Global Discourses, Regional Framings and Individual Showcasing: Analyzing the World of Education IOs

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INTRODUCTION

Education is commonly heralded as one of the key policies for fostering future progress and well-being. Accordingly, governments, national stakeholders, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and International Organizations (IOs) advocate improvements in education almost as a *sine*

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qua non for sustainable human development. Hence, education policy is also conceptualized as a social policy in the sense that it enables individuals to acquire skills for living an independent and fulfilled life while also providing states with a toolkit to stimulate economic growth and social cohesion. However, different actors hold different views on the goals of education: while some emphasize the positive economic effects that education has on states and individuals, others refer to the feedback loop of education on the social integration of societies. In short, there is no universally or uniformly accepted idea about the purposes of education.

At the same time, education has gradually and constantly become an increasingly internationalized issue area. By being under constant pressure through ongoing globalization processes, social policies in general and education policy, in particular, can no longer be viewed without reference to the global context (Deacon 2007, 7; Mundy 2007). This expanding internationalization is best reflected by the multitude of activities and initiatives of IOs in the policy field of education. Since the second half of the 1990s in particular, education has been seen as a domain that was boosted into the global arena of policy making in the context of international initiatives, such as the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) under the auspices of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), and the European Bologna Process. In response, national education systems were, for the most part, urged to respond to new challenges from the knowledge economy.

Central to the impact of IOs in international politics in general and in education, in particular, is their ability to exercise autonomy *and* authority at the same time (Niemann 2012). As they are often equipped by their founders to set agendas, foster implementation, and make binding decisions in the face of state sovereignty, IOs are more than the sum of their member states' interests (Koremenos et al. 2001). Thus, they can be considered powerful actors who possess "a sphere of autonomy and a resource they can use to shape the behavior of others in both direct and indirect ways" (Barnett and Finnemore 2005, 162). IOs are thus able to shape discourses, to make decisions which may counter the wishes and virtues of their members, as well as influence policy implementation.

For education, it is now indisputable that IOs influence international and domestic education policy making processes. In particular, it has been shown that major IOs active in education, such as the OECD, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), or

the World Bank, set and influence agendas for education purposes and goals in significant ways. As we argued elsewhere, the OECD is today able to disseminate its program through large-scale education assessments globally—reaching well beyond the group of its member states (Niemann and Martens 2018). The globally operating UNESCO significantly changed the discursive frame regarding the context of education: from education for peace to education in conflict (Lerch and Buckner 2018). However, beyond single case studies on prominent IOs in education, we know comparatively little about how the population of education IOs is constituted and how they reflect on and promote education purposes.

In this contribution we have two analytical objectives. First, we map the population of education IOs to describe the organizational field in which the social policy discourse in the sub-area of education takes place. The assessment of what types of IOs deal with education is summarized in a typology to identify different clusters of IOs and provide accounts of both their characteristics and the different niches they have populated in the organizational field of education policy. Second, given that IOs can be viewed as influential, autonomous actors, it is important to show which ideas they develop and promote regarding education. How to think about an issue heavily influences which actions are taken and which recommendations are given. Hence, the repercussions that IO activities can have on states and their education systems are ultimately shaped by the ideational framing of IOs. We thus analyze the ideas IOs hold regarding education and show how the discourse on education has developed over time within the population of IOs.

Overall, both of our research aims are related. By generating a typology of education IOs and identifying different clusters, we also link the clusters to overarching education ideas. In this chapter, we provide an empirical assessment of the population of education IOs and analyze the ideas these IOs hold regarding education (purpose) as suggested by the introduction of this volume. Accounts that might explain the observed phenomena are discussed in the concluding paragraphs.

What We Know About Education IOs

The research on IOs in the field of education mainly focuses on case studies of large and globally visible IOs. Overall, few contributions examine IOs in education in an encompassing or overarching way (exceptions being, McNeely 1995; Mundy 2007) and few deal with more than one

case or undertake a comparative analysis (exceptions being, e.g., Moutsios 2009; Resnik 2006). Most prominent, however, are case studies about the 'usual suspects' of IOs in education, namely UNESCO, the World Bank, and the OECD. Academic literature on the World Bank's engagement in education, for example, focuses primarily on financial issues, its lending policy, and how these have shaped the economic and education policies of governments (Banya and Elu 2001; Jones 1997). Other literature critically reflects on the World Bank's economic ideology and suggests alternatives to its view (Heyneman 2003; Klees 2002) or analyzes individual aspects of the World Bank's work in education, such as different regions, educational levels, or its work in the context of development (Mazrui 1997; Verger et al. 2014).

Since UNESCO has long been an IO in education, academic work on its activities dates back decades. Given its structural incorporation into the worldwide UN system, academic work on UNESCO and its activities in education primarily look at its engagement in developing countries of the Global South along with its basic education goals, such as literacy (e.g., Jones 1988). Current literature focuses on its implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in education (e.g., Walid and Luetz 2017). By contrast, the OECD is the newest 'kid on the education bloc.' Although its main focus is laid on economic cooperation among Western economically developed states, it became an "eminence grise" (Rinne et al. 2004) by the turn of the millennium in the field of education after establishing its Programme for International Student Assessment, better known under its abbreviation PISA. Since then, academic literature on the OECD, on education, and on PISA in particular has increased substantially: for example, literature examines how PISA came about (Henry et al. 2001; Martens 2007), how the OECD exercises governance in education and what impact PISA has (Bieber and Martens 2011; Grek 2009), and how the OECD promotes its education model and itself worldwide as "infrastructural modes of global governance" (Sellar and Lingard 2014) or as a "knowledge broker" (Niemann and Martens 2018) in education.

Taken together, there is a lot of literature on the internationalization of education policy in general and about the role or impact that individual IOs play or have in this process. However, there is surprisingly little knowledge about how the population of education IOs as a whole is constituted, what characteristics can be observed, and how this has been changing over time. We aim to fill this research gap.

Population of IOs in Education

In order to understand what influences the ideas of education IOs and determines organizational change, it is essential to identify who is actually populating the organizational field of international education policy. Next to IOs in education policy, there are obviously also many NGOs, think tanks, private foundations, and donors who are influential players in the field; however, in this contribution, we concentrate only on IOs which are conceptualized and synonymously used with the term Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) (Rittberger et al. 2012). Thus, although perhaps some NGOs, like the Gates Foundation, are considerably important and active players in the global education sphere, they were not considered in our analysis.[1] Of the couple of hundreds of existing IOs, only a few deal with education policy and even fewer leave a recognizable footprint that makes them influential players in education policy. Identifying who is out there in the internationalized area of education policy is a promising first step in providing some explanations as to why and how the discourse has developed.

Defining 'Education' IOs

In our case, it is the issue area of education that is the distinctive feature of those IOs we are interested in. In this regard, an IO is defined as an 'education' IO if it has three complementary features regarding its policy program, organizational structure, operational activities, and aspired scope. First, education has to be mentioned in the IO's programmatic mission statement as a designated task of the IO (be it in the IO's preamble, founding treaty, amended treaties, or on its current websites). Second, it has to have its own permanent organizational (sub-)department, unit, or otherwise named structural component which specifically deals with issues of education (or training). Third, the IO has to address education *policy* issues. Hence, we exclude IOs from our definition of education IOs that

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[1] Accordingly, the Global Partnership for Education is not part of our data set as states only function as donor countries. Similarly, intergovernmental organizations in a legal sense need to be distinguished from simple groupings or coalitions of states, such as the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERISEE), Conférence des ministres de l'éducation des pays ayant le français en partage (CONFEMEN), or the Coordinación Educativa y Cultural Centroamericana (CECO), which we also do not consider in this chapter.

deal with strictly educational topics, like teaching methods or coordinating scientific cooperation, and do not address education policy. For instance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) also has an educational focus, but its activities mainly address the training of own staff with regard to security-related issues. It does not have any overarching education idea on potential education reforms or on how to organize education policy which it seeks to disseminate to its members. It also excludes IOs such as the Islamic Development Bank which only gives out scholarships.

While IOs are institutions that "can cover several issue areas of international relations" (Rittberger et al. 2012, 6), this means that education IOs do not necessarily have to focus solely on education issues. Education can be one of many policy fields the IO is committed to. Another analytical constraint for us is that we only include IOs that were still active in 2019. Since we are interested in analyzing the contemporary discourse on education, dissolved or suspended education IOs are not in our sample.

The Population of Education IOs

Taking the definition of IOs into account, we identified the population of education IOs by searching the Yearbook of International Organizations (YIO) as well as the Correlates of War (COW) data sets. Every single IO mentioned in these two data sets which met the key criteria of an IO definition, in general, was individually examined regarding its constituting documents (e.g. preamble, founding, or amended treaties) and its web pages and as to whether they refer to education as a field of activity. In our search, we included all initiatives of IOs in the education sector which relate to school education (primary and secondary level) and/or the tertiary education sector. Each IO was examined by hand as regards any activities related to education. After reviewing the individual organizations, a total of N=30 organizations were identified from the two data sets (see Table 7.1).

The identified education IOs feature several different characteristics that allow for a more nuanced geographic clustering. In our set, five IOs are related to the United Nations family and thus promote education issues *worldwide*. Next to UNESCO, the ILO, and the World Bank, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are also involved in education issues. A special case of a worldwide active

Table 7.1 Education IOs

IO Acronym	Full IO name	Year of establishment	Number of member states in 2020
ADB	Asian Development Bank	Est. 1966	67
ABEGS	Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States	1975	7
AfDB	African Development Bank	1963	80
ALECSO	Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization	1970	22
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation	1989	21
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations	1967	10
ASEF	Asia-Europe Foundation	1997	49
AU	African Union	2002	55
CARICOM	Caribbean Community	1973	15
CBSS	Council of Baltic Sea States	1992	11
Commonwealth	Commonwealth of Nations	1931	54
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States	1983	11
EFTA	European Free Trade Association	1960	4
EU	European Union	1992	27
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank	1959	48
IFESCCO	The Intergovernmental Foundation for Educational, Scientific and Cultural Cooperation	2006	8
ILO	International Labour Organization	1919	186
ISESCO	Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	1979	52
Mercosur	Southern Common Market	1991	5
OAS	Organization of American States	1948	35
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	1961	36
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States	1981	11
OEI	Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture	1949	23
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation	1985	8
SEAMEO	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization	1965	11
UNASUR	Union of South American Nations	2008	12[a]
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	1945	193
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	1950	102
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund	1946	72
WB	The World Bank Group	1944	173–189

[a]Member states as of 2017. Several states recently suspended or withdrew their membership in UNASUR due to the crisis in Venezuela, https://www.dw.com/de/lateinamerikanisches-b%C3%BCndnis-unasur-vor-dem-ende/a-45070291. Accessed March 20, 2020

education IO outside the UN system is the OECD. Although the OECD technically has a restricted membership which only includes the most advanced economies, its scope reaches well beyond its member states in terms of its education activities (and program). The IO provides services and recommendations for any state that is interested in joining the OECD's education portfolio (e.g. participation in PISA, PISA for Development, etc., see Addey 2017). We thus classified the OECD as a global education IO.

Most education IOs, however, can be found on a *regional level.* In total, 20 regional education IOs exist (see Fig. 7.1). In Europe this category includes the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), the European Union (EU), and the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS), which is even limited to a specific region within Europe. In Asia, most education IOs also narrowly focus on sub-continental regions, particularly on South and Southeast Asia. Next to the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are also active education IOs. An exception within Asia is the Intergovernmental Foundation for Educational, Scientific and Cultural Cooperation (IFESCCO), a sub-organization of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) of former states of the Soviet Union. In the Americas, there are even six IOs active in the field of education and these include the Organization of American States (OAS), Mercosur, the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), as well as the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB). On the African continent, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the African Union (AU), and the African Development Bank (AfDB) make reference to education issues, with ECCAS being a partially autonomous regional organization within the AU framework. In the Arab world, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) and the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS) are education organizations.

In addition, four IOs cannot be clearly assigned to one particular region. However, since membership to them is bound by other factors that do not cover all states, they are categorized as *transregional* IOs. For instance, Europe and Asia 'share' the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), and the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science

and Culture (OEI) has members from Latin and Middle America, as well as from the European countries of Portugal and Spain. The Commonwealth Secretariat, which describes itself as "a voluntary association of 52 independent and equal sovereign states, […] [t]hirty of our members are small states, many of which are island nations,"[2] also spans across several regions (but not the globe). Finally, access to the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) is bound to the religious alignment of the state toward Islam. Thus, we can see substantial differences between the IOs regarding the requirements for membership: while few education IOs are open to all sovereign states, the majority have a restricted membership which is bound to certain conditions, be they regional, cultural, or economic preconditions.

In systemizing our findings regarding the population of education IOs beyond geographic patterns, we find a divided organization field (see Fig. 7.1). On the one hand, we have seven specialized education IOs, also characterized by an E in their name which stands for Education. One of their major founding missions, and in some cases their sole founding mission, is thus to deal with education topics. We refer to these as *distinct* education IOs. Unlike UNESCO, the six smaller *distinct* IOs all cover their specific education 'niche': ISESCO, a sub-unit of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, represents Islamic education goals on religious grounds, SEAMEO represents the values of the Southeast Asian region, ALECSO and ABEGS are bound to the Arab region, IFESCCO to the former Soviet region, while the OEI can be characterized as consisting of an Ibero-Portuguese cultural heritage. Interestingly, three *distinct* education IOs cover the Arab/Islamic area. In terms of niche theory, this indicates that the overall competition in this area is not yet settled and reflects a strong emphasis on education in this cultural sphere.

On the other hand, this minority of *distinct* education IOs within the organizational field is facing a majority of IOs that cover several policy fields, with education being only one of them. Thus, a key characteristic of the other group of education IOs is that they only discovered education as an area of expertise at some point in time after their foundation. They usually do not have any outstanding education focus embedded in their founding treaties, but their scope of issues is either broad and general, or specialized in other single policy fields. We refer to these IOs as *derivative* education IOs. The largest group of *derivative* education IOs are nine IOs
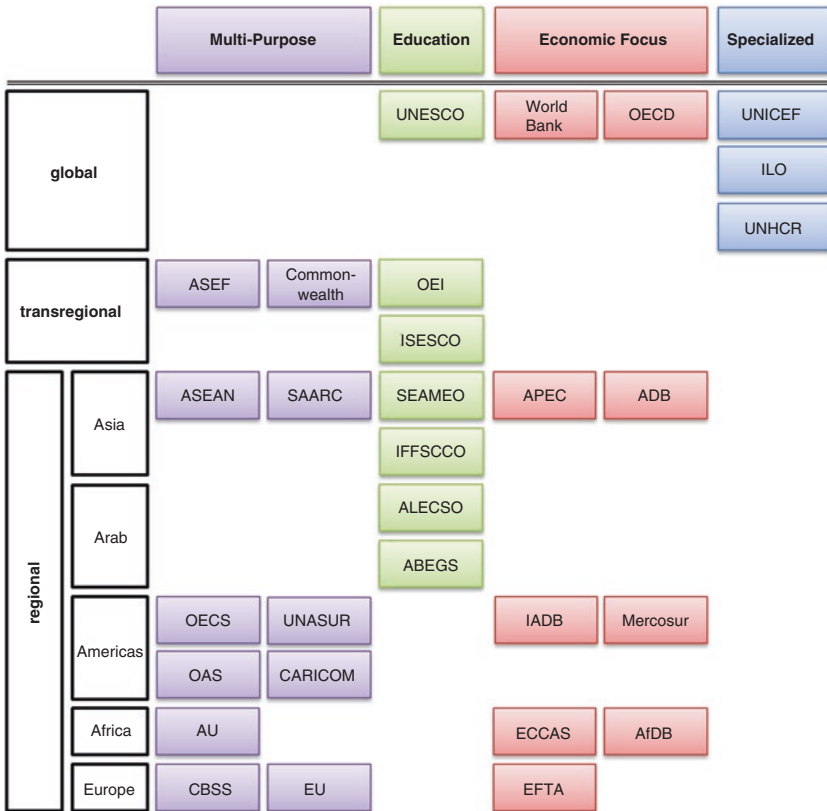
[2] http://thecommonwealth.org/about-us. Accessed March, 19, 2020.

	Multi-Purpose		Education	Economic Focus		Specialized
global			UNESCO	World Bank	OECD	UNICEF
						ILO
						UNHCR
transregional	ASEF	Common-wealth	OEI			
			ISESCO			
regional — Asia	ASEAN	SAARC	SEAMEO	APEC	ADB	
			IFFSCCO			
regional — Arab			ALECSO			
			ABEGS			
regional — Americas	OECS	UNASUR		IADB	Mercosur	
	OAS	CARICOM				
regional — Africa	AU			ECCAS	AfDB	
regional — Europe	CBSS	EU		EFTA		

Fig. 7.1   Mapping the population of education IOs. (Source: own account, colors indicate primary focus area of IOs)

whose original missions primarily pertained to economic cooperation, most noticeable the different 'banks' which focus on economic growth and development but also started to work on education. This finding also underscores that education becomes increasingly important and that diverse IOs feel the need to cover education topics in order to address their original aims. For instance, the World Bank views education as an intermediary means to fight poverty. For the OECD, education is decisive in generating human capital. Hence, in order to fulfill their original mandate, these IOs identified education as one crucial lever.

From this map in Fig. 7.1 we can see that the more specialized an education IO is with regard to membership rules (restricted) and issue area (distinct), the less competition it faces within its niche. For instance, the AU almost has a monopoly when it comes to education on the African continent. In contrast, six IOs address education issues in the Americas and six cover Asia. Furthermore, two specialized education IOs are active in the Arab region. In addition, the global players, that is the three UN organizations, the World Bank, the ILO, and also the OECD, compete with each other in the field of education. This competition is not restricted to international forums but also takes place on the regional and national level, since all global IOs conduct and fund on-site education projects. On the one hand, some IOs like the ISESCO or SEAMEO have populated the niches for Islamic education and Southeast Asian education, but this does not mean that they do not face any competition or that they have a monopoly on education within their regional or cultural niche. Since others, like the OECD or UNESCO, operate globally, the activities of regional education IOs are interfering with programs of the global IOs. For example, the OECD's quasi-monopoly on defining large-scale education measurements also influences how other IOs view education outcomes (Martens et al. 2016).

When taking the temporal development of education IOs into account, at least three instances have to be highlighted (see Fig. 7.2). First, a steady expansion took place: the number of education IOs rose from just 2 in 1945 to 30 in 2018. There was no sharp increase in any particular decade but rather constant expansion between 1945 and the mid-1990s. Second, the field of education IOs was established almost as far back as the mid-1990s. Although education did not become a highly internationalized policy field until the late 1990s, only two additional education IOs were established after 2005 (namely, the *derivative* UNASUR and the *distinctive* IFESCCO). Hence, education IOs could be assumed to be the causes, rather than the effects of increasing internationalization in the education area. Furthermore, all IOs in our population that existed by 1996 also covered education. This means that while in previous periods there were some IOs, like the ADB, which did not incorporate education into their thematic portfolio after their establishment; all IOs that were identified as education IOs from the mid-1990s onward covered education topics from the beginning of their existence. Third, the *derivative* education IOs that originally had a focus on economic issues were
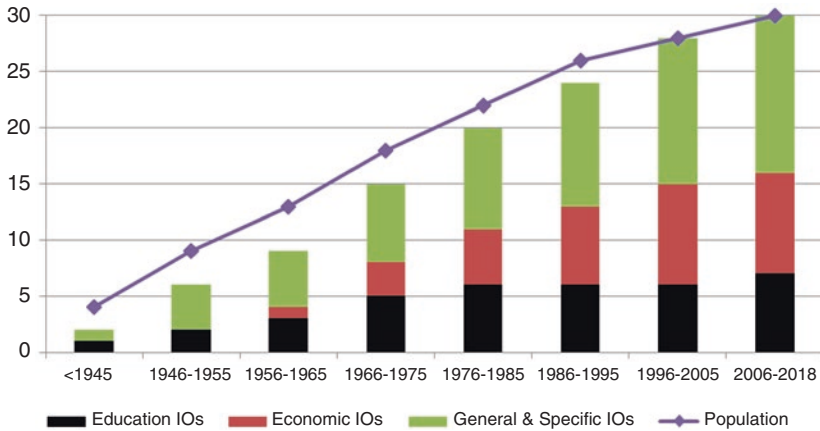
Fig. 7.2   The rise of education IOs over time

comparatively latecomers (red bars in Fig. 7.2). While other derivative IOs began including education during the decade of 1956–1965, just one of five existing economic IOs also dealt with education. In 1966–1975, the share rose to 50%, and by 1996 all nine economic IOs also included education in their thematic portfolio.

EDUCATION LEITMOTIFS AND DISCOURSES

The typology of education IOs has shown that the population in this policy domain is multi-layered, diverse, and partially competitive. Against the background of how the field of education IOs is organized, we address the ideas and leitmotifs that are featured in the discourse because an analysis of the education ideas put forward by IOs helps to assess how the discourse on education has developed over time and if a certain framing became dominant or vanished. As a criterion, we added the necessity that the IO has to publish visibly on education and has to aim for actively participating in the global education discourse. Hence, to be analyzed regarding its discourse as an education IO, it must go beyond self-proclaiming to cover education topics: the IO has to be active in the field. If an IO met our defined requirements for being classified as an education IO but lacked available documents on education or in English (since we focus on the

global discourse), we excluded that IO from further discourse analysis. Thus, 24 IOs remained to be analyzed regarding their discourses.[3]

What Are Education Ideas?

Ideas on education usually establish some kind of means-end relationship: ideas frame how the purpose of education is perceived. In this regard, education reforms that IOs recommend to their member states are strongly shaped by the underlying ideas and "[i]deas have a lasting influence on politics through their incorporation into the terms of political debates" (Goldstein and Keohane 1993, 20). Moreover, ideational leitmotifs are not static and can change over time. Thus, we expect that education IOs vary regarding the leitmotifs they hold. Since IOs compete for influence within their thematic niche and exert soft governance through ideational framing (see Niemann et al., in this volume), we also expect IOs within the field of education to disseminate their own views on the purpose of education. In doing so, they compete with each other for cognitive authority and legitimacy.

In addition, the birth characteristics of IOs' thematic scope can influence their lasting ideas on education. IOs may propagate their mission statements universally if they claim global significance; however, they may also pursue cultural or regionally specific goals, such as concentrating educational policy activities on a particular cultural area, making them inapplicable to a broader international community. For UNESCO, for example, the universalistic principle of 'education as a human right' is in the foreground; the ILO promotes social justice as well as human and workers' rights as part of a United Nations special agency concerned with labor that operates worldwide, whereas Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization appear to propagate more culturally particularistic values. Being a globally active IO, the OECD's PISA study claims global validity for their examples of 'what works' and influences the educational reform processes of small nations that did not even participate in the PISA study (Niemann and Martens 2018). As another example, ISESCO diffuses cultural ideas from religious-Islamic education as a primary goal while simultaneously

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[3] Six IOs are excluded from further detailed discourse analysis due to limited publications (less than ten publications on education policy in the English language). Excluded IOs: AfDB, ASEF, CBSS, IADB, IFESCCO, and Mercosur.

following global benchmarking guidelines, such as standardized measurement and comparison (Martens and Niemann 2019).

With regard to ideal types of education leitmotifs, a distinction can be drawn between two overarching key topics in the literature on educational goals. On the one hand, education may be considered from a utilitarian perspective which emphasizes positive economic effects of education as the engine of economic growth. As such, it expressly serves the development of human capital through the transfer of applicable skills, which leads to increased productivity. "From an economic background education provides a helpful means of improving the competitiveness of a national economy. It serves as a tool to generate a nation's wealth by coordinating investments in human capital" (Nagel et al. 2010, 15). This conception of utilitarian educational goals is often accompanied by standardization efforts of curricula and the increasing measurement of so-called competencies. In contrast to a utilitarian perspective, education purpose may also be framed from a citizenship standpoint. From this perspective, education is essential to the emergence of social capital and identity formation, since education in modern societies establishes or maintains the political integration of a society (Nagel et al. 2010, 15). Among these benefits is the transmission of common behavioral and cultural norms, and of a common language and a common history. Education and educational policy are considered the tasks of society as a whole, with the goal of empowering every individual citizen to participate in the social framework and guarantee social cohesion (Shuayb 2012). Both views are not mutually exclusive according to a zero-sum logic but can complement each other. However, when under a common framework, one key topic can be prioritized over the other.

Furthermore, both views can be applied to an individual or to a collective perspective on education purpose. On the one hand, Nagel et al. (2010) argue that education can be viewed within the utilitarian concept as a mechanism for individual skill formation or as a tool for fostering the growth of productivity and the wealth of nations. On the other hand, the liberal citizenship framing contains the idea that education can be understood as a "means of self-fulfillment and personal refinement by taking part in a collective cultural enterprise" or as a social right or duty which helps to increase each individual's chances of political and social participation (Nagel et al. 2010, 15). For the conceptualization and operationalization of such leitmotifs in education policy, we distinguish four ideal-typical principled beliefs of education (see Table 7.2). We apply this classification

of the guiding principles of education in order to make variations of the means and concepts of education in different international organizations visible.

For example, in IO recommendations for education reforms, the over-arching education purposes of economic utilitarianism and liberal citizenship are translated in concrete policy programs and activities in education. Thus, the perspective of economic utilitarianism is often combined with the promotion of standardized learning assessments and a curricular focus on skills relevant to the labor market. EFTA positions that "Education is one of the core objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth."[4] In contrast, a citizenship framing tends to lead to the advocacy of social inclusion, individual's rights, and self-refinement. UNASUR, for example, wants to "[e]nsure and promote the right to education for everyone";[5] for UNICEF, "Universal access to quality education is not a privilege – it is a basic human right."[6] Hence, the general leitmotif of an IO heavily influences what the IO recommends to do in education policy.

What Ideas Are IOs Promoting?

When comparing the population of education IOs and summarizing their education ideas, it can be shown that over time some profound developments took place in how education is viewed by the population of IOs in this field. Figure 7.2 displays the percentage of references to a certain education idea made by IOs in their main publications on education between 1919 and 2018. These publications were mostly mission statements, general proceedings on concepts, and progress reports. The data was coded according to the categories of the theoretical framework as outlined in Table 7.2. For example, in the period from 1996 to 2018, 27% of the coded IOs (N=24) referred to education purpose as liberal and individual. It is important to note that IOs can have more than one purpose at the same time. Naturally, this overview only offers a first glance at education ideas and IOs.

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[4] http://www.efta.int/eea/policy-areas/flanking-horizontal-policies/education-training-youth. Accessed March 19, 2020.

[5] https://www.academia.edu/22909516/regionalism_and_higher_education_in_south_america_a_comparative_analysis_for_understanding_internationalization. Accessed June 23, 2020.

[6] https://www.unicef.org/education/. Accessed March 19, 2020.

Table 7.2 Guiding leitmotifs of education

Focus	Economic utilitarianism (Econ.)	Liberal citizenship (Lib.)
Individual level (Indiv.)	*Skill formation:* education as a means to boost individual productivity	*Self-fulfillment:* education as a means of personal self-development
Collective level (Coll.)	*Wealth of nations:* education as a means to boost national productivity	*Social right and duty:* education as a means of political and social participation

Adapted from Nagel et al. (2010, 16), own account

The assessment shows some major trends in the ideational framing of education within the population of IOs and at least two general developments can be identified. First, the normative Lib./Coll. framing of education was always prominently put forward by IOs. Although it has slightly declined, it is still omnipresent when IOs address the purpose of education. For the vast majority of IOs, conceptualizing education as something to support citizenship issues and to promote universal norms is a core tenet.

Second, the economic-oriented utilitarian view on education continuously gained considerable support. This idea emphasizes the return on investment that education can bring through the development of the national economy (collective) and the enhancement of (individual) skills. While the individual focus on skill formation almost reached its peak by the early 1990s (and remained constantly relevant afterward), the view that education collectively serves the advancement of national economies became progressively more important. Especially since the mid-1990s, IOs have claimed that the purpose of education is to accumulate wealth for national economies. In contrast, the Lib./Indiv. framing tended to remain on a lower level. In the face of the growing emphasis on human capital development, it seemed to become unimportant for IOs to also emphasize the benefits of education for personal refinement or self-development. In sum, the utilitarian-oriented leitmotifs gained relevance, but not at the expense of the Lib./Coll. framing. Today, the two interpretations coexist within the population of education IOs.

Competing or Complementing Paradigms on the Global Level?

The coexistence of ideas also implies that almost all education IOs became multi-purpose IOs. This means that they hold more than one idea regarding education at the same time (see Fig. 7.3). While at the early phase (before 1956) each IO had one principal leitmotif regarding the purpose of education, this rose to 2.5 leitmotifs on average in the period from 1996 to 2018. It is also shown in Fig. 7.2 that nowadays, with the exception of the Lib./Indiv. perspective, all four ideational meta-frames are almost equally present. Hence, IOs increasingly communicate a holistic education idea and have broadened their scope by including diverse perspectives within one complementary ideational superstructure (Fig. 7.4).

The general developments regarding IOs' holistic leitmotifs in education can be illustrated by analyzing how different education IOs which have a leading position in global education policy have framed education over time. Two groups of IOs can be distinguished: first, economic education IOs that incorporated a liberal framing of education purposes, and second, liberal IOs that increasingly included economic reasoning. Linking these findings to the theoretical concepts depicted in Table 7.2, expansions on both the horizontal and the vertical axis can be observed.

The utilitarian-driven view on education was always central to the World Bank's education discourse: education should serve the purpose of fostering the economic development of states and societies. When the
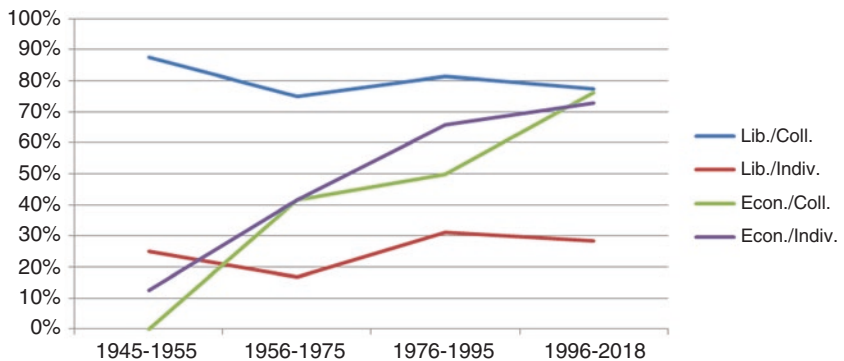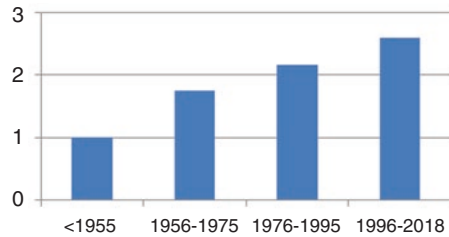

Fig. 7.3 Education leitmotifs of IOs over time. (Source: own account)

Fig. 7.4 Number of leitmotifs per IO. (Source: own account)

Bank discovered education as a field of activity in the early 1960s, more economic-leaning approaches became institutionalized in its education program and the development of human capital was prioritized (Heyneman 2003). While the economic-oriented leitmotif was strengthened under the Washington Consensus, the Bank's education ideas continued to remain in line with neoclassical economic thinking when a Post-Washington Consensus began to emerge in the 1990s (Mundy and Verger 2015). In the view of the Bank, education affects how well individuals, communities, and nations fare and countries need more highly educated and skilled populations because the level of acquired "skills in a workforce […] predicts economic growth rates of a states" (World Bank 2011, 3), and learning is essential for human capital development (World Bank 2018). However, the Bank currently also frames education as a human right (World Bank 1999; World Bank 2018) and recognizes the limits of the market model for education (Robertson 2012). In sum, the economic view is still central to the Bank but embedded in a more holistic framework which also includes the positive effects that education can have on social developments. However, liberal views are linked (and subordinated) to an economic reasoning, namely one that emphasizes a return on investment.

The same applies to the OECD, which believes that the advancement of education systems should contribute first and foremost to human capital formation and secondarily to the progress of social citizenship. From the early 1960s to the mid-1970s and under the leading paradigm of Keynesianism, the emphasis of the OECD's education activities progressively shifted toward issues related to the labor market and economic growth (Rubenson 2008). During this phase, the social and equity components of education policy "receded to the background, giving way to economic concerns" (Papadopoulos 2006, 25). The neoliberal interpretation of education was further strengthened in the 1980s when the OECD

moved to a neoclassical supply-side orientation (Mundy 2007; Sellar and Lingard 2014). Since the mid-1990s, the OECD worked on strategies that dealt with developing human capital to counteract the negative effects of globalization (Henry et al. 2001; OECD 1996). Today, the OECD views human capital as "a major driver of a country's trend productivity, not least through its impact on innovation" (OECD 2010a, 18) and national education systems "need to equip people with knowledge, skills and tools to stay competitive and engaged" (OECD 2010–2011, 3). However, the OECD does not neglect a wider social aspect of education, having noted that education serves the provision of social cohesion (OECD 2010b) and overall well-being, including health issues for example (OECD 2007). Remarkably, social cohesion refers to economic factors: in order to create more social cohesion, education should enable individuals to advance economically. Concerning this matter, social dimensions were also included in the OECD's leitmotif of education, however, under an economic-centered framework.

UNESCO, in contrast, claims that the primary purpose of education is to promote norms and values. The IO laid down in its constitution that education is a means "to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world" (UNESCO 1945, Article 1). This view remains at the core of UNESCO's work in education and was reemphasized in the following decades. Much like the World Bank and the OECD, however, UNESCO's framing of education also underwent some changes, though in a different way. While the former two IOs extended along the horizontal axis as presented in Table 7.2 by adding a liberal layer to their otherwise (purely) economic view on education, UNESCO extended along the vertical axis from having a solely collective purpose of education to one that integrated an individual purpose as well. The IO emphasized the notion of citizenship and focused "on educating the whole individual in order to provide the learner with the capacity to flourish" (Vaccari and Gardinier 2019, 78). Lerch and Buckner (2018) show how UNESCO's "ideational underpinning" as regards education has shifted over the decades since its inception in 1945. While for a long time it envisioned education at a collective level as contributing to international peace, an additional layer about individual human development was added over the years. Whereas in the old view education was seen as a collective instrument of socialization for international understanding, the recent shift to the individual proclaims the view of education as a right to

personal development. As a result, UNESCO expanded the scope of its discourse so that it would not only focus on those in need due to warfare but also on individuals whose right to education was at risk.

Conclusion

The social policy field of education is populated by different kinds of IOs and different kinds of education ideas. Both have proven to be dynamic. Geographically, the population of education IOs has expanded and today consists of several different types: some IOs have a clear global reach and ambition; most IOs have a transregional, regional, or cultural focus and an accordingly restricted membership bound to certain conditions; several IOs focus on education, often in combination with science and culture; and many IOs deal with education in conjunction with an additional focus they have.

Regarding ideas and discourses, global trends and paradigm shifts have also affected the education ideas of IOs and influenced which leitmotif had the upper hand in certain periods. For example, the general paradigm shift from Keynesianism to Neoliberalism was also reflected in IOs' ideas regarding education. While the neoliberal Washington Consensus surged in the 1980s, a countermovement to the neoliberal agenda emerged in the early 1990s. Recently, the SDGs set a universal framework. Generally, two phases can be distinguished. The first period spans most of the time until the early 2000s and was characterized by mostly antagonistic competition between the utilitarian and citizenship perspective. Two camps of IOs wrestled to dominate the discourse and gain cognitive authority and legitimacy over education ideas. The second phase started in the early 2000s and was marked by a more integrative approach of both views. While each education IO still maintains a predominant view on the purpose of education, they tend to subsume both idealistic framings under one discourse.

Taking the findings on population and discourse together, it is remarkable that especially the *derivative* banks which became increasingly involved in education policy no longer envision the sole purpose of education as economic utilitarianism, rather they now also promote (collective) citizenship values. According to their view, integrating the goals of liberal citizenship into the ideational education agenda allows for fostering economic development on one hand. On the other hand, IOs like UNESCO which always strongly emphasized the role of education in disseminating universal norms and values included economic-oriented considerations

when referring to the purpose of education. They acknowledge that economic growth contributes to stable societies.

The way in which IOs view education purpose has become increasingly similar. We cannot see that one idea 'wins.' We find the puzzling situation of isomorphic polymorphism: while the ideational portfolio of IOs has become increasingly similar, the ideas within their portfolios have become more diverse. These are sound arguments supporting the claims of a world society (Meyer et al. 1997) in the population of education IOs. On the whole, IO ideas seem to converge.

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