

Toward a 'Critical Cultural Political Economy' Account of the Globalising of Education¹

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Abstract

This paper outlines the basis of an alternative theoretical approach to the study of the globalisation of 'education' - a Critical, Cultural Political Economy of Education (CCPEE) approach. Our purpose here is to bring this body of concepts – critical, cultural, political, economy— into our interrogation of globalising projects and processes within what we will refer to as the 'education ensemble' as the topic of enquiry, whose authoritative, allocative, ideational and feeling structures, properties and practices, emerge from and play into global economic, political and cultural processes. In the first half of the paper we introduce and develop the concepts that will underpin our approach. In the second half of the paper we explore the explanatory potential and epistemic gain of a CCPEE approach by examining the different manifestations of the relationship between globalisation as a political, cultural and economic project and an education ensemble. We conclude by reflecting on the possibilities this perspective offers.

Key words: globalisation, critical theory, education ensemble, political, cultural, economy, critical realism

Introduction

This paper outlines the basis of a theoretical approach to the study of 'education' around the globe. Our approach, one we have called a Critical, Cultural Political Economy of Education – or CCPEE – is inspired by the work of a growing number of social scientists who have sought new ways of understanding modern social formations, their social relations and subjectivities, by bringing political economy into a productive conversation with the cultural turn (cf. Sayer, 2001; Jessop, 2004, 2009; Jones, 2008; Sum, 2008; Best and Patterson, 2010). Our purpose in this paper is to bring this body of concepts – critical, cultural, political, economy— into our interrogation of globalising processes within the 'education ensemble', as a particular kind of *problematiqué* to be opened up, examined, and explained. We take the 'education ensemble' as the topic of enquiry, whose shifting authoritative, allocative, ideational and feeling structures, properties and practices, emerge from and frame global economic, political and cultural processes.

The use of the concept 'ensemble' reflects the fact that education represents, and is reflected, in crucial, multiple relationships with, and within, societies; it is a complex and variegated agency of social reproduction, broadly conceived. Thus it cannot be reduced to 'a system', or 'an agent' of socialisation and social selection, or indeed a provider of vocational qualifications. The value of using the concept 'ensemble' is not merely to register this range of relationships, but to indicate that the constituent parts of an ensemble are placed in internal relationship with each other. In line with the critical realist ontology (Sayer, 2000), we view an education ensemble as a particular kind of social world made up "...of various layers of structures and generative mechanisms" (Joseph, 2000: 186). The constituent elements and internal relations of an education ensemble have causal powers which are emergent from, though not reducible to, its parts. In other words, an education ensemble has to be seen as a unity of multiple determinations. Given its stratified ontology, not all of what goes on in any education ensemble is visible. As a result, our explanations of education ensembles needs to take into account those mechanisms and processes that are not observable, but which have real effects.

What, then, might a critical cultural political economy account contribute to the study of an education ensemble, and globalising processes within and beyond it? Our main argument is that the dominant theoretical accounts of the globalisation of education tend to focus on particular elements of the education ensemble, for instance the cultural to the exclusion of the political and economic, or vice versa. In doing so, they offer a partial reading of the structures, institutions, and practices of the much broader and more nuanced conception of the education ensemble, and therefore of the full complexity of its forms, scope and outcomes. Yet deploying one or two of these categories (whether cultural, political or economic) by themselves is inadequate to explain our worlds – despite the tendency of academic disciplines to "...universalise their specific ambitions and "marginalise the relevance of other disciplines, and other ambitions" (Walker, 2010: 225). Yet bringing culture, politics and economy together is not unproblematic, and not only because their meanings are separately contested; what is to be understood by cultural, political and economic is open to different readings that are derived from particular ontological and epistemological positions. Given this, our approach will be shaped by a broad commitment to 'critical theory' in that we view both theories, and action, as derived from "a position in time and space" (Cox, 1996: 97). In other words, "...action is never absolutely free but takes place within a framework for action that constitutes its problematic" (ibid). Further, it is not only actions, but the theories we develop about the world, that in turn structure the possibilities for knowing, acting, feeling, reflecting and transforming. Through critique, we can reveal the ways in which theories structure the *problematiqué* and in doing so, see more clearly their assumptions, interests and standpoints.

Although there have been efforts to draw upon cultural political economy to analyse education including our own (Jessop, 2008; Sum and Jessop, 2013; Jones, 2010; Robertson, 2008, 2012), critics have rightly pointed out there has been a tendency to reduce the political and economic largely to—albeit complex—contexts for education (capitalism), on the one hand, and in viewing the cultural as policy ‘discourse’, on the other. Both produce incomplete accounts of the relationships. A robust conceptual framework for the analysis of education must not be reducible to a particular form of economic development (such as capitalism), cultural form (such as Western Modernity) or political organisation (such as Westphalian state systems) but rather must contain the possibility for diversity, even if capitalism, modernity and national states continue to be hegemonic. Recognising diversity, however residualised and invisible, nevertheless offers a realistic hope for *reimagining* and *remaking* education ensembles.

We develop our argument in the following ways. In the first half of the paper we introduce and develop the concepts that will underpin our critical realist approach to the cultural, political, economic and education ensemble. In the second half of the paper we explore the explanatory potential and epistemic gain of a CCPEE approach by examining the different manifestations of the relationship between globalising projects, processes and outcomes, within and beyond education ensemble. We conclude by reflecting on the possibilities this perspective offers.

Conceptual Grammar – Critical, Cultural, Political, Economy

In this section we lay out the ontological, epistemological, methodological and conceptual basis for a critical cultural political economy of education approach (CCPEE). We begin by noting that it is not enough to just bring the cultural, political and economic together. Rather, it is the ontological and epistemological assumptions we make about these processes, and the nature of the relationships between them, which matter for our account. Methodological implications follow. For if we view, for instance, a student’s or teacher’s experiences as having been shaped by categories that order their understandings, experiences and practices, then we need to be able to move backward and forward between these ways of seeing, experiencing and reflecting on the world, on the one hand, and the structuring mechanisms, on the other (Harvey, 1996:78).

Critical realism

Ontologically, CCPEE is informed by critical realist assumptions about the social world; that is, “...of a world comprised of various layers of structures and generative mechanisms... ..so that the social world is also comprised of a stratified ensemble of structures and relations” (Joseph, 2000: 186). Critical realists argue that our inquiries into the structures, properties and practices cannot be conflated with our experiences of them. Critical realism distinguishes between the ‘experiential’, the ‘actual’ and the ‘real’ and argues that just because we cannot observe something does not mean to say that it does not exist.

Take, for example, a roomful of fifteen year old students in Finland, sitting at individual desks, filling in responses to a test entitled Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - *Programme of International Student Assessment*. The students’ experiences of this activity does not exhaust all there is to say and understand regarding the causal powers of the test and their effects in and on the education ensemble. We need to understand how this event (examination, OECD, PISA, individualized responses etc) came about by asking questions such as: what are the outcomes of the results for the students, for Finland, the OECD, and other 73 countries involved? What causes the test to have the power to reshape education ensembles in countries like Germany? These questions require us to think about more abstract concepts, like power, learning competencies, comparison,

and so on. Critical realists refer to this as the 'actual'; that is, what happens if and when those powers (in this case the global PISA test) are activated to do what they do, and what eventuates when they do (Sayer, 2000: 11-12). The 'real' refers to the structures, properties and powers of objects (objects defined here as physical, social theories, mental phenomena, and so on) that act as causal powers in the real world. In other words, processes and mechanisms are real phenomena, and the work of the social analyst is to establish the presence of those entities, how they work and with what outcomes. In the case of the OECD's PISA tests, the purpose would be to establish how the representation of each country's performance, drawn from the results of the tests administered to 15 year olds across 74 countries, has causal powers that affect outcomes. The analyst could argue that processes and mechanisms of PISA – such as hierarchically organized representations of a country's comparative performance on particular items (such as mathematical, scientific and literacy competences), its structures (hierarchies, temporal rhythms), properties (competences; numbers with little country contextual; structures of feeling, such as shame, pride), have the power to effect different kinds of changes in and on differently located education ensembles.

Critical Theory

Our approach is also 'critical' (see Connerton, 1976; Cox, 1996). We take Sayer's challenge seriously; that "...if a new cultural political economy is to be a worthwhile enterprise, it needs to be more critical of contemporary economy, culture and society" (2001: 688). Critical here draws from the tradition of critical theory. Two elements are important. First, critical theory is concerned with the conditions for knowing and knowledge. It begins with the assumption that social realities are a profusion of senses and impressions, yet we perceive the world as a world of ordered things. It is our faculties that produce that order, so that realities are constituted by us in the sense that we can only 'know' through *a priori* forms or categories (Hall, 1980; Archer, 2007; Jessop, 2009). A critical theory approach means interrogating these categories to see how knowing, and thus experience, is co-constituted. This is described as reconstruction.

Second, critical theory embraces *critique* as a basis for social change. Critique was central to Marx's dialectical approach, as a means to open up ways of thinking about the emancipatory as well as exploitative dimensions of the capitalism/modernity model of development (Connerton, 1976). In applying critique to our investigations in an education ensemble, one key aim is to reveal their contradictions. For instance, 'school choice' policies at work in an education ensemble might reveal that whilst choice gives greater freedoms to some families, by definition there will be those who are unable to exercise choice, since they stand in relation to each other. The very different choice/no choice outcomes are also mediated by broader cultural, political and economic processes.

Cultural Political Economy

We now turn to the next three elements which follow the critical in the CCPEE string –the cultural, political and economic. We can begin by noting that the theoretical status of each of the three elements is not evenly shared. Political economy, for instance, is a better established approach within economics, sociology and political science departments; cultural studies, however, emerged from the 1980s onwards (Hall, 1980), and the danger to be avoided is that a cultural analysis is simply added to political economy, rather than each of the three concepts being challenged to think differently as a result of their conversation with each other.

Before introducing our own understanding of cultural, political economy, it will be helpful to outline four potential cul-de-sacs we have sought to avoid. First, we want to avoid viewing the economy as THE ECONOMY, with the result that we recognise only one form of organising the relations of production, distribution and exchange, as in the capitalist or market economy, over others. This is a particularly serious issue for education: first it discounts non-market economic activity, for instance

the contribution of the unpaid domestic economy to the world of schooling and learning; second, it obstructs us from seeing the education sector as a complex 'economy' in its own right – some of which is increasingly heavily commodified (see, e.g., Ball, 2012), and other parts which continue to be coordinated through relations that might well describe a gift economy (Mauss, 1954). Second, we want to avoid viewing the political as POLITICS, in the sense of entailing a focus on government and/or the state. Politics and power are contested concepts (Haugaard and Clegg, 2009). The political in education operates in a multiplicity of ways - from whose knowledge counts to how the sector is governed. Limiting our view of the political to formal institutions of government generates a partial account of mechanisms and processes within an education ensemble. Third, we want to avoid reducing culture to discourse or semiotics. Whilst important, Jessop's (2004, 2008) approach to cultural political economy views the cultural as semiosis, whilst his analytic work centres on the production of discourses (see Jessop, 2004, 2008). We have little sense of how these processes articulate with the cultural in terms of social practices, experiences, feelings, and forms of reflexivity. To understand the nature of the cultural in the education ensemble more fully, we need a broader understanding of the cultural as civilisational projects – such as western modernity, Confucianism, Islam, and so on. Fourth, we need to avoid simply adding education to the cultural, political and economy string, and in turn placing education into a subservient relationship. Rather, we need to place the education ensemble at the centre of our investigations and examine the ways in which these the cultural, political and economic – as distinct kinds of determinations – work on, in, and through education.

It now time for us to draw together the elements we have been outlining so far. To begin, like Walker (2010: 233), we believe it is not possible to develop *a* single cultural political economy, as such, as if in some grand synthesis. Rather, philosophical decisions need to be made about how we understand the cultural, political and economic. In our case we argue that a critical theory approach, and critical realist ontology, will enable us to bring into view, and explain, the complex nature of social formations, including their causal mechanisms, processes and outcomes. Nor do we take the view that the political and the economic over-determine the cultural, or that the cultural is reduced to experiences. To speak of culture is to also speak of the ways in which we live and experience our condition *through* categories, classifications and frameworks for action which shape the possibilities for reflexivity and social practices. It is these categories, classifications and frameworks, that structure and place limits upon the possibilities for human knowing and action, including our inquiries into such processes.

Yet not all frameworks for action operate at the same level of deeper level of hegemony. Here we follow Jonathon Joseph (2000) who distinguishes between an agentic level of hegemony, and a structural level of hegemony. He states: "...the agential aspect of hegemony is rather easier to outline as it corresponds to normal understanding of the concept as the struggle for dominance, the application of strategy, the exercise of power, the striving for consent, the articulation of interests, the construction of blocs, and the battle of ideas" (Joseph, 2000: 190). A structural level of hegemony is concerned with the process of social reproduction that operates at a very deep systemic level; that is to say, those frameworks for action – such as capitalism, patriarchy, modernity, racism, Islam – that for many operate at a more unconscious, or commonsense level.

In order to advance projects of transformative action, a critical theory approach must not just engage in a critique of frameworks for action (including our own theoretical tools) to reveal contradictions, interests and depoliticising processes, in order to "...proceed to concrete actions, projects and bodies" (Joseph, 2000: 190) that are informed by 'real utopias' (Wright, 2010) that are the outcomes of our capacities to learn and be reflexive (Archer, 2012) about our histories and our futures. Rather, the capacity to radically transform social formations and their institutions – such as education – will be dependent on their weight in the social system. That is because their structures,

practices and generative mechanisms exist in stratified and hierarchical combinations, and some carry more weight and influence than others.

Education Ensemble

It is now time to turn to elaborating the idea of an ‘education ensemble’. One way of introducing what we think the concept entails can be inferred from the following quote from Connell - one of the most sophisticated and astute analysts of education. She writes

At the core of education is the creation of a network of workers and practices that sustains this second order learning capacity *for both the individual members and for the collectivity*. I emphasise “for the collectivity” since educators talk mainly locates “learning how to learn” in the development of the individual. *But this means nothing if it is not sustained also as a collective property of the social world that the individual is entering* (Connell, 1995: 97-8, emphasis added).

Here, ‘learning’ is placed at the centre of anything that we might know as education, but it is seen as a collective property of the social world, and our understanding of the education ensemble represents education as also a complex collective *construction* of the social world, that is not reducible to schools, or universities, learners and teachers, though these may prominent forms of activity. Rather, education involves an array of actors and other institutions beyond the obvious or our commonsense understandings whose logics, interests and forms of authority generate tensions and contradictions within the ensemble. In line with our critical realist ontology outlined earlier, analysing what goes on in an education ensemble, means breaking it open.

There are two moves involved that operate at different levels of abstraction. The first move is recognise that what we refer to as ‘Education’ is the outcome of sets of ideas and activities accreted over generations, which, whilst individually irreducible to each other, can be seen to be in an internal relationship with each other in the production of the ensemble. This means that ‘education’ as an ensemble, has to be seen as the unity of multiple determinations; there can be no effective understanding of the individual elements of the ensemble, without an overall understanding of it collectively, and it is this that led us to refer to it as an ensemble. There are four elements that we might distinguish within an education ensemble: the (different) civilisationally-based cultural scripts through which it is constructed and mediated; education’s relationship with national (or global, regional or local) societies; the forms of organization that have come to characterise education as a system; and the relationships between education and the economy, in this case capitalism as the dominant mode of economic organization.

The second move is methodological; it draws upon what we have elsewhere called the ‘education questions’ (see Dale, 2000, 2005; Robertson and Dale, 2013). These education questions are ways of orienting our investigations into an education ensemble, and in revealing its stratified social ontology (see Table 1). These questions open up four analytically distinct, though not discrete, ‘moments’ of what might be seen as constituting different realisations of the ‘education ensemble’: the *moment of educational practice*, the *moment of education politics*, the *moment of the politics of education*, and the *moment of outcomes*. The key point to note in this context is that the *moment of educational practices* is set up in a way that assumes a range of distributions of educational experiences, starting from the question, ‘who is taught what?’ and then going on to link other factors affecting that distribution, such as the circumstances in which it takes place (how, where, by whom, and so on). The *moment of education politics* raises issues around the relationship between policy and practice, such as ‘how and by whom are these things decided?’ (e.g., individuals, families, the state, the community, corporations, shareholders, international agencies, and so on), but always

in the recognition that not everything that occurs at the *moment of educational practice* is a direct consequence of and response to something that happens at the *moment of education politics*. Indeed, elements of the *moment of education politics* may be taken directly from the *moment of practice*. Nevertheless, it does open possible windows both on why things are as they are at the moment of practices, and how they might be changed, and what impact they may have on educational outcomes.

The *moment of the politics of education* is fundamentally concerned with social structures, with individuals and institutions occupying varying positions in those social structures dependent upon the conditions at play (see Brenner et al, 2010). Again, this neither pervades nor provides the whole of the context of the moment of policy or of practice, nor is it impervious to influences and practices at the earlier moments. The *moment of the politics of education* is where we find the kinds of ‘rules of the game’ or ‘paradigmatic settings’ that set basic limits to what is considered possible and desirable from education. Here, the most significant and relevant shift for our analysis of the globalising of education is move in many countries, from a more ‘social democratic welfare state’ to a competitive ‘neo-liberal’ one, that in turn set in motion a range of tendencies that have opened up education ensembles to new actors, commercial logics, and so on.

Finally, the *moment of outcomes* of education processes include not only the immediate consequences of educational practices, policies and politics for those directly involved, but also their wider personal/individual, community/collective, social and economic qualities arising from globalising processes. It allows us to ask such crucial questions in this context, such as: ‘How far are the successes of some achieved at the expense of others?’ And, what are the collective benefits of the conjunctions of the three moments?’ In the following section we draw upon these understandings of an education ensemble in developing an account of the globalising of education.

Globalisation and Education: A CCPEE Approach

It is now time to turn to how a CCPEE approach might help us understand transformations taking place in the education ensemble as a result of processes broadly attributed to globalisation. We begin by making some brief remarks on competing approaches to explaining the globalisation of education, before turning to develop two CCPEE accounts of different manifestations of the global in the education ensemble; the expansion of schooling around the globe, and the changes in the global governance of teachers.

Competing Approaches to the Globalisation of Education

There are three significant theories of the relationship between globalization and education: the ‘world polity theory’; ‘world systems theory’; and globalisation as providing a ‘structured agenda for education’. World polity theory (cf. Meyer and Ramirez, 1997) is the most prominent approach to explaining the globalization of education. Its view of what constitutes the globalization of education is that a ‘world culture’, or ‘world polity’, constitutes a universal transnational, cultural environment, and it is the existence of this common symbolic universe that explains the apparent worldwide convergence of conceptions of education. This symbolic universe is based on the values and propositions of Western modernity, which frame conceptions of both state and individual, especially through the ‘scripts’ that they provide for states in terms of education. One major strength of the approach is that it points to the fact that other explanations of the spread of education—such as that between education and economic growth—do not account for what they refer to as the ‘isomorphism’ at the global level. There are, though, a number of problems with this approach. First, it has a flat social ontology. Missing are those layers, such as the experiential and the actual, where

actors and power reside. In other words, we have description rather than analysis, and it lacks any theory of agency. It seems to be assumed that the significance and value of the ideas are self evident. Neither is there any recognition of the very variable degrees to which national responses go beyond mere lip service (see Levitt Anderson 2012). Finally and most importantly, there is no recognition—indeed, a denial of—the importance of the economic as compared with the cultural in explaining the globalization of education. Both assume the existence of a ‘world system’.

It is this that most significantly distinguishes it from World System Theory in particular (see Arnove, 1980; Griffiths and Kornetz, 2004; Stromquist, in this issue). Both see a ‘world system’ which makes available to ‘local’ actors relatively narrow ranges of roles and scripts, as the context for the development of education systems. Both emphasise the need to recognize that the ‘parts’ cannot be understood without an understanding of the whole. Both see education as a response to the wider ideology of progress and modernization. Beyond that, there are significant differences, especially in the perception of the main drivers of the process: for world polity - ‘culture’; for World Systems Theory - the global economy. And yet the knowledges that are central to the work of education around the globe are cultural, and tied to civilisational projects. Any account of education must include therefore the cultural along with the political and economic. Both see a significant role for national states; in the former as the organisational embodiment of the institution of education, in the latter as embedding the global division of labour within the world system between core, semi-peripheral and peripheral states. Most significantly, they both identify an international system of states as crucial to the spread of educational practices, though these practices are expected to differ in the world system approach according to the states’ position in the global division of labour between states.

This distinction, between ‘international’ (or ‘world’ – which is assumed to be made up of separate states) and ‘global’ is what distinguishes both these approaches from the ‘structured agenda’ approach (see Dale, 2000). There, the emphasis is placed squarely on the role and operations of transnational economic and political organisations, which are taken to be representative of a global project of neo-liberalisation. Its basic theoretical starting point is political economy, rather than culture or economy. The agenda for globalization is seen as structured—subject to broad, but by no means specific, conditions—by a dominant conception of a global knowledge economy, into which all nation-states are incorporated, more or less directly, and which all states are more or less strongly bound and free to interpret. The problem with the globally structured agenda approach is that it tends to reduce economy to the capitalist economy, it does not have a sufficiently developed account of agency or of the basis of social change (beyond the contradictions of capitalism), and it does not address the cultural.

A CCPEE Approach to the Globalisation of Education

How might a CCPEE approach a more complex account of the globalisation of education? We start from the position that globalisation does not just happen, or that it constitutes a useful label for a range of apparently similar occurrences. We see it as a particular project that acts as a mechanism of change at a ‘global’ level. This is in contrast to representing it as one or other form of empirical generalization—such as the ‘unspecified other’, an ‘arbitrary list’, the ‘not local’, the world is global because everyone says it is, or as both ‘menagerie’ and ‘concept’ (Kamola, 2013). Referring to globalisation as a project means that we see it as neither an accidental nor unintended set of processes and outcomes—though it certainly cannot be seen to fit any ‘master plan’—but as a witting attempt by a range of national and transnational organisations to bring about a set of interventions around the globe aimed at extending the role of the market and reducing the role of national states. But global processes are not to be exclusively associated with political economy or the expansion of capitalism. The expansion of education has also been driven by cultural and

political projects aimed at access to formal schooling, such as the idea that education is a human right. These broader projects and processes frame strategies and responses within the education ensemble.

We will now elaborate two accounts of different ways in which globalising processes are at work in education ensembles; (i) efforts to expand access to schooling around the globe, driven by policies and programmes such as Education for All; and (ii) the global governance of teachers' labour. In both cases these are interesting manifestations of the global in the education ensemble as education until more recently has been a profoundly national or sub-national activity. We address these two rather different phenomena by working our way through the different moments of an education ensemble (outlined in the section above on the education ensemble).

Expanding access to schooling – 'Education for All'

We have chosen the topic of expanding access to education as our first example, because it represents the first concerted attempt to create a global programme for education in the sense of what might be called 'the global community' in the shape of the United Nations, which in 1948 promulgated a Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which included the right of all to education. This represented recognition of a global responsibility for ensuring that education was available to all. And alongside the Declaration, the same period saw the creation of a specialist UN body with responsibility for education globally, in the form of UNESCO, another 'first' in the internationalising of responsibility for education.. The origins and early years of this development centred around the emergence through the late 1940s and 1950s of several new nation states, created by their liberation from colonial control by European countries. The complexity of this development was to a degree disguised by the very flexible deployment of the idea of 'modernisation' to describe the process. However, when we examine this project, it becomes evident that it provides a very good example of the construction of an education ensemble, in that 'modernisation' is applied to three quite distinct, and not necessarily mutually compatible processes; education as a human right of all members of a modern global community; as the process through which the new states would be enabled to govern themselves and build a national identity; and as economic progress through the development of education as the basis of human capital. Furthermore, these different conceptions of modernisation were all to be played out through a model of schooling that had developed over the previous century in the former colonial states, processes which respectively illustrate the 'civilisational', the 'national', the 'economic' and the 'organisational form of schooling' elements of the education ensemble. And this also enables us to illustrate what we mean when we refer to education as the outcome of multiple determinations; we could not understand the complex reality of those developments if we restricted our analysis to any particular element of the ensemble.

Support for various programmes of modernisation continued in rather piecemeal fashion, largely on the basis of bilateral aid, with support from UNESCO, and increasingly the World Bank. Eventually, in 1990, a major effort at coordinating these efforts was launched with the Education for All (EFA) project, following a meeting at Jomtien in Thailand, attended by representatives of almost all countries in the world. The 'diffusion' of global educational norms was to occur, independent of national interests, with 'education policy' operating through organisational variables rather than nation states' interests (Chabbot, 1998, 207).

Central to the moment of the politics of education—that is *the rules of the game* framing the direction and framing of national education policies—in the case of EFA—was the dominance of the agenda by the international organisations who were responsible for creating it—UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank. It represented elements of continuity with the 'educational aid as the

modernisation' agenda, and it, too, almost from the start of this agenda it was essentially bifurcated into strands emphasising education as a human right, in particular UNESCO, and education as economic investment, especially following the World Bank's increasing interest in education.

In a sense, EFA represented the apogee of the former approach with education being represented as an international issue and responsibility necessitating increased funding both nationally and internationally, and a sense of global collective responsibility for access to basic education, not just for the purposes of economic development but as a universal human right. The separate motives of, and relationships between, the different international agencies involved in sponsoring the conference were played out as EFA developed, with the World Bank effectively taking over leadership of the project from UNESCO, and its agendas coming to dominate, with its success attributable to the institutionalization of a standard model for educational reform and educational investment' Mundy (2002: 493), and its ability to impose its discourse. This model, for instance, included support for user fees and privatisation. And it was also due to the prominence of the economic basis of the calculus of importance of different educational sectors, that primary education was prioritised in the EFA, not on the grounds of educational significance, but because it produced the highest rate of return on investment.

For the *moment of practice* in EFA we have essentially three kinds of 'evidence'; sociological or anthropological ethnographic studies of schools and classrooms in developing countries; (very) large statistical databases; and the Global Monitoring Reports produced annually by UNESCO to track developments in EFA. (And it should be noted here that these are necessarily 'second order' accounts/interpretations/definitions of practice). In their different ways, these kinds of evidence are essentially produced with the intention of ascertaining what levels of 'improvement' can be perceived in progress towards the attainment of the six major goals specified in EFA, which in itself represents a limitation of the scope of practice discussed.

The ethnographic analyses are typically informed by the 'sceptical/critical' approach characteristic of such work across the world, essentially asking 'how far have these programmes lived up to their promise of 'improvement', and why not?' In doing so, they do, at least implicitly, provide valuable accounts of (differences and inequalities in) who is taught what, by whom, under what circumstances and conditions, etc. Since at least the middle of the last decade there has been an increasing emphasis on the 'quality' of education children receive, as one response to the relatively disappointing results of improved levels of access to schooling. Thus the 2005 GMR *Education for All - The Quality Imperative*' suggested that one solution to the quality problem could be to replace 'traditional', teacher-centred pedagogies, with more 'learner-centred' pedagogies, though it did also note that 'In most of the countries concerned, ...attempts to institutionalise child-centred pedagogy in schools and teacher-training institutions have produced inconclusive results", and suggested that 'these efforts may be explained in part by the current tendency of some international agencies to favour such pedagogies' (ibid)²..

The GMR is also associated with the *World Inequality Database on Education* (WIDE), which 'highlights the powerful influence of circumstances, such as wealth, gender, ethnicity and location, over which people have little control but which play an important role in shaping their opportunities for education and life. It draws attention to unacceptable levels of education inequality across countries, and between groups within countries, with the aim of helping to inform policy design and

² GMR 2005, 152-3

public debate' (GMR 2013).

The *moment of outcomes* is especially difficult to chart. The main reason for this is that the most clearly evident results of the production and distribution of a range of knowledges through schooling take the form of 'outputs' rather than 'outcomes'. A typical form of *output* is a qualification; something 'tangible' to 'show' results from the experience of schooling, and this is the form in which the results of EFA are typically presented—the number of literate children in a society, for instance, might be seen as an output of the education system. By contrast, the idea of *outcomes* refers to what outputs are produced *for*, and what they might enable. While literacy is clearly of value in itself to the successful student, the rhetorics and rationales of EFA contain rather larger claims about the consequences of increasing levels of literacy within a society. Especially prominent here are the frequently, but not necessarily, competing claims that literacy is of great personal value, as well as economic value to the country, while it is also to produce greater social cohesion. Here, the economic and social gains are outcomes of education, that for which the educational record is at best a necessary, but never a sufficient condition. Educational outputs are relatively standardized, but the outcomes they lead to are not—which does not, of course, mean that there is no relationship between educational outputs and their wider individual and social outcomes.

There are two main consequences to be inferred from this in terms of our approach; one is that as well as analyzing the production and distribution of knowledges gained in school—its immediate outputs—we need also to address the ways that they are valorized, for outputs do not become outcomes spontaneously. And the second is that the outcomes of education are not confined to those demonstrated in tangible outputs. They stretch much further; into interpersonal and inter-group feelings of envy and hostility, merit and superiority; affecting levels of social cohesion and national loyalty (and the many other dimensions that surveys of 'citizenship', 'tolerance, democratic have shown are associated with (though not, of course, necessarily caused by) levels of education; self image and identity; intergenerational reproduction, and many more. All these are raised when we compare the scope of the *Education* questions, with those generated by an analysis of EFA as a particular kind of educational project.

Governing teachers' labour globally

In this second case, we look at what how to might make sense of efforts by national governments, international agencies, education corporations, education consultancy firms and philanthropic foundations to change what and how teachers in national education systems teach, as well as the conditions of their employment.

We can immediately see all three elements, the cultural, political and economic, are at work, in that teachers are part of a labour market and this labour market is organised in ways that are both historic and political. As a profession, teachers have sought to manage their own labour around claims to expertise and the complexity of the labouring they are engaged in. Teachers' work is also cultural; for example, the knowledges teachers teach with, the pedagogical relationships they establish with students, their sense of identity, and so on, form a complex web of lived social practices, feeling structures and artefacts. Ignoring the economic means ignoring the ways in which the formal capitalist economy is increasingly reshaping the nature of their labouring, including their conditions of employment.

Drawing upon the education questions as a way of revealing the stratified ontology at work in the education ensemble in which teachers, along with the diverse actors are located, we can begin at the moment of education practice, and from there move to the moment of education politics, the

moment of the politics of education, and the moment of outcomes. At the moment of education practice, we could look at the OECD's Teacher Assessment of Learning International Survey (TALIS) findings reported for a participant country over time, to see what, if any, shifts in patterns occurred. Comparing different TALIS reports over time might provide some sense of these changes, though they will provide little insight into teachers actually think and do. Alternatively, we might interview teachers about their experiences of particular changes taking place in the education ensemble. Or, we could undertake a series of observations of their teaching, and compare this with the kind of curriculum and pedagogy being suggested in TALIS.

Similarly, with the World Bank's SABER-Teachers project launched in 2010 to collect quantitative data on teacher policies, synthesises the results, and uses them for decision-making in improving education (World Bank, 2011), we would be interested in what new practices teachers engaged in over time following the implementation of policies aimed at changing their incentive structures and other conditions of work.

However, these would give us very little insight into why and how these practices are as they are. For instance, where and how, and by whom, were decisions made to enable survey data to be collected from teachers and headteachers in the sample schools? Who decided on the OECD's TALIS survey questions, and how? And what of the SABER-Teachers instruments? Or the effects of McKinsey & Company's (Barber et al., 2007; Mourshed et al., 2010) highly influential reports on top performing schools and their policies toward teachers? Were teachers and their associations consulted, if so who and how? Which government departments were the key conduits for decision-making, and at which scale of governing?

To answer these questions, we would need to move to the level of the *actual*; that is – when, where, how, when, and why, were these arrangements decided (the content of the curriculum, how the curriculum was assessed, teachers' employment contract, and so on), what causal powers were activated when these decisions were made, what were their conditions, and outcomes? Specifically, we now are probing why, how and with what consequences for teachers and learners, the global agencies, such as the OECD, the World Bank, McKinsey & Company, along with the one of the world's largest education firm, Pearson Education, have become key players – along with national governments (and we say this in full recognition that education is often a sub-national affair) in making the decisions about what and how teachers teach, and in showing how different countries perform on these things. To understand the significance of these changes for teachers we could compare past with current decision-making structures globally (see Robertson, 2012). We would see that though the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers was developed in the 1960s, and that the ILO and UNESCO have continued to publish guidance for teachers around the status of the professional practice, these international actors have become more marginal in the key decision-making arenas. Yet from 2000 onwards, the activities of the ILO and UNESCO appear to have been eclipsed by this newer set of global actors who have entered the arena with rather different ideas of the role of the professional teacher and what their relationship should be to help societies and their economies prosper.

The OECD's TALIS project was spearheaded by the OECD's Indicators and Analysis Division (IAD), under the direction of Andreas Schleicher. TALIS is described as a 'collaboration' between member-states of the OECD, and non-members. Broadly, TALIS 2008 collects data on: (1) the role and functioning of the head teacher; (2) how teachers' work is appraised and the feedback they receive; (3) teacher professional development; and (4) teachers' beliefs and attitudes about teaching. We can also see from the discussion of the indices in the Annex (OECD, 2009: 268-275) the pedagogic principles at work. Teachers are asked to respond to a series of questions, for instance around teachers' beliefs, indicating how strongly (1 = strongly disagree; 4=strong agree) they agree with the statement. In relation to teacher beliefs, there are 2 opposing indices: direct transmission (the

implication here is a bad teacher) or constructivism (the implication here is a good teacher). Here the OECD (2009: 269) states: “In short, constructivist beliefs are characterised by a view of the teacher as a facilitator of learning with more autonomy given to students, whereas a direct transmission view sees the teacher as the instructor, providing information and demonstrating solutions”. In other words, the competent teacher facilitates the learning of the pupil through ‘making knowledge’, whilst direct transmission approaches to learning are conceptualised as ‘taking knowledge’. That teachers are likely to need a combination of pedagogies dependent upon what needs to be taught is not thinkable in this framing.

Constructivism is an important epistemological anchor in TALIS. Yet it can be argued that a constructivist teacher pedagogy, with its over-emphasis on agency and ‘social knowledge’ as opposed to ‘disciplinary’ or ‘scientific knowledge’ (Rata, 2011: 2), links the wider political project of neoliberalism to the emerging social base of production. More importantly, a constructivist teacher pedagogy does not provide the knowledge resources for learners that have been the pillars for the development of modernity, including its emancipatory potential. Where and how might learners acquire those knowledges beyond the local that might enable them to engage in critical reflection and political critique?

But it is particularly the instruments for governing, and how we theorise their causal properties and powers, that are the more important and interesting for our explanations of what is going on at the level of the real. These also move us to the moment of the politics of education. For instance, SABER-Teachers favours a deregulated labour market for teachers, and uses an evaluative/moral developmental trajectory – of ‘latent’, ‘emerging’, ‘established’, ‘mature’ to move teacher policies in this direction. ‘For instance, we see questions about the terms and conditions of teachers’ labour include: “Is participation in professional development compulsory? What is the burden of teacher compensation? What labor rights do teachers enjoy?” and “Are there monetary sanctions for teacher absenteeism?” These are political and economic questions around the use and exchange value of teachers’ work. There is also a strong moral, and therefore cultural, project at work as a result of the comparisons that will be made between countries, and between teachers. Countries are to be compared with each other and will learn from each other, whilst the evaluative/moral developmental trajectory provides both direction and a lever for change.

Elsewhere we have described this mechanism as competitive comparison (cf. Robertson, 2012) and it is a tool favoured by the global actors such as the OECD and the World Bank. Competitive comparison’s reach as a global tool is enabled by the ways in which hierarchical space, temporal rhythms, evaluative trajectories and scale are mobilised as complex modalities of power. As a powerful spatial framer and lever for allocating status, it pitches one country and its teachers against another in terms of a global hierarchical ordering of performers and underperformers. Through ratcheting up the temporal dimension to comparison, such as regular cycles of data collection, a new horizon for performance is targeted. This uses a horizontal plane for comparison – over time - where one can learn to do better the next time, and the time after (or not), whilst keeping sufficient tension within the system. An evaluative/moral dynamic provides the basis of judging where a country lies on each teacher policy area—from ‘not present’, to ‘fully developed’, as we can see in the World Bank’s work.

Finally, at in the *moment of outcomes*, it is important to take into account not only the unity of multiple determinations, but also where participating countries come in the hierarchy. These outcomes are cultural, political and economic. In relation to the cultural, what are teachers’ experiences of these changes? What kind of ‘structuring of feelings’ is at work – to paraphrase Raymond Williams (1977) – when SABER-Teacher norms assume teachers are lazy, underperforming and opportunistic? How do these norms shape the structuring of teacher reflexivity? And what are the outcomes In relation to the political, it matters if a participating country in SABER-

Teachers is also subject to Bank conditionalities. Thirteen countries were involved in the first round of SABER-Teachers data collection in 2010—from Chile and Djibouti, to Egypt, Guatemala, and New Zealand. Whilst some of these countries are recipients of Bank aid, countries such as New Zealand are not, though it has in the past been assigned the status of a laboratory for World Bank structural adjustment policies (Peck, 2010). How does the Bank's capacity to shape outcomes influence what eventually emerges? Finally, economically, what do these policies, in reshaping the conditions for teachers' labour (such as rates of pay, the capacity to unionise, and so on) exploit teachers?

Conclusions

In this paper we set out to outline an approach to the study of the relationship between education and globalisation that might overcome some of the limitations of current accounts. We argued that the dominant accounts offer partial insights into education as a complex social process because they tend to privilege the economic and political over the cultural, or vice versa. Yet, it is not sufficient to simply bring the cultural, political and economic together; rather we need to make ontological and epistemological decisions about how we understand these concepts.

To advance an alternative account – one we called a Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education--we have laid out the basis of its conceptual grammar. We began with specifying what we understand by a 'critical' approach; drawing on critical realism, we argued our social worlds are comprised of various layers of structures and generative mechanisms, and that in our enquiries, we need to be attentive to those processes that are not visible, but which have causal powers under particular conditions, and which have effects. We also argued for a critical theory approach on the grounds that it not only invites critique but that this forms a basis for social change. This is very important for any study of education in that it is a powerful institution of social reproduction in societies. It matters how it is organised, and what the outcomes or effects are for individuals and the collective. These are basic questions of social justice.

The second element of the conceptual grammar is the idea of an 'education ensemble' which would help 'crack open' our commonsense understandings of education, as a static, homogeneous, and enduring container of social processes, relations and identities. The point here is that an 'education ensemble' – as itself a unity of multiple determinations whose constituent elements (civilisational projects; forms of local/regional/national/global education; a common form of educational organisation; and a relationship to the economy – albeit largely capitalist) have causal powers under particular conditions. Yet this is a necessarily abstract level of thinking about education, and not one that students investigating education problems and issues are likely to find immediately helpful.

Our next move was methodological; that is, to advance a set of education questions that might help us bring into view, the different layers of the education ensemble, and to invite theorising around these deeper social processes. The education questions comprise the third element of the conceptual grammar.

In the second part of our paper we used this conceptual grammar to explore two examples of the globalising of education; the expansion of access to education around the globe, and the global governance of teachers' work. What kinds of insights might be enabled by the education ensemble about these projects and processes at work, and what might CCPEE – as an approach – add in terms of epistemic gain?

There are several insights which we might tease out. The first is that there is a growing economisation of education around the world, both colonising the cultural, and transforming the

nature of the political, at all scales. We see this with the leeching out of civilisational knowledges in the OECD's TALIS activities, for instance. And despite the fact that efforts such as Education for All are driven in part by a concern for access to education as a human right, it is difficult to draw the conclusion that there have been significant improvements in the educational experiences of learners or teachers. In short, whilst there may be more learners in education settings around the globe, this has not necessarily been paralleled by an increase in human development. We might suggest that some of the reasons for that are to be found in the recognition, intrinsic to the idea of the education ensemble, of educational outcomes being the result of multiple, mutually influential, determinations. The second insight is that where decisions get made about education has changed; these changes have also altered the nature and shape of the education ensemble. There has been a growth in both the number of global actors, such as the World Bank and the OECD, or firms like Pearson Education and McKinsey & Company, shaping the agenda for education, including their role as powerful agents within it. Where and how are they accountable for the outcomes that follow? These are not simply questions about power. They are also questions about democracy and social justice – and ones that a CCPEE approach gets us closer to posing and pursuing. Finally, the balance of the components of the education ensemble, and thus its geometry, are being transformed as a result of the globalising of selective elements of the education ensemble. What are the short and long term consequences of this kind of development for education, as the means to secure a very different kind of future to the one that we currently face? Where is power and authority over education being consolidated if it is not now in Ministries of Education in national and sub-national settings? What new contradictions are being set in motion? And where, and how, might we contest these development? What new futures might we imagine for an education ensemble that draws up, and draws upon, a different idea of economy, politics, and the culture, and how might these reshape education? These developments demand urgent scrutiny in order to open them to critique, to action and social change.

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