Chapter 3
Globalization, Nationalism, and Inclusive Education for All: A Reflection on the Ideological Shifts in Education Reform

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Abstract This chapter examines the concept of inclusive education for all as articulated in the United Nations against the rise of nationalism and ethnicism. We begin with a discussion of the concept of globalization. At the turn of this century, globalization was a positive force in the forward march of modernization. The former Soviet Union had collapsed barely a decade earlier, and liberal democracy became the dominant regime form around the world. In fact, no other option appeared to be possible. As we examine the rise in nationalism and ethnicism in the post-2000 era, that point of view now seems quaint. We explore the implications in education reforms under the global shift towards human rights-based development, with the adoption of the 2000 United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the more recent 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We offer a reflection on global education reforms that began with the adoption of the Dakar 2000 Framework of Action and the more recent 2015 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4. We conclude with an extrapolation of the education reform outcomes arising from the synergy and contradictions embedded in the global shift that has taken place.

Keywords Democracy · Education reforms · Global education · Globalization · Human rights-based development · Inclusive education · Liberal democracy · Nationalism · Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) · United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

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Education Reforms for Human Rights and Inclusive Education: Introduction

The central theme of this section is an examination of the education reform processes towards the realization of United Nations 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the UNESCO 2015 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action goal of inclusive education for all. This took place in the context of a rise in nationalism and ethnicism. The idea of an inclusive education for all builds on the progress made under the global promise of Education for All (EFA) that has been pursued alongside the expansion in globalization into the new millennium. The World Conference on Education for All-Inter Agency Commission, taking place in Jomtien in 1990, delivered a world declaration on education that was to be realized by 2000 with a national mandate for the public financing of all education (WCEFA 1990). However, the entrenchment of neoliberalism from the 1990s presents a contradictory policy framework that ultimately defined the characteristic feature of educational reform around the world. It focused on the institutionalization of the private cost in education (Lockheed 1990).

Throughout the 1990s, The World Bank, as the dominant multilateral source of finance in developing countries, promoted expanded access to low cost primary education (World Bank 1995). At the time, the world also accelerated cost-sharing through tuition fees and the elimination of subsidies to mobilize private financing in public higher education (World Bank 1994). While there was a marked growth and expansion in education opportunities, the sector became characterized by exclusion and inequality and declining enrollment in poor households (Bentaouet Kattan and Burnette 2004).

The 2000 United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the more recent 2015 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framed the global development agenda from a human rights-based perspective. These values were encapsulated in the UNESCO 2000 Dakar Framework of Action that reaffirmed the right to quality education for all with a focus on meeting the basic needs of all learners (UNESCO 2000). The follow-up UNESCO sponsored 2015 SDG 4 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action committed governments to ensure that they implemented an inclusive and equitable education opportunity and promoted lifelong learning opportunities for all citizens (World Bank 2015). The current analysis here examines the concept of inclusive quality education for all as a reflection of the shift in ideology towards a human rights-based education reform process, against a backdrop of a retreat from globalization and a backlash against neoliberalism.

Globalization and Changing State Interventionism

At the turn of this century, globalization was seen as a positive force in the forward march of modernization. The concept of globalization is broad and encompasses a variety of facets of the human experience. The founding of the Bretton Woods institutions in 1944 set in motion the contemporary process of globalization through the expansion of free market capitalism (Mikesell 1994). The nations of the world became intricately intertwined through trade, international finance, and macroeconomic policy, usually on the part of the dominant economic power blocks (Zajda 2018; Carnoy 1995).

The post-World-War II redistributive form of capitalism enabled the actualization of an expanding global system in which the economic, political, and sociocultural experiences of people around the world came to be intricately intertwined. For the next half century, the nation state and the citizenry remained the unit of reference in all accounting of economic intervention and the measure of growth and development. Keynesianism, or the belief in the necessity of state control over the economy, dominated the economic thinking about global development, with the state often intervening to redress market failure on behalf of the citizens.

The 1970s oil crisis compromised the world economies, leading to the proliferation of austerity measures. In the USA, the Nixon administration response to the first oil shock of 1973 was to introduce fiscal austerity in the social sector, while the Carter administration domestic policy response to the second oil shock of 1978–79 was ambiguous; however, both administrations introduced deregulation policies (Sill 2007; Weatherford and Fukui 1989), that introduced what became the dominant brand of neoliberalism in the American economy. The oil crisis also negatively impacted the global economy, leading the World Bank to mandate Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) in the developing regions. A globalized world in which communism and capitalism had hitherto offered opposed economic models, also enabled the continuation of governmental intervention in the lead up to the end of the 1980s.

By then, Western economies had adopted the expansion of free market globalization of production of goods and services, with the USA having pursued restrictions on public spending and the elimination of controls in the private sector (Crotty 2012; Weatherford and Fukui 1989). Implementation of similar restrictions were imposed on developing economies, as a result of the structural adjustment policies, with the education sector reforms moving towards an escalation of the use of cost-sharing, cost-recovery mechanisms in higher education, and the adoption of parental and community financing models in primary education (Haddad and Demsky 1987; Jee-Peng et al. 1986; Bray 1996). Nevertheless, throughout the 1980s, governments continued to intervene in the delivery of education services through public sector budgetary allocation and subsidies to the education sector that included non-tuition costs.

The globalization ideal of the 1990s represented a marked shift in both the status of the nation state and the relationship between the state and her citizens. With the

collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Francis Fukuyama 1992) would write that we have reached the "end of history," suggesting that the world had finally reached the conclusion civilization had been pointing toward for centuries. It seemed inevitable that liberal democracy would take root in every country of the world, and its economic expression, globalization, would soon dominate as well.

The last decade of the twentieth century ushered in a globalization of political democratization across the world, as countries began to relinquish authoritarianism. The demise of the Soviet Union presented Western countries with an opportunity to eliminate the cost of protection of their cold-war authoritarian allies, paving the way for breathing space for agents of human rights and democratization.

As the world progressed through the 1990s, global democratization and neoliberalism replaced Keynesianism, with implications for access, participation, and financing of education. Community and parental financing in basic education had become entrenched as a mechanism for mobilizing private resources for education (Levin and Lockheed 1991). The globalization of the 1990s largely expanded individual freedoms through democratization of the political spheres and decision making opportunities as liberal democracies became the dominant regime form around the world, a phenomenon that had been assumed to be the epitome of forms of governance for Western-inspired civilization.

The 1990s also marked the entrenchment of individualism as citizenry communitarian rights were upended by the globalization of unfettered free-market capitalism that cemented individual consumerism. Governments accelerated their divesting from delivery of social services, with the costs of education to individuals rising at all levels as budget cuts eroded the fiscal health of education institutions.

If the 1980s protests against budget cuts to social services and the negative effects of the SAPs among poor populations were mostly targeted against national governments, the 1990s saw growing and globalized protests against neoliberalism. The global democratization movement enabled civil-society organizing and the centering of a human-rights agenda in development discourse. Together with public sectors workers, civil-society groups mounted protests against governments, corporations and global capitalist institutions that promoted austerity measures and the erosion of the rights of workers (Warner 2005). The anti-globalization movements presented a counter force to the notion of a progressive and emancipatory globalization and shed light on the oppressive conditions of the global poor around the world.

While the ideology of neoliberalism was to promote a global free-market, it had not contemplated the issue of inequality and poverty within and across nations (Fischer 2003; Ravallion 2003). The level of absolute poverty rose in the most economically vulnerable developing regions, including Sub Saharan Africa and Central European (Chien and Ravallion 2001). It is the persistence of political globalization that enabled the expansion of protest activities, which were key to the adoption of the rights-based development ideology after the turn of the century, under the MDGs global compact, including a right to education for all.

Globalization and the Rise in the Manifestation of Nationalism

The current state of education reform is best understood within the context of a rise in nationalism and a retreat in neoliberalism, as the nation state is being forced to become accountable to her citizenry. While the contradictory existence of an articulation of a human-rights agenda and nationalism exist in the same space, it is important to recognize that these counter paradigms are united in their rejection of neoliberalism. While the civil society and citizen activism of the 1990s was directed towards global governmental institutions and national governments, the current protests also include counter-protests between residents characterised by a process of othering and xenophobia. It is also the case that reforms in the education sector that reflect the response to the adverse effects of neoliberalism on individual rights to education opportunities have been implemented in both the developed and the developing regions of the world, marking a retreat from neoliberalism and a return to mitigated Keynesianism.

The United Nations member countries from the developing regions of the world adopted the 2000 Millennium Development Goals (MGDs), inspired right-based agendas, and enshrined the human rights of their citizens in their respective constitutions and new laws. This process had been contemplated as a mechanism for guaranteeing the realization of the MDGs by nations (Ghai and Cottrell 2011). Universal access to basic education had long been guaranteed in the developed countries of the West and in much of the better performing economies of Asia and South America. The MDGs pertaining to expanded access only promoted a guarantee to universal primary schooling, making it a much more relevant goal for the developing regions of the world. As such, the principles of neoliberalism continued to be applied to post-secondary education in all nations connected by a global capitalist market place. The MDGs implementation also moved development partners to shift emphasis from a focus on access towards consideration of quality and outcomes.

The global advance of neoliberalism that followed the demise of the Soviet Union represented a radical shift in the role and status of governments in the Western economies in relation to the rights and expectations of the citizenry. With the focus on individual capitalism, there was a concurrent acceleration in the loss of manufacturing jobs, as technology adoption increased and production shifted to the low-cost production zones in Asia (Berman et al. 1994; Bacchetta and Jansen 2011). At the same time, there was an acceleration in the gutting of labour protections and an erosion of welfare safety-nets in the West as well as further elimination of subsidies to social programs and consumer protections as a means to preventing capital flight (Drezner 2001).

The outcome in rising poverty, coupled with growing income inequality and vulnerability to unemployment personalized the protest movements in the West (Alderson and Nielsen 2002), This turn of events connected Western-focused civil society groups and individual agency to the growing anti-globalization and anti-Neoliberalism protest movements in the developing regions of the world. This is

evident in the protests against the World Trade Organization, and the more recent protest ritual at the annual G20 Summits that have focused on employing human agency in advancing human and environmental rights. Nevertheless, the application of the principles of neoliberalism continued to dominate the global economy, and in the shaping of the delivery of social services, defining the nature of access to public education.

The 2007–2008 global economic crisis was occasioned by the crash in the US real estate mortgages (Verick and Islam 2010). The magnitude of the recession has been compared to the great depression of the 1930s in terms of duration and severity and lasted well into 2009 (Thomas 2013). The financial crisis also exposed the economic vulnerability of populations in developing countries, whose economy is dominated by the service and financial sectors. The experience furthered the perception of economic dispossession of middle-class and working-class citizens of Eurocentric racial groups.

The expansion of political instability in the Middle East, in the post-2000 era, has created an ever increasing crisis of refugee migration into neighbouring countries and across borders into Western countries. While former refugees from around the world have been resettled in the Western countries, the most visible political face of dissatisfaction with Western neoliberal democracies in recent times has been refugee populations. This has been much the case given that migrants from North Africa and the Middle East seeking refuge in Europe (UNHCR 2018). Their seeking safety in the Western countries is wrongly perceived as contributing to economic vulnerability of the citizens. This shift towards an economic nationalist and ethnicist response to global socio-political change, has gained momentum in the post 2010 period, and represents an advent of a politics of dissatisfaction with neoliberal democratic governments and an embrace of anti-democratic ideology (Foa and Mounk 2016).

Education Reform Implications of a Right-Based Development

Expanded provision for access to education for all was one of the pillars of the 2000 Millennium declaration. The resolution provided for access to a full cycle of primary education for all children. Gender equality in all levels of education also became the goal, with a target of realizing the goals by 2015 (UN General Assembly 2000). As such, while it represented a shift towards a rights-based development approach in the delivery of education services, the focus of the reforms in the education sector did not differ from the priority advanced in the 1948 human rights declaration in terms of the issue of access to education. The international development efforts articulated within the World Bank emphasized the need to ensure access to education for all nationals, particularly in those countries with significant populations impacted by social, economic and political vulnerability (World Bank 2002, 2005; Sperling and Balu 2005).

The World Education Forum meeting in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000, had earlier offered a more comprehensive commitment to education for all, noting that a free and compulsory quality education is a right for every child regardless of their station in life (UNESCO 2000). The World Education Forum also committed itself to expanding comprehensive early childhood education, eliminating gender inequality, providing equitable access to skills development and life-skills training, and working to increase adult literacy rates by 50% (p. 8).

In spite of the commitments coming out of the World Forum on Education, the ability of nations to deliver on the commitment in the first decade of the new millennium remained subjected to the tenets of a neoliberal global economy. It is not surprising that the United Nations and UNESCO focused on primary education and left higher education to be subject to the free-market. The World Bank had consistently pushed for an ideology informed by rate-of-return to public investment in education and a prioritizing of primary education, because of perceived higher social and private returns to investment (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos 2004). The focus on basic education also meant that the developing regions of the world were the geographic regions where any reforms pertaining to universalization of education would take place. The cost-recovery and cost-sharing policies in higher education continued to be pursued globally (Johnstone 2004a; Woodhall 2007), and tuition increases were witnessed in public higher education across nations and growth in the private sector in terms of delivering education services.

Among the reform measures that reflected the spirit of the 2000 Millennium Declaration and the Dakar Framework was the expanded access to basic education across the developed regions of the world. The only shift taking place, in terms of a rights-based development, ensuring the right to primary education and elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education within constitutions across developing countries (Ghai and Cottrell 2011), While not all children are enrolled, many developing countries and regions had made significant gains in expanding access to primary and secondary for previously excluded populations (World Bank 2006).

The development focus on basic education was understood as the major challenge of the developing regions of the world. The human development index continued to demonstrate that developing countries had achieved an almost universal level of access to primary schooling with a significantly high secondary education attainment in the adult populations (UNDP 2013). Average enrollment at primary education in both developed and developing countries was almost 100% and secondary enrollment rapidly expanded within the first decade of the new millennium. In addition, the average of the global population with at least a secondary education attainment for those above 25 years of age then stood at 57% (Majgaard and Mingat 2012; UNDP 2013). Nevertheless, as we entered the second decade of the new millennium, education remained out of reach for a majority of populations in social, political and economic vulnerable position. Of course, post-secondary education remained subject to free-market principles.

Global Reforming in Education as a Sustainable Right

The United Nations 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) went beyond an articulation of rights to encompass the element of sustainability in the global development agenda. The SDGs also spelled out seventeen goals and one hundred and sixty-nine (169) targets that were to be pursued simultaneously, in regards to the realization of human rights for all, gender equality, and the empowerment of all women (United Nations 2015). The SDGs represented a more comprehensive and holistic approach to human development and economic growth that captures the element of sustainability, while redressing the deprivation of exposure to neoliberalism with respect to exclusion and poverty conditions.

The proclamations in the SDGs were forward looking as they committed to address issues of marginalization in all forms, including the economically vulnerable, gender inequality, ability-based exclusion and discrimination, and ethnic marginalization (United Nations 2015). For the first time, proclamations regarding a guarantee of human rights recognized the inequality and deprivation faced by the marginalized and excluded populations in developed regions of the world and inadequate protection to the environment by all. Since then, all members of the United Nations system participating in monitoring the state of the various indicators of sustainable development, with the USA and the United Kingdom leading the way (Sachs et al. 2018; Lynch et al. 2019).

The UNESCO sponsored Education 2030 Incheon Declaration (UNESCO 2015) reiterates the declaration of the United Nations General Assembly to work towards a more equitable and sustainable global development. The SDGs education development commitments, in both the United Nations and UNESCO, were retrospective and prospective in anticipating implementation of interventions and programs that would promote sustainable development for all humanity. On the retrospective front, the proposed global interventions were intended to remedy the failure of governments to provide education for all the citizens. The Incheon declaration had noted that special measures and financial investment were needed to meet the needs of the millions of adults, youth, and children that remained illiterate. Moving forward, the world nations committed to eliminating illiteracy and ensuring the delivery of an inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels (UNESCO 2015; United Nations 2015).

The education sector reforms that have been implemented since the adoption of the MDGs represent a right-based paradigm and focus on expanding access to education with an emphasis on improving quality and learning outcomes in developing regions of the world. As neoliberalism continued to define global capitalism, it has not been surprising that education reform processes of the MDG era were limited to basic education, a focus on outcomes, and on expanding market access in tertiary education. While many countries opened their doors to primary schooling and expanded access to secondary schooling by eliminating user-fees, the donor driven interventions mostly limited their scope to early grade learning (Bentaouet Kattan and Burnette 2004; Graham and Kelly 2018). Teacher recruitment, training, and

incentives were aimed at improving the quality experience for learners and promote achievement (Nielsen 2006).

Conditional cash-transfer programs and food-aid programs were also employed in order to incentivize education participation amongst the economically vulnerable and mobile food-insecure families (Reimers et al. 2006; Gitter and Barham 2008). Poor school feeding programs have demonstrated that they improve enrollment and participation among food-insecure households, with the largest single donor of school-feeding intervention being the World Food Program (Drake et al. 2016). Reforms aimed at improving learner outcomes in basic education were also explored in developed countries as well. Unlike the developing countries context, whose focus was on a basic right to education, the primary policy focus was to prepare students for a twenty-first century economy and global competitiveness. For example, the adoption of the 2001 No Child Left Behind policy in the United States mirrors the global concern of improving learning outcomes for vulnerable children and America's readiness for a twenty-first century economy (United States Congress 2002).

In developing countries, education finance reforms in higher education were meant to expand access to groups that had previously been excluded. Such reforms touched on user-fee policies involving tuition-costs and living expenses for students attending public higher education as marketization of the post-secondary tier of the school system remained in place even with the implementation of MDGs. The expansion of education opportunities from the 1990s allowed for the public university to establish parallel admission tracks for publicly-subsidized and full-fee paying students, most of the later are likely to be from a disadvantaged backgrounds (Canning et al. 2007; Murakami and Blom 2008).

In the developing regions of the world, excluding the non-university sector, student loans were expanded to include students attending both public and private universities While the student loan markets were more mature in the developed countries, the private financing programs in developing regions were nascent and characterized by challenges in uptake (Abdo et al. 2015), with implications for accessibility and affordability regarding economically vulnerable students (Murakami and Blom 2008).

Advances in expanding access to primary education has significantly contributed to reduction in illiteracy rates in developing countries (Chowdhury 1995). Nevertheless, a focus on interventions in adult education continues to be a reflection of the inefficiencies and failures of the formal school systems. Illiteracy rates remain high in developing regions of the world and are found to be considerable in the older populations, with more significant negative life outcomes for isolated illiterate individuals (UNESCO 2018). The MDGs opened up opportunities for a continued fight to eliminate illiteracy, including adult literacy and adult education focused interventions in a decentralizing policy environment (UNESCO 2013).

The MDGs provided for previously excluded youth and adults to be reintegrated into the school system. An examination of case studies from national school systems in sub-Sahara Africa revealed that governments have adopted re-entry and

continuation policies or practices for pregnant learners but do not always enforce compulsory schooling (Birungi et al. 2015). Other policies have addressed the issue of elimination of exposure to gender-based violence, safety, and pregnancy-related discriminatory practices through promotion of learner-friendly environments for girls (UNESCO 2014). Elimination of fees following the adoption of the MDGs has also seen surges in enrollment, with attendant increase in participation for previously marginalized populations (Morgan et al. 2014).

When there was consensus about a global economy and democratization, the task of the school was relatively clear. There has been consensus that a democracy requires well-schooled citizens. But rarely have policy makers confronted the issue of how democratic attitudes are to be developed. How was an institution, the school, that has been traditionally built on hierarchy, authoritarianism, and patriarchy, all antithetical to democratic values, going to adjust itself so that it contributes to globalizing, democratic values and attitudes among the young (Dalin and Rust 1995)? The naïve argument might be that schools were the only institutions that could make the necessary adjustments. We could not rely on the workplace to do the job. Most workplaces do not help youth learn democratic, global values. Employers expect workers to be obedient to arbitrary rules. Factories expect workers to perform a limited number of tasks in a tightly defined manner, and in coordination with all the other tasks being undertaken. We could not rely on religious institutions to instill democratic values. They expect adherents to engage in strict obedience to God's laws and mandates. Even sports are not easily adapted to democratic thinking. Players are usually expected to follow prescribed plays and follow the rules and guidelines of the coach. The home is also not inclined to be democratic. Good parenting is usually defined as strict parenting, where mom and dad are in control and the kids obediently follow their mandates.

The one aspect of our contemporary culture that may claim to be democratizing and globalizing is digital technology. In prior decades such technology has fallen within the realm of national entities, but in the recent past technology has broken away from national boundaries and has become, for better or worse, globalized. The former gatekeepers of information have lost their gatekeeping powers and communications technology has demonstrated that it has the capacity to become instantly viral, to become global in its capacity to race around the world. Information technology has the capacity to assist a single, humble individual or a national tyrant to take advantage of its capabilities.

Having no other options, we must rely on schools to instill global, democratic values. Typically, schools have adopted formal curriculum units to teach youth about formally defined democracies. Kids learn about the various parts of the formal constitution of countries, the processes of government, including laws and governance practices. They learn about citizenship and what it means to be a good citizen. However, most studies suggest schools have not done particularly well in imparting civic knowledge and behavior, mainly because formal learning does not translate well into civic behavior. But today, where these goals are contested, the role of schooling becomes not only contested, but in question. Many would argue

that schooling is, inherently, anti-democratic and because it is generally sponsored by national governments, its curriculum is too often dedicated to the interests of those national sponsoring agencies.

Inclusive Education and Shared Sustainable Prosperity

Education sector reforms that have come into effect since 2015, reflect a paradigm shift towards a more inclusive education sector development and a shared sustainable prosperity. The more recent reforms also reflect a global shift away from the neoliberal ideology. This emerging development paradigm and ideological shift extends the agency and policy reform efforts of the first decade of the twenty-first century and attempts to respond to the education needs of marginalized populations in both the developed and the developing regions. Neoliberalism had resulted in the globalization of inequality and poverty in ways that compromised access to basic services (Ravallion 2003). The present sector reforms are bringing together concerted efforts to meet the education needs of citizens whose voices were unleashed with the anti-economic globalization movements.

Education reforms that have been implemented since the adoption of the SDG are both target and context specific. In school systems, for all United Nations member countries, there is a shift towards expanding access through inclusive practices. Early childhood education, previously not considered an aspect of universal basic education, has now been incorporated into the plan of education for all. Nevertheless, the goal of universal education remains elusive. Many children, especially the most vulnerable, have not yet found access to schools (UNESCO 2016, 2018).

Significant efforts have been made to expand access to pre-school and pre-primary education with variations in the delivery of education services reflecting the unique differences in national context (White and Friendly 2012; van Huizen and Plantenga 2018). For example, the American states of Georgia, Texas, Florida and California have expanded access to pre-kindergarten state-funded programs. New York City has been the first to implement an acceleration towards universal access to pre-kindergarten education (Potter 2015). Pre-kindergarten education covering three to 5 year olds has also been opened in some public primary schools in developing countries of the world (UNESCO 2019).

Attention to the consideration of an inclusive education has been framed more as a function of expanding access to children. The interventions have also recognized that vulnerabilities exists in multiple dimensions for some children. As a result, countries have begun to implement practices that address access to education for children with disabilities by developing inclusive learning environments, pedagogical support structures for learners with special needs, grants and nutrition needs for children from low-socioeconomic background, and education needs of migrant children (UNESCO 2019).

Investment in infrastructure is one other area we have seen being undertaken by countries implementing SDG4. The early childhood education area now benefits from investment in buildings, construction, and rehabilitation of classrooms in developing countries (Roca and Proulx 2016).

Another dimension of the articulation of inclusive education practice is evident in the reforms in higher education that are focused on creating a more inclusive and diverse learning environment. In the US, for example, while diversity has been an issue institutions have grappled for some time. Many institutions now clearly articulate requirements in their mission statements, as well as practices that account for diversity in the composition of their faculty, staff, and student populations (U.S. Department of Education 2016). Universities in Europe have also adopted strategies to maximize diversity (Claeys-Kulik and Jørgensen 2018).

The direction of reforms centered around the issue of access seems to be diverging across countries and is context specific. The Norwegian higher education system is more socially inclusive, compared to the German higher education system owing to its tuition-free policy (Schulze-Cleven and Olson 2017). The discourse on American campuses now embraces a social-justice framework and is moving away from a limited focus on diversity in ways that attempts to find solutions to the conditions of marginalization (Stachowiak 2015). This is reflected in reforms that include the growing trend in some states in the US that have embraced policies that promote access to free or subsidized public education. The focus is mainly on a guaranteed, tuition free, two-years community college education (College Promise Campaign 2019). Private student loans and federal financial aid continues to be accessible to students in US higher education, irrespective of the provider and the nature of the delivery of post-secondary education (Radwin et al. 2018).

In much of the developing world, the higher education finance reforms have mostly centered on expanding access to public funding sources for economically vulnerable populations. (Johnstone 2004a, b). Previous efforts were focused on cost-recovery for students attending public university systems, particularly for publicly subsidized student loans being made available to students qualified as low income (Albrecht and Ziderman 1992). Besides government subsidized student loans, the private sector has increasingly been involved in lending to students, who are participating in private higher education institutions (Johnstone 2004a, b). The MDGs allowed for devolution of resource management in previously centralized governments that embraced representation among minority regions and ethnic minority inclusion in national development (UN General Assembly 2000). More recently, devolved governments have emerged as the most accessible source of grant support to higher education for students from low socio-economic background in the regions. The Kenyan example of the deployment of the Constituency Development Funds for bursary allocation to higher education does illustrate this trend (Ayako 2015).

Summary and Conclusion

The post-Sustainable Development Goals era represents a paradigm and ideological shift in global relationships and in the relationship between citizens and those seeking protection from violence and other forms of indignity. The erosion of the social and economic safety-nets under neoliberalism gave rise to civil and nationalist discontent. In both cases, a shared belief in the exclusion and dispossession of rights by the governments has precipitated the demand for accountability and a recognition of rights to compensatory intervention. The outcome has been two contradictory social paradigms in which nationalist forces advance exclusion, while the rights-based social movement advocates promote an inclusive prosperity agenda. The global education sector reforms reflect a more inclusive development paradigm shift, expanding access to education and eliminating economic barriers to higher education for marginalized populations.

The more recent reforms in the education sector signal a shift away from neoliberalism and towards a mitigated Keynesianism in policy and practice. The SDGs build on the gains of the UN Millennium Development Goals, by allowing for governmental intervention in the delivery of education services. They also expanded the articulation of the relationship between the citizen and the state by centering on rights in national development. While free-market capitalism continues to be the economic ideology, the demarketization of aspects of education services signals a shift away from the practice of neoliberalism that dominated the last 30 years of global development. The education reforms that are being implemented under the SDGs, address issues of access and quality from a multidimensional perspective. For example, basic education has been expanded to include school readiness in the form of universalized pre-schools and early childhood education. They have also paid special attention to the condition of children in difficult circumstances and those for whom participation may be hindered by a compromised learning environment. More and more governments are investing in education infrastructure and teacher supply in order to boost delivery of quality education for all. Elimination of user fees and tuition charges at postsecondary education expands access to previously marginalized socio-economic groups of students. Overall, governments are now more responsive to the rights of their citizens in ways that they have not been since the advent of the unfettered free-market capitalism of the neoliberalism brand.

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