masses: rugged programs for transforming the masses into good Frenchmen, Americans, or Japanese, flourished. Furthermore, subnational loyalties were suspect and to be eradicated. Education was a key institution through which national citizens and elites were to be created.

This dynamic continued into the 20th century. But two world wars later a rethinking of the nationalizing agenda of education emerged. In an earlier era world models privileged national agendas, thereby nudging empires and colonies alike to enact national identities. But these models are changing and increasingly emphasize different conceptions of the good nation state and its virtuous educational system. The ideal citizen is now first and foremost a person with rights, preferences, and capacities that need to be nourished in schools and universities. The good nation state is expected to foster this ideal citizen in terms of broader transnational standards that assist in the project. These standards are reflected in the rise and growth of international achievement tests and university rankings but also in the enormous attention

given to the individual learner. The proliferation of tests and rankings presupposes that nation states can upgrade the quality of their educational systems by comparing them against the best in the world. Universalistic world standards influence educational developments not only through national policies but also directly through a web of professional educational organizations and leaders that increasingly use world standards as their reference structures. Thus the virtuous educational system is very much attuned to world standards and their articulation in international organizations and conferences. These transnational standards impose much discipline, but also, reflecting modern individualism, give rise to more student centered curricula (Bromley *et al.* 2011b) and greater choice in university courses (Frank and Gabler 2006). In world society students are conceived not only as potential sources of human capital but also as rights bearing persons with tremendous capacities for transforming the world.

This chapter explores these changing directions – changes in who counts and what counts – by examining global educational structures and trends. These include the growth of international educational organizations, professional associations, publications, and discourse. They also include the growth of international achievement tests and university rankings, and initiatives to create world class universities.

Taken as a whole these developments add up to global policy-making that privileges universalistic and optimistic emphases on high standards and best practices. The virtuous educational system is expected to prepare students to meet world challenges and seize global opportunities. All sorts of educational systems increasingly include references to the world within which they are embedded. The nation state continues to be held responsible for the education of its citizens, even as these citizens are increasingly framed in post-nationalist terms. Students are expected to function in and contribute to a Knowledge Society that is itself a creature of world standards, scripts, and statistics. Thus, the individual person is increasingly linked to the wider world not just through nation states with increasingly more similar structures and policies, but also more directly through processes that emphasize world citizenship and a global economy. The national era now co-exists with a post-nationalist global agenda, and national educational policy-making coexists with much global educational policy.

To come to terms with these developments, one needs to engage in long-term and large-scale comparative educational research. This means prioritizing longitudinal instead of cross-sectional research designs and examining changes over extended time periods. Much of what we now take for granted – women in higher education, for example – was unthinkable in many countries at the beginning of the 20th century and even well into it. Moreover, much of what we often “explain” with this or that local societal need or cultural tradition becomes problematized when we explicitly compare many countries and find common developments over time. Furthermore, one can also estimate the clout of the global versus the local only by examining the comparative weights of their influence over time. A core world society insight supported in numerous analyses is that the global weight is greater in the more recent era. A related insight is that as countries become more closely linked to world society their educational talk and action will be more attuned to global scripts. Lastly, a world society research perspective compels one to go beyond world economy emphases and to recognize the role of global authority and influence in shaping legitimate identity and proper discourse, policy, and action.

Note

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