

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1 Education and International Development

Summary

The latter half of the twentieth century witnessed the rise of the international development sector, bringing with it new government agencies and international organizations (see Appendix – International Education and Development Timeline). Education played a pivotal role in the new development sector: Rostow's (1960) modernization theory stipulated that investments in education would put Third World countries on the path to development, eventually transforming them into industrialized societies similar to those in Western Europe and North America.

However, the experiences of Zambia and Nepal show that the relationship between education and development is not straightforward or deterministic. Zambia initially concentrated on secondary and technical education, but was later hard-hit by structural adjustment programmes and burdened with debt. Nepal's history shows not only that primary education can be rapidly expanded in just a few generations, but also that this expansion can marginalize many groups within a society.

The most important outcome of the post-war period was a set of ideas about what development is and what it means to be developed. These were articulated by development theorists such as Rostow (1960) as well as through international development organizations (e.g. UNDP, World Bank, USAID). The notions that former colonies should develop into industrial nations, that international aid could facilitate the economic growth required, and that investments in education were one way they could do so, all emerged during this period. More than 60 years later, these ideas still underlie much of the work within the field of international development as well as the ways in which development is constructed in popular media and the press. However, the next chapter examines how challenges to these underlying ideas have redefined development work and the role of education within it.

Chapter 2 Redefining Development: Education for All

Summary

Beginning in the mid-1980s, a shift began to take place in international development; influenced by the work of Sen (1983, 1999), development organizations began to focus less on economic growth and more on poverty reduction, equity and inclusion. In the field of education, this is reflected in the EFA movement, an initiative to provide primary education to all children in the world by 2015. EFA is led by UNESCO, but is supported by a number of international organizations (e.g. the World Bank), national aid agencies (e.g. DFID) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The goals of EFA were first stated in the World Declaration on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, and then renewed in the Dakar Framework for Action in the year 2000 with a 2015 deadline.

Despite a large increase in primary students worldwide, progress towards EFA remains difficult. In 2008 there were 67 million children out of school and if current trends continue this will increase to 72 million by the 2015 deadline (UNESCO, 2011:6). Three key issues are especially relevant to the challenge of achieving universal enrolment. First, gender parity has been a priority for the EFA movement, as girls make up the majority of out-of-school children globally. Research (UNESCO, 2003) shows this is due to prevailing preferences to educate boys, particularly when resources for education are scarce and a larger share of household work is borne by girls. Funding is another key challenge, as in many countries funding for education is scarce. The debate around language of instruction is also important, as supporting minority languages benefits learners but demands extra resources (Brock-Utne, 2001).

Many of these issues can be seen in the case of Bangladesh, which has made great strides towards achieving the EFA goals. Although attaining universal primary enrolment remains a challenge, the country has achieved gender parity in primary and secondary education and increased overall enrolment. Increased funding for education, a strong commitment to poverty reduction, and policies that actively counter disincentives to girls' education have all contributed to this progress towards EFA goals.

Chapter 3 Critiquing Education and International Development

Summary

This chapter has presented and analysed critical research on international development and the role of education within it. The chapter began by conceptualizing critical positions, showing that some critiques accept the overall goals and values of international development, while others seek to reform them or reject the legitimacy of development altogether. The chapter examined three lines of critique in depth. The first (e.g. Jones, 2004) claims that development donors exert unfair influence over the policies of recipient countries because they control the flow of funding. The second critical perspective uses Wallerstein's (1974) concept of world systems analysis, which views development as an expansion of the capitalist world system, while the third (e.g. Escobar, 1995) utilizes poststructural and postcolonial theory.

Critical approaches were then illustrated through the analysis of text from a television advert produced by a major international aid organization. To make development critiques more approachable, three overarching questions were presented to the reader as way of theoretically orienting oneself to development critique. Seeking to explain some failings of education for international development, the next chapter focuses on a new approach to understanding international education: the globalization perspective.

Chapter 4 Education in Conflicts and Emergencies

Summary

This chapter has shown that education and violent conflict are often deeply inter-linked. While this relationship is complex, two-way and unpredictable, it is clear that education is not always a force for good. Rather, education has two faces in relation to conflict: on one hand it mitigates and prevents conflict by promoting dialogue and social cohesion. On the other hand, education reproduces social inequalities and prejudice, which often fuel and exacerbate the outbreak of violence. Growing awareness into the close connection between education and conflict has led to increased provision of education programmes as a way to promote cohesion and avert violence in conflict-affected societies. This contributes to and benefits from a wider movement towards education in emergencies, the integration of educational components in humanitarian aid and relief.

Education in conflicts and emergencies is an emerging field, and one that is unique in that it utilizes the institutional apparatuses of development aid (i.e. international organizations, bilateral donors and NGOs) in a way that is separate and distinct from international development. Rather than a long-term vision of social and economic progress, the focus is on immediate needs and maintaining social stability. This move away from relatively simple, linear notions of development is representative of the larger recognition of the increasing complexity of education in global contexts, which is explored in the following chapter.

Chapter 5 Conceptualizing Globalization and Education

Summary

This chapter has examined globalization and the many ways in which it is affecting education around the world. The origins of the term 'globalization' are found in the field of international economics, but the concept has been applied to virtually all social science disciplines. Globalization has come to mean different things to different groups of people; in fact it is such a variable concept that in many senses it lacks a concrete meaning. The study of globalization and education differs from international comparative studies in several important respects: the globalization perspective acknowledges that significant educational policy decisions are taken at the supranational (or global) level, and growing inequalities within countries and similarities between countries render many national comparisons meaningless.

The chapter examined three dominant theories of globalization from a broad base of social science literature: neoliberalism, world systems analysis, and world culture theory. The first of these views globalization primarily as a phenomenon of increased competition; as countries compete with one another in the global economy they become more similar in many ways, including their education systems. In contrast, world systems analysis attributes growing similarities in education systems to global power relations and the influence of elites. Finally, world culture theory identifies international organizations such as the World Bank and United Nations as key agents of globalization: through their international declarations these organizations embody a 'world culture' that values individualism, democracy and human rights. These competing theoretical conceptualizations all acknowledge increased similarities in education systems, such as the trend towards decentralization, but they offer very different accounts for why it is happening.

This chapter underlines that globalization is surrounded by controversy and confusion. There is disagreement over what the term itself means, heated debate about whether it is for the better or for the worse, and competing theoretical conceptualizations about how and why globalization occurs. An unexpected outcome is that in the midst of this confusion and disagreement there is remarkable clarity on key issues and questions for research. Regardless of their theoretical position, researchers are asking why education systems throughout the world are converging on a common set of policies and practices, examining the effects of international organizations in contributing to this isomorphism, and questioning the future of the nation-state in a globalized world.

Chapter 6 Education and the Global Knowledge Economy

Summary

Over the past half-century, a number of scholars (Machlup, 1962; Drucker, 1968) have described the advent of a global knowledge economy, an increase in economic activity that focuses on the production and application of knowledge, information and intellectual property. This idea has become widely accepted among international organizations, national governments and other educational policymakers, who see education as a key factor in creating a population of knowledge workers who can compete in this new economic landscape. Education is increasingly considered in relation to national economic competitiveness, particularly in the areas of lifelong learning and higher education (World Bank, 2003a; Salmi, 2009).

The global knowledge economy has also resulted in increased interest in international achievement tests such as the Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and PISA. These are administered to students in many countries around the world, producing a body of internationally comparable data that ostensibly allows the ranking of national education systems. Policymakers draw upon this data when discussing educational reforms, although this is often used to legitimate existing policy decisions that are driven primarily by political ideology.

While the global knowledge economy has become a key driver of educational policymaking at all levels, its deeply problematic nature is seldom acknowledged. The global knowledge economy is not a value-neutral concept; it embeds contentious notions of global capitalism and neoliberalism under the pretence of progressive social change that is desirable and inevitable. Many of these characteristics are seen in changing discourses on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education, which are explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 7 International Discourses on ICT in Education

Summary

This chapter has examined the use of ICT for education, with an emphasis on ICTs as part of development initiatives in low-income countries. Proponents of ICT4D have claimed that bridging the global digital divide will reduce poverty, improve education and spur economic growth, and the UN's WSIS made commitments to bridge this divide. Education has been a key focus of this discussion, with particular emphasis on the ability of ICT to expand access to education, improve the quality of education, and support social inclusion. Many of these beliefs are central to the work of the OLPC Association (OLPC, 2011), which aims to provide children in low-income countries with its XO Laptop. While the laptop features a rugged design appropriate for low-income countries and software built on the constructionist theories of Seymour Papert (1980), it has yet to receive the widespread take-up that OLPC originally anticipated.

However, there are legitimate grounds to question the use of ICT for education in international development. First, many of the claims about the educational benefits of ICT have never materialized: there are many statements about what ICT *can do* but little evidence of what it actually *does*. Furthermore, there are many implicit values embedded in the high-minded and idealistic discourse on ICT for development, which often proposes technological solutions to complex social issues that stem from deeply rooted inequalities.

Chapter 8 Globalization and Higher Education

Summary

This chapter has discussed a set of global trends in higher education. The latter half of the twentieth century witnessed a rapid expansion of higher education globally, as well as a gradual decline in public funding for higher education and the introduction of market mechanisms. These factors created an environment that favoured internationalization; in an effort to replace lost public funding universities increasingly looked to international student enrolment and offshore delivery programmes. Internationalization resulted in other changes to the sector, such as the growing influence of international rankings and increased importance of international research networks. WTO's GATS, which defines higher education as a tradable commodity that is subject to its international free trade regulations, has played an important and controversial role in promoting the internationalization of higher education.

If these trends continue, it is possible that coming decades will see the emergence of a completely integrated, global higher education system. Universities will be cut loose from national governments and will compete to attract students from all over the world. While dramatic in nature, these changes are very recent, and there is no reason to expect that the trend towards increasing internationalization will continue. Furthermore, many of the changes associated with internationalization are built on the assumption that higher education produces economically valuable skills, which is essentially an application of human capital theory (Mincer, 1958). The internationalization of higher education depends very heavily on whether human capital theory is tenable, and the continuation of this trend is certain to put the theory to a rigorous test.