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## THE GLOBAL EDUCATIONAL POLICY ENVIRONMENT IN THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION: GATED, REGULATED AND GOVERNED

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United Kingdom – North America – Japan  
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## CHAPTER 2

# COMPARING THE RECEPTIONS AND TRANSLATIONS OF GLOBAL EDUCATION POLICY, UNDERSTANDING THE LOGIC OF EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

Gita Steiner-Khamisi

### ABSTRACT

*In focusing on the changing dynamics of education governance, this chapter draws on a few key concepts of policy borrowing research, notably the focus on reception and translation of global education policy, and sheds light on the temporal and spatial dimensions of policy transfer. It is not sufficient to simply acknowledge that one and the same global education policies means something different to different actors in different contexts. In addition, to providing a “thick description” of why global education policies are received and how they are translated, a specific strand of policy borrowing research – well represented in this edited volume – examines the global/local nexus and acknowledges that local actors are positioned simultaneously in two spaces: in their own (cultural/local) context and in a broader transnational “educational*

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*space." From a systems theory perspective, the broader educational space is Umwelt (environment) and therefore local actors interact at critical moments with the broader educational space. The policy bilingualism (or in the work of Tavis Jules, the "policy trilingualism" when the local, regional, and global is taken into the account) is a result of policy actors operating simultaneously in two spaces that are populated with two different audiences: local and global actors. The example of bonus payments in Kyrgyzstan, a local adaptation of global teacher accountability reform, is used to explain how the method of comparison is used as an analytical tool to understand the global/local nexus in the policy process.*

**Keywords:** Translation; reception; policy bilingualism; policy trilingualism; systems theory

## INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I first introduce two key concepts of policy borrowing research — reception and translation — and then use them as a methodological tool to understand fundamental differences among educational systems. As a case in point, I analyze *why* so-called incentive schemes (in particular, performance-based bonuses), commonly considered one of the prominent elements of global managerial educational reform (Verger, Kosar Altinyelken, & de Koning, 2013), resonate in post-socialist education systems and *how* policy makers, administrators, and teachers subsequently translate these type of reform imports in Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and Mongolia. Believers in "delta-convergence" (Bieber & Martens, 2011), that is, the convergence of national educational systems toward one global system of education, tend to use the method of comparison to emphasize commonality over difference. In this chapter, I do the contrary. I draw on the full scope of comparative methodology and draw my attention to fundamental divides between educational systems with the dual intension of understanding the particular logic of educational systems as well as investigating how policy actors cope with counterproductive reform imports, that is, borrowed policies that exacerbate rather than mitigate existing local problems.

The purpose of teacher accountability reforms is supposedly to make teachers work harder and to retain effective teachers in the profession

(see, e.g., Bruns, Filmer, & Patrinos, 2011). What if teachers are already strictly held accountable for student outcomes and in fact micro-managed? That is, what if there is no need to borrow teacher accountability reforms because the system already is saturated with, and indeed suffers from, minute regulations on how teachers have to perform. Does the global managerial reform of teacher accountability nevertheless resonate in such contexts? If it does, why do local actors buy into them? What sense do they make out of a situation that is nonsensical: the import of a global reform that merely exacerbates the already existing excessive control over teachers? How are such counterintuitive reforms adapted to the local context and how are they implemented? Finally, for the purpose of advancing theory and methods in comparative policy studies: how could the comparative study of policy borrowing better inform research on fundamental differences between systems, that is, help formulate the world systems in education? For example, is it possible to use the lens of policy borrowing to formulate systemic differences in terms of what systems expect from teachers and how they recruit, educate, manage, and pay them?

The preoccupation with local actors, the interest to understand the "socio-logic" (Schriewer & Martinez, 2004) of systems and the choice of contextual comparison as the preferred method of inquiry are characteristic features of policy borrowing and lending research. For example, Brögger (2014) focuses on local agency to analyze higher education reform in Denmark and brilliantly applies Jacques Derrida's term "hauntology" to explain why practices and beliefs from the past endure into the present and "haunt" the reception and implementation of the Bologna process in Danish higher education. In her intellectual endeavor to understand globalization at an organizational level, she demands that we critically challenge "globalization's status as a hegemonic macro-narrative, which often leads to a temporal and ahistorical analyses" (Brögger, 2014, p. 3) and immerse ourselves into alternatives to macro-analysis. In line with Brögger's (2014) argument, the interpretive framework of policy borrowing and lending takes into account the constitutive power of the system and therefore draws great attention to analyzing the reasons, processes, and impact of imported educational reforms in a particular context. Of particular relevance for the study of education governance is the focus on power, coalition building, and legitimization. More often than not, policy makers borrow, that is, make references to experiences in other countries or to broadly defined international "best practices" as a tool to establish authority or to mobilize additional support for their reform program. As a corollary, all research on

reception and translation takes into account issues related to power, conflict, and education governance.

## KEY ISSUES IN POLICY BORROWING RESEARCH

Within education governance, typical research questions on reception include *why* local actors select a particular policy, which problem the borrowed policy pretends to solve, or what the “selling points” of the policy are that seem to appeal to local policy actors. In this section, I highlight two of the key issues that recent studies on reception tend to examine: (i) system receptiveness and (ii) the use of international standards. For studies on translation – discussed below – (i) the temporal dimension and (ii) the spatial dimension of policy translation have gained prominence over the last few years. They are discussed in this section too. For this particular volume on the new global educational policy environment, the spatial dimension is of great significance. I therefore draw attention to the spatial and scalar aspects of policy borrowing in the changing global context of education governance.

### *System Receptiveness*

It is necessary to reiterate the notion of “externalization” that German sociologist Niklas Luhmann coined and Jürgen Schriewer adopted for comparative studies in education (Luhmann, 1990; Schriewer, 1990). Embedded in a theoretical framework of system theory (Luhmann, 1990), Schriewer and Martinez (2004) propose to study the local context in order to understand the socio-logic of externalization. Schriewer and Martinez (2004) find it indicative of the socio-logic of a system that only specific educational systems are used as external sources of authorities. Which systems are used as “reference societies,” they tell us something about the interrelations of actors within various world systems. The referenced societies may be countries that are in the same “educational space” (e.g., countries subscribing to the Bologna process of higher education reform), the same geo-political space (e.g., the European Union, CARICOM), or similar in terms of economic dependency (emerging and frontier markets). However, the research of Jürgen Schriewer and most of his associates focuses on historical accounts of global diffusion and reception in education.

I introduced the externalization framework into the field of comparative policy studies. For the past ten years, I have made it my intellectual project to adapt the concept of externalization as an interpretive framework for systematically analyzing policy borrowing and lending in education (Steiner-Khamisi, 2004). The group of researchers in Comparative Education that focus on the study of policy borrowing and lending has substantially grown and by now there are different generations of policy borrowing/lending researchers each adding new perspectives and research avenues to this fascinating research area of Comparative Education (see Steiner-Khamisi & Waldow, 2012).

Arguably, the concept of externalization is useful for comparative policy studies and education governance studies as it enables us to understand how “global forces” are sometimes locally induced with the purpose of generating reform on domestic developments. Very often it is precisely at a moment of heightened policy contestation that externalization occurs, that is, references to other educational systems or to “international standards in education” broadly defined or to globalization are made. I concluded that cross-national policy borrowing, discursive or factual, has a certification effect on domestic policy talk. In previous publications I used the octopus as a metaphor to describe cross-national policy attraction, resonance, and reception. Local actors reach out and grab the arm of the octopus that is closest to their particular policy agenda, and thereby attach (local) meaning to a (global) policy (see Steiner-Khamisi, 2012). By default, any study on receptiveness becomes a study on selective policy borrowing. Policy borrowing is never wholesale, but always selective and, by implication, reflects the “socio-logic” or context-specific reasons for receptiveness.

In policy studies, Kingdon (1995) coined the term “policy window” to identify favorable conditions for policy change. He found that the convergence of the three following streams is likely to produce change: the problem stream (recognition of a problem), the policy stream (availability of solutions), and the political stream (new developments in the political realm, such as for example, recent change in government). It is important to point out that Kingdon (1995) does not take into account process of transnational policy borrowing. Arguably, in an era of globalization transnational policy borrowing, whether rhetorically or factually, is the norm and not the exception. Thus, the policy stream tends to be available to politicians and decision makers at all times in the form of “best practices” or “international standards” or lessons learned from other educational systems. In fact, the pressure to borrow is great to the extent that policy analysts are frequently placed in the awkward position of having to



retroactively define the local problem that fits the already existing global solution or reform package. For example, nowadays the call for greater teacher accountability is used as a universal explanation for justifying the expansion of standardized tests and reinforcing school-based management that presumably enhances teacher effectiveness. With the global teacher accountability reform in mind, researchers are sometimes put in a bizarre situation to having to find retroactively evidence of a lack of teacher accountability. This pressure applies even to over-controlling contexts, such as in Mongolia and other former communist countries, where deputy principals are put in charge of micro-managing, and if necessary publicly humiliating, hard-working, and underpaid teachers.

It seems to me that the more challenging task is to bring the flow of the political stream in sync with the other two streams. Framed in terms of a research question: how are different political parties and interests mobilized in support of a change or reform? Research on policy borrowing has much to offer for this research question. Many studies have identified the salutary effect of policy borrowing on political mobilization. In addition, in the context of developing countries a fourth stream comes into play: the economic stream, that is, the prospects of international loans or grant to carry out a particular reform. It is necessary to acknowledge Kingdon's (1995) Three-Streams Theory as a valuable framework to draw attention to the timing of policy change. At the same time, it is indispensable to adopt a *globalization optique* to further refine the Three-Streams Theory in ways that suits today's reality of cross-national policy interaction and borrowing.

Indeed, the study of policy borrowing lends itself as a fertile ground to better understand power constellations and protracted policy conflict in a given context. The analytical approach to the study of educational transfer includes typically a political and an economic dimension. Politically, borrowing has a salutary effect on protracted policy conflict: it is a coalition builder. It enables opposed advocacy groups to combine resources to support a third, supposedly more neutral, policy option borrowed from elsewhere. International standards have become an increasingly common point of reference in such decisions. The economic dimension, in turn, is particularly salient in developing countries. Economically, policy borrowing is often a transient phenomenon, because it only exists so long as external funding – contingent upon the import of a particular reform package – continues. Policy borrowing in poor countries is to the education sector what structural adjustment, poverty alleviation, and good governance, are to the public sector at large: A condition for receiving aid. As a requirement for receiving grants or loans at the programmatic level, policy borrowing in

developing countries is coercive and uni-directional. Reforms are transferred from the global North/West to the global South/East.

## INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS: THE FUNCTIONALITY OF AN EMPTY VESSEL

The terms "international standards," "21st century skills," and "best practices" greatly resonate with politicians and policy makers and they resort to them at particular moments of agenda setting: whenever there is a need to generate reform pressure. These terms effectively function as catalysts for change even though there is no agreement what they actually mean. Even better, they serve as empty vessels that are, whenever needed, filled with local meaning. Nevertheless, they are politically powerful because they generate fears of falling behind on a global market place and therefore have the potential to build, as mentioned before, coalitions among interest groups that otherwise would be opposing each other. In short, globalization is not an external force, but rather a domestically induced rhetoric that is mobilized at particular moments of protracted policy conflict to generate reform pressure and build policy coalitions.

For borrowing researchers of the first generation, it was vital to interpret the choice of reference society, that is, the educational system from where policies, practices, and ideas were borrowed. Typically, there were cultural, political, or economic reasons that accounted for the borrower's interest in a particular system. Phillips (2004), for example, examined the reasons for the cross-national policy attraction of British government officials and scholars toward the educational system in Germany, during the nineteenth century. The range of motivations for one country to seek inspiration from the educational system of another can be extremely diverse. In the United States political affinity between the Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher administrations drew the attention of American neoliberal reformers to the United Kingdom model in the early 1990s. However, U.S. education policy makers have also been driven by competition (e.g., the Soviet Union the late 1950s and early 1960s) or by curiosity (e.g., Japan during the 1980s). Nowadays, the league leaders in international student achievement tests, such as the educational systems of Finland or Singapore, receive the most attention.

Naturally, league leaders lend themselves as projection screens for local policy actors. The explanations for the success of the Finnish or

Singaporean education system vary widely, depending on the national context of the educational researchers. There is a fascinating new body of research produced by scholars in the field of policy borrowing and lending that examines country-specific receptions of the Finnish success in program for International Student Assessment (PISA). Media and policy accounts in Germany, Japan, and Korea each tell a different tale to explain why 15-year-old students in Finland outperform students from other educational systems in reading, math, and science (Takayama, 2010; Waldow, 2010). These stories shed more light on contested policy issues in Germany, Japan, and Korea, than they do on what makes the Finnish education system so successful. In the cases of Japan and Germany, policy makers reframed, or "Finlandized," ongoing debates in their country, that had little to do with why Finnish students performed exceptionally well in the PISA studies. Their analyses had more to do with the desire to justify controversial educational reforms at home and therefore only corresponded loosely with realities in Finland. The popularity of global education governance mechanism, such as PISA, The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and other Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) or Institute for Educational Achievement (IEA)-type international student achievement studies leads us to conclude that standardized comparison has become a powerful policy tool to generate or block off reform pressure. The league leaders in such studies tend to be seen as global norm setters in education. However, the "lessons learned" from another educational system always include a significant portion of projection into others' educational system.

## TEMPORAL DIMENSIONS OF POLICY TRANSLATION

The temporal dimension is not to be underestimated. As mentioned in several other publications, the temporal dimension of global education policy is often neglected in theories on the policy process. The temporal dimension, or "life of a policy" (as presented in Fig. 1), matters a great deal and helps predict the likelihood that a reform gets exported or disseminated. The epidemiological model of global dissemination, widely used in social network analyses and diffusion of innovation studies (see Watts, 2003), traces the deterritorialization process of a reform over time. The epidemiological model, depicted in Fig. 1, distinguishes between early and late adopters of an innovation.

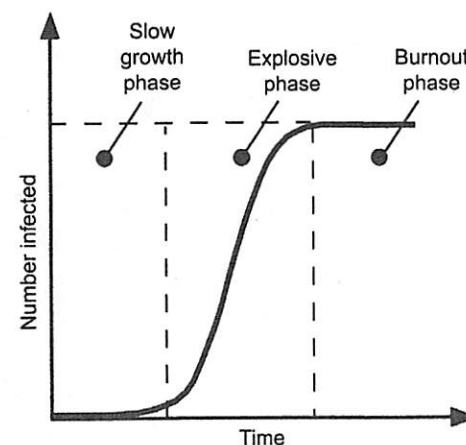


Fig. 1. Lazy S-Curve. Source: Watts (2003, p. 172).

In the early stages, only a few educational systems are "infected" by a particular reform. Adopters make explicit references to lessons learned from other educational systems, especially those that they are specifically seeking to emulate. A good example is the transatlantic transfer of "school choice" between educational systems in the United States and the United Kingdom in the early 1990s. Externalization made a contested reform more palatable. During the phase of explosive growth (the middle phase as depicted in Fig. 1), however, more systems adopt a reform, as traces of transnational policy borrowing disappear. Once a critical mass of late adopters has borrowed a particular reform, the geographic and cultural origins vanish, making it easier for decontextualized and deterritorialized versions to spread rapidly. At this stage, global dissemination occurs. During the phase of explosive growth, some policy makers opt to only adopt rhetoric, but not the actual reform. They do so because they are afraid of being left behind and labeled as backward, old-fashioned, or pre-modern. Late adoption should be interpreted as an orientation statement made by policy makers to denote their geo-political affiliation with a larger, modern, educational space. The "global speak," occurring at this stage is mostly symbolic, with few consequences for policy action at the national level, or policy implementation at the institutional level. Thus, the age of a traveling reform accounts for its accountability: the older it is and the more it has been circulated among educational system, the more likely it is that it will be further exported or disseminated.

The lazy S-Curve represents a hypothetical model of diffusion for epidemics, innovation, ideas, rumors, beliefs, and other phenomena that spread at global scale. Lao (2015) demonstrates the validity of the lazy S-Curve for explaining the global spread of reforms in education. She produced a fascinating international comparative study on the global diffusion of quality assessment (QA) in higher education. She examines in which year higher education systems established formal QA institutions that were separate from ministries of education (Lao, 2015). Her analyses of the higher education literature shows that at least 48 countries had adopted over the period 1983–2010 QA reforms in higher education. The pioneers were the governments of the United Kingdom, France, England, New Zealand, and the Netherlands. Starting in the early 1980s, they institutionalized QA by developing distinct policies, putting mechanisms in place, and appointing agencies in charge of QA in higher education. Within the former socialist world system, Poland and the Czech Republic are considered early adopters of QA in higher education. Lao's (2015) analysis resembles the lazy S-Curve, as depicted in Fig. 1, which differentiates between three stages of global reforms: slow growth, exponential growth, and burn out. Lao (2015) identifies the decade of the 1990s as the exponential growth phase of QA. In the new millennium, the adoption of QA is still occurring but at a slower pace; mostly because the higher education landscape is already saturated with QA reforms. Fig. 2 presents the global spread of QA reforms in higher education, traced by Lao (2015).

Without any doubt, we are today surrounded by numerous “well-traveled” reforms such as QA reforms in higher education. Many of them are considered quasi-market, neoliberal, or managerial reforms that originated during the Thatcher–Reagan era. Initially, they were borrowed from New Zealand and Australia, adopted in the United Kingdom and in the United States, and then disseminated to every corner of the world. Precisely because they were introduced so long ago, policy makers in late-adopter countries refer to them as “international reforms,” without explaining where they originated. At the stage of explosive growth – ten, twenty, thirty years after the introduction of a reform – it would sound odd to refer to these reforms as British or American. The same applies to managerial transformations in the form of teacher accountability reforms. They are nowadays decontextualized and deterritorialized and are therefore likely to be adopted by varied education systems.

To reiterate the explanations provided in this section, the likelihood of adopting a reform from elsewhere is greater the more well-traveled that reform has been. Not only does the traveling reform become, with every

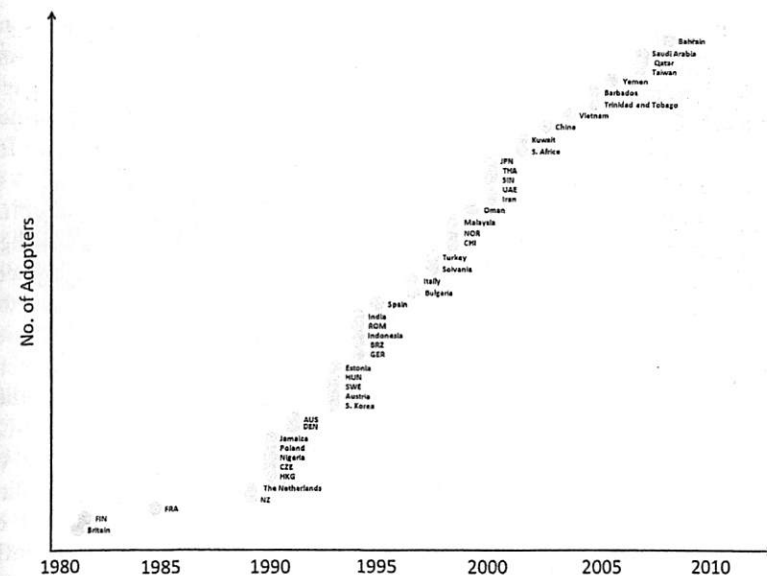


Fig. 2. The Global Spread of Quality Assessment Reforms in Higher Education.  
Source: Lao (2015).

new adoption, reconfirmed as a “best practice” – ultimately reaching the status of an “international standard” – but it also becomes, with each new act of borrowing, increasingly deterritorialized. During the stage of explosive growth (see Figs. 1 and 2), the global reform is considered at the same time everyone’s and nobody’s reform. The assumption of impartiality is one of the reasons why global education policy tends to resonate with politicians and policy makers: the reform comes across as being devoid of any political agenda and as having the potential of mobilizing opposing interest groups in support for one and the same external, deterritorialized, and presumably neutral reform.

## SPATIAL DIMENSION OF POLICY TRANSLATION

Research on policy borrowing, traveling reforms, or global education policy has greatly benefited from notions of “educational space” (Nóvoa & Lawn, 2002) and “scale” (Robertson, 2012). For a long time, Comparative



Education researchers had been narrowly preoccupied with understanding the choice of reference societies and its implication for domestic policy formulation. Nowadays, studies deal increasingly with the emergence of new regional and international “educational spaces” or regions that are created as a result of harmonization or voluntary policy borrowing. Examples for harmonization include, for example, the Bologna and Lisbon Protocols in higher education or the Education for All (EFA) declaration in developing countries. Governments that sign such agreements must eventually align their policies with those of the larger educational space they inhabit. Jules (2012) takes in his research the distinction a step further and analyzes the different audiences that one and the same Caribbean government addresses in different policy documents. Jules (2012) finds that the same government addresses different reform priorities and strategies, depending on whether the audience is a national, regional, or international entity. Jules’ (2012) work on policy trilingualism represents a fascinating study on the spatial or scalar dimension of globalization studies. Theoretical debates on policy bilingualism, multi-scalarity, multi-spatiality, or the relational nature of local versus global policy actors are crucial for abandoning the frequently made distinction between global (out there) and local (in here). It appears that the twin notion “positionality” and “audience” helps to suspend the false dichotomy between internal and external that early globalization and policy borrowing researchers tended to construct.

From the perspective of policy transfer research, harmonization represents the specific type of policy borrowing in which adaptation to a larger educational space is required. Thus, perhaps more visibly than with other types, harmonization depicts the move away from a bilateral, to a regional or international frame of reference.

Early on, Dale (2005) warns against “methodological nationalism” in educational research. A few years later, Susan Robertson presents a very useful categorization of the term “global” and finds that it covers a wide range of social phenomena including a condition, a discourse, a project, a scale, and a reach (Robertson, 2012). I use her typology of globalization and add terms that are commonly used in globalization studies and comparative education:

- *condition of the world*, labeled by most authors as globalization
- *discourse*, also known as “semantics of globalization” (Schriewer, 1990)
- *project*, popularized with the term “globalization optique” (Carney, 2009)
- *scale*, typically addressed with terms, such as global players/actors
- *reach*, in this book referred to as global education policy.

The distinction lends itself to clarify what I mean by the juxtaposition of global/local or global versus local actors, frequently used in this chapter. The two terms are relational terms and only make sense in combination. Robertson’s (2012) thoughtful categorization enables us to dig deeper into the question of how re-contextualization studies help advance theories on globalization and the policy process. It helps us to identify the areas under scrutiny. For example, several of us have made it a vocation to challenge the current nationalistic and parochial theories on policy change. The conviction has to do with our particular angle: we see a global map underlying national policy agendas. This particular *globalization optique* makes us interpret national or local education policy in a particular manner. For us, “globalization” is – to use Robertson’s (2012) terminology – a “project” that helps us to see and interpret local education policy in its larger context. Globalization is the relatively new terrain of reforms or, as Verger, Novelli, and Kosar Altinyelken (2012), phrased it: the “context of contexts” of education policy.

The relational feature, reflected in the research focus on the global/local nexus, has been pointed out by many but empirically investigated only by a few. I find in particular the notions of “positionality” and “audience” key for understanding the relational nature of global education policy. In my earlier work on global education policy in Mongolia, I noticed that government officials frequently engage in double-talk. One talk is directed toward donors (“global speak”) and is instrumental for securing external funding and another, printed in party action programs, funded from the national education budget, and distributed over the media, is addressed to a Mongolian audience (“local speak”). The first one is published in English and recycled in technical reports, education sector reviews, and strategies that are funded by international donors. In contrast, the local speak is in Mongolian and is barely accessible to international consultants and researchers, leading donors to perpetuate the myth that the only reform projects that the Government of Mongolia is carrying out are the ones funded by international donors (see Steiner-Khamisi & Stolpe, 2006). It was in this context that I suggest that we examine policy bilingualism, that is, the two different scales or “spaces” from which one and the same policy actor or state institution speaks or operates.

The relational nature between the global and local is crucial for understanding phenomena that at first sight appear to be absurd. As mentioned before, one of the most dazzling phenomena is that local politicians periodically invoke globalization semantically and present the condition of globalization toward their local audience as a quasi-external force for the sole purpose of generating reform pressure on local policy actors. The fact that



a series of similar global education policy circumvent the globe is often taken as a proof that national educational systems are converging toward the same reform package or toward the same set of global education policies. Note the circularity of their argument: local politicians first create the phantom of (vaguely defined) international standards to generate reform pressure; then they use the existence of such (self-produced) standards as proof that all educational systems, including their own, must be aligned with them. To put it differently, "globalization" is a reality but also a phantom that is periodically mobilized for political and economic purposes. Robertson's (2012) distinction between globalization as a condition and a discourse represents the differentiation between "real globalization" and "imagined globalization" discussed elsewhere (see Steiner-Khamisi, 2004).

### THE GLOBAL/LOCAL NEXUS OF TEACHER INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

Over the past ten years or so, I became enamored with understanding the fundamental differences between capitalist and communist salary systems. Naturally, the communist salary system from the past endures, in some countries more than in others, into the present and shapes how global education policies in Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and Mongolia – notably incentive programs for teachers in the form of performance-based promotion and bonus payments – are re-interpreted and modified regionally, nationally, and locally. What I find striking is the role of local policy actors who must appease simultaneously local and global actors. They carry out this balancing act by first selectively adopting global education policies, then translating them into their own local structure and context, and finally back-translating the hybridized borrowed policy as a global "best practice," an international standard, or a global education policy. The balancing act is especially challenging when the reform or change is expected to bring about a fundamental transformation of the system. The (post-) Soviet salary system (referred to in Russian as the *stavka* system) is by all accounts different than the salary system in OECD countries. Thus, the import of a global salary reform package, for example performance-based payment schemes, requires a major re-orientation of how teachers are perceived, managed, and compensated.

In OECD countries, teachers have a fixed salary based on the weekly workload (35–40 hours per week). Their salary is predictable and,

provided that the teacher chooses to work fulltime, sufficient to make a living. In contrast, the salary structure in the post-Soviet educational space is low, fragmented, and unpredictable because it comprises the following elements:

- a low base salary that is below the national wage average in the country
- a low statutory weekly teaching load (16–20 hours per week)
- payment for additional teaching hours
- numerous supplements for additional tasks, such as grading student notebooks, lesson planning, meeting with parents, and organizing after-school activities, etc.
- allowances for the rural location of the school, teaching of subjects that are high in demand, etc.
- semi-automatic promotion or linear salary increase based on age or years in service (as opposed to systems that promote based on performance and/or increased responsibility).

It is important to point out that teachers are not entitled *per se* to receive the full amount of the supplements. It is the task of the education manager or deputy director to continuously monitor and evaluate teachers and to ensure that teachers properly grade student notebooks, serve as homeroom teachers, prepare lessons, meet with parents, and organize extracurricular activities. Deductions are made from the full supplement for every failure to comply with the school's standards for these special tasks. As a result, teachers engage in excessive reporting on all these special tasks and education managers or deputy school directors, respectively; micro-manage, control and, if necessary, humiliate teachers.

The punitive nature associated with the payment of the salary supplements is not the only problem. The UNICEF Kyrgyzstan (2009) study on teachers brought to light a vicious cycle that made it difficult for schools to improve the quality of instruction. Prior to the salary reform of 2011, teachers were not able to make a living from one teaching load alone and therefore took on additional teaching hours at their own school and, if possible, at surrounding schools. Clearly, the allocation of additional hours benefited mainly experienced teachers and teachers working in large schools. In urban areas, overcrowded schools with possibilities to take on additional teaching hours were attractive to teachers but highly unpopular among students and parents. There were no incentives to fill vacancies or build additional school facilities as teachers had to rely on the redistribution of vacant hours which resulted from unfilled positions. In an effort to retain the best and most experienced teachers at the school, some schools

purposefully did not fill vacancies so that they could redistribute hours from unfilled positions and thereby boost the salary of well-performing teachers. Unsurprisingly, teacher shortage was high, the actual teaching load excessive, and the proportion of subjects taught by non-specialists a cause of great concern. According to the PISA 2006 study, 62 percent of all schools in Kyrgyzstan report vacancies in science and almost all of these schools (59 percent countrywide) cope with this shortage by filling their vacancies with teachers that take on additional lessons in science or by assigning unqualified teachers (i.e., teachers qualified in other subjects but with no training in science) to teach science (CEATM, 2008; OECD, 2007; UNICEF CEECIS, 2009).

As demonstrated in the PISA 2006 study, the widespread practice of redistribution, in which vacant teaching hours are assigned to non-specialists, concealed the true extent of teacher shortage. In 2008, the National Statistics Committee (NSC) of the Kyrgyz Republic recorded a teacher shortage of only 4.2 percent. Nationwide 56.6 percent of schools reported one or more vacancies. However, by the beginning of the school year, most schools managed to fill the vacancies by using all kinds of coping strategies: allocating additional hours to teachers at the school, hiring retired teachers, university students or teachers from another schools, hiring professionals without any pedagogical degree, etc. In fact, the 2009 UNICEF Kyrgyzstan study identified 10 such coping strategies to fill the vacancies. Therefore, we kept referring in the study to "10 plus 1 indicators of teacher shortage" (see Steiner-Khamisi, Teleshaliyev, Sheripkanova-MacLeod, & Moldokmatova, 2011, p. 205): Ten indicators were so-called covert indicators of teacher shortage (redistribution of vacant hours, hiring retired teachers, and hiring teachers from other schools, etc.) and one indicator was the overt indicator measuring the number of unfilled positions.

It is important to bear in mind that the allocation of additional teaching hours was primarily done for financial reasons (low base salary) but at the same time reflects a system that was in its core structurally flawed: as mentioned above, until 2011 the teacher's income was composed of a low base salary for one statutory teaching load (*stavka*), additional teaching hours, numerous supplements with a small nominal value, and allowances paid by local government, and fees for special classes and private tutoring as well as unofficial income paid by parents. In 2009, the average base salary for one teaching load was approximately 30 USD but the average income of a teacher (including base salary, additional teaching hours, and supplements) was 82 USD per month (UNICEF CEECIS, 2009). The *stavka* system is a legacy from the Soviet past and the education system in Kyrgyzstan is not alone

with having to tackle deep-rooted structural problems. In fact, it shares the same kind of structural issues with other countries in the Central, Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEECIS) region. Fig. 3 shows the fragmented teacher salary structure in Tajikistan which is based off the teaching load system (*stavka* system) and which is to this day found in the majority of countries of the former communist countries. In Mongolia, for example, the base salary of teachers (without additional teaching hours) amounted to slightly less than 59 percent of a teacher's income.

Strikingly, the development banks (the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank) advocated for the introduction of performance-based bonus payments that would replace the linear salary increases that governments in the region periodically issued to adjust public sector salaries to the better paid salaries in the private sector. Acknowledging the fact that the base salary is too low to attract graduates to work at schools or retain effective teachers in the profession, the bonus system was seen as a solution to demonstrate to the general public and the teacher workforce the perspective of earning a decent salary composed of a very low base salary, additional teaching hours, myriad supplements, and an attractive bonus system.

One of the best-kept secrets toward international experts and organizations is the fact that the bonus system had already existed during Soviet times. It existed both at school level (10 percent of the salary fund was reserved for handing out rewards to teachers) as well as at district, regional, and national level. Regardless of past experiences with the bonus system, development banks strongly advocated for performance-based bonuses as a new way of lifting the teacher salary for effective teachers. The Government of Kyrgyzstan, for example, approved in 2011 the (re-)introduction of a "stimulus fund" that was earmarked for performance-based bonuses and that replaced semi-automatic promotion based on teacher "categories" or age/years of service, respectively. According to the regulations that were put in place in 2011, the bonuses were supposed to award active and effective teachers, that is, teachers who made an extra effort to improve student learning. In the most recent UNICEF study, entitled *Situation Analysis of Teachers in Kyrgyzstan*, we examined the award criteria for bonuses paid from the school's stimulus fund in greater detail (UNICEF Kyrgyzstan, 2014). Based on recommendations of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, most schools in the country use the following criteria to have the deputy principals evaluate the performance of teachers:

- Complexity and intensiveness of teaching
- Quality of extracurricular activities

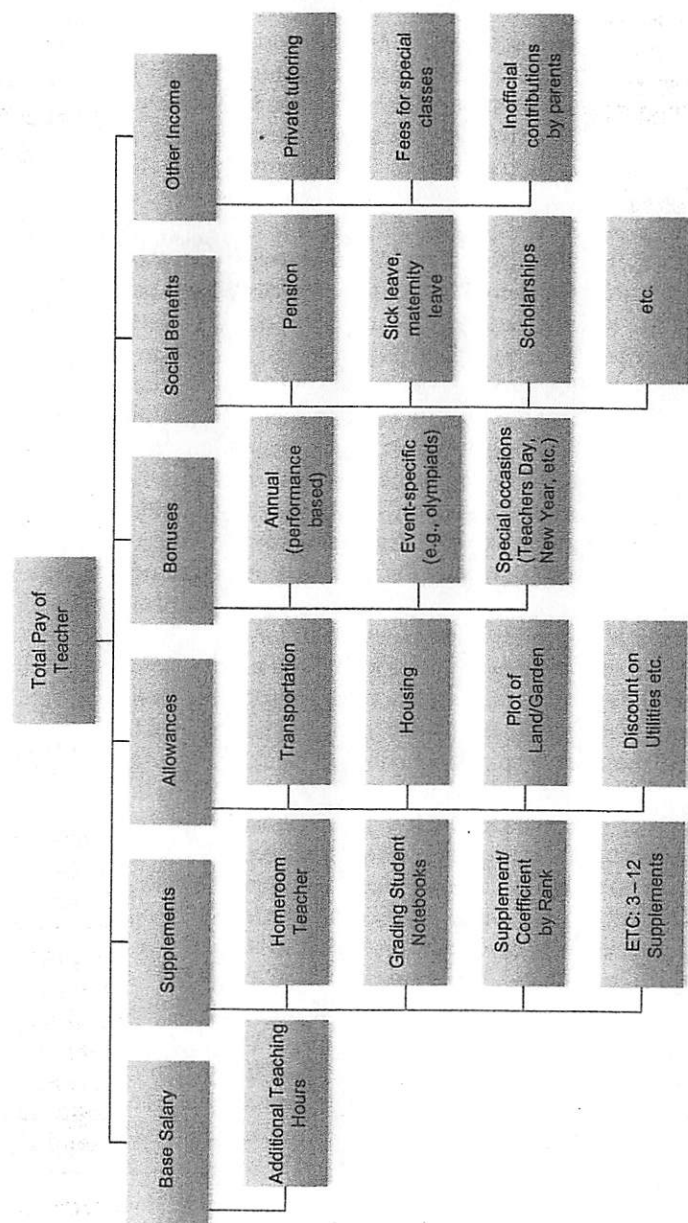


Fig. 3. The *Stavka* Teacher Salary System in the Post-Soviet Region. Source: Steiner-Khamisi (2007).

- Preparation and organization of conferences, workshops, pedagogical meetings
- Preparation of students for *olympiads* (student competitions)
- Development and introduction of authors program
- Methodological work
- Condition of classroom
- Absence of administrative penalties
- Quality maintenance of documentary records
- Work discipline (not coming late to class, dress code, and not missing classes, etc.)

A closer examination of the criteria reveals that teacher performance and student outcomes (with the exception of outcomes at *olympiads*) receive little weight in the evaluation of teachers. In fact, from the ten recommended criteria:

- four criteria deal with work discipline and administrative tasks (condition of classroom, absence of administrative penalties, quality maintenance of documentary records, and work discipline)
- two criteria address professional activities (preparation and organization of conferences, workshops, and pedagogical meetings as well as development and introduction of authors program)
- two criteria measure the time spent on preparing for teaching (complexity and intensiveness of teaching, and methodological work)
- one criterion assesses the teacher's contribution to special events or extracurricular activities
- only one criterion evaluates the teacher's impact on students' learning outcome, in this case narrowly defined for the select group of gifted students that the teacher coached to participate in olympiads.

It is noticeable that the greatest weight (four out of ten criteria) is placed on completing administrative tasks and carrying out administrative orders. Apparently, the evaluation criteria prioritize compliance and obedience of teachers over high performance in pedagogical activities; both relics from the communist past. In fact, student learning outcomes and wellbeing are absent from the list of recommended evaluation criteria. The bonus payment criteria reflect the "policy bilingualism" also found in other countries of the post-socialist region: when addressing international donors, the governments emphasize the introduction of "incentive schemes" for effective teachers (such as bonus payments for good performance); when they communicate with school administrators and teachers, they reframe the award



criteria in traditional ways, that is, in ways that reflect the culture of teacher surveillance as well as obedience toward government officials. To be fair, speaking from the two corners of the mouth, or policy bilingualism, is not of the extraordinary for governments in developing countries that are dependent on external financial assistance.

### CONCLUSION: BRINGING POLICY AND GLOBALIZATION STUDIES HOME

Arguably, there are several ways of theorizing the redefinition of award criteria for bonus payments in Kyrgyzstan. The first interpretation, associated with neo-institutionalist theory, is "loose coupling," that is acknowledging that there always is a gap that yawns between what a Ministry of Education envisions in terms of a new policy, how it enacts it in legal frameworks and guidelines, and how school administrators and teachers modify it when they implement it in practice. A second interpretation, propelled by authors with a culturalist approach, emphasizes the local adaptation that takes place when reforms are imported from elsewhere: the local actors rely on their own cultural schemata to reframe an imported reform in ways that are meaningful to them. They resort to practices with which they are familiar with that perpetuate the existing power relations in the social order. The second group is more descriptive than interpretive in nature and views "thick description" as a means in its own end. Proponents of the third interpretative framework, proposed by a group of policy borrowing researchers (including Jules, 2016, several others, and myself) are not content with describing in detail that one and the same global education policies means something different to different actors in different contexts. In addition, to providing a "thick description" of *why* global education policies are received and *how* they are translated, they examine the global/local nexus and acknowledge that local actors are positioned simultaneously in two spaces: in their own (cultural/local) context and in a broader "educational space." From a systems theory perspective (Luhmann, 1990), the broader educational space is *Umwelt* (environment) and therefore local actors interact at critical moments with the broader educational space. The policy bilingualism (or in the work of Tavis Jules, the "policy trilingualism" when the local, regional, and global is taken into the account) is a result of policy actors operating simultaneously in two spaces that are populated with two different audiences: local and global actors.

I would like to add a fourth interpretation that, if seen as an intellectual trajectory, is only at the stage of infancy: I would like to propose that the policy borrowing lens is used to contribute to the core endeavor of Comparative Education and comparative policy studies: understanding idiosyncrasies of different educational systems. It should not come as a surprise that educational systems educate and manage teachers differently depending on whether the system hires and pays teachers based on the overall workload (e.g., OECD countries) or on the actual teaching hours as it is done in the (post-)Soviet region. Other factors that related to system differences relate to questions of whether the system is decentralized or centralized in terms of recruiting, hiring, promoting, and laying off of teachers, conceives the teacher education degree as a pedagogical degree or a generalist degree, focuses on literacy narrowly defined or on literacy and education, or uses reward or punishment for reinforcing learning; only to list a few key features of teacher education and management systems. I have made it lately my intellectual project to demonstrate the existence of fundamentally different teacher education and management systems.

The majority of authors have used the study of policy borrowing, traveling reforms, and global education policy to understand globalization processes in education. A few of us have also used policy borrowing research as a methodological tool for comparative policy studies, in particular, for advancing theories on the policy process. In this chapter, I meant to reiterate the great utility of policy borrowing research for exploring globalization and policy processes in education. In fact, many of us kept insisting that a comparative study of educational systems is indispensable for analyzing globalization, policy borrowing, and the policy process. However, Comparative Education is more than a particular way of knowing and seeing, it is also a professional field with select objects of study, notably the comparative study of education. Therefore, I end this chapter with a suggestion to bring policy and globalization studies home, that is, to use it for understanding the logic or idiosyncrasies of different educational systems, institutions, practices, and beliefs.

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