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**The structuring / restructuring of the global governance of
education and development: A framework for inquiry**

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The structuring / restructuring of the global governance of education and development: A framework for inquiry

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Since Jomtien (1990), a global compact on education for development has been framed. International organizations and the most important donors have reached an important consensus on common policy instruments to achieve quality education for all (EFA) by 2015. Nevertheless, is this new compact as coherent and absent from conflict as stated by official discourse? What are the tensions and the omissions of the EFA agenda? Who are the major players in developing this agenda? In what ways are extra-educational problems reflected in their mandate? This paper presents a framework for inquiry and tentative answers to these questions based on the analysis of the EFA case.

Introduction

For many observers of international education policy the Education For All conference, Jomtien 1990 represents a watershed in the re-prioritization of education as a central plank in international development policy. Emerging in the wake of a decade of structural adjustment policies which undermined both the equity and efficiency of many education systems in low-income countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, EFA was seen as evidence of a rapprochement between the major supranational organisations (the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP), key bi-lateral donors, third world states and critics of structural adjustment policies, and a recognition of the need to prioritise and protect education systems in periods of fiscal austerity and crisis in order to promote more sustainable processes of development. While the breadth and depth of the agreement on what constitutes the priority (basic education, UPE, adult education) and the nature of the strategies (public-private, state, cost recovery in high education) continued, Jomtien represented the beginning of a remarkable coming together of a wide range of actors (state, bi-lateral donor and multilateral donors, civil society) working towards access and quality in education for the world's poor and marginalised children and youth.

In this paper we want to take a step back from this apparent unity of purpose and reinsert a broad and critical political economy analysis into the debate on post-Jomtien 'global' education policy. In doing so we want to locate the education debate within the broader twists and turns of

international development policy, problematise both the underpinnings of consensus and the underlying dynamics of educational policy and bring back into the debate questions of global capitalist development, social forces and social struggles, which we believe can shed new rays of light on a 'global compact' that continues to fail to adequately redress the poverty and inequality that exists within the contemporary world.

The article is divided into two main sections. The first section sets up a research framework for theorising and doing research on the globalization, education and development nexus. This framework builds on the 'globally structured agenda for education' (GSAE) approach (Dale, 1999; 2000) and incorporates theories and concepts from the International Relations field. In the second section we apply this framework to the analysis of the current Education For All (EFA) agenda. Specifically, we proceed to an analysis of the broad transformations within the global governance of education and international development since the EFA Conference in Jomtien, and we reflect critically on EFA as a hegemonic phenomenon, in Gramscian terms.

1. Framework of Inquiry

Academic literature dealing with education and globalization has increased greatly since the nineties (c.f Lauder, 2006). Despite this, relatively little work has been dedicated to theoretical developments aimed at analyzing the relationship between education and globalization in a systematic way. Specifically, only two well-defined theoretical approaches appear to have addressed this: the Common World Educational Culture (CWEC) and the aforementioned GSAE (Mundy 2007, Dale 2000). The framework of inquiry of our research is based mainly on the latter. We make this choice largely for epistemological reasons, but also for reasons related to the scope of the problematic of the research. The CWEC is focused mainly on the commonality of curricular aspects of education, while we are interested in both the 'politics of education' (the way education is embedded in a broader political economy of international development) as well as in 'education politics' (the internal politics of educational policy and planning) levels of analysis (Dale & Robertson, 2007).

At the epistemological level, the CWEC asserts that the values of western modernity are the driving forces of the globalization of education and, specifically, of the expansion of schooling. Their focus is on cultural isomorphism¹ and their argument does not deal with geopolitical and economic interests of western societies. On the other hand, the GSAE's core assumption suggests that the world capitalist economy is the first causal source of the multiple transformations manifested in national education systems. Consequently, capitalism's expansion

¹ Isomorphism is derived from the Greek: *isos* "equal", and *morphe* "shape", and refers in our sense refers to the similarities of educational processes in different cultural contexts.

and transformations, directly and indirectly, affect the contemporary education field (Dale, 2000). For the GSAE, the current global agenda in education is thus 'structured' via the demands of contemporary capitalist accumulation and legitimation strategies. As we argue in this article, the core axiom of the GSAE continues to remain valid for understanding how the international agenda for education and development is being constructed. While agreeing with Santos's (2002) understanding of globalization as a complex, multi-dimensional and multi-faceted process that should be thought of in the plural i.e. globalizations, we concur that economic globalization represents its dominant form in the contemporary period and thus needs to be highlighted.

To better understand the effects of globalization on the educational field, we argue that the hegemonic globalization project is constituted, mainly, by a finance-economic driven agenda. It seeks to open up national economies, the liberalization of capital, the global guarantees of rights to private property, the spread of western like institutions capable of managing and governing the new complexity of the rules of the game of the global economy (and, consequently, to guarantee transparency and the respect of contracts for foreign investors). This agenda also includes within it legitimation objectives, which can assist in explaining why topics such as poverty, social cohesion (understood as social peace) and the spread of *basic* social rights are also included within its ambit. Following the GSAE, we hypothesize that the components of this global consensus represent key elements for understanding and explaining the content and shape of the current international field for education and development.

The GSAE also contemplates a more refined theory on how globalization affects education at the state level. This theory is composed of several elements. Firstly, globalization is not perceived as a "total" program that destroys national power and the room for manoeuvre of states. Following Lukes' categorization on the dimensions of power, we assert that the 'global' is not taking decisions in the name of the local; what is being mainly settled at the global level are the *agenda*, as well as the preferences and the rules of the game. Countries continue to constitute the main decision makers in the education field; however, they take decisions within a policy framework that is, at least in part, externally settled.

Second, the relationship between the global agenda and local policies is not inherently determined. There are specific mechanisms that need to be activated to explain how globalization influences national education policies (or, in other words, to explain how the global agenda is translated into particular events). Specifically, Dale (1999) categorized a series of top-down mechanisms - normally activated in the framework of international organizations - that, in recent decades, have acquired more centrality than traditional mechanisms such as 'policy borrowing' and 'policy learning'. These new mechanisms are imposition, harmonization, standardization,

dissemination and installing interdependence. Linked to the previous point, only imposition operates in the domain of decision taking; the other mechanisms are formally voluntarily adopted by countries and operate in the domain of preferences, agenda and rules settlement.

Third, the indirect effects of globalization in education can be as meaningful as the direct effects. For instance, national education policies are also altered by the general changes to state capabilities, functions and priorities that emerge as a consequence of the globalization of the economy. Today, most governments, independently of their ideology, think that if they sustain a high taxation system for capital, national and foreign investors will move to other countries with a more favorable fiscal environment. Therefore, they opt for reducing taxes and, consequently, they have to tightly control public spending. This obviously affects the funding and provision of public services such as education.

These theoretical developments introduce a range of methodological challenges (Dale & Robertson, 2007). First, they necessitate a need to go beyond educationism. That means that when we analyze changes, events and regulations in the educational field we have to take into account that all these elements could be influenced and configured by extra-educational events, rationales and processes. In fact, aiming to explain the link between the changes in global politics and economics and the changes in the national education (policies and practices) implies recognizing *de facto* that education outcomes are not necessarily related to educational inputs and procedures, and in fact require an understanding of the complexity of the field of International Development. The implication of this is that we need to reinsert 'education' into the broader field of international development, from which it has been noticeably absent².

Second, the GSAE strongly suggests the need to transcend methodological nationalism. In the current globalized environment, international organizations, both regional and global, and other external actors (for instance, bi-lateral donors) are becoming more influential in the settlement of national education policies and priorities (Robertson & Dale, 2003, Robertson, Novelli et al 2007). In this context, educational and extra-educational events that occur at different scales also affect education. So, the GSAE seeks to understand education problems and systems as embedded within a complex local, national and global political economy and rejects the notion that educational problems can be simply bracketed off from these broader phenomena (Novelli and Lopes Cardozo, 2008-forthcoming).

The third challenge concerns methodological statism. The main implication of this challenge is accepting that, in the current governance scenario, state actors do not have the monopoly over

² The study of education in low-income countries, which constitutes our field of inquiry, normally takes place within education departments, research is generally published in specialised education journals, and the field is noticeably absent in the vast majority of International Development departments and academic journals.

political action. Non-state actors are also relevant political agents in the global governance of education scenario. In fact, the hegemonic process of globalization is able to be “contested, and transformed through a range of sociopolitical and discursive processes, strategies, and struggles (...) that take place at different scales engaging an array of actors and interests, for example, capital, national states, para-state organizations, labor unions, local social movements, and supranational organizations” (Robertson et al, 2002: 475-6). It should be added that non state-actors can also strengthen, support and legitimate the hegemonic neoliberal globalization process. On the other hand, it is important to mention that challenging methodological statism doesn’t mean accepting that the state is becoming less and less powerful. Rather, it means accepting that the role and functions of the state have been altered in the broad governance scenario, that other players participate actively at the levels of education policies and politics, and that the state it is not as autonomous in relation to certain policy issues, such as education, as before.

It must also be pointed out that the GSAE itself is not a complete theoretical framework. We believe that its core utility is as a broad theory that helps to us to understand the nature of the relationships between globalization and education that provides a complex picture of the global governance of education scenario, and allows us a way of thinking about where education fits into the broader field of development studies. Most of the literature on global governance puts the emphasis on the plurality of actors (public, private, local, international) dealing with policy issues; what the GSAE interestingly adds is that the governance of a policy sector is also affected by extra-sectorial factors, phenomena, actors and rationales. On the other hand, the GSAE is also a set a methodological guide-lines and orientations to properly analyze the relationship between globalization and education. In fact, the proponents of the approach identify the key analytical questions to inquire into the globalization and education field (both in developed and in development contexts). Table 1 contains these ‘education questions’ in relation to the two levels of analysis we are interested in: education politics and the politics of education.

Table 1. Education Questions. Source: (Robertson and Dale, 2007)

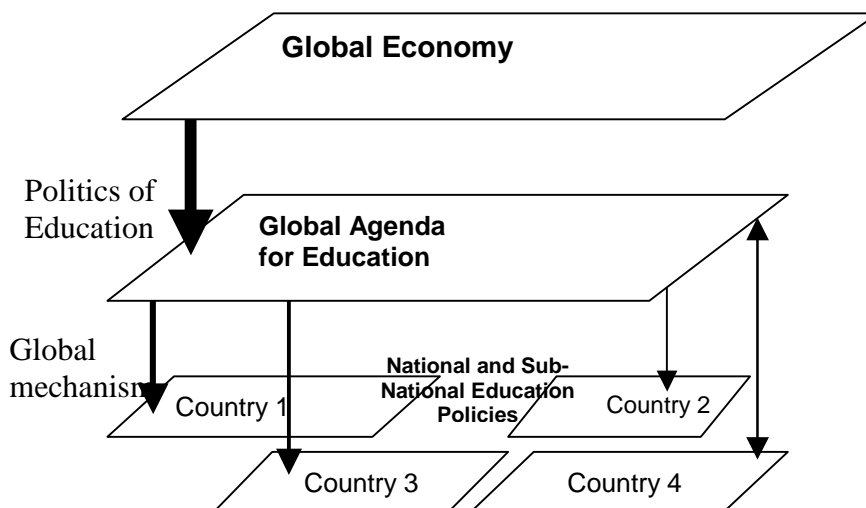
<p>Education politics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How, in pursuit of what manifest and latent social, economic, political and educational purposes; under what pattern of coordination (funding, provision, ownership, regulation) of education governance; by whom; and following what (sectoral and cultural) path dependencies, are these things problematised decided, administered, managed? <p>Politics of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What functional, scalar and sectoral divisions of labour of educational governance are in place? • In what ways are the core problems of capitalism (accumulation, social order and legitimation) reflected in the mandate, capacity and governance of education? How and at what scales are contradictions between the solutions addressed?
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- How are the boundaries of the education sector defined and how do they overlap with and relate to other sectors? What ‘educational’ activities are undertaken within other sectors?
- How is the education sector related to the citizenship and gender regimes?
- How, at what scale and in what sectoral configurations does education contribute to the extra-economic embedding/stabilisation of accumulation?
- What is the nature of intra- and inter-scalar and intra- and inter-sectoral relations (contradiction, cooperation, mutual indifference?)

Addressing some missing pieces

The GSAE is mainly focused on two inter-scalar relationships and interplays: the relationship between the global economy and the global agenda for education, and the relation between the global agenda for education and national education policies. In Chart 1 we reproduce in a very schematic way the GSAE focus.

Figure 1. Globally Structured Agenda for Education (GSAE)



However, we believe that there are some missing pieces in this analytical framework (some of which are already being addressed by the proponents of the model – see Dale, mimeo; Robertson and Dale, 2008).

The first missing piece is related to the focus of the approach on agenda settlement aspects. The ‘agenda’ refers to what has to be discussed and to which problems are sought to be solved. Nevertheless, we believe that the global affects domestic policies in a much broader way. As Dale himself recognizes, the use of the term ‘agenda’ shouldn’t impede contemplating that, following Lukes’ conceptualization, the third dimension of power could be inferred as being more important. So, the rules of the game settlement as well as the settlement of the core principles and ideas that legitimate these rules become key elements in the global governance of education

scenario.³ One concept that could be useful to capture the complexity of what is being defined globally is that of *international regime*. This concept provides a broader understanding of what is really being constructed globally. A regime is a major type of international institution that can be defined as a set of explicit or implicit principles, norms, rules and procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a specific policy area at the international level (Ruggie 1982). Regime theory is grounded in Gramsci's notion of hegemony, and shows how ideas held consensually are able to replace coercive force as an instrument of world order (Jones 2007). Authors such as Jones and Mundy are already applying this concept in the education and development field.

Secondly, the GSAE could problematize more clearly the local-global categories as well as the relationship between them. Currently, its proponents strongly reject the idea that globalization is an absolute project with identical effects in all places (Robertson & Dale, 2006). They also recognize that the effects of globalization on national education systems are locally mediated (Dale, 2000). Nevertheless, the global and the local are usually drawn as a top-down relation, which seems constructed as a duality. This could raise the opposite problem to that of methodological nationalism: that of methodological globalism. Our own feeling is that the global and the local represent a dualism that can only be separated as an analytical convention. In the real domain, both geographical scales (and the events placed in both scales) are mutually constituted (the local in the global and vice versa). Thus, many “global” objects and subjects (such as international organizations, global brands, supra-national trade agreements, etc) are the result of the actions and interests of powerful national actors. For instance, the “hegemon” usually plays a crucial role in the formation of international regimes and seeks to ensure that the regime, despite being global in its scope, reflects its particular national interests (Keohane 1984). Finally, the GSAE has been criticized as too structuralist (Mundy 2007). We believe that the focus on mechanisms of the GSAE is a good antidote to this critique, but, still, the approach can be accused of a lack of dynamism and capacity for explaining the *structuring* (and re-structuring) of the global education agenda (Robertson, forthcoming). Something similar could be said in relation to social movements contestation of the dominant global education agenda. While non-state actors are recognized, it is not clear how these players are theoretically operationalized and their role in the structuring of the agenda. However, while the GSAE does not provide us with the theoretical tools to address agency and change on its own, it doesn't represent a barrier developing these elements. We believe therefore that developing a better conceptualization of the

³ By rules we refer to both constitutive rules and regulative rules. The former define who can participate in the game, which are the objectives of the game and the roles to adopt by the players, whereas the regulative rules are equivalent to specific sets of norms. Its scope is contingent to conjunctural and specific situations and its domain is limited by the constitutive rules (Lang 2006).

'processes' of the GSAE perspective necessitates taking agency, strategy and the role of ideas more seriously.

Introducing agency does not mean having to renounce the main assumption of the approach (i.e. capitalism as the driving force of globalization and the key element behind the global agenda of education settlements). It rather means recognising that global capitalism places limits on action (structural selectivity), and is also a terrain for strategy (strategic selectivity) (Dale, mimeo). Bob Jessop's Strategic Relational Approach and its recently developed Cultural Critical Political Economy approach could become a coherent theoretical corpus to incorporate these elements within the GSAE (Robertson and Dale, 2008). However, in this piece, we are particularly interested in developing and translating the contributions made by neo-Gramscian International Relations theory to the education domain. This theory, within the historical materialist tradition, emerged to challenge the overly structuralist nature of World Systems Theory and developed a framework of world order that recognises both the dialectical relations between ideas, material capabilities and institutions and the multi-scalar location of social forces in the contemporary world (Cox, 1996; Morton & Beiler, 2002). The emphasis of the power of ideas pointed out by Gramsci provides an important terrain for social change and contestation. On the other hand, his work also provides an ontological and epistemological foundation upon which to construct a non-deterministic yet structurally grounded explanation of change. As Germain and Kenny state, "Gramsci's theoretical insights provide a critical counterpoint to approaches which hypostatize the structural characteristics of world order, in terms of either the international system of states or the world economy/system. By insisting on the transformative capacity of human beings, Gramsci's radical embrace of human subjectivity provides IR scholars with one way of avoiding a deterministic and ahistorical structuralism".

For our purpose, we find the concept of hegemony particularly useful for understanding the shift to an apparently more 'social' agenda within global development policy. Gramsci (1971) developed this concept in early 20th Century Italy to assist in understanding how a political project, representing the interests of a particular social class, could be successfully constructed through the incorporation of a range of different subordinate classes into its orbit. He saw hegemony as a form of 'intra-elite compromise/co-option and also inter-class compromises which, while not challenging the underlying means of production, allows for a process of partial re-distribution of wealth and favour. While hegemony could therefore be understood as rule based more on consent than coercion (Gill, 2003, p.118) it nevertheless also implies a balance between the two – "the iron fist in the velvet glove" which, while varying over time, implies domination and consent in a range of fields from the military to the social and ideological. Pozo (2007) introduces the notion of 'mechanism of class accommodation' to show how hegemony

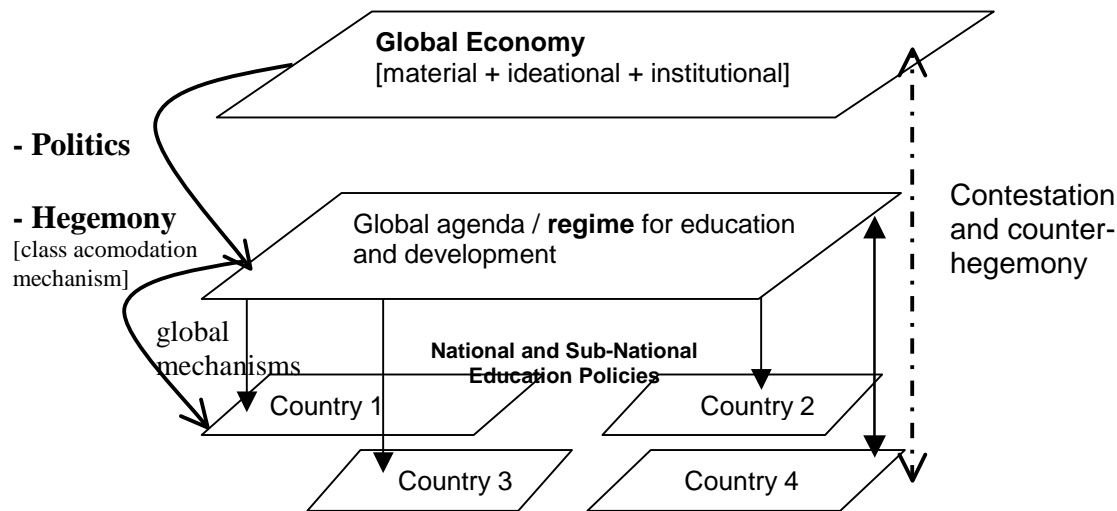
operates. He argues that this mechanism is activated by the dominant groups to construct common identities in the framework of nations - although we think that it could also be applied in the framework of international communities. These common identities act as hegemonic principles that generate cohesion and loyalty around the principles, norms and targets of the community. Therefore, the members of the community perceive that they have common interests and projects, despite the fact that they actually pertain to antagonistic groups or classes with antagonistic interests.

Centrally for Gramsci, 'hegemony' was constructed upon the terrain of civil society, which he saw juxtaposed in two ways. In his formulation it was both the foundation of the existing order: 'state = political society + civil society' – or what he termed 'hegemony protected by the armour of coercion' (Gramsci, 1986, p.263), and also as the potential territory where social transformation could take place; in other words the creation of a counter-hegemonic bloc that would challenge the contemporary order in what he called a 'war of manoeuvre'. Developing on these ideas, Robert Cox (1999) suggested that in the contemporary globalised world the two competing forces needed to be located within a framework that went beyond the nation state and conceptualised them as top-down and bottom-up civil society. The 'top-down' process expressed the idea of the dominant forces of 'global' capitalism creating an intellectual and cultural hegemony that secures the acquiescence of the majority of the population within a given historical structure. The bottom-up approach implies a process led from below by those disadvantaged sections of the population who aspire to develop sufficient support in the population to replace the existing order. From a top-down perspective, powerful states and corporate interests intervene in the development of civil society attempting to steer it towards stabilising the status quo. This is done through activities such as the co-option of elements of popular movements, and subsidies to NGOs pushing them to conformity with established norms (Robinson, 1996), or through the use of economic or military force and other disciplinary mechanisms. From a bottom-up perspective, oppositional groups would, likewise, try to win over disaffected sections of the elite bloc that are losing out in particular ways under contemporary relations, and construct a broader base to their movements.

The above mentioned theoretical insights contribute to developing a more complete picture of the structuring and restructuring of the global agenda for education, and give a sense of a terrain of struggle (material, institutional, ideational). In Figure 2, we represent the form of the resulting approach. The main changes in relation to the original GSAE (see Figure 1) are: a) mechanisms related to hegemony that contribute to a more process-based exploration of how the global economy (understood as a world order structured by material capabilities, ideas and institutions) affects education; b) the concept of regime, which gives a broader underpinning of what is

actually being constituted at the global level; c) the possibility of contestation and the unleashing of counter-hegemonic processes at one or more scales.

Figure 2. Globally Structuring Agenda/Regime for Education



2. The structuring of the international agenda/regime of education and development

Having laid our theoretical and methodological cards on the table, in the following section we explore the particularities of the emergence of EFA in 1990 and the strategy underpinning its rise. In doing so we will illustrate how the EFA agenda operates as a hegemonic device that fits in with the broader development and consolidation of neoliberalism as the dominant development paradigm of the last 3 decades outlined above. Specifically, our case study aims to answer the following questions:

- How was the EFA agenda settled and its mandate defined?
- What lies behind the EFA label? What are the core principles and ideas that constitute the EFA field?
- In what ways are extra-educational problems reflected in this mandate? What are the main omissions, contradictions and dilemmas within the current dominant agenda?
- What mechanisms/strategies are activated in the framework of EFA to influence national education policies?
- Why is the EFA a non-contested process?

We believe that it is important to focus our research on the EFA as a specific political project because it has become the central piece of the current international regime of education and development. In fact, EFA contains within it a set of principles, causal beliefs and common

understandings over the role of education for development. EFA also answers the question of what ‘education for development should be’ (levels, resources, processes, methodologies, results) and what are the procedures to achieve it. EFA brings together the key actors in the education and development field (international organizations, donor countries, developing countries and civil society). More interestingly, EFA defines the standard of behaviour of all these actors. And, finally, EFA is a clear agenda that underpins the issues that have to be discussed and the problems that have to be resolved. At the same time, it reflects, in a more explicit or implicit way, what are the topics that should be excluded from the international discussion over education and development.

From Washington to the Post Washington Consensus

Centrally for our argument, the emergence of EFA can only be understood within a framework of the ‘politics of education’ located within the broader twists and turns the global political economy from the 1990s onwards and the shift from a Washington to a Post-Washington Consensus model of neoliberal development. Between the early 1990s to the present day there have been a range of modifications that have altered the architecture of international development and global education policy therein, that emerged in response to the abject failure of structural adjustment policies during the 1980s and early 1990s to deliver sustainable development processes.

During this period a revised development agenda emerged from the World Bank/IMF – which was initially termed the ‘good governance’ agenda – emerging as both an explanation of and solution to the deficiencies of the Washington Consensus development model. By the end of the 1990s a broader and more sustained alternative development model emerged, known as the Post-Washington Consensus, which extended and consolidated much of the Good Governance agenda. The decade closed with the signing of the *Millennium Development Goals*. In line with the developments within the broader field of International Development we can also see an Educational Post-Washington Agenda emerging during the same period, which begins with Jomtien, EFA, 1990, and travels along mid-term EFA reviews to the World Education Forum, Dakar, 2000 and onto the Millennium Summit in the same year (King, 2007). During this period we see a discursive shift from fiscal austerity to poverty reduction, from structural adjustment policies to poverty reduction strategy papers, from conditionality to country-ownership and partnership (including civil society actors and INGOs), and the galvanization of the international development community on targets (EFA and MDGs) and results based management, and shifts in the architecture and delivery of aid (sector-wide approaches, FTI). These combined

transformations have been labelled as the ‘new meta-narrative’ (Maxwell, 2003), and the framework can be equally applied to understanding the education/development relationship during the same period.

In order to understand how this emerged we want to return to the early 1990’s and explore five factors that appear important for understanding the rise of the ‘meta-narrative’. Firstly, by the late 1980s, a decade of structural adjustment policies led by the World Bank and the IMF had had a devastating effect on some of the poorest countries in the world, and the poorest population groups therein (SAPRIN report). This had resulted in major criticisms and protests (Cornia et al 1987; Walton and Seddon 1994). Opposition to SAPs and the IFIs came not only from those badly effected—poor people and working classes—but also from the middle classes and from NGOs and human rights organisations in both the North and South (Caufield 1996, White 2002). The World Bank/IMF and other international financial institutions were under considerable pressure to address the outcomes of SAPs, with calls for ‘adjustment with a human face’ (Cornia et al 1987), and education and health were at the centre of many of these protests and debates, and there was a great deal of critical literature produced highlighted their effect on education (Samoff; etc) . Within this context, the EFA, Jomtien can clearly be seen to serve as an important mechanism through which the World Bank could regain legitimacy, and also draw in a range of other UN institutions into common agendas.

Secondly, it was not only the harsh social effects that were producing criticism, there was also concern over the failure of SAPs to either reduce poverty and inequality or to achieve sustainable economic growth in low-income countries (SAPRIN report). SAPs, even within its own stated narrow economic objectives, had failed to resolve the economic crises of low-income countries and rapid and sustained economic growth had not been realised. SAPs had generated steep declines in national income and high increases in unemployment, they had crippled education and other public services, deepened poverty, widened social polarization, and damaged the most vulnerable sectors of the population (Archer 1994; Bonal 2003). SAPs had also weakened the capacity of the state and increased corruption and clientelism in many low-income countries. One consequence of this was tensions between neoliberal economists as to the efficacy of the SAPS recipe and a need to focus on ‘institutions’ as well as getting markets right (North; Stiglitz). This debate was also centred on the success of the Newly Industrialised Countries (NICs) in Asia (the Asian Tigers) which raised questions about the efficacy of a purely market-led development model (Wade 1990). Within education these debates led to a rethinking of the prioritizing of education during periods of austerity, this begins with social stabilization funds, then moves on to broader debates on the relationship between education and growth, and also about the relative importance of sectors (new growth theory and the knowledge economy come later).

Thirdly, the end of the Cold War and the fall of communist regimes in the eastern bloc had a strong effect on global politics. The Cold War had provided the rationale for four decades of social and economic policies in both the East and the West. The end of the bi-polar world system signalled the arrival of the new uni-polar world order (Abrahamsen 2000; Leftwich 1993). During the Cold War, geopolitical priorities gave particular shape to development strategies. Both the West and the East supported regimes in Asia, Africa and Latin America to secure their power and influence others. Western governments, particularly the USA, supported several highly repressive and authoritarian regimes in return for their alliance and help against communist expansion. The decline of the Soviet super power and the end of the Cold War removed western justification for supporting these types of regimes (Burnell 1997). The post Cold war period thus provided a window of opportunity to utilise aid to address the countries in most need, rather than political allies for geo-strategic reasons. By the mid 1990s this appeared to have had contradictory effects. On the one hand overall aid declined (lack of political necessity after the end of the Cold war) but within education there was an increase in basic education funding (Mundy, 2006). This dynamic also led to a stronger international focus on the poorest countries, and particularly sub-Saharan Africa. It also facilitated an ongoing shift towards donor-coordination as consensus was made more possible.

Fourthly, the intellectual climate had changed with the collapse of the communist regimes in the eastern bloc. This was widely regarded as a victory of capitalism over communism. Communism was articulated as a corrupt, stagnant, inefficient, mismanagement regime and associated with an unsuccessful development model that produced unsustainable economic growth. Fukuyama (1992), captured the zeitgeist of the time, arguing that mankind had reached the “end of history” and capitalist democracy was revealed as the final form of “human government” (Abrahamsen 2000: 33, Kiely 1998: 684). Linked to this, there was a growing consensus emerging that liberal democracy was the only “model of government with any broad ideological legitimacy that can produce sustained economic growth in the world today” (Diamond et al 1988: 186). Certainly linked to this within education was the relationship between decentralisation and democracy (discursively at least) and with the PRSPs and education sector priorities (on partnerships and participation).

Fifthly, during the 1980s, the number of NGOs and human rights organization had increased dramatically across the world. This was true both in the North and the South. Indigenous democracy movements had arisen in Latin America and in countries like the Philippines, and these processes encouraged similar movements in other part of the world, particularly Africa (Leftwich 1993). These movements put an unfavourable spotlight on the structural adjustment policies and programmes of the international financial institutions. The increased awareness of

social and political issues meant that many western governments were heavily criticized for the negative impacts of neo-liberal economic policies, for creating inequalities and deepening poverty in many low-income countries, and for their earlier support for regimes such as Pinochet's Chile. Western governments needed to find other justifications and purposes for their aid budgets in light of these new post cold war realities. In this context, the good governance agenda (and later the PWC) could be regarded as a new 'grand moral crusade' (Abrahamsen 2000:36). The rising role of NGO's during the late 1980s and 1990s within the education sector was equally important – both as service providers- stepping in as the state increasingly had been stepping out – and as an advocacy institution and 'partner' in major international conferences and policy making (Mundy & Murphy)

By the late 1990s, this line of thinking emerged as a more coherent set of development policies. Joseph Stiglitz in 1997 called this new phase, the 'Post-Washington Consensus' (Stiglitz 1998; Stiglitz 2002). Fine (2001: 139) describes its features as follows:

First, it is sharply critical of the Washington Consensus and seeks an alternative in which state intervention is greater in depth and breadth. Second, it rejects the analytical agenda of state versus market, arguing that the two are complements and can work together and not against one another. Third, if less explicit, it poses an alternative agenda for development economics and policy debate, seeking to establish the appropriate role of the state in view of market imperfections. Fourth, it also brings the social back into the analysis as the means of addressing, and potentially correcting, market imperfections – rather than simply creating them as for the Washington Consensus for which the world would be a better place if it were made more and more, if not completely, like the market.

However, while the new agenda acknowledged the relevance of non-economic factors to economic success, it did not represent a break from the Washington Consensus. SAPs overall logic remained largely unchanged within this agenda, with macroeconomic policies (such as market liberalisation, export-oriented free markets, the removal of trade barriers and tariffs), all remaining paramount. Furthermore, as with SAPs, there was considerable continuity in the application of conditionalities, although in the 'post-Washington' agenda, they are much broader, incorporating not only economic, but political reforms as well. In this respect the 'good governance' agenda is argued to have some similarities with early modernisation theory (Leftwich 1993; Abrahamsen 2000) aiming for "a profound change in social culture" and "a long term process of changing mentalities" (Landell–Mills 1992: 564-565). The 'good governance' agenda embraced by the World Bank continued to see the state's role as minimal and that it should play a limited developmental role – a role far away from the 1950/60's conception of the role of the state in modernisation theory. For Fine (2001), Stiglitz's PWC was not a rejection of the broad trajectory of neo-liberal economic policy but rather its deepening and widening (Stiglitz 1998). In that sense it can be seen as a logical extension of the 'good governance' agenda to embrace wider

concerns. While state intervention remained focused on areas of ‘market failure’ the expansion of these areas was notable.

In adding a structural dimension to these debates we have also found it useful to think of the transition from Washington to Post Washington as an example of the difference between roll-out neoliberalism and roll-back neoliberalism (Tickell and Peck, 2003). In this conceptualisation, the SAPS period can be conceptualised as the moment where the obstacles (subsidies, redistributive taxation, high tariffs) to neoliberal development were ‘rolled-back’, and the Post-Washington Consensus is the period of ‘roll-out’ where, having removed the major obstacles to neoliberal development, the model is ‘rolled-out’ ever more broader social and political domains (see Robertson, Novelli et al 2007 for a more comprehensive development of this argument).

Thus, if the 1980s represented a period where the dominant focus was on markets, and the early 1990s markets and states, then the late 1990s can be seen as a re/turn to the social but always with a focus on the primacy of markets. A process that can be explained not only by structural imperatives but also by agency and social struggles, both ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ (in Cox’s 1999 terms) .

From Jomtien, 1990 to Dakar and the MDGs

In 1990, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank set up and coordinated the ‘Education for All’, conference in Jomtien, Thailand. The conference gathered together representatives of the Bretton Woods institutions, including a wide array of United Nations agencies, the major donors, and the representatives of education ministries across the globe and out of that conference came “a uniform ideology, structure and practice by nation states” for the provision of education (McGinn 1997: 237). The framework was provided by the World Bank and recommendations included donor coordination, sector rather than project support, institution and local capacity building, support for recurrent costs, decentralisation of educational provision, acceptance of user-fees in post basic education, privatisation, and the relative emphasis on the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of basic education. These aims were further elaborated in 1995 with the publication of the Bank’s educational strategy (World Bank 1995). It also led to more pledges by donor states towards basic education and the aim of providing *Universal Primary Education for All* by the year 2000.

There has been some fine coverage of the different aspects that led to the coordination of the EFA, Jomtien (Chabbot, 1998; 2002; King and McNab (1990; King, 1990). These shed light on the way that the EFA facilitated the different agendas of the major conference sponsors UNECISO, UNICEF, the World Bank and the UNDP. Centrally for our discussion is King’s argument that it was donor preferences that shaped the scope of the Jomtien agenda minimising

it from education for all, to education for school-age pupils, and then from primary and secondary to primary (King 2004: 87). However, Jomtien also broke important new ground by pledging “long term budgetary support’ to help the poorest countries reach SFA”(ibid). Similarly, Brock-Utne (1996) notes the centrality of the discursive battles over the definition of what constituted basic education. In terms of the inter-institutional battles this could be roughly divided between a minimalist World Bank and UNICEF conceptualisation (UPE), counter posed to a broader UNESCO, UNDP definition (including adult and non-formal education)

These debates are important in breaking down a ‘monolithic’ notion of the global and demonstrating that there were battles and struggles amongst the global players as well as other social forces and low income states. Similarly, the outcomes also reflect the inequalities of power and influence of the respective institutions, demonstrating hierarchy within the process of the global governance of education, mediated by struggle and contestation. As noted before Jomtien, 1990 coincided with a shift in World Bank policy to ensure that key social sectors, such as education and health, should be ‘protected’ by special funding during structural reform processes. Mundy (2002) notes that from this point onwards, over half of adjustment lending was directed to social safety nets and emergency social funds. She notes that the percentage of Bank lending focused on the social sectors increased markedly during the early part of the 1990s; thus, education funding doubled between 1990-1994 from the previous four-year period. Apart from an increase in educational funding, funding for primary education rose to 36.1% of education funding.

These events reveal the dynamics of the educational transition from Washington towards a Post Washington paradigm, and how Jomtien was both a site for and signal of the move towards a new agenda for education. In many ways the Education for All agenda represented a bridge between the Washington Consensus policies of the 1980s and the ‘good governance’ agenda of the early 1990s. It was a bridge because it satisfied the more narrow economic rationale of the rates-of-return policy repertoire whilst simultaneously embracing a more social role for the World Bank in its quest for legitimacy in the eyes of public opinion (Chabbott 1998; Chabbott 2002).

As with any policy shift there were concerns raised about the new directions. The main concern seems to be the risk of the international agenda steamrolling national policies, and leading to the standardisation of education throughout the world. King asked this potent question concerning policymaking. “Are recipients asking for the same things because they want them or because they know what the donors want to give?” (King 1992:260). Samoff (1994) suggested that the ability of low-income country governments to control educational planning was being restricted by the power and influence of the World Bank and its major creditor nations. ‘Good’ in

education was increasingly defined by the World Bank. There were other policies, such as increased support for user-fees to certain sectors and privatisation, which were far less contradictory and reflected the incorporation of the Washington Consensus Agenda. Samoff, writing in 1994, noted that the Bank had stamped its policies and influence well beyond the confines of its budget and was now the provider of the dominant discourse on education and development. This discourse has then provided the focus for the rest of the world to discuss education, and the orthodox to follow.

Despite the optimism of Jomtien, funding was not as forthcoming as might have been expected, and by the time of the mid term reviews it was clear that the EFA agenda, even in its more minimalist terms, needed to be kick started (King 2007). The follow up conference in Dakar in 2000 changed the dead line to achieve education for all as well as reframed the specific objectives and targets to achieve. More importantly for our argument Dakar and future developments (such as the UN Millennium Conference or the Fast Track Initiative) accentuated the embedding of EFA in a finance-driven globalization process. First, Dakar and beyond reaffirm the focus on primary education. It implies leaving out of the agenda higher levels of education and adult education – which paradoxically are key educational sectors to promote access and good performance at the basic education level (Torres 2000; King 2007).

Second, it promotes the ‘good use of the private sector’ and the promotion of Public Private Partnerships to achieve EFA (Draxler, 2007). This reifies a conception of the state in developing countries as a weak subject incapable to fund and provide directly universal basic education. In fact, the EFA movement itself assumes that the southern countries need the external donor’s contribution, as well as the private sector contribution, to implement this basic function.

Taxation to capital and the implantation of a progressive fiscal system, debt relief or tariffs to importations are policies that could be more effective to get the necessary funding for education, but they do not resonate positively within the neoliberal broad programme and, consequently, are out of the EFA scope.

However, the neoliberal shift is clearer in the case of the Fast Track Initiative, which was launched in 2002 and is coordinated by the WB. Countries who apply for the FTI must have a PRSP and a ‘credible’ national education plan. This means that governments are required to formally integrate social development goals with plans for macroeconomic stability, liberalization and debt repayment (Mundy, 2006). The FTI strongly looks for reducing unit costs of primary education, which could contradict other education objectives such as expanding supply, improving quality and stimulating demand. Probably, the most controversial indicative benchmark of the FTI is that related to teacher salaries (they are set at 3.5 times GDP per capita)

(Rose, 2005). This benchmark, for obvious reasons, can also clearly contradict the objective of achieving *quality* education for all.

The FTI also re-dimensions the external influence in developing countries education policies. The initiative can be perceived as “a new internationally driven planning exercise into the education sector” (Mundy, 2006: 37). In broad terms, the FTI (although something similar could be argued about the EFA targets in general) establishes new rules of the game that alter the priorities of developing countries, These countries are conditioned to frame their education policies within very specific ‘indicative benchmarks’ and targets if they aspire to get extra-funding, as well as the acceptance and technical support from the international community.

Hegemony and the politics of education

Having laid out some of the ‘politics of education’ that shaped the educational policy shifts before, during and after the initial EFA agenda, and their compatibility with the rationales of neoliberal capitalist development we now want to make a set of linked assertions about the role of EFA within the global compact in education.

We suggest that the EFA process is not only compatible with the broad neoliberal agenda within education, but that it provides an important strategic tool for the political drivers of the dominant agenda of education for development to achieve cohesion and loyalty at the international level. It does this in a number of important ways. From the 1990s onwards it has served as a durable ‘master’ discourse that is difficult to reject, but which allows within it a series of reforms which many social forces committed to the EFA find unpalatable. Education For All operates as a unifying discourse that manages to unify very different interpretations of the value and necessity of education within processes of development. Centrally, it manages to unite those that see education as a basic human right with those with a far more narrow ‘human capital’ agenda. While this might be seen as an example of the taming of the neoliberal agenda we believe it can better be understood in Gramscian terms as a class compromise under the leadership of the dominant forces of global capitalism represented through the agency of the World Bank. For the World Bank, education can be placed in the centre because it represents an agenda for growth and competition that allows the social to be addressed without policies of economic redistribution and an undermining of the overall neoliberal model. As can be reflected in the following World Bank citation, the repertoire of education access provides a legitimating discourse that allows it to unify the neoliberal rationale and an equality discourse within the international community:

The expansion of educational opportunity, which can simultaneously promote income equality and growth, is a win-win strategy that in most societies is far easier to implement

than the redistribution of other assets, such as land or capital. In short, education is one of the most powerful instruments known for reducing poverty and inequality and for laying the basis for sustained economic growth, sound governance and effective institutions. (World Bank 2002a, quoted in Mundy, 2006)

In this sense EFA becomes a kind of magic bullet for development (Mundy, 2006) which also successfully serves to fragment opposition to the broader neoliberal agenda that it encapsulates. For 17 years it has held together a rallying call that has brought together unlikely bedfellows, IFIs, corporations, different UN institutions, bi-lateral donors, civil society organisations. In doing so it has diffused and dissipated the possibility of constructing an alternative educational agenda tackling issues of redistribution and global inequality along more egalitarian lines.

This collective commitment has meant that many oppositional voices have been silenced and forced into compromise, when broader neoliberal policies are introduced in the name of EFA. For example, common amongst the tension here is the role of the private sector in education. Here the argument often runs something like this. If we are to achieve EFA by 2015 then we need to muster as many resources as possible – therefore (while we know some of our partners are uncomfortable about this) we must focus our funding on basic education and leave the market to other sectors, and include the private sector in PPPs. In doing so, markets are opened up in a whole range of sectors that were previously thought the domain of the state (e.g. emergence of a higher education market). Furthermore, the call for the strengthening of teachers salaries and conditions (and in relation to this the quality of teacher training) is likewise sacrificed in the name of the need to get more teachers at the chalk face (less training, lower salaries) in order to achieve EFA (Archer, 2006). Similarly, the consensus on the MDG's generally, but the EFA goals in particular, has led to a transformation in the governance of the education system – conditioned from outside.

The EFA also plays an important discursive role in legitimating international organisations and bi-lateral donors, providing an idea that the international community is working hard to alleviate poverty and inequality in low-income countries while obscuring the other activities that are undermining the possibility of development (writing off external debt, avoiding reforming unfair trade rules that protect the powerful, avoiding issues of taxation and redistribution of the massive profits of corporations – not least multinational oil companies, war and pillage). It also reinforces north-south dependency relations and the child like status of 'fragile' and 'weak' low income states which cannot move forward without the benevolent help of the West.

As we have seen, the EFA as a sub-component of the Post Washington Consensus, on the surface looks like a welcome step forward; yet it produces almost identical structural reforms without the heavy hand of overt conditionality of the structural adjustment years. This again

serves to release the pressure from those left out of the benefits of the education agenda without addressing any of the issues of inequalities and redistribution. EFA thus represents the glue that holds the broader project together – but focussing only the objectives of EFA makes us miss out on the broader and wide ranging transformations within the global governance of education system.

Conclusions

In this paper we have argued that the international regime of education and development is being developed around the notion of ‘Education For All’, which acts as a class accommodation mechanism that serves to unify potentially competing social forces, weaken oppositional movements, and successfully obscure and confuse other dynamics taking place within the sector. We have also argued that rather than seeing the EFA, and other development initiatives post-1990 as demonstration of a humanising of neoliberalism or the social democratisation of neoliberalism (Panitch, 1997) we can understand it better as part of a process of embedding educational claims - as well as the institutions (UNESCO, UNDP), NGOs, and oppositional forces that raised these claims - into the ambit of neoliberalism. This has serious political implications, and serves to remove us ever further away from arguments for the recognition of the need for a New International Economic Order (NIEO), for policies of global redistribution, for strong initiatives of debt relief and ever further towards the methodological individualism of neoliberal development theory that states that the obstacle for development is lack of entrepreneurial spirit in the south.

EFA, like many other development processes, has become portrayed as a technical problem, but actually politics represent the centre of its constituency. Bringing back into the picture the range of social struggles that preceded the setting up of EFA, and understanding EFA as a hegemonic project led by the World Bank and powerful bi-laterals, helps to open up room for thinking about alternative educational projects. It allows us a framework where we can understand how alliances were constructed, by agents in structured conditions that placed limits on manoeuvre, but also provided possibilities for strategy. The World Bank and the major bi-lateral donors used their power (resources, influence, ideas) to set the agenda and many of the aspirations and ideals of the partners caught up in the process got massaged out of the final objectives, whilst their continued presence within the alliance delivers a sense of common purpose and legitimacy, particularly when they remain silent on crucial issues in the interests of ‘unity’.

Similarly, if we seek to promote an alternative EFA, that addresses the gross inequalities and injustices that continue to block educational progress, access and quality for the world’s children, then we need to study this balance of forces, and the possible alternative policies, alliances and

strategies that could be constructed upon a new and alternative terrain. The early 1990's, despite being a moment of legitimacy crisis for the World Bank/IMF – as the guardians of global capitalism – was also a moment of triumphalism; with the collapse of the soviet union and the shift to a uni-polar 'New world order'. US 'neoliberal' leadership was on the rise, and there were new opportunities for extending the spread of capitalist relations throughout the world, and rolling back any alternative development strategies that existed.

Today the world is much more fragmented, a resurgent China, a US economy weakened and heading for recession, and a US state that lacks international legitimacy embroiled in various highly unpopular wars. Meanwhile across Latin America, left wing nationalist, socialist and social democratic governments have been elected and in some cases are developing alternative policy measures to attack educational access and quality within the remit of EFA, but through a politics of redistribution and taxation of multinational profits. Just as Latin America was the site for early neoliberal experiments (Pinochet's Chile) so perhaps today Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador can become laboratories for thinking counter-hegemonic projects of education for development.

Beyond aspirations for alternative education futures, constructed within an understanding of the structural and strategies possibilities of the time, there is also a need for critical research within the field of education and development that analyses the politics of education within a framework that embeds educational policy within the complexities of a highly unequal global political economy.

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