2015 2017

Applying Theory of Political Science and IR to Globalization of Education Policy

Applying Theory of Political Science and IR to Globalization of Education Policy

Dawson, Walter

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Through my visits to Cambodia I was able to visit and interview numerous aid officials in the bilateral aid agencies of Japan, South Korea, Sweden, and other agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank. This enabled me to collect data in the form of documents and interview data which I subsequently analyzed to be presented at a conference and for publication in an international research journal. I was able to present my research and publish one article over the past year as a result of the research financed by this JSPS research grant. The presentation was made at a symposium at the University of Tokyo on the topic of internationalization of education research in Japan.

ODA   JICA

The theory debate in comparative educational sociology has centered for too long on two competing schools of educational sociology: Neo-Institutionalism and Systems Theory. The theories promoted by these schools neglect power relationships and agency which are all too important toward efforts to develop and improve education in nations like Cambodia. Therefore, it is the purpose of this research project to re-invigorate the debate by introducing fresh approaches based in the fields of political science and international relations to look at policy-making for education aid and the international relations inherent in the transfer of education policies and practices. Fundamentally, this approach must focus on the issue of "policy discourse" and the global and local origins of that discourse. The researcher feels that this discourse analysis would benefit from post-structural theory (especially Foucault and Barthes) as it can be applied to the politics of educational globalization. The global discourse on educational policy and practice ("global speak") will be examined as it is manifest in the concept of "myth" in the wider debate between Neo-Institutionalists, Systems Theorists, and Anthropologists in Comparative Education (Steiner-Khamsi & Stolpe, 2006; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). A new Post-Structural-Political Approach is introduced and used to examine political ideologies (discourse) in Japanese education aid policy at both the level of policy discourse and enactment of these policies in the form of "lesson study" projects for teacher training in Cambodia. The project is one which entails deconstructing the "mythologies" of such ideologies as "autonomy" and "equality" which are "borrowed" and "lent" (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004) in the international arena, penetrate

different national boundaries (with reference to David Philips' Typology of Cross-National Attraction; Philips & Ochs, 2003), exhibit the "externalization" process (Schriewer, 2003), and illuminate the ways in which "ideoscapes" and "policyscapes" are "re-creolized" by actors who exercise agency at the different levels of policy implementation, curriculum development, and school-level practices (Appadurai, 1994; Carney, 2009; Napier, 2003). In doing so, this theoretical approach to comparative education termed "Comparative Mythography", attempts to synthesize the strengths of several different approaches which focus on political (post-structural concepts of "mythologies" and "governmentality") and cultural (ethnographic studies of "creolization") aspects of globalization of education. In sum this new theoretical approach should avoid the simplistic categorization of policies and practices as "convergent" versus "divergent" with global standards and examine in more depth the power relationships which give birth to global policy change.

This study will first examine and deconstruct the central theoretical debate about globalization of education in the fields of educational sociology and comparative education today. On the one hand, Neo-Institutionalist scholars contend that a "world culture" represented by international organizations promotes convergence of common values of "progress" and "justice" to expand education in nations across the globe (Meyer & Rowan: 1977). On the other hand, Systems Theorists argue that the "policy talk" of education policy exists as discourse which displays divergence in the way it is translated into different education practices in

each national and cultural context and potentially by different bilateral aid agencies (Schriewer, 2003; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). Researchers in Anthropology and Cultural Studies insist that we must focus on processes of "indigenization" or "creolization" of global discourse and practice at the national and local levels (Anderson-Levitt, 2003; Appadurai, 1990).

The aim of this study will be to use post-structural theories to address issues of power and agency which have been neglected in previous theoretical frameworks which attempt to explain cases of education transfer of policies, reforms, or practices. Too many previous studies have focused on developed nations such as Germany and the UK which have a more equal power footing on the geopolitical stage. This study will focus on instances of education transfer between Japan and Cambodia to examine the international relations between the two nations. The tentative theoretical framework will be based on the post-structural theories of two theorists: Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes. In particular the concept of "governmentality" from Foucault is useful to explain the power with which international or national "best practices" are imbued (Foucault, 1991). Roland Barthes' (1972) concept of "mythologies" can be applied to the global discourse of education development to unpack and critically examine the content of such reforms. Nevertheless, the researcher will explore numerous cutting-edge theories in the political studies to inform the construction of the new theoretical approach with further enrichment from cultural studies.

STAGE I (2015-2016) Examination of Political Science and International Relations Theory
(A) STEP 1—History of Institutions (Agencies)

The researcher will investigate relevant theories for educational globalization from the fields of political science and international relations. A thorough survey of such theories will be carried out with a focus on those theories which have the most potential to contribute a forward-thinking perspective to the field of comparative educational sociology.

(B) STEP 2—Background of JICA "Lesson Study" Projects in Cambodia

The researcher will attend the leading international conferences in these disciplines to learn the state of the art with respect to theory development. It will be important to identify leading scholars in the different disciplines and examine how they develop theory from case study research.

STAGE II (2016-2017) Background research on JICA "Lesson Study" Projects
(A) STEP 1— Policy Document Analysis

(1) Policy Analysis of "Lesson Study" Projects

The researcher will collect all policy documents relevant to "lesson study" projects from the JICA and other relevant agencies. These documents should be accessible through the researcher's contacts or released publicly. The documents will be subjected first to a policy analysis according to the principles laid out in Bardach (2008). This policy analysis will focus on the policy as it benefits both the donor and the stakeholders as an element of the country-wide movement for education for all.

(2) Discourse Analysis

The researcher will subject the policy documents to further analysis to

discuss the policies as they exhibit convergence or divergence of policy priorities related to Education for All and other global priorities for educational development as articulated in international agreements and conventions on education.

(B) STEP 2—Stakeholder Interviews

Interviews will be conducted with local partners of education development experts in Cambodia. Respondents will be asked surveyed to learn about the values transferred by "lesson study" projects and their effectiveness. Responses will be compared with those of practitioners to examine cases of coordination versus disconnect or miscommunicated policy priorities.

STAGE III (2017-2018)—Presentation and Publication of Results

(A) STEP 1— Data Analysis

The researcher will analyze all historical documents, policy documents, and interview transcripts, according to the following process. A comprehensive conceptually-clustered data matrix will be used to compile and organize data as themes emerge (Miles & Huberman 1994). "Data reduction" will be performed to identify emerging themes and "constant comparison" will check the validity of those themes (Marshall & Rossman 1989; Lecompte & Preissle 1993). Thereby, a theoretical framework can be chosen to describe the findings per "theory implications selection" (Lecomte & Preissle 1993). As such, the discourse will be deconstructed as it relates to the wider EFA movement versus donor-specific political priorities.

(B) STEP 2—Professional and Academic Presentations

The findings and results of this study will be presented for the benefit of both education and development practitioners as well as academic researchers in Japan and abroad. The researcher will make every effort to present the research findings at forums in multilateral and bilateral agencies, NGO forums, and for public forums in Japan. After synthesis of research findings and preparation for publication journal manuscripts will be prepared for presentation at the Japan Society of Educational Sociology, the Japan Comparative Education Society (JCES), and the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) conferences for the Japanese and American/European research communities.

(C) STEP 3—Publication

The researcher will prepare the data and findings for publication in both domestic and international journals related to international relations, development studies, Asian studies, and comparative education. Once published the researcher will distribute these publications to any government or NGO actors who might be interested or benefit from the content contained therein.

Through my visits to Cambodia I was able to visit and interview numerous aid officials in the bilateral aid agencies of Japan, South Korea, Sweden, and other agencies such as

UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank. This enabled me to collect data in the form of documents and interview data which I subsequently analyzed to be presented at a conference and for publication in an international research journal. I was able to present my research and publish one article over the past year as a result of the research financed by this JSPS research grant. The presentation was made at a symposium at the University of Tokyo on the topic of internationalization of education research in Japan. The information about the research article can be found below.

1

Dawson, W.P. (2017). " A Comparison of Asian Bilateral Agencies' Education Aid to Cambodia: Convergence and Divergence in Japanese, South Korean, and Chinese Donor Agencies," in Research Journal of Educational Studies and Review, 3, pp. 27-31.

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Dawson, W.P. (2018)" The Journey of a Comparative Education Researcher in Japan" a paper presented at EDASSO2018: Symposium on Internationalization of Education Research.

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DAWSON, Walter

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