

Vongalis-Macrow, A., (2009). The simplicity of educational reforms: defining globalization and reframing educational policies during the 1990s. *International Journal of Educational Policies*. Vol.3 (2) pp. 62-80.

ISSN: 1307-3842

The Simplicity of Educational Reforms: Defining Globalization and Reframing Educational Policies during The 1990s

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Abstract

Reviewing the trends in educational reforms from the last decade provides opportunity for policy makers to understand the issues from the past with a view to improving the educational planning in the future. In the 90s globalization emerged as a great impetus for educational reforms, however a central problem concerning globalization was its full meaning and implications were still emergent therefore educational planning and policy making reflected a great deal of uncertainty. This paper reviews and analyses how educational policies from the 90s constructed globalization and uncertainty and whether the lessons from the 90s have implications for current policy making. Using computer assisted text analysis, this paper explores how educational policies from OECD, UNESCO and the World Bank coalesced with certain notions of globalisation that strategically guided educational reforms. By focusing on textual evidence, in a range of education policy from the 90s, the paper discusses how policy consolidated particular ideas about globalization and presented 'simple' recipes for educational change. When reviewing the 90s, the relationship between education and global change the macro policy research shows a trend towards narrowing focus on managerial and financial issues, specifically the paper discusses how OECD policy emphasized education a social and individual payoff, World Bank policy focused on education enabling the free flow of capital and UNESCO policy problematised globalization but focused on the importance of teachers as a way to create stability in education during the paradoxical times.

Keywords: *globalisation, education reform, education policy, policy analysis*

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Introduction

The 90s presented educators with new challenges in educating for a global economy as education became axiomatic in encompassing new conceptual and technological demands related to the global economy, knowledge making and the role of education. The influence of supra agencies, such as UNESCO, OECD and World Bank, in shaping educational reform has been extrapolated by Spring, (1998), and others (Henry, Lingard, Rizvi, & Taylor; Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, & Henry, 1997). The paper revisits a selection of educational policies from the 90s and uses snapshot of policy text from UNESCO, World Bank and OECD, to illustrate the predominant ideas shaping educational policy in the 90s and how these ideas were interpreted by the aforementioned agencies. This is reflective research, seeking to review the past as a way to displace ideas that resonate in educational policy which delimit educational futures.

The research was prompted by Robert Zagha, who conducted a large scale review of World Bank economic policies of the 1990s. In presenting his findings on the review of World Bank policies, at the end of 2005, Zagha concluded that the 1990s represented the age of simplicity (Zagha, 2005). According to Zagha, what was missing was a better understanding of non economic factors, such as, history, culture and politics. However, one element not measured or reflected upon was education. Perhaps it is not part of the core economic and monetary policies of the World Bank. Yet, education systems had undergone radical change in the 90s and for many developing nations, the World Bank influence on restructuring education systems had dire consequences (Jones, 1992; Rhoten, 2000; Vongalis, 2003).

Zagha's review raised interesting questions that undermined previously glowing assessments of economic growth and prosperity as a result of globalisation and the promises of new economic frontiers through the knowledge economy. Interviewing key policy makers and former World Bank directors, Zagha surmised that if the 1980s represented the "lost decade" for many nations, then the 90s turned out to be "the age of simplicity". The review suggested that one set of common policies does not suit all nations and recommended that policies should heavily adapted these to suit countries' own cultures, interests and politics. In the light of Zagha's review education reform also falls under the spotlight. If the 90s

were the age of economic simplicity, can we say the same about education reform? \

This paper considers this question by reviewing the trends in education reform of the 1990s. This paper analyses a selection of education policies from the 90s to identify and critique some of the common features of educational policy from OECD, UNESCO and World Bank. These supra national agencies acted as harmonizing bodies, whose task was to bring together policy that embraced a range of national perspectives in order to produce a cohesive framework prepared national policies for the globalisation of education, the knowledge economy and the trading in educational services and products. The discussion will critically examine how education policy making may have fallen into the same traps as economic policies and simplified education reform into a narrow fitting template.

Method

The focus on this paper is to consider some of the key trends shown in policy with respect to educational restructuring. In order to begin the review of education policies from the 90s, the research analysed a cross section of educational policy texts from OECD, UNESCO and the World Bank over the period of 1996-2000. A range of range of policy texts, 17 in total, formed the basis of textual policy analysis from which a macro view emerged. The texts are summarized in the following table (Table 1).

Table 1: The policy texts used for CAQDAS

OECD	UNESCO	World Bank
(Johnston, 1999) speech	(Matsuura, 2000) speech	(Wolfensohn,2000) speech
(Johnston, 1997) publication	(UNESCO, 1996b)publication	(WorldBank,2000a) publication
(OECD, 2000) policy document	(Delors, 1996) policy documentation	(WorldBank,1999) policy documentation
(Hirsch, 1997) report	(UNESCO,2000)publication	(WorldBank,2000d) publication
(CERI, 1998) policy recommendation	(UNESCO, 1996a)policy document	(Craig, 1998) policy recommendation
	(UNESCO-ACEID, 1996)	(WorldBank, 2000c)

The macro policies from these agencies represent key trends in the way that educational reform was developed and shaped during the era under examination. The definition of macro policy is taken from Stiglitz (2002) in which the macro refers to the aggregate trends and behaviours. Using key work in context (KWIC) analysis, a generalized snapshot of policy content can be revealed. The first section discusses the major policy directives of OECD, UNESCO and World Bank in relation to educational restructuring.

Textual analysis of Education Policies

The policy texts shown in table 1 were coded using Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS), in order to define and delimit the meaning of educational restructuring. Educational restructuring as a central concept has been used because it encapsulates educational reform, however, importantly, draws upon subsidiary concepts that have ideological and political connotations thus politicizing the concept of globalisation (Duan, 1997; Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, & Henry, 1997; Willmott, 1999). Nash (1999:451) explains structure as “systems of human relationships” and “collective rules and resources that structure behaviour”. Nash’s definition of structure contextualizes structure within a system of relationships and behavioural possibilities influenced by the ideologies shaping rules and regulations.

When analyzing the textual data related to educational restructuring in the seventeen policy documents, ten themes are more often made explicit within policy (see Figure 1). These themes are:

- human capital
- budgetary decisions
- costing education
- educational objectives
- educational outcomes
- education system
- global/local context
- investment
- management
- teachers

Of the ten themes however, more unequivocal statements about budgets, costing and managing education are more likely to be identified as predominant concepts or ideas evident in policy discourse (see Figure 1).

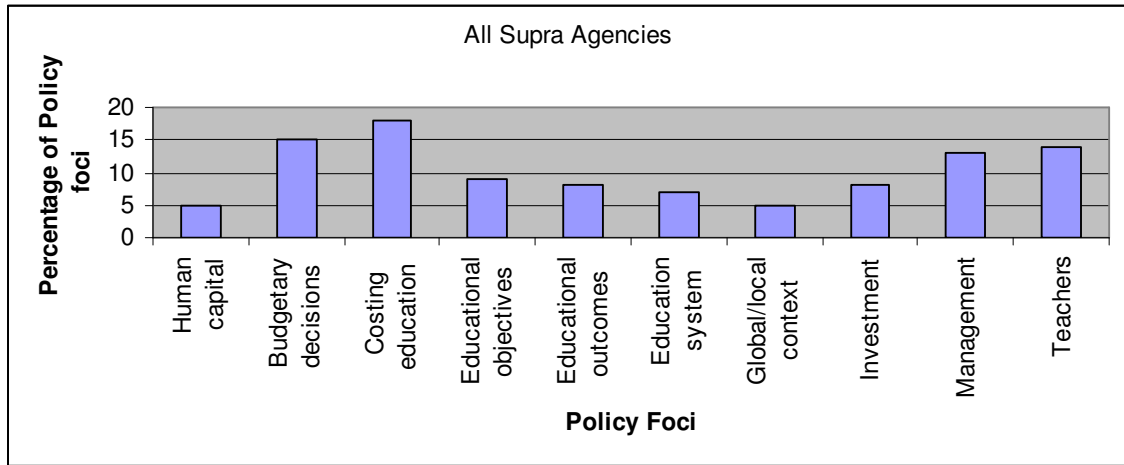


Figure 1. Policy Content Text shows that budgetary concerns and issues relevant to costing, teachers and management figure more extensively in policy.

The figure shows that the costing of education (18 percent) dominates restructuring policy. Furthermore, budgetary decisions (15 percent), management (14 percent) and teachers (13 percent) are recurring policy themes. Education policy is preoccupied with issues surrounding costing and managing as these appear to be the most tangible way to think about the educational restructuring. Policy statements about educational objectives-9 percent, educational outcomes-8 percent, education system-7 percent, and the global/local context-5 percent are less visible in policy and as such issues relevant to these themes are less likely policy targets.

The prevalence of budgetary decision making, costing and management of education suggests a focus on shaping the allocation of resources, almost as if policy is about regulating how and who manages the costs of education in its redesign. In addition, education restructuring coalesces with ideas about resource efficiency and a maximization postulate. The discourse surrounding restructuring education policies focuses on efficiency gains and managing, that is controlling the rules that govern the way restructuring will take place. Interestingly, teachers

figure highly in restructuring discourse. Upon closer examination of the textual data related to teachers, the policy focuses on the cost of teachers, as a large percentage of educational spending. By factoring in the costs of teachers in restructuring policy, teachers' output, measured against their costs, become a focus of controlling and managing educational restructuring.

By far, the more evident policy foci, costing education, budgetary decisions, teachers and management represent a recurring pattern in policy discourse where these foci are more consistently evident in policy. If these foci are more evident in policy discourse, and occupy a greater policy space, it does suggest that these foci create points of certainty in that they represent a more deliberate reference point from which policy develops. These points of certainty create a sense of common global policy directives where the macro or aggregate trends emerge from the scope and content of these, more evident foci.

Overall, the data presented in figure one, suggests that the aggregate trends for managing the restructuring of education in the 90s meant that global policy deliberated on decision making, management, costs of education and teachers. From the onset, the results are familiar yet surprising. The results are familiar, in the sense that the preoccupation with educational costing has been a mainstay of educational reform over the last decades. However, the limited discussion on global and local implications is surprising considering the contested meaning of globalization. Considering the contextual nature of education and open relationship to broader social, cultural and economic values, extended discussion and policy about the meaning of globalization and its relationship to educational systems appears to be a critical omission in order to truly adapt a system to new conditions.

However, before we can draw conclusions about the common purpose of policy in the 90s and whether it was, in fact simplified plans for education restructuring, it is necessary to investigate the different perspectives represented by the policies from UNESCO, World Bank and OECD. These organisations, while global in their operating sphere, are nevertheless different. The differences in these supra agencies have been investigated by educational researchers (Ball, 1998; Deacon, Hulse, & Stubbs, 1997; Jones, 1992; Spring, 1998; Joseph Stiglitz, 1998). When considering the mission of the three supra agencies, their overall objectives and

position, in relation to the emerging global context, what is revealed is that each organization occupies a unique and valuable purpose in relation to globalisation. The strategic governance occupied by each organisation and its framework for action is inseparable from policy emerging from the organisation. OECD, UNESCO and World Bank have clear educational agendas as part of their responsibility. In addition, these agencies governance extends to different nations, often based on economic and development status. As the policy takers from these agencies are diverse in culture, socio economic and political terrains, it raises questions about whether the educational policies, referring to restructuring, have different points of certainty that contextualize the different educational spaces being governed.

Further analysis of that data differentiates the way that each organization contextualizes those points of certainty and assembles policy text around the identified themes. By analyzing differences, what emerges is the distinct way that each agency conceptualizes educational restructuring, and how each agency ties education to globalization.

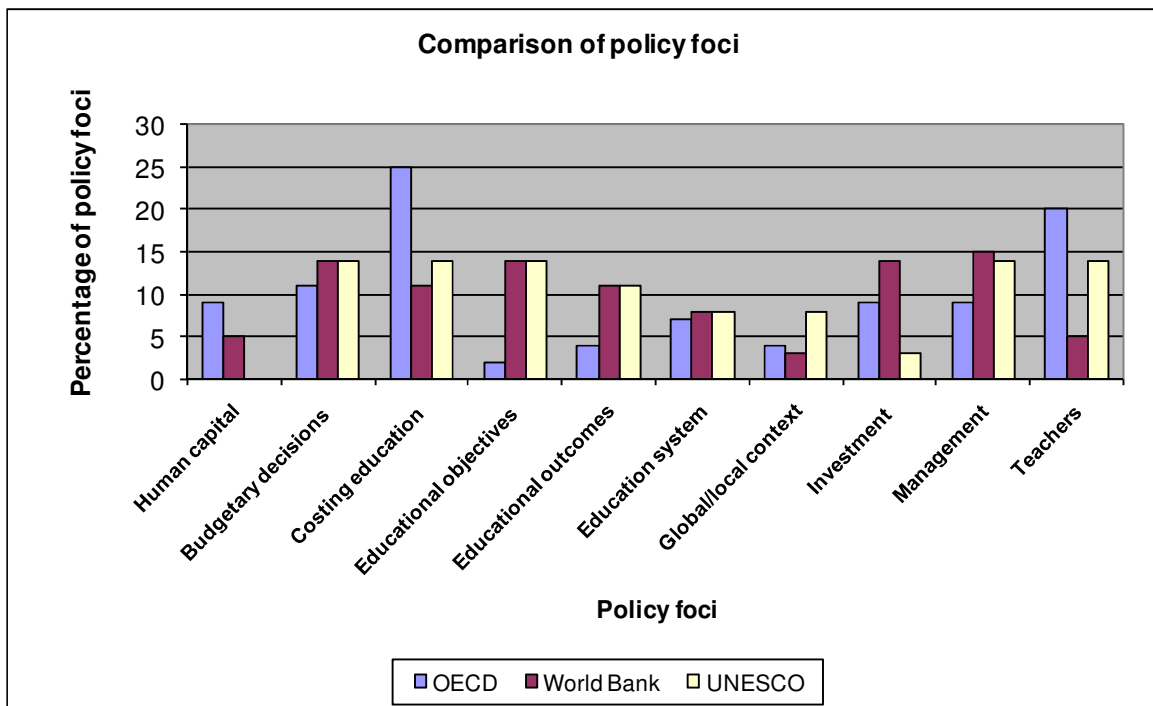


Figure 2. Breakdown of Policy Relevant to Educational Restructuring

Each organization creates policy in order to find ways to deal with the globalisation challenge and strategize about what the global economy means for education in a particular context. As identified, there are predominantly ten themes evident in globalised education policy. From these themes a core foci of policy resolves issues dealing with budgetary decisions, costing education, management, and teachers. These are common policy points across the supra agencies. However, considering the different policy targets, it is interesting to consider how the agencies vary and the implications for educational restructuring falling under the particular governance. A closer examination of policy textual data follows to map out the policy terrain of each supra agency and lead towards a discussion about the sophistication or poverty of policy, and the constituent components of education policy responding to globalisation.

OECD educational policy

Restructuring policy in OECD policies focus on educational costings, teachers and budgetary decision making. How do these three elements form part of the OECD policy agenda for education in the 90s? Part of the OECD plan for a globalised future where globalisation can materialize as a fact, is to restructure education. The main thrust of policy is to push this notion of education as a pay off. Policy states,

There is also growing evidence, albeit less direct, of a payoff for whole societies from increasing the educational attainment of the population (OECD, 2000 lines 97-98).

Having constructed the main purpose of education as a payoff, restructuring policy focuses on ways to assist the payoff. A more detailed analysis on OECD education policy, (Vongalis-Macrow, 2006) showed that OECD policy aimed at educational outcomes for all students relevant to a motivating question about how best to prepare young people for the kind of society that is likely to emerge in the next millennium? This question is axiomatic to globally focused policy that captures the educational future through strategic planning. However, when examining the content of policy relating to globalisation, educational objectives and questions about the education system, OECD policy is less forthcoming. Hence there appears to be a mismatch between the rhetoric of OECD education

policy seeking to prepare students for the globalised future and the actual focus of attention.

The majority of OECD policy instead appears underpinned by the notion of education as a payoff. Policy outlines the need for education reform underpinned by the demands of globalisation. It states,

Economic globalisation makes change seem everywhere more urgent. Increased competition between, and integration, of the world's economies make it harder for a country to maintain those aspects of its traditional education system which appear to put its citizens at a disadvantage internationally (CERI, 1998 lines 244-248).

According to policy text, the importance of globalisation, as a driver of social and economic change, is that it encourages every country to take seriously the shortfalls in education systems. Within the potentially risky future scenario, the focus on education restructuring is underpinned by a necessity to optimise inputs into educational restructuring, meaning efficient fiscal decision making, maximization of inputs and managing the most costly factor, namely teachers. When examining the predominant foci in OECD policy it appears to be planning for balancing costs. Approximately 25 percent of policy is concerned with matters of costing. This predominance is higher in OECD policy than in World Bank or UNESCO policy. Similarly, the singling out of teachers in policy, 20 percent of OECD policy deals with teachers, also taps into concerns about costing. In fact, policy states outright that the costs of teachers underscore reforms. In further reading of policy, there are stringent conditions places on teacher reforms presumable to allay the costs in terms of the optimisation of teacher' costs to public education systems. Thus, policy makes explicit the reform of teachers' work based on compulsory lifelong learning programs, and need for teachers to collaborate with educational change agents to ensure educational reforms are materialised. The teachers' role is critical, that is, "teacher reform part of wider enterprise to adapt education to society". What is meant by society? When analysing OECD policy, the rationale for educational restructuring includes the dominance of the market model. Policy states that the key factors in the global economy are,

Market liberalisation – without which the current expansion of trade and investment would slow dramatically – and new forms of governance to referee the changing rules of the game and ensure effective implementation of public policy(Johnston, 1997 lines 9-13).

As public policy, education under the market model is infused with the negative scenarios of what happens if nations and individuals are left behind. The OECD policies forewarn that nations may miss out and be left behind if restructuring is left undone.

The market orientated society, reflects the prevalence of human capital discourse in OECD education policy. When contextualized against the core premise of education as a payoff, the nexus for OECD policy coalesces education and the labour market. Within OECD policy, a key labour and social consequence of globalisation is the transformation in the pattern of demand for skilled labour. In other words, it is not the transformation of skilled labour only that will change, but how that skilled labour is chosen, demanded and employed. It is important to distinguish the difference between transforming the skills of the workforce and transforming the pattern in which those skills are selected and managed. The former relates to the redefining of skills and the types of skills that are likely to be optimised in the future. The latter however, suggests social change that goes beyond re-training for new skills and adapting human labour to new demands. Rather it suggests deeper structural changes that reconfigure the distribution, management and organizations of skills.

The OECD presents a scenario of the global age as an info-rich society operating not only through new skills but also in new patterns of relations. It is within this context that education overlaps with changes in social relations and changes in the demand of labour. In this sense, it is misleading to identify education as a locus of change; rather education complements the OECD agenda for materialising and regulating development towards its vision of a global age. Education weaves together the social and the economic, as intimated by in an address to foreign ministers, by Alexander who outlines the OECD education platform as:

Ensuring a fair distribution of learning opportunities; Improving educational outcomes; ensuring the effective use of resources; Ensuring the relevance of

learning to changing social and labour market needs and enhancing employment and earnings prospects; Improving access and effectiveness of learning opportunities to make life-long learning for all a reality (Alexander, 2000:2).

The brief policy snapshot reveals that the discourse that permeates OECD policy relies on recurrent market-based assertions where education becomes a payoff and has currency both human and monetary. However, the restructuring relevant policy is also provocative in suggesting that education systems only have currency in the global era provided that they are budgeted managed and restructured in particular ways. The predominant emphases on the costing of education, the roles of teachers and budgetary decision making resonate throughout policy and frame policy strategies.

World Bank educational policy

The World Bank develops its strategy for education restructuring by emphasizing budgetary decisions, educational objectives, management and investment certainties based on the broader premise that globalisation is a historical development that first emerged in the 1800s and the current era is a ‘flowering’ of that policy. Policy states, “globalization is sometimes used in a much broader economic sense, as another name for capitalism or the market economy (WorldBank, 2000a lines 151-153). Policy emphasizes creating the right conditions necessary for monetary liberalization, and the free flow of capital. Policy states that money is

Moveable overnight from one part of the globe to another, is constantly seeking more favorable opportunities, including well-trained, productive, and attractively priced labor forces in market-friendly and politically stable business environments (WorldBank, 2000b lines 39-41).

The issue is how to attract investment to find a place in lesser-developed nations. Education has been a mainstay of World Bank policy since the early 1960s. From the early World Bank projects in the 1960s, education has been part of a broader strategy to break the poverty cycle. Education is part of a coordinated approach to create improved social conditions, and create healthier and happier populations through investment in building those conditions and services necessary for social and individual well-being. It is not surprising to find that policy concerning

investment prevails in World Bank education policy. Specifically, policy focuses on what must be done to meet investment conditions and the positive outcomes that result, from what may be very difficult structural alignment policies. Underpinning the rationale for investment includes explicitly naming the benefits of training attractively priced labour forces, and creating a market friendly environment that is especially attractive to the flow of capital.

In the context of labour force prices and flow of investment potential, policy discourse resonates with discourse about human capital. Specifically, human capital discourse is used to draw in 'the poor', that is, engaging the human capital potential of 'the poor' as a powerful force. Education is critical in this debate because according to policy, poor nations have weak education systems and lack well-trained and dynamic teachers. Policy states,

Amongst the poorest, their education systems the weakest, and their education spending some of the lowest around the world. In terms of access to education they have some of the greatest problems due to the lack of trained teachers, materials, destroyed buildings and fragmented or shifting communities (WorldBank, 2000b lines 110-113).

World Bank policy also focuses on teachers as did OECD policy but the emphasis is less emphatic about teacher costs. Rather, the retraining of teachers is the focus of education development strategy that is part of adapting education to create favourable conditions for financial investment. The need to improve the quality of teaching is aligned to the overall development strategy that prioritises education. Policy states,

However, there are some "top-down" or global priorities that emerge from the Bank's commitment to the international education goals, and from the consensus that there must be an unrelenting focus on the quality of teaching and learning (WorldBank, 2000b lines 21-24).

The restructuring of education is aimed at optimising market conditions and thus investment through a range of reform measures. In this case, World Bank policy does focus on educational objectives and educational outcomes and goals. In fact, educational policy makes explicit the four pillars of educational policy: the completion of primary and secondary school; basic numeracy and literacy for

global competition; increasing social capital benefits; and enjoying the richness of human experience.

There is a certain amount of discourse tension in World Bank Policy. For example, policy aims to alleviate poverty yet emphasizes only human capital value of the poor. Policy aims to construct a very universal human rights based education, however the policy undermines public provision of this education by emphasizing privatisation and competition for education. Policy questions assumptions about current educational provision practices and raises new models for educational provision. For example, introducing options of choice and affordability in education because private funding gives families choices and lowers the unit cost of education supports the idea that public education provision is a costly measure that necessitates privatisation. Therefore, competitive educational provision created through private funding, heightens innovation and frees up public resources. Supporting private funding options, along with an increase in World Bank investment, from 27 per cent to 44 per cent becomes a powerful means by which the Bank can shape reform. The responsibility of government is to cooperate with World Bank education strategies in line with the top down global priorities. Policy resonates with concerns about budgetary decision making and underpins the Bank's role in guiding and managing the implementation of policy decisions. Policy states,

Country education strategies, lending, and non-lending tasks are shaped by Country Assistance Strategies (CASs), budget constraints, and dialogue among the Bank's country directors and sector teams (WorldBank, 2000b lines 467-470).

Overall, the role of the World Bank is to guide restructuring of education. In providing guidelines, the emphasis is less on inputs and outputs, although these are important. The emphasis on investment, educational objectives, management and decision making inserts World Bank strategies into the ideological and operational spheres. Much like investment planning, the policy texts are not focused so much on costing margins, but making the right choices for investment windfalls.

UNESCO educational policy

In UNESCO policy globalisation is presented as paradoxical and incomplete. Globalisation means unprecedented encounters between people; however, the social, cultural and economic divisions between people are starker. Expressing uncertainty about globalization compares with the competitive, chaos suggested in OECD policy and the unbridled opportunism of World Bank policy. In other words, UNESCO policy acknowledges that globalisation has both positive and negative effects. Policy discusses the potential for closer encounters between peoples, however also points out that these encounters also have the potential to create further social and cultural divides as differences become more readily apparent. Furthermore, the negative effects of globalization are drawn from economic imperatives that have come to dominate globalisation. Economic globalization is a powerful agent of change, however, UNESCO policy stipulates that in such a form, it mainly benefits the rich nations. Policy states,

Globalisation is still dominated to a large extent by economic, financial and market principles. Social, political and ethical considerations remain secondary: there are as yet few instruments for the political and ethical control of globalization, which goes hand in hand with a deficit in democratic governance and an increase in poverty (UNESCO, 2000 lines 41-45).

To counter the incompleteness that results from economic globalisation, UNESCO policy promotes an alternative strategy in which to harness the economic forces of globalisation for the greater social good. Education is constructed as a public good that has capacity to counter the domination of economic globalisation. Unlike OECD and World Bank policy, UNESCO policy resonates with discussion about the global context and the implications for education. Within discussions about globalisation, social and cultural discourse has more prominence in policy. In UNESCO policy, education is

The absolute priority of the global society that is emerging is education of a type that passes on both the existing stock of knowledge, skills, values and experience that has been built up over hundreds of years, while at the same time educating people in ways which enable them to participate actively in the rapidly evolving info-technological society (UNESCO, 1996a lines 74-77).

UNESCO policy states that education is being enlarged and customized to prepare individuals for new knowledge while also prioritising social and cultural dimensions of education in the global era. Educational objectives framed in social and cultural terms, figure prominently in policy discourse. UNESCO policy stresses the importance of resisting the marketization of education. Unlike World Bank policy, UNESCO policy is critical of,

Increased privatization of education: increasingly, educational goods and services are being privatized and are becoming big business (UNESCO, 2000 lines 114-115).

Recommendations in policy include criticisms of education restructuring in accordance with neo-liberal education reform. These reform measures are criticised for being too narrow as a cost reduction, as an end in itself that redefines teachers as inputs. From the figures in table 2 it would appear that UNESCO policy focuses just as heavily in prioritizing the costing of education, however upon closer examination, the policy discourse functions to dissuade from neo-liberal view of costings. Policy reacts against the trends presented by OECD and World Bank.

The limitations of neo-liberalism are further extrapolated in policy related to teachers. OECD policy focused on teachers as costs and the need to get quality in return, world bank policy emphasized the need for more teacher training in developing nations to ensure that education could be the lever for investment, however, UNESCO policy asserts that neo-liberalism attacks teachers. UNESCO policy stresses the use of teachers as legitimate change agents, who not only contribute to educational equity on a small scale within national systems, but on a global scale, are agents that contribute to balancing and redressing the paradoxical effects of globalisation.

Advancing the need for a renewal of education systems, teachers' agency is affirmed as having capacity to counter the domination of economic principles. Teachers are custodians of education as a public good, they are participative agents of change, they are a resource in education and education reform is dependent on teachers. Education reform through teachers, fosters social capital

that creates a learning/knowledge society able to regulate and control the chaotic forces of global capitalism.

In UNESCO policy, four equally prominent themes emerge. As in OECD and World Bank policies, budgetary decisions and costing of education figure highly in policy discourse but the nature of that discourse reacts to Neoliberalism and the neoliberal framing, management and funding mechanisms prevalent in globalised educational reforms. UNESCO policy stresses educational objectives, which have social and cultural affirmation, the unique role of teachers and unlike OECD and World Bank, UNESCO policy contains a more contentious reading of the meaning of globalisation as more uncertain and risky. Teachers are given significant representation in policy and the type of representation is markedly different to teacher based policy references in OECD policy.

Concluding Remarks

The educational policies of UNESCO, World Bank and OECD provide an insight into the early stages of globally orientated education policy. The processes of educational restructuring draw upon complex factors which may involve social, cultural, national or political decision making. However, the macro policy research shows a trend towards narrowing focus on managerial and financial issues. In fact, considering the social-historical context of the 90s and the ICT revolution, policy shows surprisingly little discussion about the global/local context, the tremendous reengineering of education and how each nation would deal with its unique positioning within a globalised economy. If this were the case in educational policy, it would be expected that policy would make explicit the key variables which may affect each nation and types of planning needed to deal with such variables. For example, OECD policy is concerned about nations competing and not being left behind. However, each nation would need to identify its own strength from which to compete and not just enter into competition without clear preparation.

What is evident from the policy snapshots is the simplistic way that each organisation attempts to frame complex policy. As discussed, the possible national variables are numerous and would entail a complex analysis of each country's status within the emerging global economy. Such complexities elude

policy, which essentially relies on adjusting costs and inputs as the main strategic way to deal with globalisation. At best, the way UNESCO policy defines globalization, as a paradoxical force, comes close to problematising the foundations for educational restructuring. If globalization was only emerging in the 90s, not fully materialized, it can be expected that policy attempts to grapple with this elusive force. What this small snapshot of policies demonstrates is a very, skewed and self interested view of globalization as an economic future. Education is drawn into globalised policy as condition of the economic future.

During the period under review, how each organisation constructed their self interest in relation to the ontological globalised space predicated subsequent education policies. Far from addressing the troublesome and uncertain frontier for education, policy sought to review the meaning of education and the subsequent restructuring of education in accordance with guaranteeing some sort of fiscal certainties. Areas which could immediately impinge on efficiency became the main target of policy making. Hence, costs, budgets and management were deeply woven in the discourse of policy. In the case of the World Bank and OECD, the policies show distinct neo-liberal reform measures that are premised on escalating the free trade in goods and services, one of which is education, free circulation of capital and freedom of investment (George, 1999). A decade later, it has become clearer that there are limitations in thinking about education as an extension of economic productivity. New technologies, greater information and increased knowledge continue to challenge the relevance and purpose of education systems. Policies which base educational strategies on narrow parameters of reform appear simplistic and abrogate the responsibility of educators and policy makers to create innovative systems that enhance the productive possibilities of citizens as socially aware and creative workers.

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