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Globalization and Chinese Education in the Early 20th Century

Abstract With China’s growing significance in the global economy ever more evident, studies in recent years have highlighted multiple aspects of China’s “Globalization” (or global connections) that *predate* the contemporary period. This article focuses on educational reform in the late Qing and early Republic as a way of illuminating a significant aspect of China’s Globalization during this period. In particular, the article highlights the role of an emerging Chinese educational “lobby” that was involved in administration, teaching, and textbook compilation; furthermore, this lobby pioneered the introduction of new ideas, concepts, and innovative practice from abroad in the specialized journals on education—the first of their kind in China—which they edited and contributed to. More significantly, contributors to these journals engaged with and discussed educational issues and problems that were *simultaneously* being debated in the West. In the process Chinese educators and officials were able to draw upon, either to valorize or critique, a wide spectrum of contemporary foreign educational debate and practice in their prognosis of domestic education and its future. The picture that emerges of Chinese education during this period is one in which Chinese educators perceived themselves very much as *active participants* in a global educational community.

Keywords Globalization, nation-building, educational reform, Chinese educational lobby, educational press

Introduction

As China’s growing significance in the global economy becomes ever more evident, historians have begun to highlight multiple aspects of China’s “Globalization” (or global connections) that “predate” the contemporary period (especially during the 19th and early 20th centuries). Thus studies have explored the global ramifications of Chinese overseas migrations, both historically and in

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the present;¹ the complexities of Chinese transnationalism (e.g., Ong & Nonini, 1997; Benton & Pieke, 1998; Pieke & Mallee, 1999; Pieke et al., 2004; Thunø, 2006), the global elements of material and cultural modernity in treaty ports such as Shanghai and Tianjin (Lee, 1999; Rogaski, 2004; Bergère, 2009; Wasserstrom, 2009; Liang, 2010), and the role of 19th and early 20th century Sino-foreign interaction (symbolized by the Chinese Maritime Customs Service, for example) in China's institutional modernization (Van de Ven, 2002, 2004; Bickers, 2012).

This article focuses on *educational* reform in the late Qing and early Republican era not only because it constituted a key aspect of China's nation-building project that began in the late 1890s in response to debilitating internal decline and aggressive external threat, but also because it illuminates another intriguing feature of China's Globalization in this period. In particular, the early years of the 20th century witnessed the emergence of an educational "lobby" that was heavily involved in administration, teaching, and textbook compilation.² This lobby pioneered the introduction of new ideas, concepts, and innovative practice from abroad in specialized journals on education (the first of their kind in China) which they edited and contributed to. More significantly, such a lobby (as well as other participants in the educational discourse at this time) engaged with, and discussed, educational issues, problems, and concerns that were *simultaneously* being debated or grappled with in the West, a phenomenon that has hitherto been overlooked in studies of educational and socio-cultural change in early 20th century China.

The Professionalization of Chinese Education

This Chinese educational lobby emerged in the wake of official attempts to create specialized schools for the training of technical experts in the 1860s and 1870s, and the first hesitant, and ultimately abortive, reform initiatives in the

¹ On the historical significance of overseas Chinese and Chinese migrations, see Wang Gungwu (2000). *The Chinese Overseas: From Earthbound China to the Quest for Autonomy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; P. A. Kuhn (2008). *Chinese Among Others: Emigration in Modern Times*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield; D. Lary (2012). *Chinese Migrations: The Movement of People, Goods and Ideas over Four Millennia*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. A pioneering work that highlights the global and internationalist aspects of Chinese diasporas (focusing on Chinese communities and activists in Russia, Germany, Spain, and Cuba) is G. Benton (2007). *Chinese Migrants and Internationalism: Forgotten Histories, 1917–1945*. Abingdon, England: Routledge. On the significance and impact of migrations within and beyond Asia itself during the modern period, see A. M. McKeown (2008). *Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders*. Bognor Regis, England: Columbia University Press, and S. S. Amrith (2011). *Migration and Diaspora in Modern Asia*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

² On this educational "lobby," see P. Bailey (1990).

1890s to implement a structured school system.³ Educational reform really took off, however, following the disastrous Boxer Uprising of 1899–1900, which convinced official and gentry elites alike of the necessity to provide state-led education for the wider populace. Such an education, it was hoped, would divest ordinary folk of their “backward” customs and “superstitious” beliefs and train a loyal, patriotic, hardworking, and productive citizenry that was now perceived as crucial for ensuring the national unity and economic progress required to withstand an increasingly aggressive imperialist threat. By 1905, the Confucian-based civil service examinations had been abolished, to be replaced by a national three-tiered school system the curricula of which would incorporate both Chinese and Western learning and which was overseen by a new central government institution, the Board of Education (*xuebu*, 学部).

During the last years of the Qing, members of the educational lobby were advisors to officials, founders of schools, compilers of school textbooks, and publicists. Many also, both during the last years of the dynasty and early years of the Republic, were employed in central and local educational administration. Most hailed from a gentry background and had studied abroad in Japan (or visited there on official missions). They included Luo Zhenyu (1875–1927), a late Qing school inspector, educational adviser to the gentry-entrepreneur Zhang Jian who pioneered the creation of teacher training and vocational schools in his home district of Nantong (Jiangsu Province), and editor of China’s first specialised journal of education, *Jiaoyu Shijie*, 教育世界 (World of Education, 1901–1906)⁴; Lu Feikui (1886–1941), teacher, book publisher, and school textbook compiler who was the first chief editor of China’s second specialized journal of education, *Jiaoyu Zazhi*, 教育杂志 (Educational Review, which ran from 1909 to the 1930s);⁵ Huang Yanpei (1878–1965), a holder of the provincial *juren* degree who founded schools and was heavily involved in educational administration in his home province of Jiangsu;⁶ Jiang Weiqiao (1874–?), head

³ In 1896 Li Duanfen (1833–1907), a vice-president of the Board of Punishments and former educational commissioner in Yunnan Province, was the first official to present a detailed plan for a national school system that would incorporate a “mixed” curriculum (e.g., Confucian Classics, foreign languages, foreign history). The plan was rejected by the court, although it concurred with Li’s idea of creating a national university. See P. Bailey (1990), pp. 20–24.

⁴ For further information on Luo Zhenyu and the key role he played in Zhang Jian’s educational reform projects in Nantong, see M. Bastid (1988). *Educational Reform in Early Twentieth-Century China*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, pp. 46–48, 106–107. See also H. Boorman and R. Howard (Eds.). (1967). *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2. 426–427.

⁵ Lu joined the Shanghai Commercial Press in 1908 after studying in Japan. In 1912 he founded his own publishing company, the Zhonghua Shuju (China Bookstore), which rivalled the Commercial Press in the production of readers for primary and secondary schools.

⁶ Huang also wrote one of the first general histories of modern education in China. See Huang Yanpei (1930). 中国教育史要 [A Concise History of Chinese Education]. 上海, 中国: 商务印书馆 [Shanghai, China: Commercial Press].

of the textbook department of the Shanghai Commercial Press (founded in 1897), an editor of *Jiaoyu Zazhi*, and a councillor in the Education Ministry (*jiaoyubu*, 教育部) of the new Chinese Republic after 1912; and Fan Yuanlian (1875–1927), who was employed by the Board of Education before 1911 after studying in Japan and later became a Minister of Education in the new Republic.

The formation of this Chinese educational lobby in the early 20th century signified a growing emphasis on the professionalization of education, a key feature of modernity that characterized educational development in the contemporaneous West and Japan. The organizational structure of the new Board of Education in 1905 itself reflected this novel awareness of the complexity of education and the need for a more professional approach. Thus the Board comprised separate departments dealing with general education (*putongsi*, 普通司), specialist education (*zhuanmensi*, 专门司) and vocational education (*shiyesi*, 实业司). This structure was replicated at the local level when provincial education bureaux were established. In 1904 and 1907 the Qing court also sanctioned the creation of teacher training schools (normal schools) for men and women respectively. Regulations for apprentice schools (*yitu xuetang*, 艺徒学堂) and vocational schools promulgated in 1904 likewise emphasized a more professional approach via the suggested creation of “consultative groups” (*shangyiyuan*, 商议院) comprising those experienced in industry and commerce that would provide expert advice on the running of the schools (Shu, 1961, 1. 783–785).

On their return from an official mission (1905–1906) to investigate constitutional government in Japan, Europe, and North America, the mission leaders Duanfang (1861–1911),⁷ the Governor-General of Fujian and Zhejiang, and Dai Hongci, President of the Board of Rites, in their report not only underlined the crucial importance of widespread general education amongst the populace for state-strengthening (particularly citing the case of Germany), but also drew attention to the need for fully-trained professionals in both teaching and administration. Significantly, they were also the first Chinese officials to draw upon the new world of technology as a frame of reference to describe the process of education. In effect, they compared schools to machinery in a factory (*jichang*, 机场); just as the individual components of a machine had to be produced to common specifications to ensure coordination and efficiency, they maintained, so schools, by adhering to uniform curricula and regulations would produce a united citizenry.⁸ The machine metaphor was to become ubiquitous in subsequent educational discourse, with education frequently referred to as a

⁷ Duanfang was later to pioneer the creation of kindergartens as well as public libraries.

⁸ The report is in Palace Museum (1979). 清末筹备立宪档案史料 [*Archival Materials on the Preparation for a Constitution at the End of the Qing*]. 北京, 中国: 中华书局 [Beijing, China: Zhonghua Book Company], pp. 961–974.

“tool” (*ju*, 具) or “instrument” (*qixie*, 器械) forging a modern and well-trained populace (both Liang Qichao and Chinese student radicals in Japan before 1911 were fond of using this metaphor). By 1910 education was being specifically described in the educational press as a “factory that produces citizens”; while in 1912 the new Republican Ministry of Education was referred to as a “manufacturing plant” and students as the “manufactured products.” Officials in the new ministry were likened to “technicians” (*jishu*, 机术), who if they did not perform their functions competently would be no different from “useless machinery producing defective goods.”⁹

In its officially announced educational aims in 1906, the Board of Education—picking up on the gist of Duanfang and Dai Hongci’s report—took it for granted that China would have to emulate practice in “foreign countries” by prioritizing general education (admitting that specialist education only created a talented few).¹⁰ The Board likewise took note of the role of national religion in the West in creating a patriotic, law-abiding, disciplined, and harmonious populace; not surprisingly, Confucius was now coopted as a *patriotic* symbol that would cement national unity.¹¹ Modern schools would henceforth be increasingly viewed as an indispensable element in facilitating social control, an aim not dissimilar to the rationale for mass education being advanced in the contemporaneous West. At the same time, the Board of Education in 1906 insisted that education had to contribute in practical ways to the concrete improvement of people’s livelihoods, an issue that equally exercised (and continues to do so) the minds of educators and officials in the West.¹²

⁹ *Jiaoyu Zazhi* 教育杂志 [*Educational Review*], 2.1 (1910), *sheshuo* (editorial), p. 9; 3.12 (1912), *yanlun* (opinion piece), p.33.

¹⁰ The Board of Education’s Educational Aims of 1906 are in Shu Xincheng (Ed.). (1961). 近代中国教育史资料 [*Source Materials on Modern Chinese Educational History*]. 北京, 中国: 人民教育出版社. [Beijing, China: People’s Education Press], 1. 220–226; and Taga (1972), 1, 634–635.

¹¹ On the cooption of Confucius as a patriotic symbol (via commemorative rituals in both the schools and government organizations) during the last years of the Qing, see Yapei Kuo (2008). Redeploying Confucius: The Imperial State Dreams of the Nation 1902–1911. In M. M. H. Yang (Ed.), *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, pp. 65–86. Chinese officials and educators at this time, in referring admiringly to the inculcation of patriotic ideals amongst the very young in the US, often took note of the prominent display of George Washington’s portrait in all American schools.

¹² The increasing awareness of the importance of vocational training amongst officials and educators during the last years of the Qing was not entirely unprecedented. In an 1866 memorial proposing the construction of a naval shipyard (and attached technical school) in Fuzhou, Zuo Zongtang (1812–1885), Governor-General of Fujian and Zhejiang, condemned what he viewed as the traditional contempt for manual and technical labor, and suggested that ambitious potential students be encouraged to embark on technical careers rather than hankering after government office or scholarly prominence. Zuo’s memorial is in Chinese Historical Society (Ed.). (1961) 洋务运动 [*The Foreign Affairs Movement*]. 上海, 中国: 上海人民出版社. [Shanghai, China: Shanghai People’s Publishing House], 5, 5–9.

Perhaps the most striking example of the emerging professionalization of education in the last decade of the Qing dynasty was the publication of China's first specialized journals on education and pedagogy. In 1901, Luo Zhenyu, a pioneering member of the Chinese educational lobby, began editing *Jiaoyu Shijie*. He had earlier, in 1896, founded the Agronomy Society (*nongxuehui*, 农学会) in Shanghai, which sponsored the translation of over 100 works (mainly from the Japanese) on agriculture. In 1901 he was sent to Japan by the Governor-General of Hunan and Hubei, Zhang Zhidong, in order to investigate education there.¹³ Much impressed with Japan's school system, Luo began publishing *Jiaoyu Shijie* on his return. The first two issues included translations of Japanese government regulations on primary, middle, and normal schools. (At the same time Luo was frequently consulted by the gentry-entrepreneur Zhang Jian, who was in the process of establishing a normal school in his home district of Nantong, Jiangsu Province, the first of its kind in China).¹⁴ *Jiaoyu Shijie* also published a lengthy series of articles (from the Japanese) on vocational education in Germany,¹⁵ which signified a growing interest in German education that was to last through the early 1920s, as well as excerpts from Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emile, or On Education* (1762), one of the first complete philosophies of education in Western culture.¹⁶

Three years after the appearance of *Jiaoyu Shijie* an important (but little-known) text was produced by the Beijing Translation Office (*jingshi yixueguan*, 京师译学馆), entitled *Jiaoyu Cihui* (教育词汇, Glossary of Education),

¹³ Luo was employed at the time in the provincial Bureau of Agriculture under Zhang Zhidong's jurisdiction. Only a lower-level degree holder (*xiucaī*), Luo nevertheless went on to become a school inspector for the Board of Education, touring a number of provinces in 1907–1908. In 1909 he became Dean of the College of Agriculture at the Imperial University (founded in 1896, later to become Beijing University after 1912).

¹⁴ The Nantong Normal School opened in 1902. It aimed to train teachers for the vocational schools Zhang was establishing in Nantong.

¹⁵ See *Jiaoyu Shijie* 教育世界 [Educational World] (1903), 44, 45, 46, 47, and 48. For a list of translations from the Japanese on education that appeared in 教育世界 [Educational World], see Saneto Keishū (1960) *Chūgokujin Nihon ryūgaku shi* [History of Chinese Students in Japan]. Tōkyō, Nippon: Kuroshio shuppan [Tokyo, Japan: Kurosio Publishers], pp. 257–258.

¹⁶ “Ameierchao” (Abbreviated Version of *Emile*), *Jiaoyu Shijie* 教育世界 [Educational World], no. 53, (1903), pp. 1a–20b. Rousseau's work described a system of education in which the individual was socialized and integrated within the collectivity. The journal also published a translation (from the Japanese) of Samuel Smiles' *Self Help* (*zizhulun*, 自助论), a work originally published in 1859 (Samuel Smiles, 1812–1904, was a Scottish doctor, publicist, and parliamentary reformer) and translated into Japanese in 1871. On the impact of Smiles' work in Japan, where the original emphasis on the importance of character, thrift, and perseverance for the enhancement of individuality was transformed into one that viewed these character traits as essential for national wealth and power, see E. Kinmonth (1981). *The Self-Made Man in Meiji Japanese Thought: From Samurai to Salary Man*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

that introduced key pedagogical terms and concepts (via the Japanese translations of German expressions), including the term for pedagogy itself (*jiaoyuxue*, 教育学).¹⁷ Important new pedagogical and educational concepts introduced to Chinese readers included the expression for “compulsory education” (*yiwu jiaoyu*, 义务教育). Noting that the term derived from the German, *Pflicht* (meaning duty or obligation), the text explained that the expression referred to both a legally coercive injunction (by the state) and the obligation of individuals to do what was naturally “right” (i.e., send their children to school; Beijing Translation Office, 1904, p. 49).¹⁸ Other key concepts introduced were the expressions for general and specialized vocational training (*shiye jiaoyu*, 实业教育 and *zhiye jiaoyu*, 职业教育 respectively, from the German expressions *gewerbe Bildung* and *gewerbe Erziehung*), and for supplementary education (*buxi jiaoyu*, 补习教育, from the German *fort Bildung* referring to continuing or part-time education for school drop-outs or those unable to attend regular full-time schools; Beijing Translation Office, 1904, pp. 148, 164, 296).

In 1909 Lu Feikui began publishing *Jiaoyu Zazhi*, the most significant and important specialist journal on education published in the first three decades of the 20th century. The journal introduced its Chinese readers to educational practice and pedagogical theory in a wide variety of Western countries (US, Britain, France, Germany, Denmark) as well as Japan. Contributors, also, as will be discussed later, participated in lively debates concerning the nature and role of Chinese education; in the process, they both critiqued and valorized certain aspects of Western practice to rationalize their educational agendas, the significance of which has tended to be overlooked in studies of early 20th-century educational change in China in particular and of Sino-Western cultural interaction in general. In the wake of Lu Feikui’s journal, a spate of specialized journals on education was published during the early years of the Republic. Some were published under official auspices such as the Ministry of Education’s *Jiaoyu Gongbao* (教育公报, Bulletin of Education, 1914–1919), *Jingshi Jiaoyu Bao* (京师教育报, Beijing Educational Review, 1914–1919) published by the Beijing education bureau, or the *Anhui Jiaoyu Yuekan* (安徽教育月刊, Anhui Educational Monthly, 1918–1919) published by the Anhui provincial bureau of education. Others were published by province-based education societies such as *Jiaoyu Yanjiu* (教育研究, Educational Research, 1913–1914), *Jiaoyu Jie* (教育界, Educational World, 1915–1916) and *Jiaoyu Zhoubao* (教育周报, Education Weekly, 1915–1919), or by professional associations such as the

¹⁷ Presumably the Beijing Translation Office was under official jurisdiction, but the author of this article has been unable to find any further information about its existence.

¹⁸ The expression *qiangpo jiaoyu*, 强迫教育 was later used to refer specifically to the state’s legal right to compel school attendance.

Shanghai Chinese Vocational Association, which published *Jiaoyu yu Shiye* (教育与实业, Education and Industry, 1917–1920). One of the longest-running educational journals of the Republic was *Zhonghua Jiaoyujie* (中华教育界, Chinese Educational World, 1913–1920), a commercial publication produced by Lu Feikui's China Bookstore (*zhonghua shuju*).

A significant illustration of the Qing government's growing acceptance of the need for a wider and more professional input into educational policy-making was its convening of a Central Education Council (*zhongyang jiaoyuhui*, 中央教育会) in June 1911 that was empowered to forward proposals and resolutions to the government. Its membership comprised government school inspectors and supervisors, representatives of education associations (which had begun to be established by gentry activists after 1906), and educational publicists (including prominent members of the educational lobby such as Lu Feikui, Luo Zhenyu, Jia Dianzhi, Huang Yanpei, and Fan Yuanlian).¹⁹ Although the Qing government's initiative was quickly overtaken by revolution it was continued by the newly-established Republic when the Education Minister, Cai Yuanpei, convened an educational conference in July 1912 to discuss the shape of a new education system. With over 80 participants, the conference again comprised a wide variety of experts, including Lu Feikui, Zhuang Yu, and Huang Yanpei. One of its proposals was the creation of a permanent educational council that would draw on the expertise of school teachers and principals from all levels that would advise the government and assist in administration.²⁰ In support of its proposal, the conference, like Lu Feikui in an earlier article published in *Jiaoyu Zazhi*, drew attention to the French model of the *Conseil Supérieur de l'Instruction Publique* [Higher Council of Public Instruction]. The *Conseil* was originally founded in 1850, comprising churchmen, politicians, and educators who met twice a year to discuss changes in educational policy and school textbook

¹⁹ Regulations on the Council are in *Jiaoyu Zazhi* 教育杂志 [Educational Review], 3.6 (1911), *faling* (laws and regulations), pp. 67–72; and Taga (1972), 1. 688–691. The Board of Education, in calling for the creation of the Council, cited the example of Japan's Higher Education Council established in 1896. Earlier, in April 1911, the nationwide Federation of Provincial Education Associations had met in Shanghai and had forwarded a number of resolutions to the government, including the suggestion that in the future a substantial role should be accorded to federations of professional teachers in matters concerning school administration, compilation of textbooks, and teaching methods. For a report on the meeting, see *Jiaoyu Zazhi* 教育杂志 [Educational Review], 3.6 (1911), *faling* (laws and regulations), pp. 1–12. Twenty-two delegates representing 11 provinces attended.

²⁰ Nothing came of this ambitious proposal, although in subsequent years the Education Ministry convened conferences of normal school principals (1915), vocational school principals (1917), and secondary school principals (1918).

material.²¹

By the early years of the Republic, therefore, the trend towards the professionalization of education had been clearly set. It is worth noting, for example, that in 1913 twenty of the 61 heads and assistants of provincial education bureaux were normal school graduates, while in 1918 nearly 50% of Anhui Province's district education inspectors (with an average age of 37) were, likewise, normal school graduates.²² Professionalism was also deemed essential for the role of public lecturing (in 1915 the Education Ministry decreed that popular lecture halls be established in provincial capitals as well as in smaller towns and villages with the aim of "enlightening" the populace and "reforming" society by promoting patriotism, respect for the laws, attention to physical hygiene, and the adoption of an industrious outlook). In 1912 Wu Da (Wu Bochun, 1880–1913), another member of the educational lobby and an official of the newly-created social education department (*shehui jiaoyu ke*, 社会教育科) in the Education Ministry, insisted that public speaking was a specialized skill requiring extensive training.²³ Whereas in imperial times public lecturing exhorting the people to be loyal and law-abiding subjects of the dynasty was carried out by the local gentry as moral leaders of the community, Wu referred to the situation in the West where public speaking was viewed as an art to argue that lecturers above all else had to be professionals whose ability to modulate their tone of voice in order to attract and influence an audience was equally as important as the knowledge they imparted (an ability, one might add, that would

²¹ On Lu Feikui's proposal to adopt the French model, see *Jiaoyu Zazhi*. 教育杂志 [Educational Review], 3.10 (1912), *yanlun*, pp. 1–4. A description of the French *Conseil Supérieur de l'Instruction Publique* is in *Jiaoyu Zazhi* 教育杂志 [Educational Review], 3.6 (1911), *diao cha* (investigation), pp. 70–71. Another example of a foreign cultural institution deemed worthy of emulation was the *Académie française* (French Academy). The Chinese Catholic educator and scholar Ma Xiangbo (1840–1939) in 1912 proposed the establishment of a similar institution in China, to be charged with producing dictionaries, and publishing old and rare texts for a mass readership. See Fang Hao (1969). 马相伯先生筹设函夏考文苑始末 [The History of Ma Xiangbo's Proposal to Establish a Research Academy]. In Fang Hao (Ed.), 方豪六十自选稿 [Fang Hao's Collected Writings] 台北, 中国: 台湾学生书局 [Taipei, China: Taiwan Student Book], 2.1995–1996.

²² *Jiaoyubu Bianzuan chu Yuekan* 教育部编纂处月刊 [Monthly Journal of the Education Ministry's Compilation Bureau], no.6 (1913), *fulu* (supplement), pp. 1–6; *Anhui Jiaoyu Yuekan* 安徽教育月刊 [Anhui Education Monthly], no.8 (Aug 1918), *biao ce* (statistics), pp. 1–5. Most of the inspectors in Anhui, furthermore, had had previous experience in teaching or educational administration. In 1919 a special handbook was published for school inspectors, which emphasized the specialized nature of their role; see Wang Guangsong (1919). 视学纲要 [Outline for School Inspectors]. 上海, 中国: 商务印书馆 [Shanghai, China: Commercial Press].

²³ Wu adopted the Japanese use of the term *ka* (in Chinese *jia*, 家) to denote a skilled specialist.

not be out of place in a US presidential contest today; Wu, 1970).²⁴

Chinese Educational Discourse in a Global Context

Chinese educational discourse during the first decades of the 20th century represented an *active engagement* with ideas and practices in the wider world (US, Europe, Japan). In some cases Chinese educators and commentators focused on features of foreign educational thought and practice in order to add weight to their own particular visions of China's educational future; in others they sought to differentiate their approach from perceived trends abroad. Furthermore, many of the issues debated and tackled by Chinese educators and officials at this time likewise exercised the minds of their contemporaries in the West (and, in some cases, still do).

One of the thorniest issues confronted by Chinese educators was how to make education more practical and meaningful for a wider constituency, as well as how to ensure the provision of basic literacy and elementary vocational instruction for the large numbers of children unable to attend regular school (or compelled to drop out of school). For guidance and inspiration they frequently focused on Germany. In fact, from the last years of the Qing up until the early 1920s Chinese educators consistently highlighted the benefits of the German system, not only because the country's economic prosperity was attributed to its education, but also because many of Germany's educational strategies and concerns resonated strongly with the Chinese educational lobby since they were viewed as especially relevant to China's own situation. For example, early issues of *Jiaoyu Zazhi* drew attention to Prussia's promotion of "citizen education" (*guomin jiaoyu*) in the wake of the country's defeat and occupation by the French in 1806, an education designed to stimulate German patriotism and thus contribute to the purge of "national shame."²⁵

Significantly, of the 13 articles in *Jiaoyu Zazhi* specifically devoted to German education that appeared in 1909–1913, eight were concerned with primary, vocational, and popular education. In particular, attention was paid to attempts after the Prussian-led unification of Germany in 1870 to implement compulsory

²⁴ On the novel importance attributed to public speaking in the new Republic, see D. Strand (2011). *An Unfinished Republic: Leading by Word and Deed in Modern China*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, especially ch. 2.

²⁵ A Hunanese student in the early years of the Republic later recalled how he and his classmates had ambitions to make Hunan another Prussia and lead the way in building a strong and united China. Lai Jinghu, 民初时代的湖南青年 [*Hunanese Youth at the Beginning of the Republic*]. In *Zhuanji Wenxue* (Biographical Literature), 16.3 (1970), pp.68–70. On the evolution and nature of Hunanese "nationalism," see S. R. Platt (2007). *Provincial Patriots: The Hunanese and Modern China*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

vocational education for primary school leavers. Thus a later article (in 1917) contrasting Germany and England noted that due to the former's commitment to the provision of supplementary education that combined instruction in vocational skills with moral lessons, the training of future workers and apprentices and the cultivation of law-abiding and patriotic citizens were guaranteed. As a result, the article concluded, Germany did not have "young layabouts," as was the case with England, which neglected supplementary education.²⁶ Intriguingly, *Jiaoyu Zazhi* in its first issues had featured articles on the problem of juvenile delinquency in foreign countries (Britain, France, US) and rising crime rates amongst 14–21 year-olds as a result of unemployment. Contributors warned that China might experience a similar problem if unemployment and poverty were not alleviated.²⁷ In the contemporaneous US, educators were expressing precisely similar concerns (Troen, 1976; Nasaw, 1979).

Against the background of both insistent calls after the Boxer Uprising (1899–1900) by Chinese elites to implement measures to "remould" or "reform" the Chinese people's "backward" and "superstitious" practices and beliefs (what I refer to as "behavioral modernization"), and Chinese educators advocacy after 1904 of a more vocational and practical-oriented education,²⁸ the Chinese

²⁶ *Jiaoyu Zazhi* 教育杂志 [*Educational Review*], 9.1 (1917), *diaocha* (investigation) pp. 1–8. While British propaganda in the English-language press in China (e.g., *North China Herald*) continually emphasized German "barbarism" during World War One, and despite the fact that the Chinese government formally declared war on Germany in 1917, articles in the Chinese educational press continued to sing the praises of Germany's education system throughout this period. See *Jingshi Jiaoyubao* 京师教育报 [*Beijing Educational Review* no.22 (1915), *zhuan-shu* (special review), pp. 19–30, and no.40 (1917), *yishu* (translation), pp.1–8. See also Huang Zhanyuan, "Deyizhi jiaoyu yu zhanzheng." 德意志教育与战争 [German Education and the War], *Jiaoyu Zazhi* 7.5 (1915), pp.45–60 which attributed Germany's military victories to its educational system producing a united citizenry (as opposed to the English school system, which purportedly exacerbated class difference and thus fostered social division).

²⁷ *Jiaoyu Zazhi* 教育杂志 [*Educational Review*], 1.1 (1909), *sheshuo* (editorial), pp. 7–18; 1.4 (1909), *zazuan* (miscellaneous), pp. 25–26; 1.4 (1909), *sheshuo* (editorial), pp. 41–48.

²⁸ Again, it is important to note here that similar concerns were being voiced in the contemporaneous West. In Germany, for example, a fierce debate broke out in the late 19th and early 20th centuries between the inheritors of the classics-based humanist education (in line with the cultivation, or *Bildung*, of the all-round individual) associated with Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), founder of Berlin University, and proponents of a less elitist, more practical-oriented curriculum. See A. Hearnden (1974). *Education in the Two Germanies*. Oxford, England: Basil Blackwell, pp. 2–23. The Chinese were well aware of this debate. See, for example, *Jiaoyu Yanjiu* 教育研究 [*Educational Research*], no.7 (1913), *zhuan-shu* (scholarly draft), pp. 1–2. As late as the 1950s, a commission of enquiry in France criticized the secondary school curriculum for not being sufficiently relevant for the majority of pupils because of its neglect of technical subjects. See R. J. Havighurst (Ed.). (1968). *Comparative Perspectives on Education*. New York, NY: Little and Brown, p. 21. Such a critique is also a feature of current educational debate in the UK.

educational press during the Qing-Republican transition was fascinated with the pedagogical thought and practice of Georg Kerschensteiner (1854–1932). Director of public schools in Munich (in the German state of Bavaria) from 1895 to 1919, Kerschensteiner was famed for his promotion of the *Arbeitsschule* (“activity school” or “labor school”) that aimed to integrate academic study, manual labour or physical activity, and moral instruction (Simons, 1966; Savioz, 1980). In Kerschensteiner’s vision, instruction provided in the *Arbeitsschule* would comprise two stages: an “egoistic” stage that instilled in pupils a sense of individual self-satisfaction as a result of performing one’s tasks well, and an “altruistic” stage that would then encourage pupils to perceive themselves as contributing their skills for the benefit of society (group work at the school, for example, would accustom them to the idea of devoting their labor to the collectivity). In the words of one study of Kerschensteiner’s thought, the *Arbeitsschule* would “educate its members to form a community of thinking, efficient people all working willingly and joyfully together for the betterment and progress of the state” (Simons, 1966, p. 29).²⁹

In articles on Kerschensteiner’s pedagogy in the Chinese educational press (the first of which appeared in 1913), commentators frequently interpreted his *Arbeitsschule* as an illustration of the philosophy of *qinlao zhuyi*, 勤劳主义 (literally, “hard and diligent work-ism”), which they insisted was essential for China to adopt in its quest for economic development fuelled by disciplined, industrious and public-minded citizens.³⁰ At the same time, Chinese educators were impressed with the moral focus of the *Arbeitsschule* given the fact that they often warned of the potential dangers of an over-emphasis on vocational training for individual self-betterment and prosperity that might lead to rampant

²⁹ The influence of theories of child-centered developmental and vocational education propounded by earlier Western pedagogues such as Johann Pestalozzi (1748–1827) and Johann Herbart (1778–1841) on Chinese educational reformers of the 1910s and 1920s is discussed in T. Curran (2005). *Educational Reform in Republican China: The Failure of Educators to Create a Modern Nation*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.

³⁰ *Jiaoyu Zazhi* 教育杂志 [Educational Review] 4.5 (1913), *diaocha* (investigation) pp. 50–56; 5.10 (1914), *xueshu* (specialized section), pp. 71–84; 5.11 (1914), *xueshu*, pp. 85–96; 5.12 (1914), *xueshu*, pp. 97–111; 7.1 (1916), *yanlun* (opinion piece), pp. 19–21; 7.3 (1916), *shelun* (editorial essay), pp.21–30; 8.5 (1917), *cilun* (essay), pp. 43–50; 8.7 (1917), *diaocha* (investigation), pp. 51–56. *Jingshi Jiaoyubao* 京师教育报 [Beijing Educational Review], no. 4 (1914), *shishu* (commentary), pp. 9–17. *Zhonghua Jiaoyujie* 中华教育界 [Chinese Educational World], 5.8 (1918), *xueshuo* (scholarly comment), pp. 1–5. Although Simons (1966) translates *Arbeitsschule* as “activity school” because of Kerschensteiner’s insistence that work had to embrace intellectual effort, I prefer to translate the term as “labour school” in the Chinese context, since Chinese educators tended to focus on the manual labor aspect of the activity. In fact, a later article (translated from the Japanese) specifically rendered *Arbeitsschule* as “labor school” (*laodong xuexiao*). See *Jiaoyu Zazhi* 教育杂志 [Educational Review], 23.2 (1931), pp. 62–72.

individualism threatening the collective interest.³¹

It is also interesting to note that Chinese educators were equally fascinated at this time with the Danish folk high school *Folkehøjskole* (in Chinese, *pingmin zhongxuexiao*, 平民中学校) as a potentially relevant model for China. The ideological “father” of the Danish folk high school, Nikolaj Grundtvig (1783–1872)—writer, poet, and teacher—had first proposed the idea of providing instruction for adolescents and young adults that would acquaint them with Danish history, language, and literature (making use of “national songs,” for example). The first folk high school, founded in 1844 by Kristen Kold, gave short winter and summer courses to 14 to 18 year-olds.³² Chinese commentators were especially drawn to the fact that Danish folk high schools increased in number after the country’s defeat by Prussia in 1864 as a means of boosting national pride (as well as providing vocational training), and that most of them were located in rural areas.³³

In addition to an interest in vocational, supplementary, and adult education amongst Chinese educators (often focusing on Germany), the role of universities—especially after 1912—was another topic of debate. Again, Germany featured prominently in the discourse. In the early years of the Republic more articles were written (or translated from the Japanese) on German universities than those in other countries. For example, in the journal published by the Republican Ministry of Education—*Jiaoyubu Bianzuanchu Yuekan*, 教育部编纂处月刊 (Monthly Journal of the Education Ministry’s Compilation Bureau)—nine of the first ten issues in 1913 contained articles on the organization, administration, curricula, and research of German universities. A contributor to *Jiaoyu Zazhi* in 1915 observed that German universities were superior to those in England because while the latter were viewed as primary

³¹ Such a danger was seen to have occurred in England, where, it was observed, the “lower classes” frequently went on strike (therefore destabilizing society) because of their overriding and continuous desire to increase their individual income. *Jingshi Jiaoyubao* 京师教育报 [*Beijing Educational Review*], no.1 (1914), *lunzhu* (treatise), pp. 1–3; *Jiaoyu yu Shiye* 教育与实业 [*Education and Industry*], no.8 (1918). Zhu Yuanshan (1917). 职业教育真意 [*The True Significance of Vocational Education*]. 上海, 中国: 商务印书馆 [Shanghai, China: Commercial Press], p. 257.

³² The folk high school model was subsequently adopted in Norway, Sweden, and Germany. A. Peterson (1971). *A Hundred Years of Education*. London, England: Duckworth, pp. 199–214.

³³ *Jiaoyu Zazhi* 教育杂志 [*Educational Review*], 2.3 (1910), *diaocha* (investigation), pp. 21–25; 6.3 (1914), *diaocha*, pp. 21–25. See also *Jiaoyu Yanjiu* 教育研究 [*Educational Research*], no.2 (1913), *diaocha*, pp. 12–15; and *Zhonghua Jiaoyujie* 中华教育界 [*Chinese Educational World*], 10.1 (1921), pp. 72–75. Danish folk high schools continued to be discussed by Chinese educators into the 1930s. See Ma Zongrong (1933). 比较社会教育 [*Comparative Social Education*]. 上海, 中国: 世界书局 [Shanghai, China: World Bookstore], pp. 79–98; and Gan Cao (1939), 乡村教育 [*Rural Education*]. 上海, 中国: 商务印书馆 [Shanghai, China: Commercial Press], pp. 37–40.

sites for character-building, the former were perceived above all else as key institutions directly contributing to economic development.³⁴

Significantly, at the 1912 conference convened by the new Republican Education Minister, Cai Yuanpei, the role of the university in society was on the agenda. A consensus emerged that insisted institutions of higher learning had to be more responsive, and relevant, to the needs of society, the economy, and the country as a whole (these are issues that are *currently* being discussed in the UK today in the wake of increasing “marketization” of higher education). Cai Yuanpei himself disagreed, arguing that universities should be centers of pure research and absolutely autonomous *vis-à-vis* both society and the state (again, issues raised today in the UK by those opposed to “marketization”).³⁵

Cai’s position constituted part of a wider difference in outlook at the 1912 conference between himself and the deputy minister of education, Fan Yuanlian. While Cai, for example, favored prioritizing investment in, and reorganization of, higher education (proposing that all provincial higher-level schools be replaced by five national universities to be based in Beijing, Nanjing, Hankou, Guangzhou, and Chongqing), Fan Yuanlian argued that resources (scarce as they were) should first be devoted to establishing a wide network of primary schools (Bailey, 1990, pp. 146–147). Another participant at the 1912 conference, Shen Buzhou (a regular contributor to *Jiaoyu Zazhi*) likewise insisted that primary education be accorded the highest priority, suggesting that extra taxes should be imposed on the wealthy to ensure that primary education would be free and thus escape the fate of being monopolized by the “upper and middle classes.”³⁶

³⁴ Huang Zhanyuan (1915), 德意志教育与战争 [German Education and the War], p. 58. Huang likened the German university to a “small-scale manufacturing factory” (*xiaojiguan zhi zhizaochang*, 小机关之制造厂).

³⁵ On Cai Yuanpei’s ideas on the role of the university, see F. Lanza, (2010). *Behind the Gate: Inventing Students in Beijing*. New York, NY: Columbia University. Cai was inspired by the German model (he had studied in Germany in the years before 1911), clearly drawing *different* lessons from it than those Chinese commentators who perceived German universities as engines of economic growth. Also, Cai’s specific focus on German higher education differed from other Chinese educators who preferred to highlight above all else Germany’s provision of supplementary and vocational education for adolescents.

³⁶ *Jiaoyu Zazhi* 教育杂志 [Educational Review], 4.1 (1912), *yanlun* (opinion piece), pp. 11–20. The new Republican government went ahead anyway and sanctioned fees for primary schools (thirty cents a month for lower primary and one dollar a month for higher primary schools). See Taga (1972), 2.409. It might be noted that although a 1833 law in France called for a national system of primary schools, it was not until after 1862 that free elementary education was provided for. An even more extraordinary example when set against Shen Buzhou’s concern in 1912 that primary schools be sufficiently funded so as to ensure the fullest enrolment possible was that of England. The major industrial and military power for much of the nineteenth century, Britain, did not provide for a national primary school system (for England and Wales, since Scotland had its own education system) until 1870, and it was not until after 1918 that the complete abolition of fees for primary schools was finally enforced. See A. Peterson (1971). *A Hundred Years of Education*. London, England: Duckworth, p. 40.

Shen Buzhou's concerns raised at the 1912 education conference touched on the third important feature of educational discourse in the late Qing and early Republic, symbolizing an intriguing and persistent strand of thought that one might describe as a form of "educational egalitarianism." Adherents of this strand of thought clearly *differentiated* their approach from perceived educational developments in the West, which were often critiqued as an inappropriate precedent for China to follow.

Educational egalitarianism characterized official discourse from the very beginnings of Qing educational reform at the turn of the 20th century. When Duan Fang (Governor of Hubei) and Cen Chuxian (Governor-general of Yunnan and Guizhou) welcomed the implementation of more widespread education amongst the people as a way of fostering unity and eliminating social divisions (Bailey, 1990, pp. 42–43), they were expressing a confidence (virtually a voluntaristic faith) in its potential rarely encountered, for example, in 19th century England, where references to the "naturally depraved" character of the "lower classes" and the dire consequences of educating them frequently appeared in elite discourse. An early 19th century English parliamentarian warned that education for the poor would be "prejudicial to their morals and happiness," as it would encourage them to "despise their lot in life" and render them "fractious and refractory."³⁷ Likewise, an English conservative publication in 1823 claimed that whenever the "lower orders" of any state had obtained some knowledge "they have generally used it to produce national ruin" (Silver, 1965, p. 21).³⁸ There is no trace of this attitude in early 20th century Chinese discourse.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of this educational egalitarianism was evidenced in discussions amongst the Chinese educational lobby concerning the necessity of implementing a one-track (or coordinated) school system. The issue was specifically addressed at the 1912 education conference. Chinese educators were aware of the dual-track systems in France and Germany, where elitist secondary schools (*lycées* or *collèges* in France, *Gymnasien* in Germany) for the

³⁷ Cited in V. Neuberger (1971), *Popular Education in Eighteenth-Century England*, London, England: Woburn Press, pp. 3–4. It is true that similar views were expressed by Qing Dynasty officials in the 18th century—see, for example, A. Woodside (1983). "Some Mid-Qing Theorists of Popular Schools: Their Innovations, Inhibitions, and Attitudes toward the Poor," *Modern China*, 9.1, pp. 3–35—but there was also an alternative, more "voluntarist" approach to the benefits of more widespread education that was especially evident in the early 20th century. I have argued elsewhere (Bailey, 1990) that the origins of this voluntarist approach lay in the egalitarian implications of Confucian educational thought. See W. De Bary (1970). "Individualism and Humanitarianism in Late Ming Thought." In W. De Bary (Ed.), *Self and Society in Ming Thought* (pp. 145–245). New York, NY: Columbia University Press, which discusses the influence of this strand of Confucian thought on the 16th century thinker Wang Ken (1483–1540), who expressed faith in the potential of the common man to achieve wisdom.

³⁸ It is worth remembering that a state system of primary education did not appear in England until 1870 (before then "education for the poor" was mostly carried out on a voluntary basis by religious societies).

most part training their pupils to go on to university were not formally integrated with primary schools (*écoles primaires* in France, *Volksschule* in Germany), since they had their own preparatory classes for potential entrants. In rejecting these models, participants at the 1912 conference curiously contrasted them with the Japanese system, in which middle schools purportedly were regarded as a component of general education and were coordinated with the primary sector. In actual fact, by 1890 Japan, too, operated a dual-track system in which middle schools preparing a select few for university were clearly differentiated from vocational secondary schools catering to the majority of primary school graduates; ultimately, Japan would have a multi-track system with little opportunity of transferring from one track to the other. Nevertheless, the 1912 conference firmly agreed that the new Chinese Republic should implement a one-track school system.³⁹ Significantly, it was not until *after* 1918 that in both Germany and France concerted campaigns for more integrated school systems got underway. The Weimar Constitution of 1919, in line with the principle of *Einheitsschule* (one-track system), prescribed a primary school for all (*Grundschule*) and abolished preparatory classes at secondary schools (Samuel & Thomas, 1949, p. 38);⁴⁰ in France the ideal of the *école unique* (primary school for all) finally became a reality in 1924 (Talbot, 1969, pp. 34–42).

Chinese educators were also wary of the potential elitist consequences of a dual-track system at the primary level. Regulations on the creation of basic literacy schools issued by the Board of Education in 1909, for example, made it clear that the graduates of such schools would be eligible to enter the fourth year

³⁹ Another important decision taken by the 1912 conference, and which arguably contributed to the “democratization” of primary education, was to eliminate completely study of the Confucian Classics from the primary school curriculum, a process begun after 1910 when hours devoted to the Classics were gradually reduced and more time prescribed for new subjects such as handicrafts. Bailey (1990), pp. 116–120, 139–141.

⁴⁰ The campaign for *Einheitsschule* in Germany attracted the interest of Chinese educators. See, for example, *Jiaoyu Zazhi* 教育杂志 [Educational Review], 10.8 (1918), *diaocha* (investigation), pp. 33–37; 10.9 (1918), *diaocha*, pp. 39–41; *Xin Jiaoyu* 新教育 [New Education] (1919), 1.2 (1919), pp. 125–129. The Chinese educational press also took note of the debate in early 20th century Germany over the teaching of the classics (Latin, Greek) in secondary schools and, in particular, the criticism voiced by some German educators that excessive time devoted to Latin and Greek at the expense of German language and culture ran the risk of “denationalizing” German students. See *Jiaoyu Zazhi* 教育杂志 [Educational Review], 4.10 (1912), *diaocha*, pp. 109–108. The concept intrigued Chinese educators, and was later cited by some commentators in their criticism of “excessive” teaching of English in Chinese schools, which would alienate students from their own culture. Wieger (1923). *Chine Moderne* [Modern China] (Vol. 4). Hsienhsien, Chine: Imprimerie de la mission catholique [Fujian, China: Printing Office of the Catholic Mission], pp. 105–108; *Jiaoyu Zazhi* 教育杂志 [Educational Review], 16.12 (1925), pp. 1–7. Interestingly, such a fear was shared by French commentators with respect to their own nationals in China, who, they lamented, would be overwhelmed by hegemonic Anglo-Saxon culture and the English language in the treaty ports. *Asie française* [French Asia] (1911), 127, p. 471.

of a regular primary school.⁴¹ Thus the way was left open—at least in theory—for the less well-off to enter the regular stream. Zhuang Yu (another regular contributor to *Jiaoyu Zazhi*) would have thoroughly approved of such an arrangement, since in 1910 he warned that basic literacy schools might perpetuate class differences if the privileged few came to monopolize attendance at regular primary schools.⁴² Similarly, at the 1912 conference Shen Buzhou proposed that two-year supplementary classes be organized for those lower primary pupils who failed to advance to higher primary school, with the proviso that on successful completion of these classes they would *still* be eligible to enter higher primary school. When, in 1915, President Yuan Shikai attempted to restructure the school system (e.g., setting up special preparatory classes for elite middle schools) that would have resulted in a dual-track approach, the scheme was vigorously rejected by Chinese educators. All these examples testify to a persistent strand of educational egalitarianism, an ideal that in many ways was betrayed at the beginning of China's contemporary reform process in the 1980s with the creation of elite “keypoint” (*zhongdian*, 重点) schools and colleges catering to a privileged few.⁴³

A third feature of this early 20th century educational egalitarianism was the rejection of the Western model by some Chinese educators and political activists on *egalitarian* grounds. Thus Jiang Kanghu (1883–1964), an educational official in the last years of the Qing and founder of China's first socialist party in 1912, claimed that “equality of education” (*jiaoyu pingdeng*, 教育平等) was severely compromised in the West by contingent factors of family or social background, tuition fees, and the costs of school food and uniforms. Jiang was especially critical of higher education in the West, which he described as the monopoly of an “aristocracy of the wealthy” (*fuhao guizu*, 富豪贵族).⁴⁴ Later, in 1929, the Chinese Marxist educator, Yang Xianjiang (1895–1931), in a similar critique of Western education, was able to cite American author Upton Sinclair's devastating *exposé* of American higher education, *The Goose Step: A Study of American Education*, in support of his case.⁴⁵

⁴¹ *Jiaoyu Zazhi* 教育杂志 [*Educational Review*], 2.1 (1910), *faling* (laws and regulations), pp. 10–11.

⁴² *Jiaoyu Zazhi* 教育杂志 [*Educational Review*], 2.5 (1910), *faling*, pp. 23–29.

⁴³ The situation has changed dramatically in recent years. Thus the percentage of children entering senior middle school doubled from 1988 to 2009 (from 38% of the population age cohort to 86% of the population age cohort), while the number of new enrolments at tertiary level has increased tenfold (from 0.59 million in 1989 to 6.39 million in 2009, representing more than 25% of the age cohort born in 1990). Kipnis (2012). p. 734.

⁴⁴ *Minli Bao* 民立报 [*The People's Stand*], 9 April, 1912.

⁴⁵ *Jiaoyu Zazhi* 教育杂志 [*Educational Review*], 21.12 (1929), *lunping* (critical essay), pp. 1–12. Upton Sinclair (1875–1968) was a novelist, journalist and political activist. In *The Goose Step* (originally published in 1923), Sinclair condemned the monopoly of American higher education by large financial interests (“plutocrats”), and the consequent lack of freedom of thought and expression on college campuses.

Conclusion

A recent article by Andrew Kipnis argues that the current trend of labelling the reform era in China (after 1978) as one of “Globalization” (or *duiwai kaifang*, 对外开放, opening up to the outside world) occludes the significant ongoing process of nation-building (Kipnis, 2012). In particular, Kipnis focuses on the state’s attempts to create a national “commonality” via processes of standardisation (*guifanhua*, 规范化) in the education system (language, curriculum, and structure, as well as uniformity of behavior). He thus insists that the conventional differentiation made between the pre-1949 period as one of nation-building and the post-1978 period as one of “Globalization” is unfounded. At the same time, Kipnis further asserts that the “nation-building” taking place today differs markedly from the earlier period (because of the greater levels of mobility, massive expansion of urban space, and the emergence of a literate internet-savvy generation in the contemporary era).

Kipnis’ argument is misleading in two respects. An analysis of educational discourse and practice in early 20th century China (within a global context) demonstrates that, firstly, Globalization and nation-building are not necessarily mutually exclusive; and, secondly, nation-building in the early 20th century differs from that of the post-1978 era *only* in degree and not in kind (it should also be noted that the contemporary Chinese state has the resources, personnel, and authority to implement national “commonality” that the late Qing and early Republican governments simply did not possess).

Given the overriding desire by officials and educators during the Qing-Republican transition period to consolidate national unity and “remould” people’s behavior and thought, the lessons they primarily and consistently drew from Western educational practice (and frequently discussed in the educational press, which, as has been shown, played a significant role in the introduction of foreign pedagogy) was its perceived focus on centralization, standardization (including more government control over textbook material), and extensive, efficient official supervision (including censorship) of popular culture.⁴⁶ In other words, what were perceived as global trends by Chinese educators accorded precisely with their own agenda. It is also interesting to note that these aspects of

⁴⁶ A. Woodside (1994). “The Divorce between the Political Centre and Educational Creativity in Late Imperial China.” In B. Elman & A. Woodside (Eds.), *Education and Society in Late Imperial China 1600–1900* (pp. 458–492). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, makes the important point that it was the lack of *institutional coordination* between center and locality in imperial China rather than the content of education *per se* that animated many of the educational reform proposals after the 1890s. Woodside overlooks, however, the other key motivator behind educational reform after 1900, the obsessive concern to cultivate hardworking, disciplined and public-minded citizens shorn of their “backward” customs and attitudes. For more discussion of this, see Bailey (1990).

Western educational practice were the very ones highlighted by “revisionist” studies of Western educational history published in the 1970s and 1980s, studies that described the evolution of formal school systems more in terms of elite attempts to discipline and control the populace (and, ultimately, reinforcing hierarchy) rather than in terms of inculcating “democratic” ideals (e.g., Kaestle, 1976; Maynes, 1985; Ringer, 1987).⁴⁷

The ambition to impose standardization, for example, marked the very beginnings of Qing educational reform. Zhang Zhidong, one of its key architects, admirably pointed to practice in the West, where, he observed, primary school texts were checked and edited by the authorities. The Board of Education sought to emulate such practice when it created a textbook bureau. However, it also decreed that no fees would be charged for approval and certification of textbooks (which, the Board noted, occurred in foreign countries) in the interests of promoting education (Taga, 1972, 534–535). Also, as with contemporaneous France, the Board of Education was eager to impose a standard national language in the schools as a means of forging national unity. In 1910 it ordered the compilation of textbooks based on the official Beijing dialect (*guanhua*, 官话, literally “official speech”), and directed all primary and secondary schools to add the study of *guanhua* to their curricula.⁴⁸ At virtually the same time the French government in provinces such as Brittany was aggressively imposing use of “standard” French (based on that spoken in Paris) in schools to replace local dialects (Weber, 1977).

In addition to standardization, Chinese educators, especially in the new Republic, praised the efficient paternalism of Western countries in overseeing popular culture and ensuring (by means of effective censorship) “harmful” literature, plays and films did not damage social mores, in contrast, they lamented, to a *laissez-faire* attitude usually adopted by Chinese authorities;⁴⁹ furthermore, Huang Yanpei, on visiting the US in 1916, lauded the practice in cinemas where, before each screening, the audience had to “take off their hats and stand up” when the national anthem was played.⁵⁰ Not coincidentally, the Chinese educational lobby was equally impressed with the role played by the boy scout movement, described as a useful tool to train young males in the habits of

⁴⁷ Drawing attention to this aspect of Western influence on Chinese educators (generally ignored by historians) complicates our understanding of Western influence on Chinese education as a whole, which has conventionally been framed in terms of its “democratic” or “progressive” character (especially during the May Fourth era).

⁴⁸ In 1911 the term *guanhua* was replaced by *guoyu*, 国语 (national language).

⁴⁹ Even “liberal” educators such as Cai Yuanpei subscribed to this view.

⁵⁰ *Jingshi Jiaoyubao* 京师教育报 [*Beijing Educational Review*], no. 27, (1916), *jiangyan* (lectures), p. 14. I remember as a child being taken to the “pictures” in the 1950s (in England), when everyone had to stand up for the playing of the national anthem before the film started.

patriotism, obedience, and hard work.⁵¹ Chinese educators likewise took note of the imposition of strict school rules and regulations in the West. In 1912, for example, Zhang Jian condemned the wave of Chinese student disturbances (referred to as *xuechao*, 学潮, “student tide”) that had begun in the last years of the Qing and continued during the Republican transition by citing Western practice, which, he declared, now laid more emphasis on inculcating habits of obedience through a highly regulated school life (having, in Zhang’s words, abandoned “Rousseauian libertarianism”).⁵²

Educational reform in early 20th century China, therefore, is an intriguing case study of complex Globalization. Through the medium of a specialized educational press pioneering Chinese educators introduced a wide variety of foreign ideas and practice. At times valorizing developments from abroad if they accorded with their own agenda and visions,⁵³ at others rejecting or critiquing foreign models as potentially harmful to China’s educational development, Chinese educators were not simply passive imbibers of Western knowledge but perceived themselves as active participants in a global discourse of educational modernization.⁵⁴ Even more significantly, they often addressed difficult

⁵¹ *Jiaoyu Zazhi* 教育杂志 [*Educational Review*], 4.5 (1912), *zazu* (miscellaneous), pp. 23–27; 7.8 (1915), *yanlun* opinion piece), pp. 13–14; 7.8 (1915), *diaocha* (investigation), pp. 75–86. A six-part article on the boy scout movement also appeared in *Zhonghua Jiaoyujie* 中华教育界 [*Chinese Educational World*] (1915–1916).

⁵² Zhang Jian’s 1912 text is in M. Bastid (1988). *Educational Reform in Early Twentieth-Century China* (P. Bailey, Trans.). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, pp. 149–150.

⁵³ The content of public lectures prescribed by Qing authorities in 1906 and by the new Republic in 1917 is a fascinating example of how foreign “models” were appropriated for indigenous use. Thus the 1906 guidelines prescribed the use of Chinese translations of *Robinson Crusoe* (to promote perseverance and self-reliance) and *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (to promote awareness of the dangers of China’s possible enslavement by foreign powers), while in 1917 lectures were to make use of the biographies of “wealthy” American individuals such as the oil baron (*meiyou dawang*, 煤油大王, literally “the great king of oil”) John D. Rockefeller (1839–1937) in order to promote economic development by inspiring ordinary folk with the possibility of acquiring wealth through hard and diligent work. Taga (1972), 1.535–537; Ministry of Education (1971). 第一次中国教育年鉴 [*The First China Education Yearbook*]. 台北, 中国: 传记文学出版社 [Taipei, China: Biography & Literature Press], 3.692.

⁵⁴ A fascinating example of such modernization in practice (in terms of integrating schools with local communities and encouraging parental involvement) was provided by some girls’ schools, which had begun to be established by local gentry elites after 1900 (in 1907 the court formally sanctioned public schooling for girls). Schools organized exhibitions to display publicly their students’ work (written essays, handicraft objects, physical education drills), an early sign of what has been termed an “exhibitionary modernity,” while others organized what we would call today “parents’ meetings’ reporting on the students’ progress and providing a forum for parents to express their views on school issues. See P. Bailey (2007). *Gender and Education in China: Gender Discourses and Women’s Public Schooling in the Early Twentieth Century*. Abingdon, England: Routledge, pp. 41–42.

educational issues (such as how to make education more accessible and relevant to a wider constituency) that were equally being debated in the West at the same time (and, to some extent, still are).

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