Equality in Education: Fairness and Inclusion

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Edited by

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"I am a person who is unhappy with things as they stand. We cannot accept the world as it is. Each day we should wake up foaming at the mouth because of the injustice of things."

Hugo Claus (1929-2008)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FOREWORD

The editors of this book have worked long and hard to bring together a quality product designed to push our thinking about Equality in Education through a consideration of the notions of fairness and inclusion. Not surprisingly, they have called on some very well regarded authors in the field to help pursue their objective. On reading the book, it readily becomes apparent that the ideas, issues, concerns and approaches suggested in the chapters certainly help us focus on the current situation in schools and why we should be paying more careful attention to influencing policy and practice.

Moving through the book – whether in a linear fashion or not – leads the mind to begin to map some of the dimensions of inclusive education and to, not only, reflect on current practice and policy but, also, to take seriously what it means to develop one's own thinking around the theme of equality. In many ways, this book creates a sense of recursive thinking as the ideas being grappled with by each of the authors link to, as well as build upon, one another in constructive and meaningful ways. The editors have, clearly, thought carefully about what they intended from the structure and the manner in which the chapters tie together to create a coherent whole.

The make-up of this book has an important basis in the essence of equality that is, perhaps, not so immediately obvious. A deliberate choice to create mentoring, sharing and development opportunities for participants through support and collaboration is evident, not only in the range of authors involved but, also, through the ways in which they have been brought together for this project. That sense of equality and, indeed, inclusion extends from the editors themselves through to the chapter authors as well as across the spread of geographic regions represented through the contexts of the different projects. The value of inclusion is also illustrated through the linking of experienced academics with colleagues and students in productive ways across the chapters; something that enlivens the field and helps to extend the knowledge, expertise and overall learning emanating from the project as a whole.

There can be little doubt that the theme of the book highlights the productive tension between what is and what might be. For example, in their chapter *Equity issues in China's college entrance examination policy*, Zhang and Wang note that, "The NCEE [National College Entrance Examination] policy is one of the most influential educational policies in the Chinese educational system. It is also one of the most disputable policies in the current development of Chinese education." That certainly goes to the heart of what it means to take equity and inclusion in education seriously. As the chapters consistently demonstrate, the reality and the rhetoric in this field are not always congruent but it is through productive tension that thoughtful development emerges. In a similar vein, learning through difference also emerges when considered across nations as Marav and Espinoza illustrate in their work when comparing access and equity in higher education in Chile and Mongolia. These

authors, like many other contributors to this book, attempt to better understand the 'why' of the current situation in order to better map the path for future change; a map that is more clearly formed when based on principles of fairness, inclusion and equity.

A key point made in many of the chapters is that greater access to education does not necessarily mean that there is greater equity. There is a need to create enhanced capacity to navigate the system – from all manner of perspectives – but such navigation needs to be informed, meaningful and useful in order to better address disadvantage in its myriad forms. The chapter authors most certainly illustrate their thoughtfulness with respect to such navigation as they outline arguments, ideas, issues and possibilities that not only challenge the status-quo but also offer ways of moving beyond the norm. Anderson, Boyle and Deppeler capture the essence of this movement in their discussion about inclusive education as an evolving construct; one that has moved from a "focus on students with disabilities to encompassing the delivery of education to all". Understanding inclusive education as a dynamic construct is important and this book certainly brings that thinking to the forefront through each of the chapters in powerful ways.

The editors and authors have worked together to develop an informative and helpful study of equity in education. I found this book to be an interesting and engaging read, I trust the same occurs for you.

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HONGZHI ZHANG, PHILIP WING KEUNG CHAN &
CHRISTOPHER BOYLE

OPENING PANDORA'S BOX

Exploring Inequalities In Education

INTRODUCTION

Equality in education is a complex and controversial issue that transcends the field of education and is subject to unique political, economic and cultural factors. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2007) suggests that "a fair and inclusive system that makes the advantages of education available to all is one of the most powerful levers to make society more equitable" (p.10). This belief is generated from its mission, which is to "promote the policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world" (OECD, 2014, par 1). In 2007, the OECD put forward ten practical steps which, it was hoped, would reduce school failure and make society fairer. The report offers an important, comparative perspective on how different countries have handled equity in education. It identified three key areas essential to the delivery of equity in education: the design of education systems, classroom practices, and resourcing. All countries have unique features in their education system. It is important to explore equity issues from a 'within country' perspective as well as from a comparative perspective.

IN THE BEGINNING

Equality in education is not just the average amount of education provided but, also, its distribution across the population. Levin (2003) argues the aim of government policy "cannot and should not be equality in the sense that everyone is the same or achieves the same outcomes" (p. 5). In fact, a state does not have the capacity to ensure that every citizen will achieve the same level of outcome or satisfaction in education. It is, however, able to create reasonable opportunities for people to develop their capacities and to participate fully in society. In other words, a state has the potential to be equal, enabling and empowering for all individuals (Lynch & Baker, 2005). As yet, opportunity is not distributed fairly and therefore, individuals are not afforded an equal chance to compete in society.

Based on the idea of equality in education, a fruitful academic conference was held as part the annual Global Education Systems Day series at the Faculty of Education,

Monash University, in November 2012. It attracted experienced and emerging scholars from 15 countries and regions (Australia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Chile, China, Ethiopia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom, United States of America, Vietnam and Zanzibar) who presented work on education equality issues in their countries. The presentations covered various equity issues such as indigenous and minority groups, religion, equity as a concept, gifted students, social class, gender and rural students, in a range of research fields – mathematics education, education policy, teacher education, language learning and teaching and eLearning, at different levels of education (primary, secondary and tertiary). This event provided a platform for in-depth, academic dialogue on equality in education, not only bringing out new ideas and information on current national events but also challenging existing and dated ideologies. The conference showed that equality in education varies depending on the national contexts examined and that diverse levels of equality exist at different developmental stages of the same national context. The success of this event led to the production of this book.

The OECD has defined term *equity in education* thus:

> Equity in education has two dimensions. The first is fairness, which basically means making sure that personal and social circumstances – for example gender, socio-economic status or ethnic origin – should not be an obstacle to achieving educational potential. The second is inclusion, in other words ensuring a basic minimum standard of education for all – for example that everyone should be able to read, write and do simple arithmetic. The two dimensions are closely intertwined: tackling school failure helps to overcome the effects of social deprivation, which often causes school failure (2007, p. 10).

The dimension of fairness in educational equity refers to the issues of equal opportunities to education, including regional, urban-rural, social class, gender and ethnic equities. The dimension of inclusion in educational equity mainly discusses the issues of equal rights to education, which indicates that the design of the education system must ensure everyone has equal rights to access education. This book discusses these terms from new theoretical perspectives and explores the latest practices in the promotion of educational equity in different national and international contexts.

DESIGN OF THE BOOK

This book takes an alternative approach to available publications on educational equity issues which differentiates it from them. The key feature of this book is the requirement for contributors to compare their findings with other contributors, thus creating close partnerships among this group of authors. Experienced scholars in the field interpret the major theoretical and conceptual issues, the latest research directions and new achievements in the practise of educational equity while the local standpoints of contributors provide diverse views on equity issues. Scholars with similar research

interests from different countries were encouraged to work together on specific topics to form comparative studies. Therefore, the book is structured into three sections: Theory and Practice, Local Perspectives, and Comparative Perspectives.

Section One, as its title indicates, focuses on some theoretical and practical issues with regard to equity and the development of inclusive education in various national and international contexts. This section begins with Gale's *Reimagining Student Equity and Aspiration in a Global Higher Education Field*, which examines widening participation in Australian higher education during the period of the Rudd/Gillard Australian Labor Government (November 2007 – September 2013). Gale focuses on two key elements: 'equity' and 'aspiration' and presents some theoretical and conceptual issues of equity in the context of Australian higher education.

In Chapter 2, *The Ecology of Inclusive Education: Reconceptualising Bronfenbrenner,* Anderson, Deppeler and Boyle discuss an interesting theoretical account of Bronfenbrenner's work as it pertains to equality and equity. This chapter offers an invaluable framework with which to organise environmental factors and understand their influence on inclusivity, whilst allowing for contextual differences within both the educational organisations themselves and the societies in which they exist.

In Chapter 3, entitled *Educational Equality, Equity and Sui Generis Rights in Australian Higher Education: Theorising the Tensions and Contradictions,* Ma Rhea undertakes an analysis of the concepts of, and theories underpinning, both educational equality and equity, using Australian higher education as the example. The author argues for the need for a fundamental reformulation of the engagement of the higher education system with Indigenous peoples through a remobilised concept of commensurability enshrined in a concept of 'both ways' educational choice for Indigenous students.

Considering school teachers through a philosophical and practical lens, Boyle and Heimans, in Chapter 4, *Take Action or Do Nothing: The Educational Dilemma of the Teacher,* suggest that teachers face dilemmas in deciding whether to take action in the interests of students or to implement policy without question. The authors propose that responses to the dilemmas should not be based on a narrowed set of predefined standards but should maintain a stance that works toward an *educational* conceptualisation of education. This places the responsibility to students and education before those of narrowing accountability - derived definitions of what it means to teach and to educate..

Section Two presents local perspectives, providing diversified views on equity issues from different countries and regions. As mentioned earlier, each country has distinctive features in its education system. Therefore, it is important to explore equity issues within these countries and regions.

Given a 'chronic quality problem' of education in many sub-Saharan African states, Outhred, Ngua-Dliwe, Stubberfield, Beavis, Wilkinson and Murphy detail the logic of 'the workbook intervention', describing the development process and implementation challenges in Chapter 5, entitled *Towards Quality as an Equity*

Imperative: Workbook Development, Supply, Utilisation and Quality in the Republic Of South Africa. They further explain the results of the independent, formative evaluation of the utilisation and quality of the workbook. Resonating with other workbook distribution projects within developing country contexts, they find that the major challenge to implementation was distribution. The authors present recommendations towards utilising the resources effectively.

By interpreting the historical development of China's National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), Zhang and Wang discuss equity issues arising from the NCEE policy in Chapter 6, entitled *Equity Issues in China's College Entrance Examination Policy: From the Perspective of a Provincial-Based Enrolment Quota Allocation Policy*. By taking one of the most controversial policies associated with the NCEE - the Province-based Enrolment Quota Allocation Policy as a case study, they find that the equity problems that exist in the current quota allocation policy go against the principle of equal opportunity and, consequently, result in obstacles preventing students obtaining equal chances to go to university.

In Chapter 7, *Prospects and Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education Reform in SAARC countries,* Mullick, Ahmmed and Sharma discuss the development of inclusive education in the eight countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) under the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Based on a critical analysis of research and policies from South Asian countries, the authors identify various challenges that children face in South Asia that impede their rights to quality education, and some of the possible strategies to address the challenges. This chapter has implications for policy makers and policy implementers who have vested interests in implementing inclusive education reform across the nations in South Asia.

Addressing inclusion, in particular the development of educational reforms in Bangladesh, in Chapter 8, *Inclusive Education in Bangladesh: Are the Guiding Principles Aligned with Successful Practices?,* Malak, Begum, Habib, Banu and Roshid analyse how the policies and legislations reflect the notion of inclusive education within the education context of Bangladesh. They identify the practical implications of these policy outlines and to what extent the policy statements are spelt out in practice.

Molla writes, in Chapter 9, *Higher Education in Ethiopia: Widening Access and Persisting Inequalities*, that, while access to higher education in Ethiopia has been widening, inequality persists along the lines of ethnicity, gender, rurality and socio-economic background. He argues that the persistence of inequality in access to and success in higher education is partly attributable to the superficial representation of the problem and subsequent inattentiveness to factors of structural inequalities.

Nguyen, Le, Tran and Nguyen provide insight into the inequality of access to English language education at the primary level between rural and urban areas in Vietnam in Chapter 10, entitled, *Inequality of Access to English Language Learning in Primary Education in Vietnam: A Case Study*. They find that inequality

of access comes from the teaching and learning conditions and methods, as well as the level of engagement of different stakeholders. Their suggestions are offered to help bring English to all learners, regardless of any social background or economic divide.

The last paper in this section is contributed by Chan and Haq Kabir, entitled *Education Across Borders in Hong Kong: Impacts and Solutions,* which focuses on cross-border students, known as 'transfronterizos', specifically those who cross the border between China and Hong Kong for their school or pre-school education. Chan and Haq Kabir describe the impacts that such a movement of students has on various stakeholders, including governments, schools and teachers, local parents/students, and Chinese parents and their children. Their discussions centre on the general issue of student mobility in countries other than the students' home country that occurs under the impact of globalisation.

Section Three consists of three chapters. Each chapter is contributed by scholars who have similar research interests but are located in two different countries. This section is important because it brings these scholars' work together as they apply a comparative approach to specific topics.

In Chapter 12, entitled *Equity and Access to Higher Education: A Comparative Perspective from Chile and Mongolia*, Marav and Espinoza provide a comparative analysis of trends in equity of access to higher education between two developing countries. These two countries share some similarities, such as a market-oriented economy, which have deeply influenced their education systems. The authors find that educational policies have been addressing inequities among students and improving the quality of higher education to meet not only labour market demands but, also, global standards in both countries. However, they question their countries' ability to access quality education through a programme which has value in the labour market.

Chapter 13, *Foreign Language Anxiety in Relation to Gender Equity in Foreign Language Learning: A Comparative Study between Australia and Indonesia* is co-authored by Hasan and Fatimah. They examine gender differences in foreign language anxiety and compare foreign language anxiety experienced by Indonesian learners of English in Indonesia and Australia. The authors assess levels of anxiety (according to the three dimensions of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) and patterns of anxiety, and study the differences between the contexts of language learning, comparing anxiety of students who learnt English in Indonesia with that of student who studied English in Australia.

The final contribution in this section is Chapter 14, *e-Learning as a Mediating Tool for Equity in Education in Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar.* Mayan, Ismail and Al-Shahrani provide an interesting account of how the use of e-Learning can address equity issues in the two countries discussed, especially for women who are otherwise less able to access education. This chapter explores how e-Learning can be a mediating tool to equalise higher education access and opportunities in Saudi

Arabia and Zanzibar and how, at the same time, it may help to overcome a particular male/female division of labour.

CONCLUSION

We wish you well in using the rich content of this book for teaching and researching. It provides a multidimensional perspective, investigating various issues on equality in education in broad national and international arenas. We hope that this book will inspire your thinking of conceptual and theoretical issues of equality in education. We endeavour to broaden your understanding of equality in education with a number of practical cases located in more than 12 countries and regions.

As one of the distinguishing features of this book, we anticipate that scholars with similar research interests will benefit from the comparative approach. We hope that more scholars in the field of educational equity will work collaboratively in the future to enrich the current body of knowledge.

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SECTION ONE

THEORY AND PRACTICE

TREVOR GALE

1. REIMAGINING STUDENT EQUITY AND ASPIRATION IN A GLOBAL HIGHER EDUCATION FIELD

INTRODUCTION

Widening participation in higher education (HE) is now a key ambition of government policy in many countries around the globe. For most OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) nations, expanding HE provision is the policy instrument for producing more knowledge workers, needed to gain a competitive advantage in the global knowledge economy, particularly in the wake of losing industrial economic dominance to China, India and other rapidly developing nations (Spence, 2011: xv). In addition, the World Bank and other transnational politico-economic organizations now tie their financial support for developing nations (e.g. in Africa and Asia) to the expansion of HE (Molla & Gale, in press), as a way of achieving poverty reduction and economic growth (World Bank, 2002). For nations with a social inclusion agenda, HE expansion is also justified in terms of increasing the participation of traditionally under-represented groups, although achieving expansion in OECD nations is itself increasingly reliant on being more socially inclusive. Universal participation (Trow, 1974; 2006) has become the new social imaginary for HE (Taylor, 2002; Gale & Hodge, in press), similar in scope and significance to the introduction of compulsory schooling in the mid 1800s.

Illustrative of this global phenomenon, this chapter examines widening participation in Australian HE during the period of the Rudd/Gillard Australian Labor Government (November 2007 – September 2013). The focus is on two key elements: 'equity' (the term used in Australia to denote a specific form of 'social inclusion') and 'aspiration' (a term used more generally in OECD HE systems). Support for equity was revived in Australian HE policy in 2009 by the Australian Government's target to increase the participation of students from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds to 20% of the undergraduate student population by 2020. At the same time, aspiration was introduced as an object of policy by the Government's target to increase the bachelor degree attainment of 25-34 year olds to 40% by 2025 (Australian Government, 2009). In proclaiming these targets (known as the 20/40 targets) the Government named them as related, with the second reliant on the first. Yet neither is on track to being achieved (Sellar et al., 2011; Birrell et al., 2011; Gale & Parker, 2013) and both are now subject to review by the newly elected (September, 2013) conservative Australian Government.

Notwithstanding that review, the premise for this chapter is that failure to adequately progress towards the 20/40 targets in Australian HE is, in part, the result of a limited sociological imagination (Mills, 1959) informing government policy, producing narrow conceptions of equity and aspiration. Mills describes the sociological imagination in terms of relations between private troubles and public issues. This is not simply about recognizing the size differentials of micro and macro activity – the particular and the general, the local and the global, and so on – but understanding troubles and issues, private and public, as implied in each other. For Mills, this is the sociological imagination, the possibility that the same social reality can at once be a personal trouble of milieu (of one's surroundings) and also a public issue of social structure, although not all personal troubles are indicative of public issues and not all public issues are personally troubling.

The absence or distortion of such imagination is evident in current Australian HE policy in at least three interrelated ways: widespread trouble is misrecognized or misrepresented (cf. Bourdieu, 1977); the elevation of personal troubles as public issues is not to scale or is out of proportion with the identified trouble; and policy makers, in the naming of public issues, have become trouble makers. For example, what seems evident from the second imagination distortion is that HE policy – now focused, at least in part, on addressing students' educational disadvantages – elevates private troubles to the level of public issues, only insofar as the identification of private troubles for policy attention and not, as we might imagine, to consider how public institutions and systems produce these 'troubles' and how these institutions and systems could be differently configured so that they do not. Dean Burnett, a columnist for *The Guardian*, has made similar observations about the UK Government's 'aspiration raising' agenda:

> David Cameron has recently pointed out that the reason there are so few non-white, non-middle class people in top jobs is because they don't have sufficiently high aspirations. Never mind crushing inequality, obvious prejudice and a stranglehold on well-paid jobs by the privately educated. All of this would be irrelevant if those from less affluent backgrounds just wanted to succeed more. (Burnett, 2013)[1]

Burnett's commentary is in response to Cameron's solution to structural inequality, that: 'You've got to get out there and find people, win them over, get them to raise aspirations, get them to think they can get all the way to the top' (Cameron, 2013)[2]. In this account, the way to overcome structural inequality is to help people address their private troubles; that is the extent of the public issue.

The eviction of Beijing's homeless people from the city in the lead up to the 2008 Olympic games is also illustrative of this distortion of private trouble / public issue relations. Before the games, homelessness was confined to the personal circumstances of individuals, a consequence of their own private troubles. But in the context of the games, homelessness 'became' a public issue. The homeless stood in the way of venue constructions but more importantly their presence challenged

the nation's human rights credentials, revealing underlying structural issues. Mills has written similarly about the relationship between personal troubles and public issues evident in unemployment, war, divorce (and 'unhappy' marriages generally), and the metropolis or 'megalopolis'. I could equally write about my own troubles on finishing school, of facing the prospect of missing out on accessing HE given my average academic results and near non-existent financial resources. Yet these troubles were reframed by an incoming Whitlam Government's restructuring of 1970s Australian HE, including the creation of more university places – thereby redefining minimum entry requirements – the removal of tuition fees and the introduction of a means-tested allowance. Had I graduated from school the year before, I would have been 'out in the cold'. Instead, HE access was transformed just at the moment I sought entry.

This sociological imagination informs the chapter's analysis of definitions of equity and aspiration mobilized in the current HE widening participation movement. The first section provides an account of how equity has been defined in Australian HE policy and then considers the limitations of this definition in the context of an increasingly global field of HE. The interplay between personal trouble and public issue is a primary interest. Equity is at once conceived as a public response to the private troubles of individuals and specific groups, while also contributing to the private troubles of these individuals and groups through limited conceptions of social-structural issues. The argument is that HE is being restructured – globalized – raising new public issues and (potentially) renewed private troubles that challenge equity, although this is largely unacknowledged by current policy. The second section of the chapter considers definitions of aspiration. Similar to homelessness at the time of the Beijing Olympics, the aspiration troubles of individuals and specific groups are escalated to the level of public issue when they reveal problems with structural arrangements. That is, there are some who believe that the benefits of HE are not appreciated by everybody and – perhaps because – the benefits of HE are not equally (understood as) beneficial, although this too is based on a false assumption that students from under-represented groups lack aspiration for HE (cf. Gale et al., 2013).

EQUITY: TARGETING PARTICIPATION

The need to pursue equity in Australian HE is often justified in Bourdieuian terms: to counteract the reproduction of advantage and disadvantage in education, society and culture (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Thus, Australia's National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education was founded in 2008 on the belief that:

> … social systems (including education systems) tend to produce unequal outcomes (advantage and disadvantage) and that in part this is because individuals' starting positions and the processes involved in the production of social and economic outcomes are unfair. In this context, a commitment to

> equity is a commitment to adjusting social systems for socially just means and ends. In short, *equity is a strategy*: (a) to achieve (more) socially just ends; and (b) is informed by a theory [or theories] about why and how a particular social system is not just. (National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education 2011: v; emphasis added)

Equity strategy has a long history in Australian HE (Gale & Tranter, 2011), with its most recent definition formalised in the 1990 Australian Government policy statement, *A Fair Chance for All*. The Government's intention at the time was:

> … to ensure that Australians from all groups in society have the opportunity to participate successfully in higher education. This will be achieved by changing the balance of the [university] student population to reflect more closely the composition of society as a whole (1990: 8) … [with particular emphasis on] improve[ing] participation in higher education of people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. (DEET, 1990: 14)

Since 1990, equity – the identification, problematisation and redressing of under-representation – has become the strategy to advance the Government's social inclusion agenda in HE[3]. To this end, A Fair Chance for All identified six target or equity groups, which were believed to be under-represented in Australian HE3: people from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds, Indigenous Australians, people from regional and remote areas, people with disabilities, people from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB), and women in non-traditional areas.[4] The subsequent 1994 report, Equity and General Performance Indicators in Higher Education (Martin, 1994), provided statistical definitions for these groups, which has allowed for their annual monitoring. Informed by these definitions, equity is now deemed to be achieved when the representation in HE of the target group is proportional to the group's representation within the general population. For example, 25% of the Australian population are statistically defined as being from low socioeconomic status backgrounds. Thus, their equitable representation within HE is achieved when they constitute 25% of the university student population. The Martin Report (1994) also defined equitable representation for each of the target groups in terms of student access, participation, success and retention, which have formed the basis of Australian Government reports on the HE sector since the 1990s.

Yet there are questions emerging about the usefulness of 'equity' as a concept and strategy in pursuing social inclusion in HE into the future. In a global HE field, governments cannot mandate the value ascribed to resources that are specific to the field of HE, namely its academic capital, because of the flows of finance, workers and ideas across borders. Maton (2005) has noted that the autonomy of HE as a field is far more resilient to influence from outside the field (i.e. challenges to 'relational' autonomy) than it is to installing outside actors into positions of power within the field (i.e. challenges to "positional" autonomy). However, on both fronts, the autonomy of HE is strengthened by the field's globalization, particularly at the elite

end. As Marginson (2008, p. 305) observes in regard to the 'Global Super-League' of universities, 'their agency freedom is enhanced by the globalization of knowledge.' In such circumstances, current government policy would seem of limited value. The ways we currently define and attempt to realize equity are fast approaching their use-by dates.

These concerns with equity are with both its quantitative and qualitative aspects. In Mills' terms, a quantitative account of equity has a reductive 'quality' that emphasizes the personal troubles of equity groups whereas a more qualitative account tends to create space for the public issues of equity to be included in policy and practice explanations. At the same time, quantitative indicators of equity in HE (e.g. expressed in enrolments, progression and completion rates) are easy to grasp and to channel into public policy narratives. Whereas, qualitative accounts of equity are more invisible, personal and difficult to measure and thus not easily taken up within public policy arenas. These are issues explored in the following sections, particularly in relation to equity and forms of HE: specifically, in relation to which qualifications, which institutions, which disciplines.

Troubling Equity's Quantification

In the current Australian context, there is an explicit equity target for the participation of low SES students in HE, even if this target is pitched below what is technically equitable (i.e. at 20% rather than 25%; Australian Government 2009). There are also implicit equity targets with respect to the retention, success and completion of people from under-represented groups. This is the implied reasoning behind maintaining comparative performance data over the last two decades. The recent Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (Behrendt et al., 2012) made these implicit targets explicit, recommending parity (i.e. equity) targets for Indigenous student retention and completion. Because the current pursuit of equity generates a numerical accounting, it is an attractive concept for informing HE policy in the current 'policy by numbers' approach to governance (Lingard, 2011) and the audit society more generally (Power, 1997; 1999). Expressed as a proportion, it is relatively easy to determine whether equity is being achieved and it is useful in driving practice towards these ends. It is also useful for challenging policy and practice to expand the application of equity to other parts of the HE system: e.g. applied to target-group retention and completion ratios but also to fields of education, undergraduate and postgraduate study, and university types. For example, quite apart from their underrepresentation across the Australian HE system as a whole, there are also inequities in the concentration of low SES students in certain fields (e.g. Education, Nursing and Engineering), in undergraduate study, and in low status institutions (Gale & Parker, 2013).

However, it is important to recognize that equity means proportional representation within a bounded system; in this case, within Australia and its HE system or parts of that system (e.g. undergraduate study). These system boundaries are becoming

increasingly porous. Australian universities now operate in a global HE field, as do most universities in OECD nations, evident in their participation in global competition and their location within world rankings. It is Australia's more elite universities – those in which target groups are most under-represented (see Gale & Parker, 2013) – which participate most fully and successfully in the global HE field. Similarly, it is students from high SES backgrounds who are most likely to seek HE beyond the nation.

A strategy is emerging among the world's elite in the face of rising HE participation, illustrated in the following comments of a high SES student from England pursuing an undergraduate degree in the US:

> There is so much talk in the newspaper of the devaluing of degrees, so I think that this is a way of making your CV stand out a little more. You didn't just get a degree, you went half way round the world to get a degree. … I suppose I looked at the Ivy League universities in the US. If I was going to make the trek over here and give up Cambridge, it needed to be something that was equally enjoyable and taxing and look(ed) good on my CV. (Student in Findlay & King, 2010: 28)

The Institute of International Education's Atlas of Student Mobility indicates that the number of HE students studying outside their country of origin increased from 2 million in 2001 to 3 million in 2008, with every indication that these numbers are continuing to rise (Institute of International Education, 2010). The flow is not simply from developing to developed nations. The exact number of Australians pursuing university degrees 'outside' the Australian HE system is unknown. However, they are most likely to be from high SES backgrounds. Aside from refugees, Bauman (1998) suggests that geographical mobility has now become the most significant marker of social distinction. Irrespective of the numbers involved, that high SES Australians are increasingly seeking to maintain their status by undertaking degrees elsewhere starts to undermine the strength of equity as a strategy for pursuing social inclusion in Australian HE. The system is no longer bounded by the nation state. Nation-bound proportional representation loses its equity potency when the Australian elite sends its youth to Harvard, Yale, Oxford and Cambridge.

Governments are not without influence in these matters. They can set targets for equity and link these to institutional funding, as per Rudd/Gillard Australian Government policy. And their influence can be extended through agreements with other governments and organisations. But the flows of people, ideas, information, institutions, capital, and so on, across (state and national) boundaries (cf. 'space of flows'; Castells, 1989) are so rapid and widespread that the extent of this influence – as stand-alone states – is necessarily limited. At some point in the future equity may be achieved for target groups within Australian HE but it may not be achieved in relation to the HE of Australians as a whole. We need to explore new policy settings for equity in these emerging times, for governments, systems and universities. This includes but is not limited to Australia's equity responsibilities. Other nations and transnational organisations have similar responsibilities to think globally with respect to equity.

Qualifying Equity Issues

Rethinking equity also requires some qualification. Social inclusion in HE is not simply about access, participation and completion; i.e. 'bums on seats' (Gale, 2012). It is also about access to, participation in and completion of particular forms of HE. That is, the question of equity needs to shift from just access, to include a consideration of what is being accessed. This qualitative dimension to equity tends to be under-explored in policy and practice, although there has been some gathering of pace in the development of: (1) university student support services (including course advice, student decision-making support and other co-curricular activities such as orientation activities) – i.e. first generation First Year in Higher Education (FYHE) approaches – and of (2) enhanced curricula activities (including collaborative institutional curricula) – i.e. second generation FYHE approaches (Wilson, 2009). These developments are important but they tend to leave untouched dominant (inequitable) conceptions of HE, and thus unexamined what under-represented groups potentially bring to HE (Gale, 2012) and how HE serves their interests. In Mills' (1959) terms, the emphasis remains on private troubles – on how to ameliorate these – to the exclusion of public issues about the structuring of HE itself. Certainly there is the creation of more spaces in HE institutions for new kinds of 'bodies' but less consideration has been given to what these students 'embody'. Proportional representation is not all that can be said about equity in HE, or indeed in any field. Numerical accounts of population groups do not fully or adequately represent the 'spaces of capabilities' such as freedom and agency (Sen, 1992). It is not just that they do not; they cannot.

That is, to be equitable, the expansion agenda in HE also needs to expand current conceptions of the capabilities of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. All students come to university with particular and important understandings of the world and not as empty vessels (Freire, 1996). Acknowledging this involves engaging with who people are, in particular with how they themselves name who they are and in recognizing the value of what they bring to their interactions with others (Gale, 2009; Gale & Tranter, 2011). Dei (2010) has argued this in terms of 'epistemological equity'; Marginson (2009) in terms of "equality of respect". Both target the specific resources of the HE field, its academic capital. As Dei explains:

> The question of how to create spaces where multiple knowledges can co-exist in the Western academy is central; especially so, since Eurocentric knowledge subsumes and appropriates other knowledges without crediting sources. At issue is the search for epistemological equity. (Dei, 2008, p. 8)

Epistemological equity thus calls into question the nature of HE itself. It challenges the exclusionary practices of disciplines and disciplinary fields in the production and legitimation of certain knowledge forms and ways of knowing, to the exclusion of or superiority to others (which are often the preserve of under-represented groups). It suggests that excellence without equity is a questionable excellence (Milem,

2003). In the absence of such equity, 'the quality and texture of the education we [universities] provide will be significantly diminished' (Association of American Universities, 1997).

Connell (2007) makes a similar argument for 'southern theory', arguing for a repositioning of centre and peripheral relations in the realm of knowledge. A southern theory of HE (Gale, 2012) would suggest that HE needs to be refashioned to serve the interests of those who access it, informed by students' own aspirations for their futures rather than simply the aspirations of governments. Sen (2009) refers to this imperative as the opportunity aspect of freedom: the freedom to pursue one's own objectives, to 'decide to live as we would like and to promote the ends that we may want to advance' (2009: 228). Opportunity that goes beyond '"culmination" outcomes" (what a person ends up with [e.g. a degree, a job, etc.])" … [to include] "comprehensive outcomes" … the way the person reaches the culmination situation (for example, whether through his own choice or through the dictates of others)' (Sen, 2009: 230).

ASPIRATION: TARGETING ATTAINMENT

Aspiration, a second key concept in widening participation policy, is a relatively recent inclusion in Australian HE. While recognized in the late 1970s as an important condition for university entry (Anderson et al., 1980), it was seen to be outside the purview of HE policy until the recent Bradley Review (2008) and the Australian Government's policy response (2009).

In current policy speak, the primary reason that student aspiration for HE is of concern is because of its potential impact on the nation's economic aspirations. Australia's economy is the envy of the developed world, one of the few that did not go into recession at the time of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, largely due to the nation's robust export mining industry. At the same time, the Government was concerned that the nation's economic future should not simply rely on the mining industry, instead putting its faith in its competitive participation in a global knowledge economy. Compared with other OECD nations, the proportion of Australians with bachelor degrees is quite low (Bradley et al., 2008). Thus, in order to be competitive in this economy the proportion of Australians (particularly 25-34 year olds) holding a bachelor degree needs to increase, which will require greater participation in HE by people from disadvantaged backgrounds who are currently represented as having low aspirations for HE.

In this account, aspiration is a relatively simple and individual issue. The current policy solution is to raise, increase or build the aspirations for university study of people from low SES backgrounds. For example, two of the current competitive grants funded by the Australian Government's Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) – both named 'Aspire' and borrowed from the UK context – seek to 'motivate students from low SES backgrounds', 'challenging the traditional attitudes of people from low SES backgrounds towards higher education'

(emphasis added)[5]. Similar programs have sprung up in disadvantaged schools throughout Australia, sponsored by government funds. But as Spohrer (2011: 58) notes:

> … the policies of 'raising aspiration' have a strong tendency to promote cultural and psychological explanations and solutions to persisting inequalities. Although reference is made to the material conditions in which young people grow up, these circumstances are not addressed by the proposed measures. Instead, they include guidance, information, and behaviour change – solutions that are targeted mainly at individuals or their families.

Apart from the individualisation of aspiration, the trouble with this approach is that the concerns of government have been elevated to the level of public issue by making trouble for those who currently do not share the government's agenda. The troubles of low socioeconomic status now include their perceived low aspirations for HE. What was once not possible (i.e. going to university) is now possible, and being possible is to be desired; desire is held in check by the 'right' values (Butler, 1987: 21). Yet the distinction between desire and possibility remains important: for the advantaged, possibility is mediated by desire but for the disadvantaged, desire is mediated by possibility.

However, research is emerging that suggests aspiration might not be the problem for students from low SES backgrounds (and other target groups) that the Australian Government and Australian universities imagine it to be. A significant body of research is now emerging, which suggests that a large proportion of students from low SES schools – whether in city or regional/remote areas – do aspire to HE. For example, a recent survey of over 2000 students from secondary schools in Melbourne's low SES western suburbs found that around 75% of students from these schools already aspire to go to university (Bowden & Doughney, 2010; see also Prosser et al., 2008). Data from The Australian Survey of Student Aspirations (TASSA) – implemented in 2012/13 in Central Queensland secondary schools with over 200 low SES students in Years 9 and 10 – show similar results, with over 67% recording aspirations to attend university in the future (Gale, et al. 2013)[6]. Although the differences are small, regional/remote areas appear to contract students' aspirations for HE, particularly regional/remote males. Even so, these levels of aspiration for HE remain high; much higher than the policy rhetoric suggests.

High levels of aspiration for HE by low SES students, combined with their below parity participation in HE, imply that the problem is something other than a lack of aspiration for university study. Considerable international research on student aspiration is now in progress (e.g. in the UK, see Archer et al., 2007; Burke, 2012; Watts & Bridges, 2006), to which several Australian researchers have contributed (e.g. Bok, 2010; Sellar & Gale, 2011; Smith, 2011; Sellar et al., 2011; Sellar, 2013; Zipin, Sellar, Brennan & Gale, in press). One line of inquiry suggests that aspiration is a 'navigational capacity' (Appadurai, 2004; Sellar & Gale, 2011). Students from low SES backgrounds typically have diminished navigational capacities – the result

of their limited archives of experience – with which to negotiate their way towards their aspirations. They are informed by a 'tour' knowledge of HE pathways – reliant on the 'hot' (Ball & Vincent, 1998) and sometimes errant knowledge and direction of others – rather than the 'map' knowledge of their high SES peers (de Certeau, 1984; Gale et al., 2013) who are 'in the know' and know the right people. Appadurai (2004) similarly describes the poor as having more brittle aspirations and sparse aspirational nodes – subject to long distance journeys between where they are now and where they want to go, and with 'extremely weak resources where the terms of recognition are concerned' (2004: 66). This different understanding of aspiration has implications for the objectives and activities of university outreach programs, to resource students' navigational capacities and to recognise the value of the socio-cultural resources for aspiring they have at hand.

A further problem with how aspiration is conceived within Australian policy and much practice is that it tends to confine students to populist and ideological conceptions of the good life. These are the out-workings of beliefs and assumptions of the dominant that circulate as natural and common sense. They are the aspirations with which students often respond when asked 'what do you want to be when you grow up?' They are the responses that students know they should give to such inquiry, the responses deemed to carry the most value. Drawing on Bourdieu, Zipin et al. (in press) refer to these as doxic aspirations. In the context of HE, less legitimate aspirations by people from low SES backgrounds are derived from their biographical and historical conditions. These are informed by and re-assert individuals' social-structural positions in society, particularly their assumed deficits in relation to and by the dominant. Zipin et al. (in press) refer to these as habituated aspirations. University outreach programs that reinforce doxic aspirations and demonize habituated aspirations fail to recognise the value and legitimacy of other aspirations for the 'good life' and that HE itself contributes to the aspirational 'problem' by assuming that it offers the best possible route or destination.

CONCLUSION

The above limitations to how 'equity' and 'aspirations' are conceived and enacted within widening participation policy in Australian HE provide considerable challenges to achieving social justice. Addressing them requires their reconception along lines outlined above and new policy and practice commitments: to expand the application of equity to other parts of the HE system, including and centrally to the nature of HE itself, and to recognize and resource the aspirations of low SES students (and other target groups) for HE without these aspirations being confined to or by HE. But in social justice terms these commitments provide little more than affirmation. Whereas Fraser (1997) has noted that transformative remedies for inequitable arrangements require disturbing and restructuring the underlying framework that generates them. I have argued in this chapter that such transformation

requires a sociological imagination and that, in the absence of this, the limits we place on public-private relations limits policy responses to structural inequalities in education.

One limitation is in how policy 'problems' are represented in order to match particular 'solutions'. For example, education systems produce inequalities; even a narrow focus on large-scale numerical data sets demonstrates this. Hence, focusing on the disadvantaged at the pointy end of these arrangements, as a way of redressing the problem, seems an odd thing to do. Oddly too, people from advantaged backgrounds are not considered as part of the problem, even though advantage and disadvantage are relational concepts. As well as limiting policy responses, limited sociological imaginations also exclude matters from policy focus. In this case, excluded from the Government's concerted effort to increase the number of HE graduates – of the disadvantaged and for the nation – is an account of students' capabilities. Excluding the 'space of capabilities,' as Sen (1992) refers to it, limits the capacity of policy to support quality-of-life decision variations.

These two limitations hide from view that aspirations for HE are not to everyone's taste. As Taylor (1985: 255) puts it, 'we can experience them as not ours because we see them as incorporating a quite erroneous appreciation of our situation and of what matters to us.' Bourdieu et al. reads the same sentiment into observations by the disadvantaged that 'this isn't for the likes of us' (1990: 17), which is an assessment of what is desirable as much as of what is possible. For example, greater capacities for mobility tend to translate into advantage in education contexts. However, students not only vary in their capacities for mobility; their differences are also measured in how mobility is valued. Different patterns of mobility signal different cultural tastes, although mobility is not simply the taste of the advantaged and immobility the taste of the disadvantaged. It can be just as advantageous to be in a position that requires everyone to come to you. The best place to be, in relation to others, might be exactly where you are. It is these tastes for im/mobility, the aesthetic judgments made about them, which differently position students as advantaged and disadvantaged, rather than simply the im/mobility itself.

Increasing the capacities of the disadvantaged to navigate education systems – to be mobile – including enabling access to the required social, cultural, financial resources and experiences, is an important consideration. But its limited view of desirable futures leaves unimagined students' capacities to imagine and pursue different futures, in keeping with their own 'archives' of experience (Appadurai, 2004) and aesthetic judgments. The possibility of HE for the disadvantaged is now open to policy intervention. Not so variation on what is desirable, what is tasteful. The conditional character of current policy, constrained by economic and social norms of the dominant, 'exclude[s] the possibility of desiring the impossible' (Bourdieu et al., 1990: 16). It is this desirability of HE and what kind of HE is desirable, that now needs to be subjected to the rigours of a sociological imagination of equity and aspiration.

NOTES

1. See http://www.theguardian.com/science/2013/nov/15/motivation-and-aspiration-whats-the-point?CMP=fb_gu
2. See http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-24936416
3. The qualification here is that 'under-representation' in and of itself is not a sufficient condition for receiving 'special treatment' (e.g. the under-representation of males in teacher education courses is not usually seen to be an equity issue for males). For a group to be designated an equity group, it also needs to be socially, economically and/or educationally disadvantaged in one way or another.
4. The first three of these were re-affirmed as target groups in the 2009 Australian Government policy statement, Transforming Australia's Higher Education System.
5. See www.innovation.gov.au/HigherEducation/Equity/HigherEducationParticipationAndPartnershipsProgram/Pages/default.aspx
6. Central Queensland is one of the most concentrated low SES areas in the nation.

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2. THE ECOLOGY OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Reconceptualising Bronfenbrenner

INTRODUCTION

Globally, student populations in government-run schools are becoming increasingly diverse (see Gonski, 2011; Rashid & Tikly, 2010; Voltz, Sims & Nelson, 2010). Simultaneously, students are being excluded from schools, or placed into segregated educational settings in increasing numbers. Both the social and economic costs of disengagement and exclusion from, and inequalities within, education systems have been well documented (see OECD, 2010; Snow & Powell, 2012; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010). The causes of these issues are complex and many sit beyond the boundaries of the school fence. Despite this, governments place much of the responsibility for delivering an equitable education with schools (Wrigley, Thomson & Lingard, 2012). While this may, in many ways, seem an impossible task, "just because schools can't do everything doesn't mean they cannot achieve something" (Thomson, Lingard & Wrigley, 2012, p. 20). Thomson *et al*. (2012) maintain schools' efforts towards equity can only be enacted through *change reform*, with an equitable redistribution of resources, and through recognition and valuing of difference. This task is challenging as schools work in tightly controlled education systems with high levels of accountability and expectations for continued improvement. However, the consequences of not providing an equitable education system are far reaching (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010). So, the question no longer is *should* a quality education be provided to all, but rather, *how* this change reform can be enacted (Jackson, 2008).

EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE: MOVING TOWARDS A FAIRER SOCIETY

More than 300 years BC, in his Socratic dialogue The Republic, Plato argued the importance of a formalised system of education for the development of a fair and just society. He recognised the valuable benefaction of a society providing an apposite education to its citizens and noted the influence it had in determining the direction one's life would take. In the more than 2,300 years since Plato's dialogue, many infamous works have been published contesting the importance of education in the development of socially just and fair societies (More's Utopia, 1516 and Rousseau's Emile, 1762 are just two examples). Despite this, today's

educationalists, philosophers and others are still arguing the case for education and its role in promoting fairness and social justice; an increasingly important argument as the gap between the 'haves' and 'have nots' continues to grow, globally (OECD, 2010; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010).

Recently, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2012) established that "an equitable education system can redress the effect of broader social and economic inequalities" (p. 15). In an earlier paper prepared for the OECD, Field, Kuczera and Pont (2007) identified and described two dimensions of an 'equitable education'; the first, fairness, stipulates that personal and social circumstances (such as gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status) should not present obstacles to educational achievement, while the second dimension, inclusion, ensures that all individuals reach a basic minimum standard of education. The assumption may then be drawn that if a society can provide an equitable educational system, it is on its way towards a fairer and more socially just existence. This is supported by Gonski (2011), in his final report into school funding in Australia, where he states, "As many researchers have found, higher levels of education are associated with almost every positive life outcome – not only improved employment and earnings, but also health, longevity, successful parenting, civic participation and social cohesion" (p. 19). Taking it further, The World Declaration on Education for All (UNESCO, 1990) concluded that "education can help ensure a safer, healthier, more prosperous and environmentally sound world, while simultaneously contributing to social, economic, and cultural progress, tolerance, and international cooperation" (p. 2). Education systems have a responsibility to promote social justice through the equitable distribution of quality education to all children, a system based on fairness and inclusion – known as inclusive education (IE).

DEFINING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

An Evolving Construct

Inclusion and *IE* are terms used frequently within education research, policy and programs globally, creating "competing discourses through which meaning and understandings differ" (Graham & Slee, 2008, p. 277). There is general agreement that IE should be understood as a dynamic, rather than a static, process: it is "a journey, not a destination" (Topping, 2012, p. 9). Recently, the term has moved from a focus on students with disabilities to encompassing the delivery of education to all (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). Nevertheless, there is much discourse debating the semantics of IE and, while it should be acknowledged this has created and continues to create confusion for those responsible for its delivery (Graham & Slee, 2008), Wrigley *et al*. (2012) and Slee (2011) attest it is time to shift the focus from defining IE to that of challenging educational exclusion. Even so, when writing about IE, a definition of the construct is necessary and, for the purpose of this chapter, IE will refer to "a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all

learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education" (UNESCO, 2005, p. 13).

Inclusive Education and the Individual Learner

The past two decades have seen the publication of much research examining what constitutes effective IE for the individual (see Black-Hawkins, 2010; Booth & Ainscow, 2002). Three factors consistently appear across much of the literature, though in varying forms and under the guise of differing terminology. It should be noted these are presented in no particular order and one does not hold greater value or weighting than another. The first is participation. Booth and Ainscow (2002) define this concisely in the Index for Inclusion as "learning alongside others and collaborating with them in shared learning experiences. It requires active engagement with learning and having a say in how education is experienced" (p. 3). The second is achievement, not in terms of standardised scores but, rather, against articulated, learning goals. A student must achieve 12 months' worth of learning for 12 months' worth of schooling (Hattie, 2012). It is important to note here, as pointed out by Guskey (2013), that achievement in education should be seen as a "multifaceted construct" (p. 29): different learning or curriculum areas require different sets of knowledge and skills to be demonstrated. The final factor is value or rather, value of person. Aspin (2007) describes value of person as being when one is accepted, respected and seen as important and capable of doing. It is demonstrated through action and relationships with others.

All students within an IE environment must be participating, achieving and valued. This will (and should) look different for different students in different classrooms, in different schools, across different educational jurisdictions. While it is acknowledged that this presents a challenge for teachers, schools and policy makers alike, the consequences of not including all students are significant.

THE OUTS AND INS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

A Focus on Exclusion

Exclusion can present itself directly, through exclusion within schools (from particular lessons, peers groups, and/or other school day activities) or segregation from the local school into a separate school setting (such as those still existing in many countries for students with a disability), as well as more subtly through practices such as labelling (see Boyle, 2014; Lauchlan & Boyle, 2007, for a discussion on the impact of labelling). Slee (2011) describes exclusion as an opportunity to "separate and sort children into their allotted tracks, into the streams that assign them to unequal destinations" (p. 151). The ramifications of these unequal destinations are far reaching. They impact on both the excluded individual and on society as a whole, through lower rates of employment, lower incomes, poorer housing, higher

crime rates, poorer health, increased family breakdowns (Topping, 2012), increased substance abuse, increased teenage pregnancy, increased mental health issues and lower life expectancy (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010). Along with the ethical issues surrounding these inequalities, comes a high economic cost (OECD, 2010). The evidence is damning and exclusion from education is not the answer to advancing towards a fairer and more just society but, maybe, its antithesis, IE, is.

Benefits of Inclusive Education

Like exclusion, IE has widespread ramifications. Unlike exclusion however, the consequences are almost always positive. Most research has found in favour of IE over exclusion for individual students, both in terms of academic and social outcomes (Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2011). In his study into the withdrawal of students for 'support', Jackson (2008) found students achieved neutral or negative gains whereas the positive results occurred when IE was enacted effectively. Additionally, in a 2009 paper, Allan concluded, from a number of studies, that a majority of school students advocated for IE as they viewed "themselves as needing exposure to the diversity they are expected to live with as adults" (p. 246). IE has shown to increase the employability of school leavers and reduce inequalities in both economic (OECD, 2010) and social outcomes (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010) for adults.

The benefit to schools is also great. IE assists children and teachers alike to increase their tolerance, understanding and value of difference (Boyle, Scriven, Durnin & Downes, 2011), perpetuating the continued development and improvement of the IE school culture. Within this environment, teachers are encouraged and challenged to use a variety of pedagogies and strategies to cater for the different learning needs and this can have a positive impact on all students (Boyle, Topping, Jindal-Snape & Norwich, 2012; Loreman et al, 2011).

Finally, Wilkinson and Pickett (2010) argue that "reducing (educational) inequality leads to a very much better society" (p. 197) as greater equality benefits not only those who are considered the have not's but all members of society. IE has the potential to break cycles of disadvantage (Snow & Powell, 2012), as well as to increase the skills of people, leading to increased innovation and productivity and, subsequently, to long-term economic viability (OECD, 2010).

A Necessary Reform

With so much at stake, the need for IE is clear and many governments have recognised this. Nevertheless, much of the responsibility for this change reform has been laid at the feet of schools (Ainscow, Dyson, Goldrick & West, 2012; Thomson, Lingard & Wrigley, 2012), with an expectation that educators work together and "share responsibility, decision making and accountability for the progress of *all* students" (Deppeler, 2012). However, schools do not sit in isolation from the communities and the wider state, national, global and historical contexts within which they

operate. These external factors, along with internal school and classroom factors, will determine the success (or not) of IE. To enable schools to enact this change reform, they (along with those setting the education agenda) need "an understanding of the various drivers, (and) established cultures" that influence IE, "as well as the interplay between these at local, state and national levels" (Deppeler, 2013, p.188). In addition, there needs to be an understanding of how IE can ultimately influence the participation, achievement and value of all students.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND BRONFENBRENNER

IE is a social construct; it relies on relationships between people and societal systems to be formed into what can be observed and called IE. By definition, it is the process whereby people are included into a socially constructed environment, or alternatively excluded from it (Mac Ruairc, 2013; Slee, 2012). Given the social nature of IE, any attempt to study either the construct as a whole, or aspects of it, must consider the relationships between various people and societal systems involved in its creation, from the individuals being 'included' to the national and global contexts within which it is situated. Social ecological theory, developed in the early 1900s by academics at the University of Chicago (see Park, 1936), recognised that individuals sit within larger societal systems and provided a loose framework to describe and study the factors that sit within these various systems.

In his 1976 seminal publication, The experimental ecology of education, Urie Bronfenbrenner adapted the social ecological theory to the field of education. He identified two determinants of student learning: the first being the characteristics of the learner and the environments in which they exist, and the second the relationships and interconnections between them. Bronfenbrenner's ensuing framework, known as ecological systems theory, provided a structure to identify and organise the influencing factors that sit within different environments, and to study the relationships and interconnections between them. In a later paper, Bronfenbrenner reconceptualised his theory to become the bioecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007), where the focus shifted from studying environmental influences on human development to the developmental processes one experiences through the course of time. He noted that the use of the ecological systems theory model had "provided far more knowledge about the nature of developmentally relevant environments, than about the characteristics of developing individuals" (p. 795).

This distinction between Bronfenbrenner's two theories is interesting when the construct of IE is considered, as it is precisely the characteristics of the learner that should not influence whether or not a student is delivered an effective IE. It is, however, the environments and factors that sit within these, along with the relationships and interconnections between them, that influence the success (or not) of IE.

Bronfenbrenner's (1993) ecological systems theory has been utilised as a "conceptual and operational framework" (p. 38) in other educative and social

science fields (see Daro & Dodge, 2009; De Wet, 2010), though, up until now, it has not been reconceptualised to build knowledge and increase understanding of IE. Despite this, the theory offers an invaluable framework with which to organise the environmental factors and understand their influence on inclusivity by placing the learner at the centre and each contributory factor is located in relation to the learner's educational ecosystem – resulting in the ecology of inclusive education (see Figure 1, below).
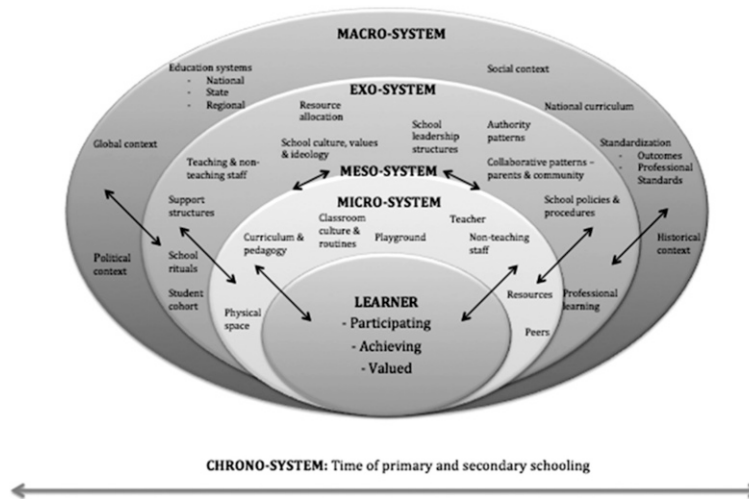
Figure 1. The Ecology of Inclusive Education.

SYSTEMS OF INFLUENCE

Bronfenbrenner (1976) describes the environments within which a learner exists as a "nested arrangement of structures" (p. 5), which he labelled as five systems. The innermost system, the *micro-system*, holds the learner at its centre with the immediate setting or settings surrounding them. The next system, known as the *meso-system*, acknowledges the interrelations between the major settings in the micro-system. Encircling this is the *exo-system*, described as containing the formal and informal structures that "impinge upon or encompass the immediate settings containing the learner" (p. 6). The final environmental system is the *macro-system* and is the culture that encompasses all preceding systems. The fifth system, known as the *chrono-system*, represents the movement of time. Each of these systems has a relationship and connectedness with the system or systems placed either side of it. Relationships and connections also exist between the factors sitting within each system.

Five Systems of Inclusive Education

Sitting at the centre of the *ecology of inclusive education* framework is the learner. All that occurs within and between each of the five systems, all the decisions and actions that are taken, are done so on the premise that it will benefit the learner. As described earlier, there are three determinants of IE for the learner - participation, achievement and value. Participation requires the learner to be actively engaged in all aspects of schooling, both academically and socially. They must be working collaboratively with their peers and involved in rich and meaningful learning experiences developed from a relevant curriculum (Evans, 2012). Additionally, learners must have a voice in the aspects of schooling that impact them (Portela, 2013) and have the opportunity to take part in whatever elements of school life interest them. Yet, participation is not enough: learners must also be achieving. This dictates access to learning goals that meet individual needs within the bounds of the curriculum, and assessment that is offered in meaningful and attainable ways (Slee, 2012). Lastly, learners must be valued for who they are and what they have to offer, to others and to the school itself. The learner must be accepted and respected as themselves, feel they hold a place of value within the school and know that others believe in their ability to 'do' (Aspin, 2007). Whilst easily described, participation, achievement and value do not transpire in an educational vacuum. There are many factors that sit within various systems of the ecology of inclusive education that influence and, at times, put pressure on the three determinants of IE. These are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Micro-system.   This system sits directly around the learner and contains all the factors that exist within the environments in which the learner directly experiences both formal and informal learning, as well as the social aspects of schooling. It includes the teacher or teachers, non-teaching staff, peers, physical learning spaces, classroom cultures and routines, resources and the playground.

Meso-system.   This system is different from the others in that it promotes the notion that the factors sitting within the micro-system are not in isolation from one another. Relationships and connections between them are continuously occurring, changing and evolving; they are never static but rather dynamic influences on the learner sitting at the centre of the framework.

Exo-system.   The factors that sit here do not exist directly within the learner's immediate environment yet still maintain influence over the learner's experience of schooling. They include school leadership structures, teaching and non-teaching staff, school culture, values and ideology, authority and collaborative patterns (leaders, staff, students, parents, community), support structures, resource allocation, school rituals, school policies and procedures and the student cohort.

Macro-system.   Here sit the factors that exist outside the physical environment of the school but, nevertheless, influence the inner systems within the framework

and, consequently, the learner at its centre. It encompasses the varying contexts in which the school exists – social, political, historical and global – as well as other factors such as the education system or systems, current agendas (standardisation of student achievement and professional performance; increased accountability), and, if applicable, a mandated curriculum.

Chrono-system.   Like the meso-system, this system is different from the others. It considers the movement of time and the impact or influence of this on the learner. As the ecology of inclusive education framework has been designed with the learner at its centre, the timeframe for this system is that of the learner's enrolment within formal school education – the years of primary and secondary schooling.

Relationships and Interconnectedness: Influence and Responsibility

Each factor sitting within the systems of the ecology of inclusive education is influenced by other factors within the same and other systems. The amount of influence a factor has on the experience of IE for the learner will depend on where the systems are positioned within which a factor sits, as well as by the importance attached to a factor by those responsible for the system. The largest of the systems, the macro-system, does not have a singular body responsible for the factors that sit within it. These factors are determined by global and national contexts. Factors within the macro-system may have influence attached to them by one or more of these contexts (for example, systemic influence such as mandated curriculum, improvement targets and professional standards, or political influence such as funding models), while, for others, the level of influence will be determined by those holding account for the exo- and micro-systems. Responsibility for these two systems is reasonably self-evident. Factors sitting within the exo-system are concerned with school-wide practices and are the domain of school leadership. Decisions made at this level influence the micro-system – the domain of the teacher. Again, levels of influence may be determined by school leadership (for example, mandates may exist concerning school-wide processes such as timetabling and resource allocation), however the teacher will directly influence other factors that may include, for example, the1 set up of the physical space and pedagogical practices. The chrono-system sits outside the other systems and represents the constant and consistent movement of time. It provides opportunity for reflection, change, reform and evolution of the factors that sit within each system; an essential component of the framework as IE is a dynamic and evolving process. Thus, the ecology of inclusive education assumes multiple levels of influence that are invariably interactive, while reinforcing either IE or exclusionary practices.

Globally, there are very few, if any, education systems or schools providing a fully inclusive education (Inclusion International, 2009). Actualising IE has proven difficult, most notably for those countries that have been pursuing the agenda for a long time (Allan, 2011). For this reason, renowned academics in the field, such

as Roger Slee (2011) and Mel Ainscow (with Miles, 2011), are vocal advocates of further research into IE. The ecology of inclusive education provides a framework with which researchers are able to better understand not only the factors that influence IE, but also the relationships and connections they have with one another and the environments in which they sit.

RESEARCH AND THE ECOLOGY OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Almost four decades ago, Bronfenbrenner (1976) established a convincing argument in his *ecology of education* theory for the need to shift educational research away from the traditionally adopted scientific methods towards a contextually perceptive and flexible approach. Today, this is a given. Since that time, Bronfenbrenner's theory has provided researchers across many fields a framework with which to make sense of and manage studies that are situated in societal environments (Daro & Dodge, 2009) while the exploration of constructs with multiple effects takes place (De Wet, 2010). Nevertheless, the examination of education environments and IE still present researchers with many challenges. It is widely acknowledged that schools are complicated, messy and changeable environments (Ainscow *et al*, 2012). On top of this, IE is a complex construct that has yet to receive a globally recognised definition (Topping, 2012: Slee, 2011). The re-conception of Bronfenbrenner's theory as the *ecology of inclusive education* extends to researchers an operational, theoretical framework within which to situate their work, one that supports the contextually diverse environments educational researchers access, while affording the flexibility to focus on individual or combinations of varying aspects of IE. Other advantages are afforded to researchers adopting this framework. The *ecology of inclusive education* allows for studies adopting either quantitative or qualitative approaches and can be used for small studies taking a snapshot of a single point in time or large-scale in-depth studies conducted over many years, across any number and type of school settings. The framework supports comparative studies and the focus of the research may be on systemic, institutional or ideological aspects of IE. Within this, single factors, groups of factors or whole systems can be studied and the relationships and connections between them investigated. Most notably, the *ecology of inclusive education* does not attempt to neaten the messes that are school environments. Rather, it provides a framework with which to explore the messiness, in all its forms, through the lens of IE, increasing current knowledge and understanding of how IE is constructed in different environments and the consequences of this for all learners.

CONCLUSION

In 2010, the OECD reported that in a small number of countries, including Canada and South Korea, student achievement was increasing regardless of the school attended or personal and social circumstances of individuals. Nevertheless, this is not a global trend. In many countries, the gap between the academic achievements of students

from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers is growing, as many education systems continue, perhaps not intentionally, to encourage inequity through the delivery of exclusionary practices. Along with others in the field, Ainscow, Dyson, Goldrick and West (2012) argue this inequity must be challenged and proffer the question "What needs to be done to move policy and practice forward?" (p. 150). To know what must be done, current systems and practices need to be better understood, through the undertaking of quality, in-depth research into IE (Ainscow & Miles, 2011). This must not only encompass schools and the environments within which they operate but, also, work to understand the relationships between the factors that influence IE. The *ecology of inclusive education* delivers a framework with which to do this. With increased understanding, policy and practice can move forward and "make the physical, social, cultural and educational arrangement of schooling better for all" (Slee, 2011, p. 13).

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3. EDUCATIONAL EQUALITY, EQUITYAND SUI GENERIS RIGHTS IN AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Theorising the Tensions and Contradictions

INTRODUCTION

Educational equality and equity in education are ideals that have become embedded within the narratives surrounding education. Green (1983) observes that 'the possibility of their joint realization is open to question because ideals inevitably conflict' (p.318). In Australia, and other postcolonial states, the developing international framework of Indigenous sui generis rights and the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples brings a third but, as yet, under-theorised ideal to the table, that of the education rights of Indigenous peoples within higher education. Following Green (1983, p.318), the question this chapter pursues is not whether equality, equity and sui generis rights are deserving ideals, which they are, 'but rather whether they can exist at the same time'. Green identifies three aspects that need to be considered, aspects that are useful to the analysis underpinning this paper: conflicts of meaning, of aggregation and of implementation. This chapter will focus on Australia and its approach to these three ideals as an example of the marked similarities in all nation states where Indigenous populations cohabit with non-indigenous populations.

In Australia, under a system where the federal government has responsibility for the oversight of Indigenous matters while state and territory governments have responsibility for the provision of schooling, the Coalition of Australian Governments (COAG) has developed a comprehensive reform agenda in order to improve the delivery of government services that includes what is known as 'Closing the Gap in Indigenous Disadvantage'[1]. There is an extensive range of policies (in education, for example, see http://deewr.gov.au/Indigenous) that have led to contradictory arguments about the ideals of equality and equity. Only recently have the education rights of Indigenous people been considered within policy, planning and implementation processes, adding to the confusion. Australia has a majority of non-Indigenous citizens who are governing a significantly smaller Indigenous population whose education aspirations can be at odds with the majority. The space of contradiction and tension has been fundamentally changed as larger numbers

of Indigenous education experts join these debates and policy processes and as increasing numbers of Indigenous students seek to study in Australian universities.

This chapter will, first, give a brief overview of the contemporary understanding of the following key ideals: educational equality, equity and sui generis rights. Within this context, Green's framework of conflicts of meaning, of aggregation and of implementation will be employed to test these ideals of educational equality, educational equity, and of sui generis rights in education. My final points will be about the potential for 'both ways' education in resolving some of the ideational contradictions and incommensurabilities that potentially arise between these ideals.

THE KEY IDEALS

Aristotle is, wrongly, attributed with saying that justice involves treating equals equally and unequals unequally. Irrespective of origin, the maxim captures the tensions and contradictions of the three ideals under discussion. Burbules, Lord and Sherman (1982, p.171) suggest that:

> Underlying the use of "equal" and "fair" in this context is a principle of distributive justice that can be traced to Aristotle and which is usually called the Equality Principle … Actually, the stipulation to treat unequals unequally is, with certain restrictions, a Fairness Principle.

It is less the intention of this chapter to try to define these terms than to acknowledge that each ideal is likely to have many meanings. Even so, there are some general ideas and principles found within each that will assist in the following discussion.

Educational Equality

This concept aligns with the Aristotelian Equality Principle (the same for all). This straightforward idea, contained in arguments for educational equality, has been well-expressed by Brighouse (1995, p.145): "the same educational opportunities must be available to equally talented individuals with the same willingness to make an effort to acquire the necessary skills and qualifications". Brown (2006, p.65) suggests that it is the idea that it is "…unfair for some people, through no fault of their own, to have a worse start in life than others, especially with respect to the basic skills and information required for living a full and rewarding life in a modern society".

Educational Equity

This concept aligns with the Aristotelian Fairness Principle (different but appropriate) whereby, according to disadvantage/need, compensatory actions to achieve education outcomes are implemented. The Gonski report (DEEWR, 2011, p.105) suggests that equity in education means:

…ensuring that differences in educational outcomes are not the result of differences in wealth, income, power or possessions. Equity in this sense does not mean that all students are the same or will achieve the same outcomes.

Sui Generis Rights

Sui generis is a Latin phrase meaning 'of its own genus'. It is used by international legal mechanisms to identify the rights of Indigenous peoples living within nations but whose pre-existent rights have not been extinguished by colonisation and subsequent overlays of imposed legal structures; as being 'of itself', that is, unique and cannot be included in a wider category.

By far the earliest attempts to recognise that Australia's Indigenous people had particular needs, drawn from the equity ideal, was evidenced by the development of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (or AEP) (See MCEETYA, 2000, Appendix One, pp.36-37). This policy came into effect in 1990 to achieve "broad equity between Aboriginal people and other Australians in access, participation and outcomes in all forms of education by the turn of the century" (Commonwealth of Australia (Hughes Report), 1988, p.2). Larkin (2011, p.2) observes that "twenty years later despite progress in some areas, there is little evidence to suggest we have made significant inroads into the Taskforce's target of broad equity for Indigenous people". He reports that Indigenous people are not fully included in the tertiary sector.

Internationally, through the United Nations, there are a number of human rights mechanisms that have been developed and ratified. The most significant is the Human Rights Declaration (1948). With this as the foundational document, more recent agreement (2008) was reached on the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples('the Declaration'). The Declaration, a product of more than 20 years of research and discussion at the United Nations, is a non-binding document setting out basic standards for the international recognition and protection of Indigenous peoples' rights. The Declaration provides a framework for countries with different histories and circumstances to help reduce levels of disadvantage and discrimination experienced by many of the world's 370 million Indigenous people.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ('UN DRIPs', 2008) addresses both individual and collective rights, cultural rights and identity, rights to education, health, employment, language and others. The text says Indigenous peoples are entitled to fully enjoy, as a collective or as individuals, all human rights and fundamental freedoms as recognised in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights law. Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals, and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination in the

exercise of their rights, in particular, discrimination based on their Indigenous origin or identity. Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By that right, they can freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development. They have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social, and cultural institutions, while retaining their rights to participate fully, if they choose to, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the state (for fuller discussion, see Ma Rhea, Anderson and Atkinson, 2012).

Australia (along with the US, Canada, Japan and New Zealand) expressed concern about the apparent lack of consensus about the word 'Indigenous' and the following guidance was provided as a summary of the deliberations of years of work of the UN's Working Group (Daes, 1996):

In summary, the factors which modern international organisations and legal experts (including Indigenous legal experts and members of the academic family) have considered relevant to understanding the concept of 'Indigenous' include:

- priority in time with respect to the occupation and use of a specific territory;
- the voluntary perpetuation of cultural distinctiveness, which may include aspects of language, social organisation, religion and spiritual values, modes of production, laws and institutions;
- self-identification, as well as recognition by other groups, or by State authorities, as a distinct collectivity; and
- experience of subjugation, exclusion or discrimination, whether or not these conditions persist.

Australia was one of the countries who voted against the Declaration, along with New Zealand, the United States, and Canada. Australia has since changed its position on the Declaration and has issued a statement of support. On 3 April 2009, Australia accepted the document as a framework for recognising and protecting the rights of Indigenous Australians and formally endorsed the Declaration. Education receives special mention in such articles as Articles 13 and 14 (UN DRIPs, 2008).

Article 13

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.
2. States shall take effective measures to ensure that this right is protected and also to ensure that Indigenous peoples can understand and be understood in political, legal and administrative proceedings, where necessary through the provision of interpretation or by other appropriate means.

Article 14

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.

3. States shall, in conjunction with Indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for Indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.

CONFLICTS OF MEANING

The words 'equality' and 'equity' are commonly confused in the English language, particularly when speaking about education (see, for example, Brighouse and Swift, 2008; Espinoza, 2007; Green, 1983; Morand & Merriman, 2012; Secada, 1989).

Brandsma (2000, p.15) argues that equity (mobilised on the basis that the market does not provide individuals with equal access to essential goods and/or does not provide in the same amount, which is considered strictly necessary for all individuals) as justice, allows government intervention to move university education from being a private good to a quasi-collective good. He goes on to suggest that:

> If one aspect of equity concerns the extent to which the market provides individuals with 'equal access' to (essential) goods, 'equality' can be defined in terms of having equal opportunities with regard to (the chances on participation in) valorised goods like education and gainful employment.

Many writers give the example of a contest to demonstrate the conflict of meaning that can occur between these ideals. Clow, Hanson, and Bernier (2012, website), for example, suggest that equity focusses on giving people what they need whereas equality aims to ensure that everyone gets the same things. They give the following example:

> … at the start of a running race, the concept of equality would have us treat the runners in exactly the same way, ensuring that they all start at the same place on the track. On the surface, this seems fair. But we know that runners in the inside lanes have a distinct advantage over runners in the outer lanes because the distance they have to travel is shorter. As a result, equality – starting at the same place – doesn't result in fairness. The concept of equity, in contrast, would lead us to stagger the starting positions of the runners in order to offset the disadvantages facing those in the outer lanes. In this case, different or tailored treatment is a surer path to fairness.

The same distinction between equity and equality can be seen when it comes to university education. For example, Australia's publicly funded universities are based on the concept of equality. They are designed to ensure that everyone has the same access to universities on the basis of their school results, based on meritocracy, regardless of any other factors. Again, this seems fair. But it only goes

so far in promoting justice because it ignores other factors – such as poverty, parents' educational levels, place of residence – that can also act as barriers to educational achievement (Artiles, 2011). As Burbules, et al. (1982, p. 171) argue, also using the race analogy:

> We have been referring to an equal opportunity to win the race; one might be concerned only with providing equal opportunities to participate in the race, regardless of who wins.

As a result, identified 'disadvantaged groups' may need additional services and programmes – rather than just the standard ones – to offset the impact of substandard housing, poor schooling or lack of family interest in higher education. This is *equity*: making sure that individuals have *what they need* to achieve a university qualification. What emerges from this discussion is that there is a conflict of meaning about educational equality depending on whether one is speaking of equality of opportunity (the Equality Principle) or equality of resources, based on need, that will enable equality of outcome (the Fairness or Equity Principle).

CONFLICTS OF AGGREGATION

Tensions and contradictions arise when one considers scale. Equality arguments are predominantly about equality of opportunity and equality of access to educational resources. These should be the same for every person. This is a 'big picture' policy framework that has to operate at a higher abstraction to the ideal than equity which, by its definition, has to take into account individual differences and is based on fairness in relation to the non-equity group.

Various tensions have arisen over time as universities have standardised equity provisions and measures for Indigenous students, making them, in effect, idealised and general principles more akin to equality even though they cannot be considered the same. Affirmative Action is one dimension of the equity approach, where proactive measures that are identifiable and targeted are taken to raise the level of participation of the targeted group. This equity and affirmative action approach has caused considerable debate within universities because it is in tension with the broader commitment to an Equality Principle. Bernstein (1971) reminds us that education cannot ameliorate all social disadvantage. Even so, proponents of the equity approach argue that it is necessary, for example, to give Indigenous students a 'weighting' on top of their school results to help them to get the necessary score to be accepted for a course. Critics of affirmative action argue that such activities allow people without the necessary academic preparation to be allowed to study at a higher level, causing a high likelihood of failure for the student and, also, having the effect of lowering the standards of the university; the objectors commonly cite the concept of equality as the only just way not to harm some people for the benefit of others.

CONFLICTS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The concept of education equality, like equality itself, is a foundational concept in postcolonial democratic societies; for example, equality of educational opportunity demands discussions about equality of access. But, often, the participation of Indigenous people is argued as an educational equity issue. Clearly, significant changes need to be made in the way that universities engage in developing the next generation of Indigenous professionals, in order to be the leaders of these changes (for a background to the economic argument, see for example, Becker, 1962). James' (2008) report to Universities Australia gives a brief history of the development of the current approach to Indigenous access to and participation in universities. Australia's Indigenous population, known in Australia as two distinct Indigenous collectivities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, were designated as equity target groups in 1990. James (2008, p.14) suggests that these groups have continued to be used, "broadly following the disadvantaged social groups identified during the mid-1970s". They were to be self-identified on enrolment. A raft of performance measures were given to universities to enable them to account for improvements in the academic achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through the following indicators:

• *Access* (proportion of the equity group among commencing domestic students).
• *Participation* (proportion of the equity group among domestic students overall).
• *Retention* (the proportion of equity group students who re-enroll at an institution in a given year compared with the students who were enrolled in the previous year, less those students who have completed their course).
• *Success* (the mean *student progress rate* for the previous year for the equity group, this being the proportion of units passed within a year to the total units enrolled).
• *Completions* (the proportion of students completing all the academic requirements of a course).

To monitor performance, universities are required to annually report their performance and to have an equity plan. The government provides universities with funds to assist with the education of Indigenous students who are supported through the Indigenous Support Funding programme (for broader insight into the Australian government approach to quality management of its services to Indigenous Australians, see Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, 2013).

At the level of the university, the Australian government policy commitments cascading from the Declaration, together with research and reviews of Australian higher education focussing on Indigenous access and participation in universities (James, 2008; Bradley, et al., 2008), are having a significant impact. James (2008, pp. 4-5) summarises the logic underpinning the equity approach taken to these matters. This report argues for the special circumstances of Indigenous people:

- The low access rates and low completion rates for Indigenous people are distinct problems that require targeted policies and programs. There are some similarities in the educational participation patterns between Indigenous people and low SES people, but evidence too of distinctive challenges for Indigenous people.
- For a period there was growth in access for Indigenous people, though this has stalled and may be dropping. Indigenous people are vastly underrepresented in higher education on even the most conservative estimates based on population size, population demography and share of university places.
- A proportion of the access to higher education for Indigenous people has been provided by sub-degree and enabling programs. Higher degree enrolment and completion rates are modest.
- The challenges lie in recruiting Indigenous students who are academically prepared for university (given that school completion rates for Indigenous people are about half of those for other Australians) and in retaining students once enrolled. The university completion rate for Indigenous enrollees remains well below 50 per cent. The low retention rate of Indigenous people is a major problem. The recent national study of student finances by Universities Australia has shown that financial factors are likely to be highly significant in improving access and retention for Indigenous students.
- The issues facing the higher education sector in achieving better outcomes for Indigenous people are partly to do with socioeconomic status and levels of educational disadvantage in schooling but there are also deep cultural issues to be confronted in order for stronger relationships to be built between universities and Indigenous people and communities.

The Bradley Report (Bradley, et al., 2008) in the findings (p. xxvi) argues for suggested targets for groups of students that are currently underrepresented in the higher education system, as Figure 1 below.

Funding is being increasingly tied to Australian universities providing evidence that they are engaging proactively with the 'Closing the Gap' agenda, an agenda that touches all universities, particularly in four aspects. First, universities are expected to provide special measures to support Indigenous students to succeed in their studies; second, they are expected to train all staff to be culturally competent in dealing with Indigenous matters; third, they are expected to encourage the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives across professional programmes of study; and, fourth, they are expected to employ Indigenous people in universities as both academic and professional, administrative staff.

Attempts to bureaucratise equity measures are, arguably, driven from an emerging tendency towards what Gildersleeve, Kuntz, Pasque, and Carducci (2010) call 'conservative modernization'. Larkin (2011, p.6) reflects this in his closing comments as the Chair of the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council when he says that "I would like to see Indigenous Australians not being regarded as just another equity group". Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not necessarily view

Suggested targets for under-represented groups of students in higher education

Student group	Measure	Target
Low SES students	Access rate	20% based on current postcode methodology or representative of the population share for the new low SES measure developed
	Completion rate	At least 95% of the rate for high SES students.
Regional students	Access rate	Proportion of the population aged 15 to 64 years in this group as defined by the ARIA classification in the 2006 census
	Success rate	Same rates as for metropolitan students
	Retention rate	Same rates as for metropolitan students
	Completion rate	Same rates as for metropolitan students

Student group	Measure	Target
Remote students	Access rate	Proportion of the population aged 15 to 64 years in this group as defined by the ARIA classification in the 2006 census
	Success rate	Same rates as for metropolitan students
	Retention rate	At least 90% of that for metropolitan students
	Completion rate	At least 90% of that for metropolitan students
Indigenous students	Access rate	Proportion that the Indigenous population aged 15 to 64 years represents of the general population in this age group in the 2006 census
	Success rate	At least 95% of the rates for non-Indigenous students
	Retention rate	At least 90% of the rate for non-Indigenous students
	Completion rate	At least 90% of the rate for non-Indigenous students

Figure 1. Suggested Targets (Bradley, et al., 2008, p.xxvi).

themselves as an 'equity group'. Given the Australian government's recognition of the Declaration, along with other advances that have been made internationally to recognise the sui generis rights of Indigenous peoples, the previous ways that universities have attempted to deal with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters in a bureaucratic manner are being challenged.

The Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC) submission to the Review of Higher Education(cited in Bradley, et al., 2008, p.32) submits that:

Indigenous people do not come empty handed to Australia's higher education system but bring significant strengths, both in knowledge capital and human capital that enriches higher education in Australia. The recognition of Indigenous peoples' contribution as well as needs, is critical to full Indigenous engagement in higher education.

Aboriginal people in Australia have the oldest living knowledge system in the world, and intellectual traditions that predate Western intellectual traditions by millennia. Torres Strait Islander people also have their own distinct knowledge

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system. These Indigenous knowledge systems and intellectual traditions have culturally distinct knowledge bases, research methodologies, evidentiary systems and values. They are complete systems in their own right.

Indigenous knowledge systems are a vital and unique part of Australia's knowledge capital but there has been a national failure to fully acknowledge the value of Indigenous knowledge systems as well as the expertise of Indigenous custodians and knowledge holders, and to make both of these visible and integral within higher education in Australia. There needs to be stronger formal recognition that Australia has two knowledge systems operating: a 'collective' non-Indigenous or Western knowledge system that links to similar systems worldwide and an Indigenous knowledge system (also a collective system) that links to other Indigenous knowledge systems worldwide, and which operate in higher education as well as Indigenous community contexts. Australia has the potential to have one of the richest and most complete knowledge systems in the world.

Australia has invested heavily in developing its Western knowledge capital in universities. Similar substantial resource investment in Indigenous knowledge is required for Australia to have both of its knowledge systems operating effectively in higher education. The nature and custodianship of Indigenous knowledge means that this must include funding for Indigenous scholars and researchers within universities, Indigenous communities and knowledge custodians outside of universities and the relationships between them. In the context of higher education in Australia, Indigenous peoples and communities want to be able to participate fully in Western knowledge systems as well as to maintain, practice, and grow Indigenous knowledge systems within universities, and in communities. The Indigenous knowledge systems of Australia are unique in the world; if they are not fully maintained, practiced and developed in Australia, where in the world will they exist?

This policy and funding nexus is creating a significant push for universities to change the way that they approach Indigenous matters. Interestingly, universities are increasingly attempting to bureaucratise equity measures into general rules that are more amenable to the quality approach, losing the potency of the focus on need and the categorisation of students in need by the nature of their membership of such a recognised group. I believe it is this, rather than the rejection of inclusion as a 'disadvantaged group', that irks Indigenous higher education students. Universities have been slow to change their managerial approach, given that they are funded on the basis of specific measurables.

FINDING COMMENSURABILITY: BOTH WAYS UNIVERSITY EDUCATION?

What has the impact of the Declaration been in universities in a country like Australia? Certainly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been severely

disadvantaged by colonisation. So how does the Australian government, on behalf of the people, overcome this historical legacy? It has tended to take an equity approach that tries to ameliorate some of the impacts of past injustices, identifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as an equity category. As Gale (1995, p. 616) notes in his research, "This emphasis on equity was the most pervasive metaphor amongst staff of the educational institutions" (see also Bulbeck, 1991). This has the unfortunate, unintended consequence of always positioning Indigenous people as being in need of help and assistance, sometimes called the 'deficit approach' in education (Nakata, 2011). Within the Declaration framework, there are Aboriginal people who want to be treated equally, to run their own race, for the system to change so as not to discriminate against them, by recognising their sui generis rights and working in partnership to develop appropriate university education services for Indigenous people (Rigney, 2011). Others prefer the equity approach because they feel that, because of past injustices, they are deserving of special considerations, allocated funds, scholarships and all the financial benefits that they can have. So, the ideals of educational equality, equity in education and sui generis education rights do not sit easily together.

This chapter suggests that it might be the equality argument rather than the equity argument that will best serve expression of the recognition of Indigenous sui generis rights in Australia. Aristotle, in the Nicomachean Ethics (350BC, Chapter V, p. 5) takes great pains to develop the idea of commensurability. He helpfully concludes a long discussion about how to overcome seeming incommensurability by suggesting that "Now in truth it is impossible that things differing so much should become commensurate, but with reference to demand they may become so sufficiently". In short, if there is sufficient political will and opportunity for people to agree on reciprocal value then, in time, such seeming incommensurability might be overcome.

This will mean the development of a significantly broadened range of options for Indigenous students who have the right to be educated in both their own and in the broader education systems, guided by the intentions of Articles 13 and 14 (UN DRIPs, 2008). Choice, here, is a key to negotiating these expanded options to enable equality of opportunity for an Indigenous student to be educated in their first culture, to learn their languages, their histories and their culture to the highest intellectual levels, overcoming what Dr Marika (1999) referred to as Australia's intellectual terra nullius.

The Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC) in its submission to Australia's Higher Education Review (Thomas, 2008) gave insight into the shift in perspective, the catch-up method, that will be required to change equity based thinking to move towards an equality-focussed, rights-based approach. Thomas (2008, p.2) summarised their six recommended strategies were summarised as

1. Indigenous Higher Education in Australia: Valuing and Sustaining Indigenous Knowledge Systems by Establishing the Indigenous Learned Academy.

2. Research and Innovation: Closing the Gaps on Indigenous Post-graduates and Indigenous Research Leadership by Establishing the Indigenous Centre for Research Excellence.
3. Productivity: Building Capacity and Skills by Developing a National Indigenous Workforce Strategy and Implementing a Cultural Competency Framework.
4. Indigenous Students: Closing the Gap by Addressing Student Finance.
5. Governance: Making Indigenous Business Core University Business.
6. Resourcing Indigenous Higher Education: Achieving Success by Funding for Success.

This submission led to an overall recommendation (Recommendation 30) that the Australian government regularly review the effectiveness of measures to improve higher education access and outcomes for Indigenous people in consultation with the IHEAC (Bradley, et al., 2008, p. xxiii). It was conceded by the Higher Education Review that previous methods had failed and that it would only be in partnership with IHEAC, as the recognised peak representative body, that effective strategies would begin to make a difference. Green (2011, p.8) says, of universities, that they:

> …need to look beyond the current popular deficit approach when considering how to increase participation and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

> Instead, I challenge the sector to look within itself and reflect on systemic and institutional factors that may serve to exclude Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from undertaking higher education and, once in the system, continue their studies to pursue higher degrees by research.

This appeal is in line with other Indigenous approaches to university education that are emerging internationally in collaboration with organisations such as UNESCO (see for example, Sanga, 2000). The basis of the argument, as outlined above, is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff do not come to the university as empty fields needing to be cultivated. Opportunity for educational commensurability provides the way forward using a partnership approach.

CONCLUSION

Before the colonisation of Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living on the land mass now called 'Australia' educated their children in ways that were appropriate to the needs of their time. As an impact of colonisation, many of the rights of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were ignored and attempts were made to assimilate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through education. While the rights of the world's Indigenous peoples are now more fully recognised under international law, mainstream university education in Australia is, arguably, still attempting to assimilate Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander peoples into a Westernised way of life, ameliorating disadvantage and need and, thereby, reinforcing the deficit thinking that underlies the equity ideal. This approach fails to recognise that Indigenous peoples all over the world are engaged in a process that might be broadly understood to be modernising without necessarily wanting to Westernise, wanting to take what is best of both cultural traditions into a sustainable economic future for themselves and their families, developing a 'both ways' education approach to higher education.

This chapter suggests that the Indigenous rights agenda is best served by taking an equality perspective rather than the equity perspective and its corollary, the affirmative action approach, which, for Indigenous people, has not been a successful strategy. Finding commensurability of a 'both ways' educational approach will be a challenge, moving away from the designation of Indigenous students as a disadvantaged group. Many will be concerned to give up the needs-based ameliorations that have become bureaucratised in current institutional arrangements.

With a 'both ways' approach, it is possible to find commensurability between competing ideals, such that the next generation of Indigenous lawyers, doctors, teachers and business leaders will have a meaningful choice of being able to graduate with the skills, knowledge and understanding of their profession within the Western culture but will, also, maintain their cultural integrity as Indigenous people with leadership responsibilities to preserve, maintain and protect their cultural rights.

NOTE

[1]   See http://www.coag.gov.au/closing_the_gap_in_Indigenous_disadvantage

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4. TAKE ACTION OR DO NOTHING

The Educational Dilemma of the Teacher

INTRODUCTION

It is argued in this chapter that teachers could be regarded as being in a somewhat invidious position when it comes to the implementation, or enactment, of various education policies. Yes, teachers are agents of the state but they can have a large influence over the effectiveness or fidelity of government policies. This chapter considers the dilemmas, from a philosophical and practical point of view, that teachers (here we focus on the schooling sector) face in deciding whether to take action that may be in the interests of students or to implement policy, without question, as mandated. Of course not all policies arrive in schools directly from the minds of politicians unscathed. They pass through various other bureaucratic and political processes and mechanisms that create other policy conditions, especially related to implementation and these inflect the potential of its fidelity – how closely the policy can be made to fit the original intentions of the policy makers and how this will be measured.

In the case of Australia this process is more complicated, as in the Federation, the States have ostensible responsibility for education, although the Australian (national) government has sought to assert its authority, especially since 2007 through National Partnership Agreements. Our argument is that teachers' responsibility is towards the students they teach, and that policy, in whatever condition, and from wherever, it 'arrives' at a school, must be reconditioned so that this responsibility may be met. How well or poorly such responsibility is carried out, is an important and broad question that current measures focused on accountability (for example high stakes standardised testing, such as the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy [NAPLAN]) do not adequately measure. With this in mind, we would like here to set out some of the ways that we might approach the policy dilemmas that teachers face, and how considering these might contribute to the fulfilment of teachers' educational responsibility, in spite of policy mandates and the current rise in accountability measures.

TEACHERS AND POLICY: WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

And yet we in education have allowed politicians to push us to act as if the most important goal of our work is to raise test scores. Never mind the development

> of the human beings in our charge – the integrity, the artistic expressiveness, the ingenuity, the persistence, or the kindness of those who will inherit the earth – the conversation in education has been reduced to a conversation about one number. (Delpit, 2006, p. xiv)

Delpit is writing about the effects of the "No Child Left Behind" policy on the US educational topography. It is a reminder that politics can march into the terrain of teachers and children and attempt to secure a flattened terrain. But in education there is always the possibility of resistance. As Delpit later notes 'On the other hand, I am filled with hope when I see schools like Hyde and others around the country that treat children with the belief that we are working with precious resources when we seek to educate young people' (2006, xix). Teachers can remake policy as 'street level bureaucrats' (Lipsky 1980) and make education work beyond measurable performance in a test. Policy here can be seen as enactment through teacher *practice* (Heimans, 2012a) rather than as simply policy implementation. Of course, within the education system it would be fair to say that there may be dissentious teachers (e.g. Farrell, 2001; Hamre and Oyler, 2004) who resist many of the policies that are continually being promulgated as putative solutions to problems that exist primarily as problems of government, and more specifically the legitimacy of government.

Teachers are not stupid and can see this. Education policy (and its formation as curriculum, assessment and pedagogy and the managerial processes which 'deliver' these) is not primarily interested in their problems, or practices, and yet does necessarily inflect them. For teachers, who do not need to be re-elected in order to do their jobs, the issues they face are more directly educational and do not have to do with the vagaries of democratic government. In schools it is ultimately members of the teaching profession who are tasked with making education policies work (or not) and as such they become caught into articulating a response both to what governments seek to achieve, and what and to whom, they are responsible for, on the ground. We discuss this further with respect to inclusive education in the next section.

Inflecting Inclusion Policy

If teachers are required to implement inclusion policy and *'…policymakers often advocate inclusive education without an understanding of the pedagogical approaches that teachers can use to operationalise the policy'* (Nind and Wearmouth, 2006, p.122), then there is an immediate problem. Likewise, the very basis of what inclusion and education mean are often glossed. Education becomes a desirable but unattainable monolith that 'others' might be 'included' in. It is possible to see this in the rise of accountability through policy as numbers (Lingard, 2011), where, and when, education becomes a 'thing' that can be measured, there is a solidification around what education 'is'. This increasing convergence is about being countable and those who count are included. Or to put this the other way, what can be counted

is what comes to count. But, we suggest that education is not about these particular and definable accountability ends that can be measured against a norm[1].

Education for us is about processes that offer the chance for teachers to enact their educational responsibility to all students, irrespective of their putative divergent abilities. It is not a question of including those whose abilities do not meet the norm, after the fact, but of keeping the possibility of education and its "beautiful risks" (see Biesta, 2013) alive for all. To maintain this educational possibility open means keeping education as a question, or perhaps more accurately, as that which contains questions that cannot be foreclosed prior to its enactment. And this is where policy and education create for teachers, whose everyday lives are made up of assembling complex practices together (Connell, 2011), powerful, and consequential for students, dilemmas. On one hand policy invariably creates a problem which it then becomes a solution to, which teachers then enact, and this becomes caught into, what Rose calls the "will to govern" (Rose, 1999, p. 192) – an ethical, moral and political rationale for doing what is 'right'. Doing what is 'right' means 'fitting in' those who are different from the validated norm and the hidden or invisible structure of classifications (Bowker & Star, 1999) on which it relies. On the other hand, education, whose modus operandi is fundamentally open, concerns the possibility of working from the ground up, so to speak, to create new worlds. We will focus on this possibility in the next section of the chapter.

BUILDING EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION FROM THE GROUND UP

Governments come and go, as do their Ministers of Education, and all new governments want to seem different, an improved version of the previous incumbents. The way to do this is to have more policy, but seemingly different, based on reforms and reviews of what has gone before. It just has to be seen to be new, the stamp of the new office holders. As governments change and education policy comes and goes it is no wonder that the adage that in education *you are so far behind you are up to date* seems apt. Policies come and go and some will be repackaged to look new. The fairness and potential inequity of constant change is inherently questioned vis-à-vis the fundamental usefulness of perennial modifications in education, especially where these changes mean that there is no change. The status quo, of inequity remains, in spite of whatever new spin the policy embodies. For example, in indigenous education in Australia, in spite of many years of intervention and the political policy rhetoric of closing the 'gap', the situation has changed little. As Boughton notes, "Raising the question of racism forces us to ask not why Aboriginal children fail to perform as well as whites, but how and why do education systems systematically discriminate against these children and thereby directly contribute to and legitimate the reproduction of inequality" (Boughton, 1999, p. 26).

The system reproduces inequality, and even though teaching staff are constantly scrutinized through various mechanisms guised as 'quality improvement' through (mostly) quantitative measures which are described by Brehm and Gates (2008,

p. 4) as "…coercive, those that emphasize monitoring performance and rewarding for meeting standards (and possibly punishing for not doing so)", nothing much changes. However, we suggest new questions need to be asked that refocus from the ground level up how we can think about inclusion educationally.

To build education from the ground up requires a strong platform that is not based in political, ethical or moral beliefs or desires. Rather, we suggest here that we need an *educational* basis for this building, which sounds strange or obvious, but for us there needs to be some clear and challenging bases from which to begin to speak and act 'up', that are derived from thinking about education- and exactly what we mean when we speak of it. To assist with this, we turn to recent work by Biesta and Säfström and their recent suggestions in *A Manifesto for Education* (2011), which is "neither populist nor idealist. It aims to speak out of a concern for what makes education educational, and is interested in the question of how much education is still possible in our educational institutions" (p. 540). Biesta and Säfström focus on what they call the interest of education, which is freedom, specifically "the freedom of the other" (p. 540). Here freedom is neither populist nor idealist. It is concerned paradoxically with untying education from progress, from either it being the solution to problems of inequality or other ills that can be found in the *what is* or as that which must be achieved in the future as the solution that will eventually be found. Education according to Biesta and Säfström a-temporally maintains a tension between *what is* and *what is not*. On one hand, not succumbing to education as socialisation (fitting in) and on the other, education as a search for a future utopia, but as that which must remain open to the possibility of an "excess that announces something new and unforeseen" (p. 541) to stay in the tension between *what is* and *what is not* is therefore also a matter of being responsible for the present. Further:

> To tie education to the 'what is' is to hand over responsibility for education to forces outside of education, whereas to tie education to the 'what is not' is to hand over education to the thin air of an unattainable future. From an educational perspective, both extremes appear as irresponsible. We therefore need to stay in the tension. (Biesta & Säfström, 2011, p. 541)

Additionally, Biesta and Säfström argue that an educational approach to education concerns not thinking about the tension between *what is* and *what is not* as a gap that needs to be synthesized or kept as a "golden mean" (p. 541) but that the tension "arises out of a confrontation" (p. 541) between them. This confrontation evokes dissensus, subjectivity and history, where "'dissensus' – is the place where subjectivity 'comes into the world'. It is the place where speech is neither repetition nor self-affirmation, but is unique and uniquely new. It is, therefore, the place where freedom appears" (p. 541). Dissensus does not mean disagreement in any straightforward sense. It means, and in this we follow Rancière's (2010) thinking about reconfiguring the sensible, enacting the equality of a capacity to change what can be thought, said, seen and heard. The "coming into the world" that dissensus implies, for us, provides a platform for teachers to think through policy and the institutional work that they

are required to do. So that they might keep an eye out for the times and places when education remains focussed on socialisation and/or utopian dreams and to rework these to orient toward education becoming something that is uniquely new.

Likewise history is not the recount of the past as that which must be fitted into – a narrative into which one must take their place. Instead it is to remain "… open to events, to the new and the unforeseen – rather than as an endless repetition of what already is or as a march towards a predetermined future that may never arrive" (p. 541). History here is prospective, how can it be made? This requires teachers to address what it is they are required to teach, and how, and to think through how this can be made into that which invites the enactment of an equal capacity to act.

These ideas, we suggest, form a basis for thinking 'educationally about education'. This, we argue, creates opportunities for thinking through how teachers can begin to build from the ground up an educational response to questions about education and inclusion. This of course is not easy and not without risks. But ground up work, in the face of the convergence of policy ideas that congeal around consensus understandings of what counts in education and who can be included requires difficult and meticulous work – and this is ultimately teachers' work. It is work that, following Biesta and Säfström concerns freedom.

> An ethics of subjectivity focuses on the ways in which the subject appears as some*one* through responsible response to what and who is other. A politics of emancipation focuses on the moment where the subject speaks in a way that is neither repetition nor self-affirmation but brings something new into the world. An aesthetics of freedom highlights the mode in which common sense is transformed by assuming equality in a situation of inequality (2011, p. 542),

CONCLUSION

What comes to matter (Heimans, 2012b) in education policy is that which derives from intersections between the provenance of ideas that are imported into and embodied in policy with the institutional, governance and bureaucratic practices that education is enmeshed in. These interstices are complex and riven with interests (including ones located in the academy) that are often difficult to discern and even more difficult to change. They become default positions that embed ways of doing educational work that have implications for what counts, and who can be included, and on what basis. For teachers this is an invidious position and one to which, we suggest, there are no easy answers. There are, however, implications for teachers that entail their responsibility to education and their students, and we suggest that this is different from the accountability that current practices emanating from the globalizing and converging education policy discourses around measurement and comparison fail to address.

Lipsky's original work, to which we have referred earlier, on street level bureaucrats, concerned public sector workers primarily in New York. From this

work, we could say that governments make the policies regarding education but it is the teachers (ground level staff) who have the power to decide whether a policy should be implemented or not. This appears to be an inordinate amount of power given to people who are far removed from where the decision took place i.e. the government. If we consider the relatively divisive topic of inclusive education (see Boyle et al., 2011 for a fuller discussion), where there have been many policy implementations both at national (Disability Discrimination Act, 1992) and international level (UNESCO, 1994), teacher attitudes to inclusive education have been found to be crucial as to whether or not inclusion, in whatever form it may be in, will be successful within a particular school (Boyle, Topping, Jindal-Snape, & Norwich, 2012; Boyle, Topping, & Jindal-Snape, 2013). However, we suggest that, since Lipsky's work, governance in education has become more controlling and narrowing and teachers need to be able to build a space for ground up work that contains strong educational reasons for their work in education and inclusion. This work ultimately requires a strong commitment to articulating ideas about education, and putting these into practice. These ideas need to be able to inflect policy demands, while simultaneously offering resources to build responses to dilemmas that are not based in being accountable to a narrowed set of predefined standards, but by being responsible to the other in the tension between *what is* and *what is not*.

NOTE

[1] This norm is increasingly derived from within a converging neo-liberalized globalizing policy discourse (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). There is a narrowing here how education might be conceptualized that revolves around the discourses of measurability and comparison.

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SECTION TWO

LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

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5. TOWARDS QUALITY AS AN EQUITY IMPERATIVE

*Workbook Development, Supply, Utilisation and Quality in the
Republic of South Africa*

INTRODUCTION

Improving access to education, globally, has been a key success of the Education for All movement, with an additional 50 million children enrolled in schooling since 2000 in sub-Saharan Africa alone (UNESCO, 2012, p. 123). However, increased enrolments can lead to further strains on education systems that are already resource-constrained. With that said, the access/quality nexus does not necessarily impede equity outcomes, as many countries have achieved improved learning for primary school pupils while simultaneously increasing enrolments (UNESCO, 2012, p. 123).

The quality and effectiveness of the workbooks used by educational institutions in South Africa were identified as an area for improvement by the Presidency. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) (DBE, 2011) was required, by a Presidential injunction, to develop and provide resources (specifically workbooks) that would assist students to improve performance in the critical areas of literacy and numeracy. The DBE has undertaken a major initiative to provide Mathematics and Language workbooks in all 11 official South African languages to learners, to accelerate progress towards Education for All in terms of *access* to and *quality* of education.

In 2012, the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) was commissioned, with funding from UNICEF South Africa, to undertake a formative evaluation of the quality and utilisation of workbooks in South Africa.

This chapter outlines the rationale of the workbook project, describes the development process and implementation challenges, and notes the results of the independent formative evaluation of the workbooks' utilisation and quality.

BACKGROUND

Of the world's 650 million children of primary school age, 120 million are not in school and a further 130 million are failing to learn the basics (UNESCO, 2012, p. 122). The chance of belonging to one of these groups of children is pervasively determined by 'the chance event of being born in one nation rather

than another' (Nussbaum, 2009, p.224). In education, stark contrasts do not just exist at the national level but, also, at the regional level, where the clustering of disadvantage can be observed (Outhred, et al., 2012). The UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report of 2012 indicated that the number of out-of-school children in sub-Saharan Africa increased by 1.6 million since 2008, the number of illiterate adults had risen by 27 per cent since 1990 and pre-primary, gross enrolment ratios were the lowest of any region in the world (UNESCO, 2012). The report suggested that the deterioration in the quality of education in some African countries is not simply due to the recent increase in enrolments but there is generally a 'chronic quality problem' in many sub-Saharan African states (UNESCO, 2012, p. 97).

Improving access to education, globally, has been a key success of the Education for All movement, with an additional 50 million children enrolled in schooling since 2000 in sub-Saharan Africa alone (UNESCO, 2012). However, increased enrolments can place further strain on education systems that are already resource-constrained. With that said, the access/quality nexus does not necessarily impede equity outcomes, as many countries have achieved improved learning for primary school pupils while simultaneously increasing enrolments (UNESCO, 2012). Workbook or textbook distribution projects have become common in the developing country context, with mass distribution projects being undertaken in Tonga (NZAID, 2011), Bangladesh (Nahid & Nurul, 2012), Zambia (UNICEF, 2000) and Zimbabwe (Outhred, Matters, & Beavis, 2013) to name but a few.

Workbooks in South Africa

In South Africa, as elsewhere, research has failed to find a simple relationship between resource inputs and learner achievement. Here, learner achievements appear to be linked to the category to which their school belongs (Veriava & Faranaaz, 2010). The category classification is constructed, in part, using resource levels (as well as broader socio-economic status). Research does indicate, however, that there is a minimum level below which achievement increases with resources (Veriava & Faranaaz, 2010). In short, resource input is likely to have a greater effect on student achievement in the poorest schools.

Textbooks and workbooks have long been considered a critical challenge within the South African education system. The Textbook Development Institute notes that:

> Concern about the quality and effectiveness of the textbooks used by educational institutions is the most neglected and underrated factor impacting on the quality of education in South Africa. Teachers are often blamed for the poor standard of education in the country. Little attention is however given to the poor standard or quality of the resources, particularly textbooks, which teachers are required to work with (The Textbook Development Institute, 1999, p. iii).

These issues have historically been identified as of major concern. To improve performance in the critical areas of literacy and numeracy, the Presidency directed the DBE to provide the means by which performance improvements could be achieved. Superior school workbooks were implicit in that directive (McKay, 2012). Thus, the DBE has initiated a priority strategy to provide Mathematics and Language workbooks to learners to speed up the achievement of *Education for All*, in terms of improved access to and quality of education. In addition to the development of workbooks, the DBE mandated that English as a first additional language (FAL) be introduced from Grade 1 in 2012.

Despite high investment levels in education, amounting to one fifth of Government spending in 2011 (DBE, 2011), the evidence of provision of instructional materials and particularly textbooks in schools in South Africa has been lower than in other developing countries in the Southern African region with lower levels of public investment and economic activity. The Southern African Council for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) reports that levels of provision in South Africa had increased since 2000 (Ross, 2010). However, in 2007, levels of provision were significantly lower than other developing countries, with 45 per cent of Grade 6 learners in South Africa having sole use of their own reading textbook/s, against 53 per cent in Mozambique, for example. Provision levels for mathematics were similar, with 36 per cent of Grade 6 learners having sole use of their own mathematics textbooks, against 52 per cent in Mozambique and 62 per cent in Botswana. Despite household data collected by Statistics South Africa indicating a decline in concern for the lack of textbooks in South Africa (22 per cent of respondents at household level in 2002 to 6 per cent in 2011), there is ample evidence that textbook provision has not been optimal.

Provincial Education Departments' Learner Teacher Support Material (LTSM) expenditure grew at an average annual rate of around 13 per cent between 2008/9, from 1.86 billion to almost double that amount in 2012/13[1]. This presents expenditure well over the inflation rate in that period. Provincial textbook provision has, historically, fallen short of the ideal of one text per learner in every subject with 51 per cent of schools indicating, in 1996, that they had inadequate or no provisioning of textbooks as against 49 per cent who indicated adequate provisioning (Human Sciences Research Council, 1996). The curriculum relevance or appropriateness was not investigated in these studies.

The Workbook Intervention

In common with other social services, education provision is complex, discretionary, variable and transaction intensive at the point of delivery (Bruns, Deon Filmer, & Patrinos, 2011). It is discretionary in that teachers must use their own judgement to determine what part of the curriculum to deliver and how to do so; variable in that different abilities and learning styles need to be accommodated in the teaching process within a relatively short period of time (typically 40 to 50 minutes). It

is transaction intensive in that learning occurs as a result of frequent interaction between learners and teachers (Bruns, Deon Filmer, & Patrinos, 2011).

A 2009 study found that the scope, depth and frequency of appropriate curriculum coverage, assessment, homework and pacing was disappointingly lacking in the schooling system (JET Education Services, 2009). Therefore, the production and distribution of workbooks represents an attempt to relieve teachers in terms of the first two aspects of provision (discretion and variety) so that teachers might be better equipped to focus on the third aspect of education provision – transaction intensive learner and teacher interaction. This was based on research indicating that well-designed instructional materials strengthen learners' and teachers' interaction with the curriculum. When teaching needs strengthening, such materials offer an opportunity to reinforce and supplement learning (Sampa, 2008).

The DBE workbook intervention forms part of the main, large-scale initiatives in recent years to drive educational improvement in South Africa: 1. Addressing curriculum streamlining and coverage. 2. Introducing universal standardised assessment of learner performance, and 3. Introducing high quality workbooks on a large scale (at no cost to learners or their parents) to complement the reform of the curriculum and introduction of Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) in 2011.

In South Africa, the provision of workbooks has yielded a variable quality of books (The Textbook Development Institute, 1999) and very high production costs result in lower than desirable levels of provision. Therefore, the DBE enlisted the services of a set of trained experts from academic and other institutions who used different methodologies, tools and graphical representations, in line with constitutional values promoting racial, gender and language diversity, among others, to produce the materials. The workbooks needed to be developed in a very short space of time, present as a set of standardised workbooks and align to the needs of the simplified CAPS. This provided an innovative opportunity, on a large scale, to address critical shortages in classrooms with respect to materials and to provide scaffolding for classroom-based teaching and assessment. It was decided that the workbooks were to serve as supplementary materials and would include lesson plans for use with textbooks in classrooms.

The large-scale production by the State was based on a materials development process which included utilising specialists in materials development, graphic design and languages to craft the workbooks. The workbooks were developed in all of the 11 official languages of South Africa. The State's free provision of the workbooks to all learners throughout the system provided an opportunity to exploit economies of scale by printing in large quantities (114 million since 2011). This approach reduced the cost to the State, providing a strong cost-benefit ratio.

The workbooks provide illustrations or tasks requiring learners to engage through identifying their responses, feelings or express their thoughts about scenarios or perspectives. The aim is to provide opportunities to explore prejudices and concerns and reflect on diversity and civic and moral responsibility. Illustrations include

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grade appropriate pictures, maps, photos, drawings et cetera of items and objects. Some environmental depictions within the workbooks may not be familiar to some learners, especially those in rural areas. The workbooks also incorporated a variety of formative assessment tasks.

The workbooks were developed for grades Reception to 9, with a particular focus on schools categorised as 'Wealth quintile' 1, 2 and 3 schools. Quintile 1 – 3 schools in South Africa represent the three poorest school categories. It is important to note the wealth quintile classification system in South Africa is not based on a strict quintile methodology (the quintiles are not taken at regular intervals from the cumulative distribution of wealth); therefore, they are referred to as 'wealth categories' within this chapter.

EVALUATION OF THE WORKBOOKS

The DBE, with support from UNICEF, commissioned the Australian Council for Educational Research to undertake an independent evaluation of workbooks in South Africa in the period April 2012 – February 2013. The evaluation of the Workbook intervention is formative and aims to:

> Contribute towards the improvement of both the effectiveness (including quality) and utilisation of workbooks in schools in South Africa; and–Provide feedback on the performance of language and mathematics workbooks, to guide adjustments to future editions.

The study included 3 meta-evaluation questions and 22 subsidiary questions. This chapter reports on the 3 meta-evaluation questions, which were:

1. How are the workbooks being utilised in schools?
2. What is happening in schools where the workbooks are not being utilised?
3. Do the workbooks and textbooks have the characteristics of quality text/ workbooks?

Furthermore, two hypotheses were tested on the basis of the available evidence:

1. Unqualified teachers use the workbooks more often than qualified teachers
2. As poverty increases, so does workbook use.

Methodology

In order to address the research questions, the study was separated into 3 parts; (a) a large-scale study drawing on a representative sample of schools, (b) 3 school case studies and (c) a desk review of workbooks.

a. For the large-scale study component of the evaluation, a nationally representative sample of schools was selected (n = 327). This component of the evaluation was designed to give a global sense of how the intervention is working.

b. Three schools were selected for the case study component of the evaluation. This component was designed to provide insights into the perceptions held by stakeholders in schools about the workbooks, to refine understanding of the performance and utilisation of workbooks and to guide adjustments for future editions. The case studies used focus group discussions and in-depth interviews to gather data.

c. The desk review evaluated the workbooks using criteria that were developed drawing on information from a literature review on the characteristics of quality workbooks. Workbooks were evaluated by at least 2 assessors, in at least 2 languages (where workbooks were developed in more than 1 language).

All three components of the study focused on Grades 3, 6 and 9 for the workbook evaluation.

Large-scale study. A total of 327 schools were selected to participate in the evaluation. Oversampling of schools from smaller provinces was undertaken and an equal number of schools were selected from each province. Schools were sampled with probability proportional to size from a list stratified by province, wealth category and school type. From each sample school, five teachers were randomly selected from a list of all teachers from the school who teach at the focus year levels (Grades 3, 6 and 9). This approach led to a sample of about 200 teachers being selected per province to provide a reasonable sample size for comparisons between provinces. As approximately 34 per cent of enrolments were in secondary or combined schools (with year 9 students), approximately 34 per cent of such schools were in the sample (about 14 per province).

The number of teachers represented in the sample was sufficient to detect any major differences between the experiences and observations of teachers at the different school levels at the national level but not at the provincial level. The sample drawn was large enough for comparisons by wealth category at the national level but not by wealth category within the province. About 12 per cent of enrolment is in special needs education and about 20 per cent of schools are from the lowest wealth category. They were represented in these proportions in the sample. This provided sufficient statistical power for national estimates of these subpopulations but not at provincial estimates.

The Eastern Cape province did not have any wealth category information. To reduce the 4,989 missing cases, schools with missing categories were assigned wealth category scores based on averages across the smallest area unit, which had schools with wealth category information. In other words, where wealth categories were missing in the Education Management Information System, missing values were calculated using available data from schools within the closest geographical area.

As the provinces varied quite considerably in population size, it was necessary to assign 'weights' to ensure that, when the data from the different provinces were

aggregated for the purposes of national level analyses, the contribution of the survey respondents from each province reflected the proportion of the national population of students and teachers from that province.

Several different populations were surveyed for this study, namely teachers, learners, Heads of Departments and School Governing Body (SGB) representatives. In addition, observations were undertaken in classrooms and recorded. In general, the approach to weighting was to form subpopulations, or weighting classes, based on important survey variables such as province and school type, and to weight the sample data so that the (weighted) proportion of respondents across these defined 'weighting classes' broadly matched the estimated population distribution. Estimates of the population distribution were drawn from the schools database used for the selection of the school sample. It was important that weighting classes did not become too small, as this would lead to large variations in the size of the weights. This is undesirable as it may place too much reliance on a small number of cases.

Data were collected using an inventory/observation tool, Head of Department (HOD) questionnaire, student questionnaire, teacher questionnaire and a SGB representative questionnaire. A total of 969 teachers responded to the teacher component of the survey. The respondent data were weighted so that the distribution of teachers broadly corresponded with the population of teachers across weighting classes defined by 3 variables: region; a wealth variable; and school type. The learners' component of the survey had 455 respondents. There were 337 respondent records in the HOD data file with a similar number of respondents from each province. Weights were applied to the HOD data file so that the weighted distribution of HODs in the sample matched the distribution of schools across the 9 South African provinces. There were 269 SGB representatives who responded to the survey.

Case studies. Case studies were carried out in 3 schools, including 2 high schools and 1 primary school, across 3 provinces. Semi-structured School Leader interviews, semi-structured Grade 9 student focus groups, semi-structured parent focus groups and semi-structured teacher interviews were conducted at each school.

Desk review. Experts were asked to make judgements concerning the extent to which the characteristics of workbook quality were observable in each focus workbook, ranging from 'not at all', through to 'to a major extent'. In addition, experts were asked to make comments regarding their judgements and a moderation process was undertaken in the event that assessors differed greatly in their judgements. The qualitative responses provided by assessors were summarised and a table created detailing the extent to which each characteristic of quality workbooks/textbooks were observed in each focus workbook. The following table (Table 1) details the focus workbooks reviewed in the study and the languages in which each workbook was reviewed.

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Table 1.Workbooks Assessed through the Quality Rubric

Grade	Subject	Languages
Grade 3	Mathematics – Terms 1 + 2	IsiXhosa
		Setswana
		Xitsonga
		English
	Home Language – Terms 3 + 4	Ndebele
		IsiZulu
		Sepedi
		English
	English as a First Additional Language– Term 1 - 2	English
Grade 6	Mathematics – Terms 1 - 2	Afrikaans
		Xitsonga
		English
	Home Language – Terms 1 - 2	Sesotho
		Siswati
		Tshivenda
	English as a First Additional Language– Term 1 - 2	English
Grade 9	Mathematics – Term 1 - 2	English

Research Questions and Findings

How are the workbooks being utilised?
There were 290 schools from which data were available for this question. Of these, 63.5 per cent had all teachers reporting that learners were using workbooks, 22.1 per cent had no teachers reporting the use of workbooks and, in the remaining 14.4 per cent of schools, some teachers did and other teachers did not report the use of workbooks. Thus, in just under 80 per cent of schools, at least some teachers were using the workbooks.

Generally, at all case study schools, teachers and school leaders saw the workbooks as an effective tool in teaching and learning. However, most indicated that they use the workbooks to supplement the curriculum and the workbooks are perceived as an 'add on' to the textbooks that were being used prior to the introduction of the workbooks. A majority of teachers and HODs indicated that learners use the workbooks every day. The frequency of use may be impacted by the availability of the workbooks to all students in the class. As can be seen in Figure 1, the majority of teachers indicated that the workbooks were used in class 5 times in the week prior to data collection.

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Mean = 3.57
Std. Dev. = 2.924
N = 754.83
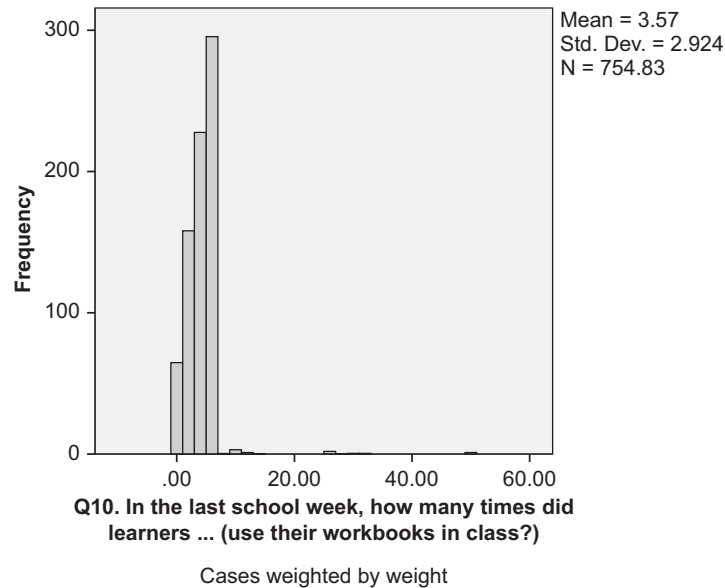
Figure 1. Teachers: In the last school week, how many times did learners use their workbooks in class?

Data on the use of workbooks in class indicate teachers reported using workbooks more often in the week leading up to completion of the questionnaire than textbooks, teacher-made worksheets and materials and other worksheets and materials. However, these findings need to be viewed in the context of some findings from the case studies which indicate that some teachers perceive the workbooks as a supplementary to the curriculum and, therefore, other textbooks are probably being used in conjunction with the workbooks.

Teachers indicated that the workbooks cater to a wide range of learner abilities. Teachers expressed some concern about the rate at which students are expected to progress through the books. About 40 per cent of teachers agreed that their learners find the pace of the workbooks too fast (while around 35 per cent disagreed). While some of the evidence is conflicting, just over half of the responding teachers reported that the pace set for the completion of the work is about right for most students.

Topics are typically being covered in sequence in classrooms where the workbooks are used. HODs and learners also reported that the sequencing of topics within the workbooks allows for knowledge and skills development. There was no significant difference between pairs of best learners and poorer learners regarding sequence. There is some evidence to suggest that topics were less likely to be covered in sequence in Grade 6 and Grade 9 Mathematics compared with other areas.

Typically, the recommended four exercises in each topic are being covered per week. Approximately half of teachers report that learners finish the work they start and just under 40 per cent of learners agreed that the class finishes all the work in the workbook. Over half of learners reported that the class finishes all the work in the workbook and just under a half reported that the class does not. Teacher and learner responses and classroom observations indicate that Volume 1 workbooks are completed before Volume 2 more than half of the time.

Classroom observations and responses from teachers and SGB representatives provide evidence that, typically, teachers are assessing and correcting work within the workbooks. However, qualitative data collected in teacher interviews and focus groups indicate that, while some teachers are assessing and correcting work within the workbooks, they may not be monitoring learner progress over time.

About half of teachers and HODs indicated that workbooks are not stored in the staffroom, the principals' office, the storeroom or the classroom. Open text responses indicated that 'other places' for workbooks storage included in the children's possession, children's bags, in children's desks and in the library.

The vast majority of learners take their workbooks home most days. Almost three-quarters of teachers indicated that learners took their workbooks home five times in the week prior to completing the questionnaire, and fewer than 5 per cent indicated that learners had not taken their workbooks home during the previous week. Approximately three-quarters of the learners report being able to take some of their workbooks home and almost the same proportion of learners indicate being able to take all of their workbooks home. They complete work within their workbooks for homework between 2.5 – 4 times per week. Approximately 65 – 70 per cent of learners are assisted by parents with completing work in the workbook for homework. The advantages of workbooks cited by parents in focus groups included children seeking out assistance from family and community members to complete exercises in their workbooks and parents using the workbooks to learn themselves.

As can be seen in Figure 2, on average, learners take their workbooks home just over 4 times per week.

According to all stakeholders, approximately 65 – 70 per cent of parents assist learners with workbook completion. In-depth data from parent responses in focus groups indicate that, while some parents help their children with homework, others struggle with the written language due to their own level of education. Simultaneously, parents and learners also indicated that the workbooks reduce the amount of parental assistance required as they enable learners to work independently or with friends. Even parents who could not assist their children felt the workbooks help them understand the curriculum and give them the opportunity to participate in their child's education.

Barriers to full utilisation of the workbooks can be summarised as late or no workbook delivery, lack of communication with schools and parents regarding the aims and objectives of the workbooks, lack of formal assessment and monitoring and errors and perceived errors in the workbooks. Errors were typographical only.
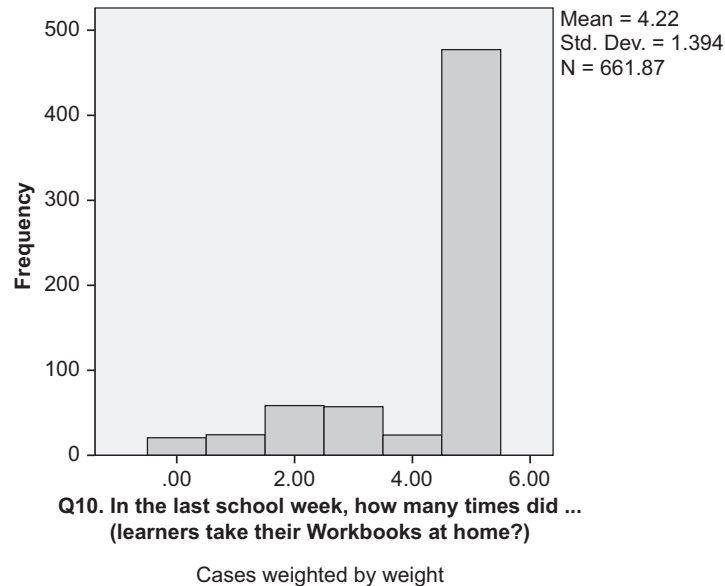
Figure 2. Teachers: In the last school week, how many times did learners take their workbooks home?

Perceived errors were due to the use of academic language rather than 'playground' language. While some teachers perceived such errors, the introduction of academic language was a key goal in the development of the workbooks. Although non-delivery was the most common barrier cited, it should be noted that approximately 80 per cent of learners were found to be using the workbooks. An analysis was undertaken to test the hypothesis that in schools where learners share workbooks in class, the utilisation of workbooks decreases. The analysis found that there is no evidence of this effect in the data.

The evidence suggests that there are few provincial differences in the number of teachers using workbooks in class. No differences in means could be confidently observed between the group of teachers that do and the group that do not use the workbooks according to teaching qualification or the level of qualification, with one exception. A greater proportion of teachers who did not complete Grade 10/Standard 12 were found to use the workbooks than those teachers who have finished Grade 10/Standard 12, college, a first diploma, a first degree or a post graduate degree or honours. The evidence suggests that workbooks are somewhat more likely to be used in single grades rather than in multi-level grades.

What is happening in schools where the workbooks are not being utilised? There were very few schools available in the study to investigate what is happening in

those schools without workbooks, with only 21 schools in the sample reported as not having received them. There is, therefore, insufficient information to try to generalise to the whole of South Africa. On average, workbooks are less likely to be used by teachers of higher grades. Most schools where there are no workbooks or where workbooks are not being used are following the National Curriculum Statement and CAPS. Other responses included the use of 'BCVO (English meaning, Movement for Christian-National Education resources)', 'Oxford Spot on' and 'Departmental Curriculum'.

Do the workbooks have the characteristics of quality text/workbooks? A literature review was undertaken to identify the characteristics of quality textbooks/ workbooks. Evaluation tools developed across international and national settings were also reviewed. A quality rubric was developed on the basis of the national and international reviews and each of the focus workbooks were reviewed against the criteria.

Identified characteristics of quality textbooks and workbooks encompassed visual presentation, ease of use within context, writing quality and design, alignment with learning goals, age and grade appropriateness of assessment tasks, pedagogic approach and reflection of societal values. In the case of the workbook intervention, it was requested that societal values be assessed as they are enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa. A review of the values protectedin the Constitution of South Africa was undertaken and the values of democracy, social justice and equity, inclusion, accountability and responsibility, respect for the rule of law, Ubuntu and reconciliation were used as indicators of the reflection of societal values for evaluation purposes.

As can been seen in Table 12, assessors found that the workbooks have all of the characteristics of quality workbooks to a moderate or to a major extent. Therefore, the workbooks were found to be quality workbooks. The majority of characteristics of quality workbooks/textbooks were observed by assessors 'to a major extent.' Assessors tended to agree that the workbook assessment tasks are fit for purpose. However, many assessors made this judgement with the caveat that this refers to the implicit learning goals within the workbooks.

Teachers and school leaders discussed positive and negative perceptions of the workbooks within focus groups and interviews at case study schools. Teachers reported that the workbooks are easy to use and make preparation easier and quicker, enable learners to be 'hands on' and allow for interactive class sessions, are excellent resources for additional practice and encourage critical thinking.

In focus groups, teachers felt strongly that the workbooks are only able to supplement the curriculum and cannot be used to substitute textbooks. It was thought that some exercises are not challenging enough for learners, however, as discussed earlier in this report, about two-thirds of teachers reported the exercises as challenging the learners.

Table 2.Characteristics of quality present in workbooks

	Not at All	To a minor extent	To a moderate extent	To a major extent
Presentation of books and of contents				X
Can be used effectively in classrooms				X
Writing Quality				X
Design				X
Each section of the book is clearlyrelated to its learning goals			X	
Each assessment task is clearly alignedto the goals of the lesson				X
Assessment tasks are age and gradeappropriate				X
Allows for the different ways thatstudents learn				X
Allows for different paces at whichstudents learn				X
Encourages different ways to teach				X
Encourages critical thinking - students				X
Encourages teachers to share new ideas				X
Democracy		X		
Social justice and equity			X	
Inclusion				X
Accountability and responsibility				X
Respect for the rule of law			X	
Ubuntu				X
Reconciliation			X	

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Parents reflected a positive attitude to workbooks in focus group discussions. Parents discussed the differences between the workbooks and their children's other school books (textbooks) and commented that they find the workbooks interesting, informative and easy to understand. Parents felt that the workbooks stimulate interest in learning and school work and that they had noticed an improvement in their child's understanding of subject matter (especially mathematics). Parents also spoke of changes in their child's attitude and behaviour towards homework and found their children to be more confident, motivated and focused. Parents reported that their children are proud of their workbooks and the work they do in the workbooks. Parents discussed the workbooks as tools that enable their children to get access to a better education and quality of life, a privilege which many parents felt they were denied.

Learners discussed being more interested in subjects that have workbooks. Learners perceived the workbooks as fun and reported looking forward to using the workbooks at school and also working together with friends to help each other. Some learners experienced difficulty relating to the stories in the workbooks due to differing cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. However, exposing children to multiple life-worlds within the curriculum and utilising diverse lived experiences in pedagogy is advocated by many education experts focusing on social justice within the classroom[2]. However, on the whole, learners reported that the work covered in class is easier to understand with the help of the workbooks. Learners reported that, in many instances, they only understand the work when they look at the workbook, even after the teacher has explained it. One learner commented: 'I do not understand the maths teacher but I understand the workbook.'

Hypotheses

Three hypotheses were tested on the basis of the available evidence:

1. Unqualified teachers use the workbooks more often than qualified teachers

There is no clear evidence that workbook use is related to the level of teacher qualification. However, a greater proportion of teachers who did not complete Grade 10/Standard 12 use the workbooks than those teachers who have finished Grade 10/Standard 12, college, a first diploma, a first degree or a post graduate degree or honours. However, it could not be stated with confidence that the true mean for those teachers who did not complete Grade 10/Standard 12 and teachers who completed Technikon or a Mastersdegree was different. This is probably due to the small number of teachers in the sample who have completed Technikon or a Masters degree, thus reducing the confidence levels. Therefore, overall it cannot be stated, with confidence, that workbook use is not associated with qualification or level of qualification. However, as can be seen in Figure 3, teachers who did not complete Grade 12/Standard 10 were much more likely to use the workbooks than many of their more highly qualified colleagues.
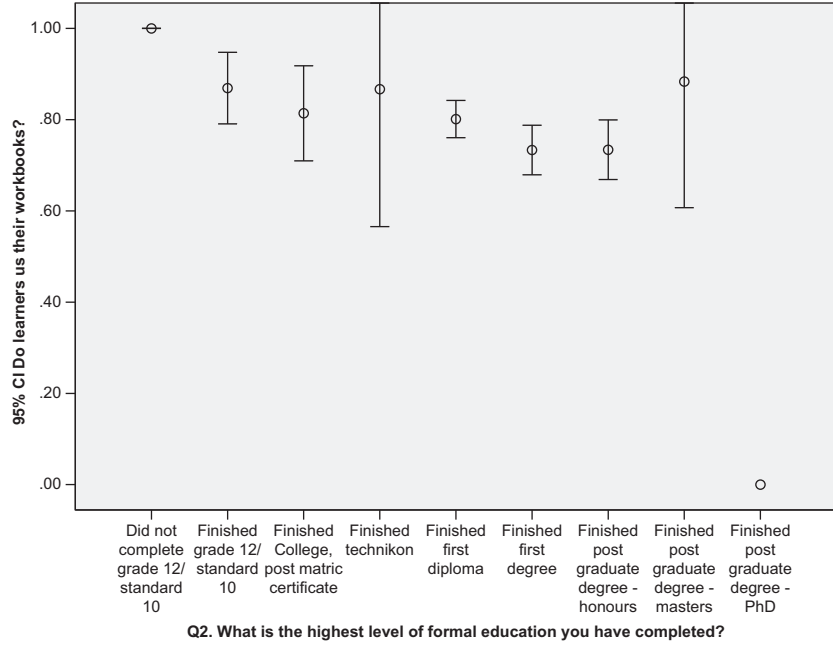
Figure 3. Do learners use their workbooks by teacher qualification?[3]
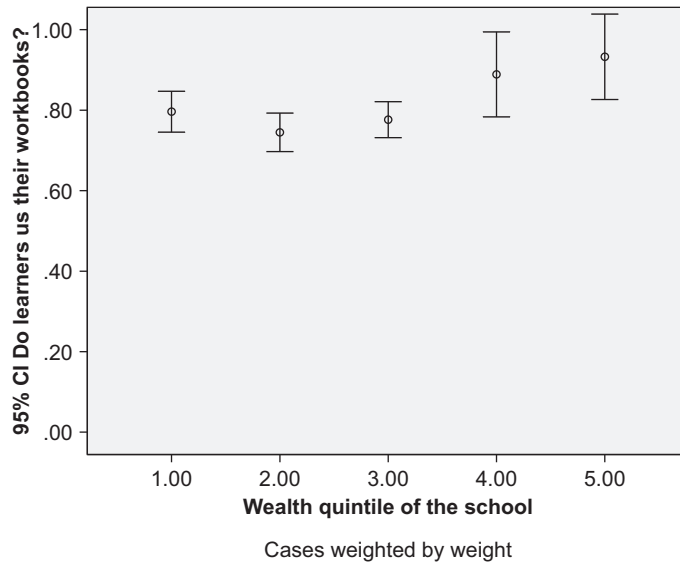
Figure 4. Wealth quintile of the school by use of workbooks.

2. As poverty increases, so does workbook use

No evidence was found to support the hypothesis that the use of the workbooks is related to the wealth category of the school. Within South Africa, Wealth Category 1 refers to the least 'wealthy' schools, through to category 5, representing schools with the greatest wealth. As Figure 4 shows, it can only be reported with confidence that differences in workbook use exist between category 5 and category 2 schools, with a greater proportion of wealth category 5 schools taking up workbook use. This result is likely to be related to workbook availability.

CONCLUSION

It is proposed that, if the logic of the workbook intervention is sound, the low levels of learner performance in the system will be improved as a result of the introduction of the materials. Evidence suggests it takes approximately three years in an elementary school and, depending on size, about six years in a secondary school to see changes in outcomes as the result of a reform (Fullan, 1999). Therefore, it is premature to seek to measure the impact of the workbook intervention at this time. Rather, in line with the terms of reference for the evaluation, ACER provided recommendations to the DBE to help inform the rollout of the intervention, to increase workbook quality for future editions and to increase the full utilisation of the workbooks in schools.

Recommendations for the DBE included providing professional training for teachers regarding workbook use, providing a DVD for teachers showcasing the use of the workbooks, the development of a communication strategy to inform School Management, teachers, parents and learners about the aims and design of the workbook project (including explanations regarding language standardisation processes), the introduction of an information sheet for parents, giving consideration to making learning goals explicit within the workbooks and the provision of templates to monitor learner progress in workbooks[4].

The challenge for the DBE, in the short term, will be to ensure that the logistical challenges involved in providing the DBE workbooks are resolved. This includes ensuring that the workbooks are used, supplemented by appropriate textbooks, provide improved subject and teacher guidance and support improved teacher capability.

More broadly, the workbook intervention and evaluation in South Africa provided valuable insight into the challenges of a large-scale national workbook intervention. With distribution a major challenge, such large-scale resource interventions require careful consideration regarding how to address the difficulties that present. This evaluation suggests that, when workbooks are available in resource-constrained environments, schools quickly take them up. Furthermore, the evidence suggests that the development of a robust communication strategy from departmental headquarters to school stakeholders is likely to increase the full and effective use of workbooks within the classroom. In terms of what schools can influence, the most

important factor in student learning is the quality of the teacher in the classroom (Hattie, 1999). Therefore, the provision of professional development for teachers addressing how to make full use of any supplied teaching and learning materials is likely to yield positive results in improving student learning. In summary, careful attention to distribution logistics, a thorough communication strategy to reach schools (including parents and teachers) and investing in professional development for teachers are factors likely to increase the utilisation of learning materials in resource-constrained education systems.

NOTES

[1] Authors own calculations, from Budget monitoring and support unit, data sourced for all provinces from Vulindlela in June 2013

[2] See the work of Luis Moll, Cathy Amanti, Deborah Neff, Norma Gonzalez, Lew Zipin and Marie Brennan

[3] The circles in the figure above represent the mean response of teachers by qualification level. The lines around the circles indicate the level of confidence that the mean responses within the sample represent the population group as a whole. The confidence intervals indicate that one can be 95 per cent confident that the true mean for the population group lies within the represented interval.

[4] Please note, since presentation of this report to the Department of Basic Education, the Evaluation team has been informed that learning outcome worksheets for the 2014 editions (DBE, 2014) are already being developed.

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6. EQUITY ISSUES IN CHINA'S COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION POLICY

The Perspective of the Province-Based Enrolment Quota Allocation Policy

INTRODUCTION

Equity is a complex issue that goes beyond the field of education. "For equity, it may be that while we cannot define what it is, we know when we are far from it" (Levin, 2003, p.5). Equity is also a controversial issue, subject to different political, economic and cultural circumstances. The notion of equity often involves diverse national contexts connected to specific historical and cultural origins. Even in the same national context, the notion of equity can be distinctively understood and interpreted in varying historical periods (Zhang, 2012a). Educational equity is an important element of social equity. It is also an important means of achieving social equity. Educational equity is becoming recognized as a social or political issue in many countries:

> Educational equity refers to an educational and learning environment in which individuals can consider options and make choices throughout their lives based on their abilities and talents, not on the basis of stereotypes, biased expectations or discrimination. The achievement of educational equity enables females and males of all races and ethnic backgrounds to develop skills needed to be productive, empowered citizens. It opens economic and social opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity, race or social status (Opheim, 2004, p. 8).

According to Opheim, equity defines an equitable education system as one that can equally allocate opportunities of education to all members of society and guarantee that individuals gain equal opportunities for success in the educational process. In the Chinese context, there are many different understandings of educational equity. One of the most influential arguments is that educational equity is the extension and embodiment of social equity value in the field of education, which includes an equal right to education and equal opportunity to education (Yang, 2000). Equal right to education means all citizens have the same rights to access education and is the extension of a citizen's equal political rights within the field of education. Equal opportunity to education means the choices of citizens should not be limited by economic level, family background, educational grades or gender. People with lower economic and social background or cultural differences should be actively supported

by the educational system as far as possible so that every member of society has evenly matched opportunities or resources in education.

Policy is the biggest equity determinant in China (Y. K. Zhu, 2008). Educational equity is associated with the implementation of education policy in the specific social, political and economic context, in this discussion of China. J. H. Zhu (2008) argues that, on the one hand, education policy usually causes educational inequity. On the other hand, however, education policy is also the starting point from which to resolve educational inequity. As suggested, educational equity usually has a close relationship with specific social, historical and cultural issues and, so, the improvement of education equity needs to fully consider all kinds of influential factors and combine multiple research perspectives: education policy is only one of the ways of resolving educational inequity.

Our discussion of the relationship between education policy and equity starts with the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE or Gaokao) in mainland China. The NCEE is an annual, academic examination that is usually taken by high school students in their final year of study. Good academic performance in this examination is a prerequisite to being offered a place at higher education institutions to study at undergraduate level. As a standardised test, the NCEE is one of the most influential education policies in China. According to the Ministry of Education (MoE), in China, 9.15 million people took the NCEE in 2012. Under China's current education system, this examination is regarded as the most equitable method for student selection, as the conduit through which students from different social classes (who meet the required college admission scores) can access institutions of higher education. At present, it is also considered the most effective way to equally distribute higher education opportunities. Since the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, there has been no other education policy that has attracted so much discussion, not only in the academic field, but also in the wider society. The NCEE is at the core of the equitable admission of students and most reform and development of Chinese higher education admission policies are related to this policy. That is, every single aspect of any reform of the NCEE affects different elements of the education system and, similarly, changes to higher education policy affect its relationship with the entrance examination policy. Because of this centrality of the NCEE and to locate our discussion of China's educational equity issues, we will first present the policy development of the NCEE and then take its sub-policy, the Province-based Enrolment Quota Allocation Policy, as an example by which to explicitly analyse the equity issues in the NCEE policy. Through this analysis, we attempt to interpret the paradoxical nature of the NCEE policy with regard to equity issues**.**

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NCEE POLICY

The emergence of modern universities in the late 1900s brought a new form of higher education entrance examination to the Chinese education system. Various forms of the examination continued to be organised by universities after the foundation of the

People's Republic of China in 1949. On 12th June 1952, the Ministry of Education issued the *National College 1952 Summer Enrolling New Students Regulations.* It explicitly stipulated that from, that year onwards, all colleges and universities, nationwide, had to participate in the national unified entrance examination, in addition to individual schools as approved by the Ministry of Education. Thus, the unified NCEE policy was first introduced into the Chinese higher education system. From then until 1958, the NCEE policy was gradually developed, playing a significant role in the selection of new professionals for the newly established China. However, the implementation of NCEE policy was appropriated in the period of the Great Leap Forward when the examination and enrolment process emphasised students' political ideology and was utilised to improve the standard of political censorship. Further destabilising the policy, the broad proletariat, which included the working and peasant classes, was directly recommended for admission to higher education institutions and so, due to an overemphasis on political ideology, higher education institutions enrolled many workers and peasants who did not take the NCEE. Consequently, the newly enrolled students' academic quality was seriously compromised. Although this method of recommendation provided more opportunities for the working and peasant classes, the fact that students' admission was based on political ideology rather than academic performance ran contrary to the golden principle of the NCEE – equality based on academic performance (分数面前人人平等). This policy bias, which overemphasised political ideology in examinations and enrolment in higher education institutions, was rectified in a timely manner. However, the influence of political ideology in the examination and enrolment still existed.

   The NCEE was cancelled by the MoE in the period of the Cultural Revolution between 1966 and higher education institutions stopped enrolling students through academic examinations. Thus, admission through recommendation became the only channel for students to access higher education. Due to the overemphasis of family background and political faith, the policy of recommendation advocated the priority of workers and peasants' children to access education which was, effectively, a discriminatory education policy against non-working class people's children. As a result of these policy directions in the field of higher education, the percentage of students from families of the working and peasant classes increased from 20.5% in 1952 to 55.28% in 1958 and reached 71.2% in 1976 (Ma & Gao, 1998).

   Influenced by the theory of class struggle, educational equality emphasized "equality within the class" and advocated the priority of worker-peasant children to access education by implementing a 'class line' policy that discriminated against 'non-working people's' children. It seriously infringed citizens' equal rights to access education. (Yang, 2006, p. 3)

China's education policies overemphasised the class attribute of Marxist discourse on equality and family background and political belief became the primary criterion for access to education. It sacrificed quality of education and deprived the non-

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working classes their educational rights. To Yang (2006), it is simplistic, brutal and devastating to promote an education ideal by completely negating intellectuals, launching a mass movement and leveling political criticism.

The Reform and Opening Up policy was officially launched in 1978. Accordingly, the restoration of a standardised, systematic and academic education became the primary task of the Chinese government. This was supported by a call for internal reform as well, as Deng (1984) pointed out, "we must create within the Party an atmosphere of respect for knowledge and respect for trained personnel" (p. 128).

Evidence of this priority is that, early in 1977, the NCEE policy was re-established in the Chinese education system. There were 5.7 million people who participated in the 1977 NCEE and the higher education institutions enrolled 0.27 million students through the examination. The reestablishment of the NCEE policy changed, exponentially, millions of people's lives in 1977. From this time on, the notion of educational equity began to move from equality for the working and peasant classes to the equality of educational opportunity for all citizens.

Since the policy of Reform and Opening Up, particularly since the 1990s, economic discourses started to play a dominant role in the development of Chinese higher education. One of the national development strategies China introduced was named Taking Economic Construction as Centre (以经济建设为中心). There were no exceptions made in the field of higher education. Concerns about educational equality became subordinate to the development of the economy and the realisation of socialist modernisation. Following this trajectory, economic factors were a primary driving force for the Enrolment Expansion Policy of Chinese Higher Education in 1999. The Enrolment Expansion Policy began with an economic assumption that an increased enrolment in Chinese higher education could drive economic growth in the short term.

This policy was one of the macroeconomic regulation and control policies for China's government to stimulate domestic demand at that time. Chinese economists played a dominant role in the construction of this policy discourse. In the process of policy agenda building, the Enrolment Expansion Policy as an economic method certainly did not reflect educational equity values. (Zhang, 2012b, p. 104)

Driven by economic interests, the golden principle of the NCEE – equality based on academic performance - was challenged in the early stages of the implementation of the Enrolment Expansion Policy. Besides academic performance in the NCEE, a student's economic status also affected the distribution of higher education opportunities. According to the research of Wu and Chen (2013), each student's NCEE score and family financial background played key roles in candidates' selection of education levels and greatly restrained candidates' choice of higher education.

Since 2006, building a harmonious society has become one of the political discourses in the context of China, which has greatly upgraded the value of educational equity to a new political height. For instance, the report *Decision on a Number of Major Issues about Building a Socialist Harmonious Society* (关于构建社会主义和谐社会若干重大问题的决定)(CPCCC, 2006) demonstrates that a basic requirement of Chinese education policy is the insistence on priority development

of education and the promotion of educational equity. It is important to note that the promotion of educational equity was regarded as one of the strategies that would help build a harmonious Chinese society. In order to challenge inequality in education, this document indicates that public education resources are to be mainly invested in the rural areas, the central and western regions, the poverty-stricken areas, border areas and ethnic regions. Not only is this the first time that the notion of educational equity has been defined in a central government document but there is also a focus on specific sectors of inequity in education, with recommended action to narrow the gaps between urban-rural and regional education and to promote the coordinated development of public education. Since then, the concept of educational equity has gradually entered more government documents and the value of educational equity has, ultimately, been reflected in the reform of the NCEE policy.

Tracing the historical development of the NCEE policy, we found that the core value of the NCEE policy was constantly challenged by political ideology and economic discourse in China's specific social context over a period of half a century. Specifically, in the early-establishment stage of the NCEE system, academic performance was the only criterion to access higher education institutions, which was regarded as a relevant equity method to select professionals for the newly established China. However, as a socialist nation led by the working class, the first generation of China's collective leadership, represented by Mao Zedong, wanted to change the disadvantaged status of workers and peasants. Under the influence of the 'Left deviation', political ideology was overemphasised in the implementation of the NCEE policy from the late 1950's. In this particular political environment, a number of people who were identified with high political consciousness (a firm communist belief) and desirable social origins (peasants and workers) were recommended to access the institutions of high education. This policy adjustment was seen as improving educational equity, however, it was at the cost of sacrificing academic quality. More seriously, the core value of the NCEE policy, that 'knowledge changes fate' (知识改变命运), was mercilessly challenged by political ideology. As mentioned above, the NCEE policy, which was discontinued for 10 years (1966-1976), was re-established in mainland China in 1977. However, the fundamental tenet of the NCEE – equality based on academic performance - was continuously under threat by the dominant discourses of economic supremacy in the process of policy making. In recent years, driven by high-level policy makers, the value of educational equity has become an important 'context of influence' (Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992) in the reforms of the NCEE policy. In the next section, our discussion focuses on educational equity issues in the NCEE policy through the interpretations of its sub-policies.

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY AND THE NCEE POLICY

As a selection examination, exclusivity is the basic characteristic of the NCEE policy. From an egalitarian perspective, the organisation of NCEE, like any other form of examinations, is an unequal selection process. However, given the scarcity

of higher education resources, a selective examination like the NCEE is usually necessary and desirable for the development of higher education. Therefore, it is difficult for any form of examination to completely avoid the issues of equity. Since the establishment of the NCEE system in Chinese education, educational equity has been a major consideration in all policy reform. On the one hand, the NCEE policy has been generally considered the most equitable way to select students for higher education, regardless of their social backgrounds. On the other hand, the NCEE is one of the most frequently discussed policies, with regard to inequity issues, in the Chinese education system. In a time where people have praised the contribution of the NCEE for the development of Chinese education, its critics are never far away.

By looking back at the NCEE policy since the 1950s, we see that the history of NCEE policy development has been one of continuous reforms and adjustments. Its significant influence on Chinese education meant the relevant reforms and adjustments of the NCEE policy were rather cautious and conservative. Notably, in the context of educational equity the NCEE policy *itself* is discussed, whereas most discussions of the restricted area of the Chinese education system focus on the sub-policies of the NCEE,

Some of the sub-policies of NCEE include the Province-based Enrolment Quota Allocation Policy, the Score Adding Policy, the Independent Examination Designing Policy and the Independent Recruitment Policy. There are equity issues associated with each of them. For example, the Score Adding Policy enables two groups of students to gain extra scores during the NCEE. The first group includes minority students, children of martyrs, children of overseas Chinese and students from Taiwan. (Ministry of Education, 2013). The second group contains those students who obtain prizes when they study in high schools, such as the winners of national or international sports competitions, outstanding student leaders, merit students, etcetera. The Score Adding Policy allows these two groups of students to obtain extra scores during the NCEE which, then, enables them to attend better universities. Since the NCEE is extremely competitive, gaining extra scores is of great importance. In fact, to qualify for extra scores, some students even provide fake certificates or change their ethnicity. The lack of effective supervision of the implementation of this policy results in many inequity issues.

In the past, examination papers for the NCEE were designed by the central government. During education reforms in the 1980s, the state started giving more autonomy to local government who gradually gained the power to design their own examination papers. The Independent Examination Designing Policy was first implemented in Shanghai in 1985. After 2000, other regions, such as Beijing, Hubei, Tianjin, also started to implement this policy. Now, most regions in China design their examination papers every year. However, although central government strongly supports this policy, most Chinese people question the fairness of this policy, as local governments cannot guarantee the quality and confidentiality of the examination papers. It is argued that this policy further expands the differences between urban and rural students regarding the amount of resources that are available. In addition, this policy makes it difficult to compare students from different regions, as

students across regions actually participate in different tests. By using inconsistent examination papers, governments are trying to hide the equity issues brought by the Province-based Quota Allocation Policy (Wang, 2008).

When local governments started to enjoy the benefits brought by increased autonomy, higher education institutions also gained more autonomy through the Independent Recruitment Policy. The Ministry of Education issued a document entitled *Opinions on Further Deepening the Reforms on National College Entrance Examination System* (关于进一步深化普通高等学校招生考试制度改革的意见) in 1999, which indicated that the NCEE system should help universities to identify and select talents. Guided by this official document, higher education institutions started to implement the Independent Recruitment Policy. By 2010, more than 80 universities gained the right to recruit students independently (Tan, 2011). These universities organise their own tests and interviews, based on their own criteria, to select students. By receiving extra scores through this process, these selected students can enroll in universities with lower scores in the NCEE than would otherwise be acceptable. This policy enables higher education institutions to identify which kinds of students they prefer. In addition, it helps to change the tradition of test-oriented education. However, because only selected high schools can recommend students to attend the tests organised by universities, this policy causes inequities among schools which, in turn, limits the opportunities for students in non-key high schools. In addition, universities limit their selections to students from certain regions, leading to serious regional inequities. Moreover, since personal relationships sometimes play a key role in the selection process, students with less social capital are at a competitive disadvantage.

The Province-based Enrolment Quota Allocation Policy refers to a system that distributes the enrolment quota of higher education places according to regions, which means that different municipalities, provinces and autonomous regions have different enrolment quotas. Among the policies associated with the NCEE, the Province-based Enrolment Quota Allocation Policy is one of the most controversial ones. Therefore, the rest of this chapter pays particular attention to this policy.

PROVINCE-BASED ENROLMENT QUOTA ALLOCATION POLICY

The enrolment plan of universities in China is formulated together by the central and local governments. The central government takes the role of providing overall guidance and making decisions on the total enrolment number, meaning that the Ministry of Education and the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), jointly, decide the total enrolment number of students first, which is then subdivided among 31 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions. The local governments are in charge of implementing the enrolment plan (Gu, 2012). Within the framework provided by the government bodies, higher education institutions can, then, develop their own enrolment quota allocation plan (Ministry of Education, 2013). The quota is allocated based on municipalities, provinces and autonomous regions. That is to say, different regions have different enrolment quotas.

Economic development in China has been imbalanced in terms of disparities across regions. The distribution of talents in China is also geographic and spatial (Jalan & Ravallion, 2002). Most of the higher education institutions were originally located in more advanced regions in central and Eastern China, especially in the big cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin. In contrast, the development of higher education in the west of China was relatively poor. Although this situation improved through the adjustment in 1952 (the introduction of the *National College 1952 Summer Enrolling New Students Regulations,* as mentioned above) (Feng, 2007).regional imbalance is still a critical problem facing the Chinese government. The Province-based Enrolment Quota Allocation Policy aims to ensure that students from less developed regions, such as Tibet, Qinghai and Yunnan, obtain opportunities to study in higher education institutions. Since many people living in these provinces are ethnic minorities, Qin and Xu (2010) emphasise that this system is an important tool to protect the rights of minority students since, if higher education institutions admit students nationwide based only on the scores they obtain in the NCEE, we will achieve formal equality but substantive inequality.

Sadly, the Chinese government has been unable make this allocation policy successful. During the enrolment plan's implementation stage, both local governments and higher education institutions had their own considerations. In China, the central government provides funding for the development of several top universities, while local governments support the remaining public higher education institutions. Local governments expect universities and colleges in their regions to recruit mostly local students in order to increase the enrolment rate, as well as promote the development of the local economy whereas higher education institutions hope to recruit the most talented students who, generally, come from the economically advanced regions. Therefore, universities tend to offer more places for students in these regions. This "spatial recruitment strategy" involves recruitment processes implemented by universities aiming to recruit only the best students in the regional and national market (Gu, 2012, p. 167). It is a useful way to effectively approach and recruit the best talents from across the different regions in China.

The bargaining that takes place between governments and higher education institutions results in greatly varying enrolment rates in different regions.

Table 1 shows the enrolment of higher education in 1991 and 2008. It is clear that the enrolment rates in all regions grew dramatically over that time. However, the enrolment rates in regions such as Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin and Jiangsu, are much higher than other regions such as Ningxia, Xinjiang and Shanxi, showing that the students in these first regions have greater opportunities to get offers from higher education institutions than those from the latter. Thus, there is greater competition for university places among students in these latter regions.

In response to the needs of local government, some universities allocate high quotas to local students, which means that a large percentage of students in these universities are local (Zheng & Chen, 2010). In 2006, for example, three key universities in Shanghai, Tongji University, Shanghai Jiao Tong University and

Table 1. The enrolment rate in selected regions in 1991 & 2008

Region	Enrolment Rate in 1991 (%)	Enrolment Rate in 2008 (%)
Hainan	21.78	76.8
Jiangsu	41.97	76
Beijing	41.37	74
Zhejiang	29.60	73
Tianjin	37.91	72.3
Shanghai	55.14	67
Guangdong	24.75	63.5
Jiangxi	13.35	62
Shanxi	20.38	59.34
Hubei	25.98	59
Fujian	25.99	56
Shandong	24.43	55
Hebei	18.90	54
Hunan	14.09	51
Anhui	13.66	50
Henan	15.47	42
Gansu	21.72	42
Guizhou	31.80	41.6
Shanxi	16.96	41
Xinjiang	23.09	35
Ningxia	13.06	33

Source: Li (2008), Souhu Education (2008)

Fudan University recruited 40.7%, 44.2%, and 49.7% of students locally. However, two key universities in Tianjin, Nankai University and Tianjin University, gave only 23.3% and 27.1%, respectively, of their enrolment quota to local students (Du, 2007).

The uneven distribution of education resources not only causes 'localisation', but leads to unequal opportunities for students to attend top universities. Peking University, located in Beijing, is one of the top two universities in China. Its academic atmosphere and reputation attracts students from all over the country. According to the admission plan showed in Table 2, students from Beijing are quite lucky, as 226 of them will have received offers in 2013, accounting for 16.7% of the total enrolment through the NCEE. Students from Tibet and Hainan, on the other hand, appear less lucky, as very few of them (9 and 14, respectively) will have been offered places.

Table 2. Provincial-based admission plan of Peking University (2013)

Region	Quota
Beijing	226
Tianjin	39
Hebei	45
Shanxi	47
Neimenggu	28
Liaoning	43
Jilin	37
Heilongjiang	32
Shanghai	28
Jiangsu	45
Zhejiang	33
Anhui	44
Fujian	37
Jiangxi	36
Shandong	51
Henan	85
Hubei	50
Hunan	51
Guangdong	50
Guangxi	35
Hainan	14
Chongqing	37
Sichuan	60
Guizhou	39
Yunnan	30
Tibet	9
Shanxi	50
Gansu	24
Qinghai	18
Ningxia	20
Xinjiang	37
Total	1380

Source: Peking University (2013)

Another serious issue is that students with the same scores might end up going to quite different universities as indicated in Table 3. Chen (2004) argues that the issue of regional inequality has not changed, fundamentally.

Table 3. Admission scores of College Entrance Examination in 2007

Region	Admission Score of First LevelUniversities		Admission Score of Second LevelUniversities	
	Arts	Science	Arts	Science
Chongqing	540	505	476	450
Zhejiang	553	568	523	523
Hebei	566	587	538	549
Guangxi	574	545	522	481
Shandong	593	573	500	480
Jiangxi	573	571	538	521
Anhui	551	563	515	505
Shanxi	567	527	530	490
Guizhou	567	536	496	487
Neimenggu	559	559	515	511
Heilongjiang	567	588	499	526
Jilin	567	574	487	487
Sichuan	559	533	510	474
Hubei	525	548	500	517
Shanghai	465	461	424	394
Beijing	528	531	486	478
Tianjin	513	509	473	453
Guizhou	567	536	496	487
Yunnan	575	560	530	500
Ningxia	548	531	503	493
Qinghai	495	467	418	405
Tibet	Minority:365 Han: 515	Minority:303 Han: 515	Minority:280 Han: 370	Minority:225 Han: 370
Xinjiang	520	518	457	452
Gansu	564	562	503	516

Source: Han (2008)

Chinese higher education institutions are divided into several categories based on education quality. The teaching and research capacity of first level universities are the

highest. Table 3 shows that the admission scores in regions with a relatively poorer quality of educational institutions, such as Tibet and Qinghai, are the lowest. However, the admission scores in big cities, such as Beijing, Tianjin and Shanghai, are also relatively low compared to other places. Even at a glance, the huge differences in terms of admission scores required in different regions is conspicuous. For example, a student with a score of 470 could enrol in a first level university if she/he was from Shanghai. However, if this student had been from Shandong, she/he would not be able to get a place in either a first level or a second level university. People regard this phenomenon as the biggest inequity in Chinese education (Zhi, 2000).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Participating in the college entrance examination in China is like joining in a war without ammunition for your gun. In China, people use the expression 'like a mighty force going through a single-plank bridge' to describe the competitiveness of the NCEE. In order to increase their chances to enrol in good universities, high school students work extremely hard. The Province-based Enrolment Quota Allocation Policy is a key part of the NCE, related directly to, not only, students' opportunities of going to university in general but also, specifically, to which university they attend. This is one of the determinants of the future of young people and, so, the problem needs to be treated seriously.

Educational equity includes two basic aspects: equal rights and equal opportunities (Yang, 2006). The issues associated with the Province-based Quota Allocation Policy mainly concern students' equal opportunities to access higher education. Since higher education institutions allocate more quotas to the provinces in the eastern part of China, students from these regions have a better chance to attend university. Furthermore, students from big cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin, are more likely to be offered a place at the top universities. In contrast, students from less developed regions, such as Yunnan, Guizhou, Qinghai and Ningxia, have fewer chances of accessing higher education.

These issues show the regional inequity of opportunities in higher education. When developing this quota allocation system, the state considered the unequal development of different regions in China and made the starting point of this policy reduction of the inequality of educational opportunities (Shi, 2007). To achieve this aim, the government also developed other policies, such as the Score Adding Policy. Although, to some extent, students from less developed regions are getting more opportunities, the overall outcome is still not satisfying.

The equity problems that exist in the current quota allocation policy go against the principle of equal opportunity (Ju, 2005) and, consequently, result in obstacles preventing students obtaining equal chances to go to university. Thus, it has triggered a lot of social problems. For example, to increase their chances from the NCEE scores, some students migrate to regions where universities require lower scores. However, by increasing their opportunities to attend universities, these students actually

decrease the chances for local students. In addition, to avoid severe competition, many students from wealthy families forego the opportunity of attending a Chinese university and enrol in overseas higher education institutions. These issues seriously undermine the effectiveness of the current quota allocation policy.

The quota allocation policy is one of the methods that has been introduced to resolve the regional inequity of Chinese higher education. By distributing the enrolment quota based on higher education development in different regions, the limited higher education opportunities that exist are allocated to students with different backgrounds in a more reasonable way. In the implementation of the enrolment quota allocation policy, there are struggles and negotiations between the interests of the central government, local governments and the universities. Attempting a coordinated approach to the development of regional higher education, the central government requires public universities (especially the national universities) to distribute a certain number of enrolment quotas to students from the western regions where there is less development of higher education. To promote the development of higher education locally, local governments require universities (especially the local universities) to allocate more places to the students in their own provinces. The universities, however, want to recruit the highest quality students by distributing their places to the educationally better-developed regions but their voice is the weakest in the negotiations among the three parties.

The NCEE policy is one of the most influential educational policies in the Chinese educational system. It is also one of the most disputable policies in the current development of Chinese education. Critics of the NCEE policy have not put forward an alternative method to allocate higher education resources in a more equitable way but, faced with the existing inequity issues as discussed, some kind of reform associated with the NCEE policy is imperative. Apart from the reform of the Province-based Enrolment Quota Allocation Policy, which has been examined in this chapter, stakeholders of the NCEE policy need to explore some other aspects of reform. We suggest such reforms of the NCEE policy should mainly focus on the following 'how' questions: how to effectively supervise the Score Adding Policy to avoid unfair competition during the NCEE; how to improve the reliability of the design of independent examinations across different provinces; how to avoid the Independent Recruitment Policy hindering educational equity between different types of schools; and, how to equally allocate higher education resources through the Province-based Enrolment Quota Allocation Policy.

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7. PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION REFORM IN SAARC COUNTRIES

INTRODUCTION

The South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) comprises 8 countries of South Asia - Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Since 1982, the SAARC countries have been cooperating in the development of various dimensions of human resources, including sports, arts and culture. More recently, this cooperative approach has been extended to education. This was in recognition that primary education in South Asia suffers from major difficulties of limited access and poor quality (South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation [SAARC], 2009a), demonstrated by the majority of countries in this region experiencing extreme impediments to successful primary education, particularly from low student enrolment and high levels of dropout and class repetitions. A similar situation prevailed in secondary and tertiary levels of education. During the 12th SAARC Summit in 1997, the member states reaffirmed their commitment to providing free education to all children between the ages of 6-14 years (SAARC, 2009a).In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding between SAARC and the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was signed in 2008 to assist member countries in different areas to achieve 'Education for All'(EFA), as agreed upon at the World Declaration on Education for All (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1990), the World Education Forum, Dakar, in 2000 (UNESCO, 2000a) and the Millennium Development Goals (United Nations [UN], 2000). The commitment of the SAARC countries was also reflected in the regional Declaration known as the SAARC Development Goals (SDGs) (SAARC, 2009b). To promote diversity and achieve the goals of EFA, inclusive education and quality education have been prioritised.

Understanding the Dimensions of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education (IE) is an evolving concept. In the past, IE was considered synonymous to 'special education' and the education of children with disabilities. More recent definitions of IE encompass all children, including those from different ethnic backgrounds. It is important to understand that IE is significantly different from integration, a term that is commonly used interchangeably in some of the SAARC countries. The next section briefly describes how these terms are different.

Integration. In the early 1980s, developing countries started supporting the integration of children with special needs into mainstream schools (Opertti & Belalca´zar, 2008). Integration was described as "the partial or full physical placement of disabled learners in mainstream schools" (Polat, 2011, p. 51). Integration is as also called 'mainstreaming' because it supports the presence of students with special needs in mainstream classes with regular students during specific time periods according to their competence. One of the key features of this definition is that it places a greater emphasis on the child to change to fit the system, rather than the system changing to fit the child. Students are expected to adapt to the norms, styles, routines and practices of the education system instead of the education system changing according to the learner (Opertti & Belalca´zar, 2008, p. 115).

Inclusion. Inclusive practice in school is not simply providing educational opportunities to children with special needs. Inclusion in schools is planned in such a way that it could "accommodate and respond to the diverse strengths, needs, and experiences of all students" (Salend, 2005, p. 6). Ainscow (2005) points out 4 elements which are the key issues in characterising inclusion. These elements are: a) considering IE as a process; b) identifying and eliminating barriers; c) ensuring presence, participation and performance of all students; and, d) putting emphasis on students who are at risk of dropping out. These elements were reflected in the working definition of IE in Bangladesh that describes it as:

> …an approach to improve the education system by limiting and removing barriers to learning, and acknowledging individual children's needs and potential. The goal of this approach is to make significant impact of the educational opportunities on those: 1) who attend school but who, for different reasons, do not achieve adequately; and those 2) who are not attending school, but who could attend if families, communities, schools and education systems were more responsive to their requirements. (Ahuja & Ibrahim, 2006, p. 106)

Social Justice, Inclusion and EFA

Inclusion is consistent with the principles of social justice. Previously, social justice was perceived as the distribution of goods, rights and responsibilities equally among individuals(Rawls, 1971). This approach to social justice had limitations for its individualistic emphasis on distribution (Ryan, 2006; Sen, 2000). Ryan (2006) argued that, "the root of unequal distribution lies not with the distribution itself or exclusively with the individuals who are part of this process, but with the formal and informal rules or norms that govern how members of society treat one another" (p. 5). Similarly, Sen (2000) considered the 'Rawlsian' theory of primary goods distribution as a means rather than the end and he suggested focussing on 'freedom' as the end. Presenting examples, Sen (2000) concluded that, with the same basket of primary goods, a person with special needs or an aged person would enjoy less freedom than

an "able-bodied person" (p. 72). The point here is that equal distribution of primary goods is one of the means to social justice but transformation of the process and the system is necessary to obtain freedom, which is a significant aspect of social justice. Miller (1999) suggests 3 principles of social justice: need, desert and equality. 'Need' refers to the obligation of each member of a community to satisfy the needs of others according to his or her ability, 'desert' refers to just distribution, which means every member of the community gets reward corresponding to his or her contribution, and 'equality' means the just distribution in a relationship of citizenship (Pendlebury & Enslin, 2004).

Despite the differences in theorising social justice, researchers concede that social justice is both a process and a goal (Bell, 2007). The goal of the social justice process is to establish a just society wherein any individual or group cannot be discriminated against for their race, belief, class, gender, disability, ethnicity and socio-economic background. Bell (2007) further explained that "social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure" (p. 1). In accordance with this ideology, IE encourages *all* children, irrespective of their backgrounds (e.g., race, belief, class, gender, disability, ethnicity, and socio-economic status), to enrol in regular schools located in their respective neighbourhoods. Moreover, in accordance with the principles of social justice, IE sets the "agenda to include those groups who have been socially marginalised" (Ainscow & Sandil, 2010, p. 402).

Similarly, the goals of 'Education for All' (EFA) are centrally concerned with equality. If children are excluded from access to education, they are denied their human rights and prevented from developing their talents and interests in the most basic ways. Any form of exclusion in education constitutes a human rights violation. In keeping with the EFA aims, IE is also based on the principle that all learners have the right to education, irrespective of their individual characteristics or differences. So, the move towards inclusion in education can be seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities and reducing exclusion within and from education. According to UNESCO, "Inclusion, thus, involves adopting a broad vision of 'Education for All' by addressing the spectrum of needs of all learners, including those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion" (UNESCO, 2005a, p. 11).

Policy and National Plans of Action for IE in the SAARC Countries

In the last 20 years, the international community has ratified several key guiding policies related to IE including:

- the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989),
- the World Declaration on Education for All (UNESCO, 1990),
- the Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action (UNESCO 1994),

- the Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2000a), and
- the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN Enable, 2008).\

In South Asia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are signatories to all the above-mentioned Conventions and Declarations, as well as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In response to the international commitment to IE reform, the majority (5) of the 8 South Asian countries that make up the SAARC have undertaken IE-related national policies and programmes. These countries, (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Nepal) have also set interim national targets to achieve universal, basic education *for all* by around 2015. Afghanistan instituted the 'Education Law' in 2008 to achieve equal rights to education without any kind of discrimination (UNESCO, 2011). It has enacted the National Education Strategic Plan II (NESP II) and introduced a Declaration on inclusive and child-friendly education targeting the provision of equal quality of education and equal access to education for all children, without discrimination, in both urban and rural areas (UNESCO, 2009). Bangladesh has enacted a 'National Plan of Action II' (NPA II), setting goals for all primary school-aged children, including children from different ethnic groups, those who are socio-economically disadvantaged and those with a disability, such that they should attend and successfully complete their primary education. The NPA II was extended, through the Third Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP3), with the overall goal of providing quality education to all children (Ahmed & Mullick, 2013). The recent 'National Education Policy 2010' has also emphasised the inclusion of all children, irrespective of their backgrounds and abilities, in education (Ahsan & Mullick, 2013). India launched 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' (SSA) in 2006 to ensure educational access, enrolment and retention of all children who are 6-14 years of age (Sanjeev & Kumar, 2007). It also adopts a zero rejection policy, which aims to ensure that every child, including children with special needs, irrespective of the category and degree of disability, is provided with a quality education. Provincial and Federal governments are working together to make all the schools in India inclusive and child friendly by 2020.According to the 'National Education Policy 2009', one of the key policy actions identified by Pakistan is to achieve universal and free primary education by 2015. It has also emphasised the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream education (Ministry of Education, 2009). Nepal has introduced an action plan called the 'School Sector Reform Plan (2009–2015)' aiming to ensure all children have access to schools and that their learning needs are addressed, through an IE approach (Lohani, Singh, & Lohani, 2010). Sri Lanka enacted a policy of Educational Reforms in 1997 to ensure compulsory education for *all* children aged 5-14 years that supports the philosophy and practice of IE (UNESCO, 2000b). Sri Lanka follows assessment and recording procedures which are implemented for every child on admission to the formal education system. To achieve EFA by 2015, Bhutan has introduced a policy named the 'Education Sector Strategy: Realizing Vision 2020' that emphasises children with disabilities and with special needs should have full

access to the curriculum and participation in extra-curricular activities (UNESCO, 2005b). In comparison with other countries of this region, the overall situation of EFA and inclusion in the Maldives and Sri Lanka is better (ISACPA, 2007).

This chapter is an attempt to identify various challenges that South Asian countries face in implementing IE reform. The chapter also identifies some of the possible strategies to address the challenges. It is largely based on a systematic review of literature published in peer-reviewed journals. The review process isdiscussed briefly below.

METHODOLOGY

A systematic review of literature was conducted for this chapter. 6 data bases, ProQuest, A+ education, ERIC, Web of Knowledge, PsycINFO and Google Scholar, were searched to identify relevant, peer-reviewed articles which reported data from South Asian countries about IE reform, published within the last 10 years (between 2003 and 2012) and written in English. In total, 25 articles were reviewed representing7 countries (Afghanistan 3 articles, Bangladesh 7, Bhutan 1, India 7, Nepal 3, Pakistan 2 and Sri Lanka 2 articles). As there was no published research within the last decade that met the criteria for the Maldives, data from the Maldives were not included in this analysis.

The major focus of this analysis was identifying challenges and prospects in implementing inclusive education in South Asia. The analysis also focused on the current situation of IE reform in South Asian countries. A general, inductive analysis approach was followed to identify themes for this analysis (Thomas, 2006). Two themes emerged from the analysis including: a) engagement, empowerment, and collaboration; and b) support for IE reform.

ENGAGEMENT, EMPOWERMENT AND COLLABORATION

In all the South Asian countries, educational policies are formed without the constructive involvement of teachers and other members of the school community. In addition, teachers have limited freedom to bring changes to schools without the approval of the government education office. Similarly, the school community, including the school head and school management, has limited power to undertake any significant decisions while implementing IE. Thus, the current, centrally-controlled, hierarchical system discourages school leaders from initiating changes that support reform activities and provides teachers and school community members with limited access to policy development and decision making. The review indicated that the centralised management system is one of the most challenging aspects for school teachers in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, India and Pakistan when trying to implement IE reform.

Teachers in both formal and informal leadership positions require authority to play a significant role in translating IE policy to practice. This may occur through IE

reform strategy such as Bangladesh's strategy called the School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP), introduced in primary education (Mullick & Deppeler, 2011). The main goals of SLIP were to:

• ensure active involvement of members of the school community,
• empower them to take policy decisions at the school level, and
• function as a voice for teachers, students and parents (Directorate of Primary Education [DPE], 2009).

The activation of Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) and School Management Committees (SMC) were other important,decentralised management strategies which aimed to extend the opportunity for teachers and parents to raise their voices for change and development of their schools (Mullick, Deppeler & Sharma, 2012), strengthen the activities of these parties and provide collaborative discussion platforms to encourage all stakeholders to voluntarily participate.

Issues related to IE reform require all the members involved to collaborate not only in school activities but also in interactions with other schools. These school community members need to see themselves as part of a*system* which is making progress towards inclusion (Mullick, Sharma & Deppeler, 2012).

SUPPORT FOR IE REFORM

The full inclusion of students with disabilities in regular schools is affected by the negative attitudes of their student peers, classroom teachers and the parents of children both with and/or without disabilities (Ahmmed, Sharma & Deppeler, 2013; Ahsan, Sharma, & Deppeler, 2012). In Bangladesh, teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education are problematic (Ahmmed, Sharma, &Deppeler, 2012), as are the attitudes of the teacher education institutes' heads, many of whom are not supportive of full inclusion of students with diverse backgrounds. In India, the caste system[1] is a strong barrier to attitudinal change regarding inclusive education. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, girls' education received limited support from the stakeholders because of a non-supportive religious construct. It can be argued that attitudes are an important dynamic in implementing IE in regular schools (Ahmmed et al., 2012; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002): it is undeniable that positive attitudes of stakeholders (such as teachers) are very important when implementing IE reform, particularly if one is looking for inclusive change in classroom practices (Loreman, Forlin, & Sharma, 2007; UNESCO, 2010).

One of the most significant challenges the countries in the region face is the inadequate preparation of pre-service teachers. In order to teach adequately in regular classrooms, teachers need to have commitment (heart), necessary knowledge and skills (head) and ability to practice inclusion (hands). It appears that university education programmes in these countries offer limited information about various aspects of IE (Sharma, Forlin, Deppeler, & Yang, 2013). There are also significant differences across programmes, ranging from one lecture on students with disabilities

to a complete course on special education. It is not surprising that graduates of such programmes continue to express high degrees of concern about and low levels of commitment to teaching in inclusive classrooms. It would appear that teacher education programmes need systematic revision if they are to prepare graduates to better manage classrooms with diverse learners. This is not an easy shift that will only be operationalised when teacher educators start seeing the value of inclusive education: teacher educators need to understand that inclusive education is good education for all, not just for some students (Sharma, 2012).

Successful implementation of inclusion requires that schools and educators are well supported with human, instructional and physical resources. Many classrooms teachers do not have sufficient of these resources when trying to address the individual needs of a diverse group of learners (Ahmmed, 2013). In most cases, classroom teachers do not have an appropriate blackboard, teaching curriculum or special needs equipment (e.g., Braille for visually impaired students) that are needed in order to address diversity. Furthermore, the majority of schools do not have a special needs friendly environment, such as ramps and toilet facilities suitable for students in wheelchairs.

The necessity of appropriate support and resources to address diversity and special needs when promoting inclusive practices has been discussed in a number of international studies (e.g., Boyle, Topping, Jindal-Snape, & Norwich, 2012; Podell & Tournaki, 2007). It was found that teachers perceived their available resources as inadequate for them to implement inclusive education in their classrooms. There is no doubt that South Asian countries are technologically less developed than Western countries and the majority of schools in developing countries, including the countries of the SAARC region, are not well equipped or resourceful enough to implement IE well. Two of the common concerns that teachers continue to raise, in the SAARC region, is that they do not have adequate teaching resources and that disadvantaged students (such as students with disabilities) do not get sufficient allowances from the State. Alur (2007), however, argued that the successful implementation of IE is possible even with limited resources.

Given the important role of resources for implementing IE in regular schools well, researchers in both developed and developing countries suggested the significance of using the available and local resources in an effective and innovative way to successfully accomplish IE (e.g., Kalyanpur, 2011; Westwood & Graham, 2003). Slee (2013) suggests that schools need to be inventive with allocated resources to implement inclusive practices. One of the setbacks to schools in this region is the limited authority of local school leaders to undertake any decisions at a school level. Amongst other challenges, this condition impacts on initiating the arrangement of necessary resources, such as support teachers or instructional supplies, at the school level.

Despite these challenges, all of the SAARC countries have made significant development towards achieving EFA through an IE strategy. For instance, Bangladesh has made significant improvement in the enrolment of girls in regular schools. Now

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nearly 99% of school-aged girls now attend schools (Directorate of Primary Education [DPE], 2012). In Afghanistan, the quality of post-conflict education is gradually improving with UNICEF's 'Back to School' programme, underpinned by principles of IE, that has ushered in education for all children, including girls, in regular schools. Indeed, the approach of IE may build social cohesion and bring promises of hope, social justice and equal rights in war-torn, demilitarised Afghan society (Matsumoto, 2008). Pakistan has moderately improved in primary education, particularly regarding students' enrolment. However, to achieve the goals of EFA, through IE, there needs to be improved teacher training, resources and a comprehensive curriculum, otherwise it will be difficult to reach this milestone (Hassan et al., 2010). India has progressed considerably in their attempts to achieve EFA (UNESCO, 2010) and the human rights movement has brought significant change in protecting the basic rights, dignity and equal educational opportunity of all people with disabilities (Parasuram, 2006). India has initiated a number of programmes (Kalyanpur, 2008), including the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA), the Right to Education Bill 2005, the Action Plan for Inclusion in Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities (IECYD, 2005) and the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2006, providing IE with impetus in recent years (Alur, 2007). Kalyanpur (2008) argues that people with disabilities are no longer invisible in society or in educational institutions in India. In Nepal, awareness-raising regarding disability issues at all levels is considered very important as disability is, to some extent,entangled with social stigmatisation (Lamichhane, 2012). Inclusion of children with disabilities requires increased awareness which, in turn, may minimise prejudice towards those with a disability.

CONCLUSION

The review reported in this chapter indicated that, although the South Asian countries have made considerable progress in achieving EFA and MDG goals employing an IE strategy, the majority of the countries are still facing significant challenges. These challenges include inadequate resources, lack of collaboration among stakeholders, limited teacher training and low engagement of the school community. Since every country has made some significant success towards achieving EFA goals and has almost similar contextual issues and challenges, it might be useful for the SAARC countries to continue to work together, learning from each other's successes and challenges in order to achieve quality education for all children and fulfil the goals of EFA and MDG. The SAARC platform can play a vital role in exchanging information, mobilising funds, promoting joint research projects and preparing policy guidelines for educational stakeholders in this region, to minimise the stumbling blocks in relation to achieving the Education for All milestone and establishing quality education for all within an inclusive education paradigm.

NOTE

[1.] The caste system is a socio-religious construct which approves division of labour and power in human society. It places Brahmins at the top and untouchables at the bottom with a belief that people categorised as untouchables are impure. (Christophe, 2006)

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8. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH

Are the Guiding Principles Aligned with Successful Practices?

ABSTRACT

Inclusive education (IE) has become a significant educational reform strategy for many developed and developing nations since its international endorsement in the Salamanca Statement in 1994. As a signatory of the major international declarations of IE, Bangladesh is committed to achieving the goals of education for all (EFA) through the successful implementation of IE in regular schools. Over the past two decades, Bangladesh has enacted policies and legislation in favour of IE. This paper aims to analyse how the policies and legislation reflect the notion of IE in the context of Bangladesh. To understand the practice of IE, it also looks at two major projects, the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) and the Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP), that have been introduced in Bangladesh over the last 7 years. The study was mainly supported by current literature and policy documents and guidelines which have been reviewed systematically to understand the notion of IE and its specific implementation pattern. Results suggest that IE policies in Bangladesh are predominantly borrowed from several international treaties and seem to be little understood among practitioners and classroom teachers. The results also show that teachers' attitudes towards IE and limited professional development are major barriers to implementing IE at the school level. The findings imply that the policy guidelines in relation to the context of IE in Bangladesh tend to be low-leverage tools. Further research is needed to understand IE practice at the classroom level.

INTRODUCTION

The philosophy to endow all learners with equitable access and participation in school is recognised as inclusive education (IE). The goal of IE has been established to act as a catalyst to ensure access, presence, participation and achievement of all students from diverse backgrounds (UNESCO, 1994). IE not only stands for including marginalised students in regular classrooms but supports the broader philosophy of embracing *all* students in a uniform education system (Ainscow, 2005).

Researchers consistently argue that the process of inclusive practice is a complex and highly challenging phenomenon (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2004, 2006; Carrington & Robinson, 2006). It has been suggested that IE can be successful when it is context-oriented (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2006; Armstrong, 2000) and built on a shared understanding: conversely, a lack of shared understanding among stakeholders, including policy makers, teachers and the community, may amplify the complexity and impede the development of inclusion within the school culture (Ainscow, 2005).

IE policies are legitimated principles and procedures that direct how IE is understood and practiced in a particular society. Evidence suggests that, despite having good guiding principles, an IE policy may lead to practices that are inconsistent with its goals (e.g., see Ainscow & Miles, 2009; Bourke, 2010; Slee, 2006). This argument pertains, particularly, to guidelines that are based on ideas borrowed from another context, as this negates the contextualised shared concept of IE. Thus, it is important that the guiding principles for IE demonstrate a direction for investment and action that takes into account the specific context or school environment. As the thoughts of practitioners are an element of context, policies directing the IE structure that ignore practitioners' perspectives may increase implementation difficulties.

Considering the facets related to IE described above, this chapter examines existing IE policies within the primary and secondary education context of Bangladesh. The specific questions that we address are- how is the notion of IE portrayed in the policies, and how is inclusion practiced in the classroom or school education context? The chapter ends with a discussion of the implications and recommendations for further research.

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The education structure of Bangladesh is divided into three main stages of primary, secondary and higher education. Primary education consists of Grade 1 to Grade5 and is compulsory for all for children aged 6 to 10. Secondary education starts at Grade 6 and terminates at Grade 12. This stage is divided into three sub-stages: junior secondary (Grade 6 to 8), secondary (Grade 9 and 10), and higher secondary (Grades 11 and 12). Secondary education is not obligatory and any student can choose not to continue to this stage after completion of their primary schooling. Higher education commences after higher secondary education and consists of 3 to 5 years of study. Recently, the Bangladeshi government has focused on pre-primary education which received formal accreditation in 2012, even though it has been informally provided in many schools during the preceding decade.

The commitment of Bangladesh towards IE is quite clear. A number of policies regarding equity and access to education for all children have emerged since Bangladesh became independent in 1971. The need for universal education for all children regardless of any special circumstances is echoed in the national constitution which was drawn up immediately after independence (Ministry of Law

Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, 1972). Articles 17 and 28 of the constitution state that education should be ensured for all children without making any discrimination -clearly consistent with IE philosophy (Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, 2000). Bangladesh is a cosignatory of all international treaties in which education for all children within an inclusive framework is emphasised, such as Education For All (UNESCO, 1990), the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994), the Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2000) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006). Until now, Bangladeshi government initiatives for IE are mainly spread over the primary and secondary education sectors and the implementation of IE is still at an early stage.

It is to be noted that national initiatives for enacting IE policies/legislation in Bangladesh have closely followed the emergence of international treaties. Figure 1 shows a time-trend for Bangladesh endorsing IE-related policies following each signed international treaty. The documents listed in Figure 1 are the key policy guidelines for IE in Bangladesh. Therefore, we now consider these four national policy documents to analyse the guiding principles regarding implementation of IE in Bangladesh.
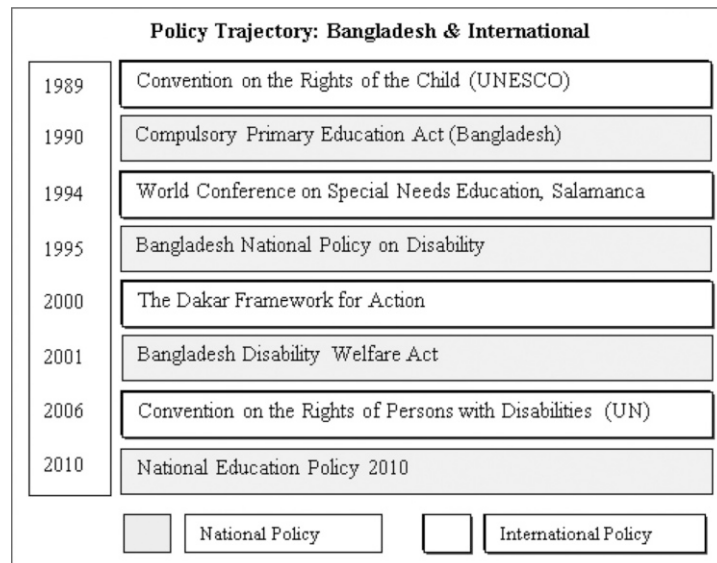

Figure 1. Time relationship between the introduction of Bangladesh IE-related policy documents and international treaties.

The government has endorsed two major initiatives for IE implementation for the primary and secondary education sectors: Primary Education Development Programmes

(PEDPs) (e.g., see Sarvi et al., 2003) and Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP) (e.g., see Sarvi, Djusupbekova, Ikemoto, Mahmood & Sultana, 2004). The former has been running for more than a decade and the latter for 8 years. One major focus of these projects has been IE practices in classroom settings but the impact of these projects on inclusive classroom practices is yet to be understood due to inadequate/no research in this area. Our analysis, therefore, includes an examination of these programmes with the aim of seeing in what ways IE is practiced and aligned with the policy guidelines endorsed by the government of Bangladesh.

STUDY APPROACH

The purpose of this chapter is to underline our critical review of IE policies within the national context of Bangladesh. The questions that guided the selection and analysis of the documents were: how is the notion of inclusive education portrayed in the policies and how is inclusion practiced in the classrooms or school environment? For relevant data, we relied on electronic versions of major IE policy documents, literature/reports on the policies (published or unpublished) and international literature representing IE concepts, policies and practices. We used Google/Google Scholar for searching the electronic documents. The search process involved the following key words and terms individually or combined: inclusive education, national policy, secondary, primary education and Bangladesh.

We have adopted a critical approach, considering the questions mentioned above, in reviewing the available documents. In our analysis, we evaluated what notions of IE are well established in the policy guidelines and what they imply for practice within the Bangladeshi education context. The evaluation criteria were based on the up-to-date notion of IE as published in recent literature. In our discussion, we have emphasised both the strengths and limitations of the notion of IE.

Table 1: Major Policy and Programme documents reviewed

Policy Documents
The Compulsory Primary Education Act1990Bangladesh Persons with DisabilityWelfare Act-2001National Education Policy (NEP) 2010
Programme Documents
PEDP
• Project Proforma of Primary EducationDevelopment Programme II
• Project Compilation Report
TQI-SEP
Project Proforma for Teaching QualityImprovement in Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP)
• TQI-SEP: Reports and recommendations ofthe president
• Project profile for TQI-SEP, CanadianInternational Development Agency

POLICY GUIDELINES FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH

By and large, IE in Bangladesh is policy focused. For over a decade, the government has taken major steps to legitimise and promote the practice of inclusive education. This section highlights the legislative or constitutional framework in which IE-related policy choices have been made forthe primary and secondary education sectors.

The Compulsory Primary Education Act (CPEA) 1990

In line with the EFA declaration in 1990, the Compulsory Primary Education (CPE) Act (MOPME), 1990) has been enacted in Bangladesh in a move towards free and compulsory education for all children. According to this Act, parents can be fined if they do not send their children to school. However, the Act can be used to justify children's absence from school on the ground of their disability. For example, section 27.3.3 (e) of the Act states that "The decision of a primary education officer [can be] that it is not desirable to enter a child in a primary education institute on account of its being mentally retarded" (Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, 1990). This statement indicates the power of a local education officer to make decisions as to whether a child with mental retardation can be in a primary school or not. Thus the Act encourages the segregation of children with special education needs (SEN) and discourages the education of children who are intellectually challenged.

Evidence suggests that, 23 years since the adoption of the CPE Act, the goal of EFA has not been achieved satisfactorily (Islam, 2010). One of the reasons given for this limited success is that the policy enactment ignored the socio-economic context of the locality. The cost involved in providing an education for each child, particularly in rural Bangladesh, remains high, which may discourage parents from sending their children to schools (Chowdhury, Chowdhury, Hoque, Ahmed & Sultana, 2009; Sabates, Hossain & Lewin, 2010). Moreover, the policy failed to recognise the following factors: accessory costs, parents' expectations on outcome (Hossain, 2011), school accessibility (Khanam, 2008; Sabates et al., 2010), contact hours flexibility, the active engagement of parents and the local community (Malak, 2013), field-level affordability monitoring and overall awareness regarding schooling.

Bangladesh Persons with Disability Welfare Act (PWDWA)-2001

This was the first legislation on disability in Bangladesh to meet the commitments of the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) and Dakar Framework (UNESCO, 2000). The Bangladesh Persons with Disability Welfare Act (The Act) (PWDWA, Ministry of Social Welfare, 2001), comprehensively covers the definition, education, health care, employment, transport facilities and social security for persons with disabilities. In fact, this Act has been recognised as the very first initiative to ensure

education as a legislative right for children with disabilities in Bangladesh (National Foundation for Disabled Development, 2013). The Act postulates that it will-

> Create opportunities for free education to all children with disabilities below 18 years of age and provide them with books and equipment free of cost or at low-cost. (Part D:2)(Ministry of Social Welfare [MSW], 2001)

Despite having several components for students with SEN, the Act itself can be considered as a barrier to inclusive education for SEN children. Firstly, the Act rests on the medical model of disability (Šiška & Habib, 2012) and considers the clinical features of an individual when defining a person with a disability. Consequently, in section D (1), the Act suggests segregated school settings for students with SEN. Interestingly, this is despite, the emphasis in the third section on the creation of opportunities for children with disabilities to study in mainstream schools. Throughout this Act, disability has been perceived largely as charity (welfare attitudes) (Šiška & Habib, 2012) and education for students with SEN has not been considered, by policy makers, to be a right. Thus, the notion of IE has not been encouraged through this Act.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2010

The National Education Policy 2010 was formally approved by the Parliament of Bangladesh in December 2010. This is another official commitment by the government to inclusive education. In this document, the notion of 'quality education for all children' is considered a fundamental issue (Ministry of Education (MoE), 2010).

The NEP (2010) refers to the education of all children for both primary and secondary education sectors although the policy statements do not directly use the terms 'inclusion' or 'inclusive education'. Indeed, it can be argued that most of the policy statements fail to align with the notion of IE. Rather, the idea of segregation of children with SEN is encouraged. For example, section 18 (7) states- "Separate schools will be established according to special needs and in view of the differential nature of disabilities of the challenged children" (MoE, p. 43). Moreover, some negative words such as 'handicapped' or 'dumb' are used to describe children with special needs. These vocabularies clearly contradict the philosophy of inclusion and reflect deficit attitudes of policy makers that encourage segregation rather than inclusion. Therefore, education reform based on policy statements such as the above may lessen the effective implementation of inclusion in Bangladesh.

Comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Policy Draft

In 2012, the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA) initiated a Comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Policy (MOWCA, 2012). Inclusion in early childhood has been focused on in this policy. The policy

underpins early participation in education of all children, irrespective of special needs, ethnicity and economic status, through inclusion. One of the significant features of this policy is to undertake screening measures for children with SEN and to provide supports within 3 years from birth (MOWCA, 2012, p. 16). Since this policy caters for inclusive education through early childhood, it might encourage students, as well as their teachers, to create a more inclusive culture in regular schools. Table 2 summarises the information from the policies that supports the values of inclusive education:

Table 2: Summary of the policy documents

Key policies	Key ideas	Observations
CPEA,1990	Legitimise 'Education for All'	Some statements regarding enrolment of children withspecial needs contradict an inclusive education philosophy.
PWDWA, 2001	Establish the rights of SEN students to education	Medical model of disability is emphasised. It encouragesdevelopment of a specialised curriculum and assessment which favours specialeducation provision rather than inclusive education.
NEP, 2010	Establish national guidelines on quality education forall	IE has been spelt out though segregated education.Segregated education has been encouraged for children with SEN. No concrete guidelinesare provided on how teachers could be supported for inclusive practices.
ECCD, 2012	Provide for IE through early childhood programme	Mainly health care focused, socio-psychological approachis less emphasised. Children are expected to be fitted into the school systemrather than the schools be modified for the children.

It can be stated that all the policies described above included many facets of inclusive education whether implicitly or explicitly, vaguely or specifically. Therefore, each of the above policies has implications for IE practice. The following section presents some evidence of IE practice in different educational settings in Bangladesh.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PRACTICE

Bangladesh has a very centralised education system with the government playing a pivotal role in implementing inclusive education. As mentioned earlier, two major programmes, namely PEDP and TQI-SEP, are involved in implementing IE in regular

schools. The following sections describe how IE has been practiced in educational settings through these programmes.

PRIMARY EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Bangladesh primary education is a vast sector, consisting of approximately 90 thousand schools and with around 18 and a half million students (Directorate of Primary Education, 2012). About 70% of these schools are under the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME) and 83% of enrolled children attend these schools. Since 1997, the MOPME prepared a comprehensive PEDP to enhance the overall development of the primary education sector and it has been a principal channel for realising the government's primary education-related policies. It has developed since its inception in three phases named as PEDP I, II and, the currently running PEDP III. All through these phases, the project has been the major contributor of IE implementation in Bangladesh. Several studies show that PEDPII made important strides forward, in terms of social inclusion, during its early years (Ahuja & Ibrahim, 2006; Nasreen & Tate, 2007). Table 3 depicts the areas of importance of the three phases/programs.

Table 3: Primary Education Development Programme by Phase

Phase and time	Aims and objectives	Key implementation / success
PEDP I (1997-2003)	Quality improvement in primaryeducation; Enhancement of educational planning and management capacity andincreasing equitable access to primary schooling.	Increased girls enrolment / decreased gender disparity
PEDP II (2003-2011)	Improve the quality of teaching andlearning and raise student achievement; increase access to schooling for thedisadvantaged; and strengthen planning and management of primary education.	Increased enrolment of SEN children, teachers trained oninclusive education and physical facilities introduced in schools forchildren with special needs
PEDP III (2011-2015)	An efficient, inclusive and equitableprimary education system delivering effective and relevant child-friendlylearning to all Bangladesh's children for pre-primary through Grade V primary.	Ongoing

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The first programme (1997-2003) focused on the gross enrolment rate in primary education. However, the second programme (2003-2011) incorporated a specific component on inclusive education to address diversity in the regular school system. PEDP III recently extended the policy of IE and places more emphasis on the objective of reducing social disparities.

As the PEDP II phase was recently completed and PEDP III is presently running, in this paper we will mainly discuss the impact status of PEDP II and projection of PEDP III regarding inclusive education.

PEDP II is one of the largest, sector-wide approaches in the world (US$150 million). In PEDP II, one of its four components was inclusive education. We will discuss three major initiatives of the IE component of PEDP II; namely, the inclusion of children in mainstream schools, massive teacher training and the facilitation of a school built environment for children with special needs.

Enrolment

Under PEDP II, the Directorate of Primary Education first made the official declaration that students with SEN would not be denied their enrolment in regular schools. This declaration was the first government initiative to provisionally ensure the admission of students with SEN in regular schools. In PEDP II, the IE component specifically targeted four groups: female students, children with SEN, children from ethnic backgrounds and children from vulnerable groups (e.g. slum children, refugee children, street children, orphans, children from ultra poor families etc.) to bring them into regular classrooms. BANBEIS[1] (2011) has documented the enrolment figures of children with SEN for six consecutive years, from 2005 to 2010 (presented in Figure 2). The figure clearly shows that the number of enrolled SEN children nearly doubled within this period.
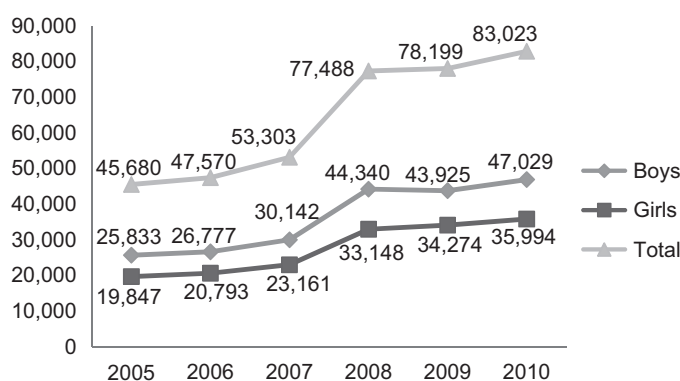

Figure 2. Trend in enrolment of children with SEN at primary level.

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The baseline survey conducted in 2005 revealed that 45,680 children with SEN were accommodated in primary schools, amongst whom was a significant number students with intellectual disabilities (PEDP Completion Report, Government of Bangladesh, 2011). The enrolment of special needs children increased by 5% each year (Directorate of Primary Education, 2012, p.54). Figure 2 shows an increased trend in SEN children enrolment from 2005 to 2010, however, the exact number of school aged children with SEN has not yet been reported.

One of the challenges of the programme was to bring children with ethnicity into the classroom. The programme itself evaluated that "due to the lack of institutional experience and capacity, opportunities for special needs, tribal and vulnerable children have not been created to the expected level" (project completion report for PEDPII, cited in Directorate of Primary Education, 2012). Sarker and Davey (2009) demonstrate that the language difficulties of ethnic children from the Northern part of Bangladesh inhibit their participation in mainstream primary schooling.

Training

Another major contribution of PEDP II is providing widespread training to administrative officers and teachers. Along with other training, short inclusive education training has been provided to 270 administrative and supportive staff (Upazila Resource Centre) and all head teachers (61,000) (Asian Development Bank, 2011). Most of these training programmes consist of 2 to 5 days. However, a recent study conducted in Bangladesh suggests that teachers' attitudes are still less than optimally supportive of inclusive education (Ahsan, Sharma & Deppeler, 2012). The pre-service teacher training curriculum has been revised by incorporating issues related to IE (Hossain, 2008) though teachers still demonstrate a lack of knowledge on disability (Malak, 2013) and inclusive pedagogy (Das & Ochiai, 2012). Moreover, teachers have limited knowledge regarding existing policy, laws and legislation of education for students with disabilities and of ethnic backgrounds (Sarker & Davey, 2009) and it can be argued that this lack of understanding stimulates teachers' negative attitudes towards inclusive teaching (Forlin, Loreman& Sharma, 2007). This can be understood from the comment of a Bangladeshi primary teacher about a hearing-impaired student:

> This boy is always shy, not sociable and spontaneous like others so it is difficult for me to involve him in activities…I don't feel he is comfortable working with other children. As you can see I have large numbers too, so it is not an easy thing to cater to individual differences or disabilities (Banu, 2012, p. 175).

In addition to teachers and administrators, the role of the School Management Committee (SMC)is consistently suggested as another area of potential, major support for implementing inclusive education in schools. Though PEDP II provided training to a considerable number of SMC members, studies found that, due to the lack of awareness of the SMC members regarding disability, inclusive education initiatives

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are facing challenges(Malak, 2013; Mullick, Deppeler & Sharma, 2012). Therefore, it implies that the sensitisation programme through SMC training is inadequate.

School Support

One of the salient features of PEDP II is to focus attention on the improvement of the school's physical environment for children with special needs. Under PEDP II, schools must be provided with ramps and classroom furniture must be modified to increase access for children with SEN. However, infrastructure development has yet to reach its set targets (DPE, 2012), and teachers have expressed their frustration regarding the inadequacy of classroom facilities (Malak, 2013).

TEACHING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN SECONDARY EDUCATION PROJECT

Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP) was one of the government initiatives to address equity and quality issues in the secondary education sector of Bangladesh. This project was jointly funded by the government of Bangladesh, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). It was formally launched in 2005 and closed in 2012.

The project was enacted for the secondary education sector in the face of some major problems that are directly or indirectly related to exclusions. As documented by the ADB (2004; 2010), the leading problems within the structural and procedural features of secondary education are: access to school (very low gross enrolment rates, about 25%), lack of quality education for learners, absence of essential teaching conditions, large numbers of professionally untrained teachers and a theory-oriented teacher education curriculum), high dropout rate (44%), decline in students' achievements and a low percentage of female teachers. Recognising these problems, the TQI-SEP initially set its main goal as the improvement of quality of all students' learning through improved teaching quality (Sarvi et al., 2004): it was expected that improvements in the quality of teaching would, in turn, improve students' enrolment and also their achievement (Dean, 2006).

Key Achievements

The project implementation unit (Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education-DSHE) and the partner organisations (such as the ADB and the CIDA) have highlighted some of the project's achievements within and at the end of the project period. It seems that the reports concentrate more on providing descriptions of input and process than on changes achieved. By and large, the project has prepared and disseminated various policy papers on gender and inclusive education and involved teachers in professional development activities, head teachers and SMC members in awareness raising activities, and teacher educators in Masters level training programmes (ADB, 2010).

In a recent report, the CIDA (2012) documented some success in the project's last year regarding students' achievement, teacher professional learning opportunities and community awareness building. The ADB (2010) has highlighted information conveyed regarding the gender aspect of inclusive education. The project provided both pre- and in-service training to women teachers and prepared and disseminated policy papers and material on gender issues. The project further supported the increased participation of women teachers at the secondary level education and in school management committees.

Students' Achievement

It is claimed (CIDA, 2012) that secondary teachers' participation in the TQI-SEP professional development activities has had a positive impact on students' achievement, based on Secondary School Certificate (SSC) results. According to this report, the SSC examinations of 2011 showed an increase in pass rates from 52.5% at the start of the project in 2005 to 67.4 % in 2009. The pass rate further increased to 82.1% in 2011 and 86.37% in 2012. However, the project's contribution to an increased pass rate may not be as straightforward as claimed by the CIDA (2012). There could be other factors facilitating students' achievements.

Teacher Professional Learning Opportunities

By May 2011, 14,530 students had successfully completed the pre-service one-year Bachelor of Education programme in government teacher training colleges; 14,500 practicing teachers had taken the initial basic module of a 3-month secondary teaching certificate (STC); 195,000 teachers had taken the first of a series of three continuous professional development (CPD) programmes on how to use participatory teaching approaches in the classroom instead of those based on rote learning. From the 3 outreach districts (Takugaon, Patuakhali and Rangamati), 1,650 classroom teachers had received professional development on inclusive practices. They constituted 55% of the initially targeted 3,000 teachers. It is also reported that 555 newly appointed head teachers have received their initial 35 days' administrative training (CIDA, 2012).

Change in Practice

Generally the success of IE is understood through the extent to which its practice in real classroom settings reflects a change in teachers' knowledge and skills as a result of the project's professional learning initiatives.

Khan (2012) demonstrates that secondary teachers in Bangladesh have shown inadequate understanding and a variety of interpretations of the concept of IE. According to their understanding, IE is a fairly vague and broad notion rather than being focused and specific. According to one of the authors' field notes, the delivery

of the professional development for inclusive practices lacked the characteristics of effective professional development e.g., by ignoring participants' (teachers') individual needs. For example, as one teacher's said, "it would have been easier for us to understand the IE topics if the trainer had presented the topic more slowly"[2]. An analysis indicates that professional development activities designed by the TQI-SEP were more aligned with a conventional, off-site approach[3]. As a result, teachers did not appear to take on the responsibility of individual learning, and they did not share the same learning goals and success criteria as the students. Moreover, teachers lacked the skills for involving students actively in the learning process.

Khan (2012) considers insufficient teacher professional learning opportunities as key to implementing IE successfully within secondary education. Recent field experience suggests that the lack of good quality professional development is a significant barrier for empowering secondary teachers with inclusivity-related instructional knowledge and skills. Evidence suggests that engaging classroom teachers in high quality professional development is essentialin order to implement inclusive practice successfully (OECD, 2005).

In short, the TQI-SEP professional development activities have created some awareness or enthusiasm about inclusion among secondary teachers. However, the daily practice of inclusion in the teachers' routinemode of classroom instruction is yet to be reached.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Our analysis shows that the policies enacted over the last 20 years have marked several milestones on the journey towards inclusive education reform in Bangladesh. Free and compulsory primary education for all, establishing the right to access to education for children with SEN and teaching in children from ethnic communities' mother tongue for are just a few of the landmarks. However, there are some issues, terminologies and conceptions embedded in the policies and legislations that clearly oppose the IE philosophy and create a niche for conceptual confusion among the practitioners and teachers regarding IE. Historically, the rights of children with SEN have been considered as a charitable issue in Bangladesh. Over the years, we have observed that special education has predominantly been regarded as the most appropriate means of educating children with SEN. Perhaps policy makers' long-held, prevailing notion of segregated education for children with SEN might contribute to the conceptual confusion in the major IE policies which, in turn, impedes the successful implementation of inclusive practice. It is acknowledged that conceptual variations or absence of a common language regarding IE is one of the major barriers to the successful implementation of inclusion(Ainscow, 2005; Ainscow & Miles, 2009). Thus, we argue, the existing policy environment generates constraints and contradictions when attempts are made towards implementing inclusive practice in schools.

We have shown that national level IE policies in Bangladesh have, mostly, closely followed the international policies that have been put forward globally. Therefore, it can hardly be expected that the IE guidelines are underpinned by an inclusion philosophy that fits the specific national context in Bangladesh. Even within the national context, a noticeable feature of IE policies is that they are imposed from the centre to the periphery. This means teachers and other stakeholders practice what the providers want, in the ways they want. Educators have expressed their concerns regarding the trend towards top-down and de-contextualised policies(Ainscow & Goldrick, 2010). It is well established that IE is a context-oriented phenomenon. The top-down approach of the Bangladeshi education system has been seriously criticised by IE researchers in that country (e.g., see Mullick, et al., 2012; Malak, 2013).

It is also suggested that IE is sustainable within an environment of collaborative enquiry where policy makers, practitioners and other stakeholders work together to understand the school culture and focus on the practical solution of problems (Ainscow, 2005) or reducing barriers to learning faced by some learners (Ainscow, 2007). However, our analysis suggests that the major education policies (e.g., NEP 2010) seem to lack specific guidelines for engaging in collaboration with the various stakeholders. Our experience tell us that teachers in Bangladesh feel hesitant, possibly because they hold egoistic values that encourage them not to 'publicise themselves' as ignorant of the subject or problems.

It is contended that the existence of policies has the flow-on effect of making practice obligatory and that is reflected in the two major programmes TQI-SEP and PEDP (for IE practice in primary and secondary levels). Under these programmes, schools and teachers are ready, at least officially, to accept all children into their classrooms. As a result, enrolment of special needs, female, disadvantaged and ethnic children has increased in both primary and secondary schools. Moreover, teachers have been trained, for the first time, in inclusive practice. It is claimed that schools have been equipped with facilities like ramps, furniture and assistive devices. However, it is questionable how many schools have had these facilities improvements put into practice in the real context.

Our observations also reveal that the policies have little impact in challenging teachers' beliefs and their practices, as no commendable change (from conventional to inclusive practice) was evident in the teachers' instructional behaviours. Moreover, teachers were found to possess pessimistic views about the learning ability of children with disabilities or difficulties in learning. Therefore, we conclude that teachers' belief systems have not improved after attending the projects' professional learning activities and suggest it be recognised that a change in belief systems is a significant factor when implementing new innovations such as inclusive education. Ahmmed, Sharma and Deppeler (2012) emphasise the importance of professional development to promote Bangladeshi teachers' positive beliefs towards inclusive education. Researchers of attitudes (e.g., Ajzen, 1991) argue that the belief systems

of teachers predominantly influence their classroom practices. It is evident that good quality professional development is one important tool for developing favourable beliefs in teachers towards inclusive education (Loreman, Sharma & Forlin, 2013).

Thus, in line with Senge (cited in Ainscow, 2005), we would argue that policy documents inthe Bangladesh IE environment tend to be low-leverage tools. While they have made a contribution, they have not necessarily led to changes in thinking or practices: Bangladeshi policy documents have accented extrinsic change (change to the ways things *look*) rather than intrinsic change (the ways things *work*).

NOTES

[1] BANBEIS refers to Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics.
[2] Conversation with a secondary school teacher during PhD data collection in 2010.
[3] Observation of professional development programme in Bangladesh in 2010.

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TEBEJE MOLLA

9. HIGHER EDUCATION IN ETHIOPIA

Widening Access and Persisting Inequalities

INTRODUCTION

In the last ten years, Ethiopian higher education (HE) has witnessed an extensive expansion and system-wide restructuring. The changes in the system were primarily aimed at producing a suitably qualified workforce for the national human resource development plan at the centre of the country's poverty reduction programme and ensuring HE's responsiveness to the nation's economic needs. At a system level, the government has introduced a new HE proclamation that sets the legal framework for the reform process, and has aggressively invested in the establishment of new universities and institutes. Even so, when viewed from Trow's (2006) categorisation, participation in Ethiopian HE is far from 'mass' and can more accurately be described as 'elite'. Inequality in access to, and success in, HE remains a critical challenge. This chapter seeks to show why widening access does not necessarily translate into equity.

   Drawing on a critical policy analysis approach and qualitative data collected from national policy documents, institutional reports, and focus group discussions with women in two public universities, the chapter endeavours to identify key indicators of inequality in Ethiopian HE and to understand factors underpinning the persistence of the problem. The discussion is presented in three major sections. While the first section shows the improvements in access, the second section presents evidence of the continuing problem of inequality in Ethiopian HE. The third section presents the central argument of the paper: inequality persists because policy provisions and physical expansion of the system fail to properly appreciate structural factors underpinning the problem.

   Before proceeding to the main discussion, a brief conceptual clarification of the idea of equity is in order here. Equity refers to fairness. This is not necessarily the same as equality. In the context of public policy, fairness may include differential, but appropriate, treatment of the disadvantaged group. According to Gordon, the basic criteria of equity policies are "distributional appropriateness and sufficiency" (1999, p.76). That is to say, equity is beyond securing equal access to resources and opportunities – it includes reasonable adjustment to provide a differential treatment in accordance with the conditions and needs of the target groups for equality of outcomes. Equity is a state or ideal of being fair. It embraces compensational or

redistributive policy measures to redress historical and current social disadvantages. Hence, as an educational policy instrument, equity is a means to achieve equality in access, participation and success in education and training. It is a way of catching-up for historically and socially disadvantaged members of society – for example, women in education in developing countries. The moral and political justification for equity policies is that a shift in a social position for disadvantaged groups requires unequal but equivalent treatment that targets redressing past injustices and existing disadvantages. In the *politics of positional difference* principle, Young (2008) argues:

> Identifying equality with equal treatment ignores deep material differences in social position, division of labour, socialized capacities, normalized standards and ways of living that continue to disadvantage members of historically excluded groups. Commitment to substantial equality thus requires attending to such differences (p.77-78).

> (W)here group difference is socially significant for issues of conflict, domination or advantage, equal respect may not imply treating everyone in the same way (p.79).

In the absence of a commitment to fairness, by applying the same standards and rules to all, public institutions may run the risk of reproducing inequality in society. Hence, in this study, I use equity as a policy goal aimed at "compensatory capacitation" (Therborn, 2006, p.14) through differential treatments (including but not limited to affirmative action) until a level playing field is established to make equality between social groups real.

WIDENING ACCESS

In 2000, Ethiopia could offer access to HE to only 0.8% of the relevant cohort (Saint, 2004). According to Saint's data, in the same year, while the sub-Sarharan Africa (SSA) average HE gross enrolment rate was 339 students per 100,000 head of population, in Ethiopia, there were only 62 HE students (including those at a diploma level) per 100,000 inhabitants.

To address the problem, the government has implemented various strategies, including equity instruments, expansion of the HE system and encouraging the expansion of for-profit private providers. The Constitution (FDRE, 1995) and key education-specific policy documents, including the Education and Training Policy (TGE, 1994), the Higher Education Proclamation (FDRE, 2009) and the Education Sector Development Strategy (MoE, 2010), stipulate preferential admission for socially and historically disadvantaged groups. The provisions have had positive results, at least in terms of widening access to the target groups.

In addition to this intentional policy intervention, the ongoing, breakneck-speed expansion has significant equity implications. In line with the premise of its political

orientation, the government's ethnic-based redistributive policy has taken a form of 'equitably' allocating public universities according to ethno-regional lines (Semela, 2011). The subsequent, drastic massification of the HE sector might have widened access to many who otherwise would not be able to be served by the elite university system a decade ago.

The government has increased the number of public universities by merging the existing colleges and institutions, establishing new universities and expanding the admission capacity of the present universities: the number of public universities increased from two (in 1999) to 32 in 2012. The government spends more than 1.5% of the national gross domestic product (GDP) on HE, making it one of the eleven top spenders on the HE sector in the world and the highest expenditure in SSA (UIS, 2010). As a result of the large-scale expansion at all levels, Ethiopia has the third highest average annual growth rate of HE enrolment in the world, after Lao People's Democratic Republic and Cuba (UIS, 2009). As *Figure 1* shows, full-time undergraduate enrolment in public universities grew from around 20,000 in 1999 to over 250, 000 in 2012.
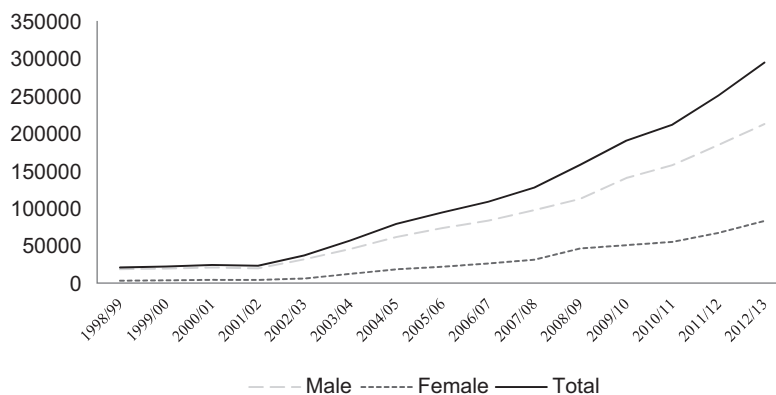
Figure 1. Full-time Undergraduate Enrolment in Public HE Institutions in Ethiopia.

Source: Computed based on data from the MoE's Education Statistics Annual Abstract documents (2000-2013).

Furthermore, in compliance with neoliberal reform pressure from the World Bank (WB), in the mid-1990s, the government also opened the HE system to privatisation. In less than a decade, the number of private HE institutionsthat provide accredited full-time education at undergraduate level and above has grown from 0 to 44. Statistical data from the Ministry of Education of Ethiopia shows that in the 2009/2010 academic year, about 18% of the total student body in HE and other post-secondary institutions was enrolled in the private sector (MoE, 2011); and in 2012/213, proportion slightly dropped to around 14% (MoE, 2013).

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In fact, the central motive for the extensive expansion of Ethiopian HE has been economic not social equity. The government (presumably uncritically) endorsed the 'knowledge economy' discourse of the WB and redefined the role of HE in its national economic development. In pushing its HE reform prescriptions, the WB called for African countries to endorse the idea that HE has come to be a key factor of development and knowledge-driven development "is possibly the only route that could permit sustained, outward-oriented development (World Bank, 2009, p.xxii). The WB further stresses that:

> The name of the game now is knowledge-intensive development. It calls for a new outlook—one that is more strategic and nationally integrated—on the nature of the contribution that education can make to industrialization, to exports, to the building of a more resilient economy, and to confronting the twenty-first century challenges (World Bank, 2009, p. xxxi).

The resonance of the 'knowledge-led development' discourse of the WB (2002, 2003, 2009) to sub-Saharan Africa has been critical. In Ethiopia, the Bank's discursive constructs have been consistently echoed in national poverty reduction strategies and the education sector development programme (MoFED, 2002, 2005). Development plans of the government (Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program, 2002-2006; Plan for Accelerated and Sustainable Economic Development to End Poverty, 2006-2011) set, as one of their priorities, the meeting of human power requirements of the economy through selective investment in the HE sector. In the second Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP II, 2002/03-2004/05), the government stressed that investment in HE is a necessary commitment for "sustained poverty reduction" (MoE, 2002, p.33). In the current national development plan (2010/11-2014/15), the government explicitly underscored the importance of human capital formation for economic growth and competitiveness: "Expanding human capital and improving human development outcomes is still a central pillar strategy of the Growth and Transformation Plan" (MoFED, 2010, p.8).

Even so, funding has not kept pace with the rate of enrolment. Although the overall budget for the HE system has increased significantly, per student expenditure in HE has drastically decreased from US$ 3,300 in 1971/72 to about US$ 700 in 2004/05, and even lower since then. This is extremely low compared to average African annual per student expenditure in HE (US$2000 in 2006), and in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries (around US$10,000 in 2006) (World Bank, 2010). This low per student expenditure, in turn, leads to a high student/teacher ratio, poor physical environment and inadequate library and other services which, in aggregate, result in a poor quality of education.

THE PROBLEM OF INEQUALITY

After nearly two decades since the introduction of a preferential admissions policy for socially and historically disadvantaged groups and, notwithstanding, the

extensive expansion of the system, inequality in, access to and success in HE is still a serious challenge in Ethiopia (Molla & Gale, 2014). The problem has quantitative and qualitative dimensions. While quantitative measures of the problem range from underrepresentation of women and high attrition rates among disadvantaged groups to disciplinary segregation, qualitative indicators of the persistence of inequality is expressed through the deprivation of recognition and hostile experiences that socially disadvantaged groups encounter.

Underrepresentation of Women

Ethiopia's gross enrolment ratio in HE of nearly 4% is among the lowest in the world. Data from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2012) shows that in 2008, the gross enrolment rate in HE in Ethiopia (5% for male and 2% for female) was also lower than the SSA average (7% and 5% for male and female respectively). The problem of inequality has persisted as well. In the 2011/2012 academic year, women constituted only 26% (66,203), 20% (3,185) and 17% (303) of students enrolled for full-time programs at undergraduate, Masters and PhD levels respectively (MoE, 2012). The representation of women drastically declines as the level of academic hierarchy increased (see Figure 2 for example).
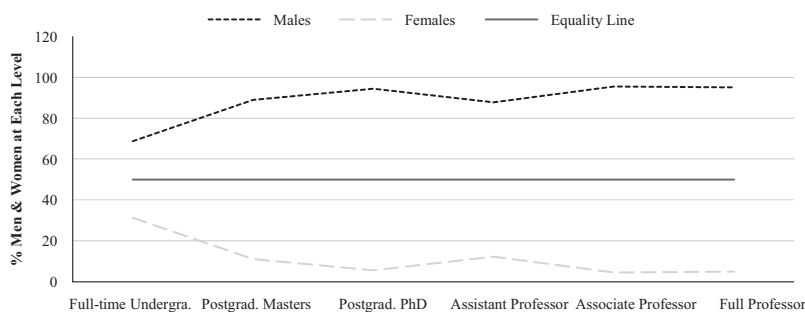
Figure 2. The Representation of Men and Women at the National University (AAU) in 2009/10.

Source: Computed based on data from the Human Resource Management Statistical Report of the university (AAU, 2010); and Education Statistics Annual Abstract of the MoE (MoE, 2011).

Women have limited opportunities for promotion and career development and, as a result, they are almost non-existent in senior management positions. With the exception of a brief female presidency in 2009/2010 in one of the public universities, currently all presidents in the 32 public universities are males. In 2010, at Addis Ababa University, out of 239 female staff (13.8% of the total academic staff of the university), only 8.8% had a doctoral degree while 23.5%of them had only undergraduate degrees (AAU,

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2010). This has a limiting effect on their participation in key institutional activities and other income generating roles, including research and consultancy.

Disciplinary Segregation

Injustice in HE is not all about inequality in access to opportunities, it can also be in the form of inequality of the opportunities themselves (Marginson, 2004). Inequality of opportunity is a serious problem in Ethiopian HE (Molla, 2013) and this negatively affects the social mobility of disadvantaged groups in Ethiopian society. Disciplinary segregation has a lot to do with pre-college inequality in access to quality education that, in turn, is closely associated with socio-economic background, gender and geographical locality (rural vs urban – 'rurality'). For instance, the socialisation of women is critical in their disciplinary streaming and occupational preference. As Rudman & Glick note, "cultural notions of what women are 'best suited for' permeate deeply into women's identities, despite their explicit goals" (2008, p.298).

In Ethiopia, the majority of female students are enrolled in the humanities and social sciences: in 2008, only 14% of graduates in science and technology fields were female (UIS, 2010); and in the 2009/10 academic year, at Bahir Dar University, female students accounted for 24% and 36% of full-time undergraduate students enrolled in the fields of science and technology and social sciences, respectively (MoE, 2011). Disciplinary segregation leads to inequality in results. While the progress of individuals in HE can easily be measured by attrition (or transition) rates, the socio-economic returns of their credentials can only be assessed in an analysis of their majors or fields of study. Educational credentials do not have equal economic return hence disciplinary segregation may result in an unequal distribution of opportunities, including income and position, and increased formal (physical) access through an equitable admissions policy may not guarantee effective participation in the learning experience and access to the instrumental and intrinsic benefits of HE.. In other words, the current experience in Ethiopia shows that education is 'reproducing inequality', to use Bourdieu's (1974) concept. In this regard, women's earning of degrees in already overcrowded fields, as is the case in Ethiopia, tends to reinforce their conformity to the traditional gendered division of labour which, in turn, defines the levels of freedom, respect and recognition they are accorded in society. Apparently, the policy texts do not consider this horizontal gender inequality (i.e., gendered streaming of academic fields) a serious challenge.

High Attrition Rate

The completion rates among female students and other affirmative action beneficiary groups are very low. An empirical study by Mersha, Bishaw, Asrat and Nigussie (2009) shows that, in the 2007/08 academic year, the attrition rate of female students in 5 Ethiopian public universities (in the Faculties of Education) was found to be much higher than their male peers: 43% female and 24% male in Mekele University;

38% female and 15% male in Jimma University; 36% female and 11% male in Haramaya University; 35% female and 8% male in Hawasa University; and 29% female and 7% male in Bahir Dar University. A mere effort to increase the number of women in HE through affirmative action policies may not result in gender equity, as the learning and working environments persist to hinder their progress and success. Hence, beyond putting a quota system or affirmative recruitment and admissions policies in place, it is crucial to be attentive to structural aspects of the problem and to challenge institutional barriers that see the preferential policies as measures of reverse injustices or as programmes for 'unqualified' individuals, rather than as compensatory equity instruments that lead to a just HE system.

Qualitative indicators of inequality in education are closely linked with structural factors deeply-rooted in the organisation and functioning of society and operate along such key social categories as gender, class, ethnicity and rurality. Therefore, numerical representations such as rates of enrolment, progress and completion are simplistic in the sense that they are expressions of the problem and are not adequate to fully grasp underlying factors of inequality. To put it differently, the problem of inequality in education is not an objective reality and, hence, cannot be fully captured by measurements of access and graduation. Inequality is largely a subjective construction to be explained by the qualitative interpretations of personal experiences of those that are disadvantaged (Semela, 2007). I will briefly present two prominent examples of qualitative indicators of inequality in Ethiopian HE: deprivation of recognition and respect; and experience of hostility and violence.

Deprivation of Recognition and Respect

The deprivation of recognition and respect may range from curricular marginalisation to prejudicial treatment of members of a particular social group. It is related to the representation of identities, histories and cultural values of social groups in policies and institutional practices. Lack of recognition deprives disadvantaged groups of respectful treatment and erodes subjects' career aspirations and choices, thereby constraining their social mobility at large. The resultant effect of prejudice and marginalisation is powerlessness. It inhibits the individual's agency freedom which incorporates aspiration to learn and succeed, as well as their voice for participation and resistance. According to Young (1990), powerlessness is expressed by "inhibition in the development of one's capacities, lack of decision-making power in one's working life, and exposure to disrespectful treatment because of the status one occupies" (p.58). In Ethiopian HE, for example, even though there is no discriminatory law at work to marginalise women in public life, the narratives of women in the two public universities studied in this research reflect the depth of mistreatment and subtle marginalisation women face in their daily activities and interactions.

Addressing this aspect of inequality should begin with such key questions as: How does the formal curriculum depict women and their roles: independent, brilliant scientist and problem solving; or dependent, loving and care-giving to their

family; or both? Are the histories, identities and aspirations of ethnic and cultural minorities mainstreamed in the curricular, pedagogical and research activities of the institutions? How do specific representations of a particular group affect the educational success and social mobility of members of the group? In this regard, mainstreaming gender and multicultural values into the curriculum is instrumental in challenging prejudice embedded in the formal learning experience and hidden curriculum of educational institutions.

Experience of Hostility and Violence

Focus group discussions with female students and staff in selected public universities revealed that the hostility of the HE environment to women is mainly (but not exclusively) related to sexual harassment within the institutions. Female students are asked for sex in exchange for good grades from male teachers and face sexual assault and bullying from their male peers in lecture halls and in libraries. What is even more worrisome is that most of the victims of sexual harassment do not report incidents to the university authorities. As learned from the discussions, this is mainly attributable to their sense of helplessness as there is no viable institutional body to respond to such issues. Louise Morley's study (Morley, 2011), which reports the phenomenon of sexual harassment in selected universities in Ghana and Tanzania, shows that female students who have been subjects of sexual harassment of different forms, including "transactional sex", fail to report either "for fear of victimization and stigmatization" or for not labelling "these culturally pervasive behaviours as sexual harassment" (p.112). Discussants in my study made it clear that, especially when the case involves male teachers, fear of revenge by the offender and his colleagues is a key reason for silence of victims of sexual harassment in their institutions (focus group discussants at two pseudonymously named universities: Odaax University [OU] , 02 October 2010; Washeray University [WU], 21 September 2010). Furthermore, the university setting presents students from rural areas with a unique and challenging experience, far removed from their cultural values and norms. Their shyness and lack of assertiveness ill-equips them to deal with sexual harassment and violence in the new environment of the university. A high rate of attrition among this group of students (Andualem & Gebre-Egziabher, 2009) can partly be ascribed to excessive fear and stress, which eventually puts their academic survival in question.

To sum up this section, notwithstanding the widening of participation, inequality in its qualitative and quantitative forms has continued to be a challenge in the Ethiopian HE system. These mutually reinforcing factors of disadvantage interact and overlap to inhibit individuals from unleashing their potential and exercising their agency. As will be highlighted in the next section, I argue that the persistence of the problem of inequality can partly be attributable to structural factors that the equity policy provisions have failed to properly appreciate. For example, given the multidimensional social identity of women, on some occasions, it may be their gender which is the principal generator of their disadvantage. The condition of

misrecognition, exploitation and marginalisation women experience may not be comparable with the experience of men with the same socio-economic status or ethnic background. In other cases, it may be the intersection of their gender, ethnic background, social class, rurality and the policy environment that determines their relative position in educational settings and in society at large.

OVERLOOKED STRUCTURAL FACTORS OF INEQUALITY

The social world is built on networks of relations and the norms that define those relations. These ongoing patterns of relations and norms in society are called social structures (Connell, 2009). Individuals or groups are in a state of structural inequality when their access to resources and opportunities, and the possibilities to exercise their agency, are constrained due to their gender, ethnic background, religion or socio-economic position in society (Young, 2008). Structural inequalities may also result from policy contexts – policy actions and inactions in relation to those structural factors of disadvantage. As a discursive practice, policy produces and limits the knowledge which is available for us within a specific time and context; and those who control discourse tend to exclude other 'truths' and concerns regarding a particular issue or agenda (Bacchi, 2009; Marshall, 1997). In the public policy arena, this means excluding alternative ways of thinking and doing in relation to a particular social problem. Viewed from this perspective, equity policy provisions in Ethiopian HE seem to have been silent on poverty and repressive cultural values as factors of inequality and to have been undermined by the neoliberal reform disposition that asserts principles of decentralisation, economic efficiency and human capital in the system.

Poverty

Poverty is the most visible but least appreciated factor of inequality in HE. Students from urban, better-off families attend higher quality, private, secondary schools and enjoy targeted tutorial support after school. Thus, they are well prepared for university-level education compared to their rural peers who have graduated from poorly-funded public schools. As a result, the former are well placed to achieve higher marks in the national university entrance examination and, thus, are more likely to secure places in economically and socially high return fields such as law, medicine and technology. On the other hand, the rural poor struggle to survive against academic dismissal in the new (urban-style) social environment and are overrepresented in the fields with lower status in the labour market.

Furthermore, as revealed in the focus group discussions, many female students were not even able to fulfil their personal hygiene necessities because of economic constraints and, in some cases, this forced them to get involved in sex work outside the universities to obtain basic supplies. One of the student discussants at WU commented:

> In fact, the economic problem is very serious for female students. When they face such situations, they tend to go outside the campus and start sex life to earn money. That is, they would have what is called 'sugar daddies'. This places their lives at risk as they may catch HIV/AIDS and other diseases. This makes the situation with female students rather harsher (WU focus group discussant, 21 September 2010).

The activity costs them their health and their moral and social relations and it points to the need for well-organised counselling services as well as financial support for the neediest female students. The problem is so pressing that, in early 2011, one of the universities included in this study set up a special committee to work, in cooperation with hotels and members of the community outside the university, on tackling the increase in female students' involvement in sex work. It is imperative that, instead of characterising the issue as the immoral behaviour of a few female students, administrators question the underlying reasons that force female students to resort to this kind of activity.

Repressive Cultural Values

Cultural values and norms of society frame power relations, beliefs, assumptions and practices that, in turn, shape our interactions in the classroom and at the workplace. Repressive cultural values (usually co-existing with undemocratic political orders) tend to be unfavourable towards ethnic and cultural minorities and women. As a result, these groups are often marginalised in curricula and other cultural representation apparatus and assume subordinate positions in economic, social and political spheres.

For instance, in a patriarchal society such as Ethiopia, repressive gender order is expressed through often subtle but, nevertheless, important messages (prejudice and low expectations) about the role and responsibility of women in HE institutions. The gender dynamics (the relations and interactions between males and females) of HE institutions, through representations of women as less capable and weak, socialises them to accept gender-based inequalities as normal. Accounts of their lived experiences from women who participated in the focus group discussions highlight that qualitative expressions of gender inequality in Ethiopian HE include sexual harassment and violence, prejudice and low expectations from male peers, and powerlessness in defending their interests and actively participating in decision-making processes in their respective departments, faculties and colleges.

Neoliberal Policy Orientation

The neoliberal policy connection with the problem of inequality in the Ethiopian HE system can be explained in three forms: delegation of responsibility, reduction of spending, and a narrow, human capital-oriented approach to the problem of inequality.

Delegation of responsibility is a key aspect of the government's neoliberal policy disposition in the HE system. In the name of institutional autonomy and decentralising power, the government has transferred the role of protecting the rights and benefits of historically and socially disadvantaged groups to the universities. The government has limited its role to concluding a Strategic Plan Agreement with the institutions in which, as stipulated under Article 65.2e of the Proclamation (No.650/2009), public HE institutions are expected to take action to promote social equality (FDRE, 2009). One of the limitations of the Agreement is that it uses the proportion of women and ethnic minorities enrolled and graduated in a particular year at a given institution as factors to determine the block grant allocation. By so doing, it encourages public HE institutions to focus on quantitative indicators while internal structural barriers related to hostile learning experiences and repressive power relations remain unchallenged. Again, as witnessed in the implementation of the National Strategic Framework for gender equality in public HE institutions (MoE, 2004), the government lacks the capacity to coordinate and follow up the equity policies and practices of the universities. For example, even though an affirmative action admissions policy has been in place for the last 15 years, until 2010, the government had no record of the number of beneficiaries and their status after entry. There has not been any systematic, official evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy.

Even worse, the delegation of responsibility has been accompanied by cuts in spending on equity-related programs in HE institutions. As a clear case of the tension between efficiency and equity goals in HE, the government has no annual budget for university-based gender offices nor multiculturalism and diversity programmes and the institutions are left to finance the offices from their almost non-existent internal revenues (Molla, 2013). As a result, in most cases, the offices are under-staffed and are not fully functional. Seen from this perspective, Gyimah-Brempong and Ondiege (2011) are correct in suggesting that the financing system of Ethiopia does not encourage equality and even tends to perpetuate inequality.

In Ethiopian HE, the influence of neoliberal policy prescriptions is also manifested in the superficial representation of the problem of inequality as a mere national disadvantage in human capital. The human capital theory may not necessarily contradict with social equity goals in education, as improved skills and subsequent increased access to well-paid jobs may support social inclusion and social mobility. The problem arises, however, when policymakers try to assemble the competing values of social equity and market efficiency without noting the internal inconsistencies of such arrangements. For proponents of the human capital theory, inequality in access to HE is primarily viewed as a loss of human resource rather than a problem of social justice. As such, when HE policies informed by the human capital theory call for addressing the problem of inequality, the assumption is that equal educational opportunity is instrumental in boosting national economic growth, since higher levels of knowledge may mean higher productivity and higher personal income and, in aggregate, increased national productivity (Gidley, Hampson,

Wheeler & Bereded-Samuel, 2010). I argue that the human capital approach is, therefore, short-sighted and that social equity in HE is better served through polices and instruments that draw on social justice as a guiding principle. This analysis enables us to see deeply-rooted structural impediments and brings into the forefront the moral imperative to eliminate unjust inequalities in the education system. In fact, advancing social equity in HE may or may not support the nation's economic interest but it is crucial for a just society. What is important to note is that economic productivity and growth is contingent on social cohesion and stability (Sen, 1999). Widening social inequality in HE may undermine the poverty reduction project and, in the long run, lead to social disaffection and unrest.

CONCLUSION

This paper has argued that, even though socially and historically disadvantaged groups (e.g., geo-politically peripheral ethnic groups and women) have been given a nominal advantage at the entry point (by slightly lowering admission cut-off points) and despite the fact that participation has considerably widened, social equity is far from being a reality in Ethiopian HE. The persisting inequality in the form of high attrition rates and low graduation rates among females and ethnic minorities, low female participation in the fields of science and technology, prejudicial views and hostilities against women and, overall, the subordinate position of women in HE clearly shows that framing the problem of inequality as a mere lack of access and a human capital disadvantage is misleading and counterproductive.

To meaningfully transform the structures of inequality in the HE system, equity policies and strategies should begin with a recognition of the personal, social and historical conditions that impede individuals from being well-educated and being able to exercise freedom of agency. In fact, higher levels of educational attainment are thought to be instrumental in promoting democratic participation, making possible open debates and dialogue and establishing trust and tolerance for diversity and difference. As such, in a multicultural and multi-ethnic society like Ethiopia, active public engagement in HE should be seen, looking beyond motives for economic productivity and efficiency, as a way of ensuring democracy, political stability and social cohesion.

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10. INEQUALITY OF ACCESS TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN PRIMARY EDUCATION IN VIETNAM

A Case Study

In efforts to make English language teaching (ELT) congruent with global and regional trends, Vietnamese education leaders have introduced a national policy in which English is made compulsory from Year 3 at primary level. The goals of primary level English as a foreign language (PEFL) education in Vietnam are described as developing communicative skills, promoting intercultural knowledge and fostering English language learning strategies. The implementation of this new policy, however, indicates many challenges, of which inequality of access to English is the most prominent. This chapter provides insight into the inequality of access to English language education at the primary level between rural and urban areas in Vietnam. The findings support the proposition that inequality of access comes from the teaching and learning conditions and methods and the level of engagement of different stakeholders. Some suggestions are offered to help bring English to all learners, regardless of any social background or economic divide.

INTRODUCTION

The new policy for primary English as a foreign language (PEFL) teaching in Vietnam focuses on communicative competence, which is in accordance with global and regional trends of English language education. Indeed, enhancing communicative language proficiency has become a priority of English language education policy throughout the Asia Pacific Rim (Nunan, 2003). English language teaching (ELT) has been implemented at primary level in non-English speaking countries in Asia due to an underlying belief in the adage 'the younger the better' (Hayes, 2008; Lee & Azman, 2004; Pinter, 2011). These trends have inspired Vietnam to introduce English at Grade 3 (8 years old), from which time English learning is compulsory.

This policy is also grounded in and developed from the previous PEFL curricula in Vietnam. Since 1997, English has been taught as an elective component of the primary curriculum in Vietnam. Initially, the new policy was piloted in schools in metropolitan cities prior to nation-wide implementation in 2003. This

implementation attracted a lot of attention and drew reactions from different social groups in Vietnam. In response to social needs, a revised policy for PEFL education was introduced. Specifically, English is now taught as an elective subject for Years 1 and 2 and as a compulsory subject from Year 3 to Year 5. PEFL education in Vietnam aims to develop communicative skills, encourage intercultural knowledge and support English language learning strategies.

From the introduction of the policy by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) to the actual implementation of compulsory PEFL education within primary schools, many challenges have presented, of which inequality is the most prominent. Research has focused on many different aspects of the policy such as the trials of implementation and the shortage of human resources (L. Nguyen, 2007; T.M.H. Nguyen & Q.T. Nguyen, 2007; T.M.H. Nguyen 2011). However, very few research studies have been conducted on inequality during policy implementation, from macro- to micro-levels (Kheng & Baldauf, 2011). This chapter, therefore, by focusing on English teaching and learning situations at primary schools in urban and rural areas in Vietnam, aims to pursue an in-depth understanding of inequality of access in the implementation of PEFL education in this specific context.

INEQUALITY IN EDUCATION AND ELT

The issue of equity has been a central concern within the educational systems of many different countries. Education is, commonly, regarded as a central component in the development process of each individual, community and nation. Most governments aim to attain equity in education quality, opportunities and outcomes and great efforts have been made to ensure success. Nevertheless, to maintain fairness in education, inequality has emerged as a controversial issue. The topic of inequality in education, therefore, has attracted a large number of research studies over recent decades.

Current research has explored several reasons for inequality in education. It has shown that a lack of fairness can result from disparities in the quality of education or from other factors including geographical area, ethnic origin and gender (Burt & Namgi, 2008; Collins, 2008, Holsinger, 2005; Ram, 1990; Rew, 2008). It has also found that supply-side, as well as demand-side, factors seem to make the inequality issue in education worse (Bing, 2008). Unequal access to education emerges, in many countries, due to poor management of education budgets and can be reflected in a variety of educational aspects such as the supply of educational institutions, allocation of qualified teachers, support for teaching and learning materials (Bing, 2008). Bing (2008) also cites family background as a factor involved in educational inequality. From this research, some effective strategies have been suggested to minimise the causes of educational inequality in Asian countries, for example in Cambodia (Collins, 2008), in South Korea (Burt & Namgi, 2008), in China (Bing, 2008) and in Vietnam (Holsinger, 2005; Rew, 2008).

The abovementioned issues of equity in education are also visible in the field of ELT. McKay (2010) warns that the current state of English language education

creates many critical issues of access, of which the central concern is "how to provide less advantaged children in the society with equal access to English so they can succeed in institutions of higher education"(p. 106).Nikolov and Djigunović (2011) are, similarly, worried about the unequal access to English language teaching in primary education. They argue that learners in rural schools or low socio-economic areas tend to have less opportunity to learn a foreign language. This discrepancy can, also, be seen between public and private sectors where the foreign language programmes at private elementary schools are more advanced (T.M.H. Nguyen, 2011).

The effects of inequality of access to English education seem to be more pronounced in Asia than anywhere else in the world (Butler, 2009). Park and Ableman (2004) argue that English in Korea is regarded as a class indicator: more opportunities, not only in education but, also, in wider society, tend to be available in Korea to those with better English proficiency. In mainland China, the policies that support ELT in elite schools exacerbate educational inequality (McKay, 2010). Likewise, access to English, the perceived language of power and wealth, is available for only a minority of primary pupils in Hong Kong (Choi, 2003). Choi contends that the ultimate effect of the policy of ELT in Hong Kong is to "perpetuate a form of linguistic imperialism" (Choi, 2003, p. 673). Addressing the disparity in the implementation of primary English instruction between the city and rural areas in Taiwan, Scott and Chen (2004) point out that children in urban areas, especially in metropolitan cities, have higher English proficiency than their peers in remote areas. Pessimistically, they conclude that it would be hard to reduce the divide in primary English language education in areas with different socio-economic status.Enever and Moon (2009, p. 12) speak generally about the issue of equity in the introduction of teaching English to young learners in the state school system:

> It is unsurprising to note that countries are increasingly concerned about children's access to Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) and the equity of provision, with frequent reports of large differences in access and in quality of provision between rural and urban areas, between geographical areas and between different urban schools.

In Vietnam, the issue of inequality of access to English learning is of great concern to different circles in society. However, it has been unexplored, in education in general and in ELT in particular. While not directly addressing the issue of inequality in PEFL education in Vietnam *per se*, T.M.H. Nguyen (2011) indicates that there are differences in teaching and learning practices between private and public schools. For example, the teaching methods at private schools are more communicative and child-friendly than those at public schools. As inequality of access to English has been of concern in Asia in general, and in Vietnam in particular, this chapter is directed towards providing insight into the inequality between rural and urban areas in the Vietnamese context.

METHODOLOGY

The study discussed in this chapter is part of a larger research project in which the focus is on PEFL teachers' work and life in Vietnam. 6 PEFL teachers, 3 from rural areas and 3 from cities, were selected as focal cases to explore the themes regarding teachers' work and life in PEFL education. A group of parents whose children are learning English at primary level also participated in the research project to raise their voice about PEFL education.

   In the research design of the larger project, no plan was made to highlight the phenomenon of inequality of access to English learning; however, it did emerge during the stages of data collection and analysis. In particular, the three cases from rural schools directly expressed the issue of unequal access to English learning when comparing the countryside and the city. As a result, this study was developed to provide in-depth understandings of inequality in PEFL education in the Vietnamese context. In the larger project, a variety of methods of data collection were used but the data sources that served this study were mainly selected from the semi-structured, in-depth interviews conducted with 6 PEFL teachers and 1 parent. The responses were translated from Vietnamese to English and pseudonyms were used to protect confidentiality. Cross-case analysis (Merriam, 1998) and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) were employed as the primary analytical tools.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data from interviews with 6 PEFL teachers and 1 parent have revealed some advantages and disadvantages that rural students and teachers are facing in comparison with their city fellows. The differences leading to the inequality of access to English language teaching and learning at primary school level in Vietnam can be classified into: (i) unequal conditions for learning and teaching, (ii) unequal access to child-friendly approaches to teaching English to young learners (TEYLs), and (iii) unequal participation of other stakeholders.

Teaching and Learning Conditions

There is no doubt that the success of teaching and learning English as a foreign language in general, and at primary level in particular, partially depends on teaching conditions and facilities in the classroom. Indeed, the humble teaching and learning conditions faced by the rural English language teachers were mentioned as a major difficulty throughout the interviews. Specifically, the lack of teaching and learning supports and the differences in students' backgrounds were cited. As a teacher in a rural area, Thao shared the idea that children at her school did not have enough textbooks and learning resources such as Internet access, computers and CD players to learn English. She emphasised that teachers should be understanding and sympathetic to the students' living and learning conditions as well as being supportive and encouraging.

> The students here are worn-out, schools are poor and even students don't have books… in class they have nothing to work with. Every summer, I have to go and ask for used books from the senior students to support these difficult students. If they do not have books, I cannot teach. I am so disappointed. (Thao)

Under these circumstances, it would be hard for both teachers and students to follow the national curriculum and to improve learning success. This situation extends the recent studies by Hayes (2008) and L. Nguyen (2008) who indicate that the large classroom size in primary schools and very few or no language learning rooms in schools in small provinces are obstacles for teachers to implement effective principles of TEYL.

Nevertheless, the participating teachers expend a lot of effort to overcome the limitations in facilities and equipment within the limited resources they have, and have shown a lot of creativity.

> If we do not have computers, we can use pictures or our drawings instead. If we don't have a CD player, we can read for the students to practice listening skills. We have been trying to make the lesson as interesting as possible to motivate the students with games and a variety of activities. Teaching in rural areas, we have to accept the insufficiency…we have also requested the schools to provide resources and materials but they considered English as a supplementary subject, so they do not want to invest in facilities, and English teachers are also marginalized. We have to be active and adaptive; it would take 100 years to wait for the changes. (Thuong)

This account reveals the fact there exists inadequate attitudes and a lack of awareness amongst school leaders towards PEFL education. The inequality of access to PEFL is reflected in biased priorities under which English is just a supplementary subject even though it has been upgraded to a compulsory one. The situation in rural primary schools seems to be far from improved, however certain investment has been made in urban schools.

The difference in background and family conditions of the students is also stated as another difficulty for rural teachers. According to the teachers' observations, city students enjoy a more favourable life and are, thus, thought of as more intelligent and more capable than the country students. Thao made the following comment:

> With a desirable nutrition diet and good nutrients, city children are more developed in terms of brain capacity than country students. The children in my areas have no ideas about 'milk' while the city children have milk as part of their compulsory diet.

In addition, the students of wealthy households in the city are well equipped, with necessary learning facilities like headphones, e-books, internet access and, even, mobile phones. In comparison, the rural students do not have even a book to study from. She continued:

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> Most of my students in the rural areas come from families of farmers or manual workers... Their parents often go to work very far way to make ends meet. Some of my students do not have money to buy basic stationery, even a notebook. They have to rely on the low and unstable income of their parents who work far way.

This situation, conversely, reflects the unequal investment and engagement level of parents regarding the support given to their children's learning.

Another disadvantage that rural students are facing is the lack of a communicative learning environment where they can practice and apply what they learn in real life contexts. The chance to use English can be a motivation for learning. One teacher participant admitted that, over the past 20 years of teaching in rural areas, she has never seen any foreigners (Thuy). Another teacher also stated,

> Students living in big cities or tourist cities like Hoi An or Danang have many more chances to practice and use English while students in the countryside do not. Also, when they go to work, most good jobs require English and the city students enjoy the benefits… it is not easy or hardly possible to find a good job in the countryside. (Thao)

Notably, there are many language centres available in the cities where the learning environments allow the learners to communicate with English native speakers and foreigners to improve their accent and pronunciation. These English classes are affordable for a considerable number of urban families but the students in the countryside cannot afford such courses. If they can afford to go to a private class, they can only learn with local teachers and the major learning focus is grammar. Consequently, city students tend to be more confident in social communication and better able to follow the national curriculum, whereas the country students appear to be left behind.

From these narratives, it is likely that both city children and teachers are enjoying more favourable living and learning conditions than the rural children, leading to a severe disparity in their performances and opportunities for learning and employment. The life circumstances of rural students disadvantage them and rural teachers are being challenged by working in underprivileged conditions. Teachers' central concern seems to focus on overcoming the unfavourable circumstances they find themselves in rather than developing their professional expertise.

Access to Child-friendly Approaches of English Teaching and Learning

Child-friendly methods in classrooms.
To young learners at the primary level, the selection of appropriate teaching and learning methods is of significance. As Cameron (2001) stresses, teaching children is not "simple and straightforward" (p.xii) even though young children's worldview is less complicated than older children's or adults'. All 6 cases emphasised that *how*

to teach children was much more important than *what* to teach. For example, due to the psychological and developmental characteristics of learners at primary age, it is impossible for teachers to use authority or power to force them to study in the same way as teachers at higher levels can (Pinter, 2011). Nor can they explain the importance or global status of English for their young students' career prospects. Rather, PEFL teachers better engage children with English learning by combining English language with songs, games and stories (Moon, 2000). In this sense, teaching young learners (YL) requires teachers to integrate pedagogic, psychological, affective and creative activities into their lessons (Linse, 2005). In most urban schools in Vietnam, PEFL teachers have created a child-friendly atmosphere to maintain children's interest in English learning:

> I know that many teachers [in Danang] are very good at singing, dancing, and drawing. Their English is of course good too, so they know how to combine these things in English classes. In one teaching period [35 minutes], we often design at least three activities. For example, I use a game for the warm-up, a song for teaching vocabulary, and play or role play for free practice. (Huong)

Realising that textbooks used for PEFL teaching do not inspire young learners, another participant, Hong, used activities of entertainment and arts to create meaningful learning contexts: "When I teach animal names, I have to show the picture of a zoo and ask children what they can see there. This simple thing can arouse children's curiosity and interest". This way of adapting materials has a great impact on learning outcomes, as teachers can make their classroom a non-threatening, comfortable and stress-free environment (Moon, 2000).

Compared to the teaching and learning practices in urban areas, PEFL education in the countryside lags behind. Thuy, a participant in the study, admitted that PEFL teachers in most village schools did not utilise child-friendly activities. Instead, they were still influenced by traditional methods which were usually dominated by grammar translation. This teaching style may result in rural children having negative attitudes towards English learning, unlike their city fellows who are presented with interesting English lessons:

> In most primary schools in the countryside, teachers just enter the classroom to show that they are teaching. They don't inspire children to learn English like teachers in cities. For example, in one teaching period, they ask children to open the textbook. They read some words and simple sentences, and then children repeat. For practice, the whole class do grammar and vocabulary exercises. Just a few teachers think of games or songs.

Looking at the ways children in the two regions access English language learning, as manifested in the teachers' perspectives, one can easily recognize inequality issues. More and more children in urban schools are provided with good conditions to maximise their learning efficiency, whereas many of their peers in the countryside have not even known a song or played a game in English classes. As a result, the

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quality of English language teaching is generally poorer for rural children and, by the time they reach the later stages of higher education, they feel inferior to their fellow students who were educated in the city.

In addition to the large disparities in teaching approaches which lead to disadvantages for rural children, their socio-economic conditions and globalisation, with its attendant global spread of English, appear to make the gap wider still between the two areas. It is acknowledged that PEFL teachers in urban schools have made great efforts to renovate PEFL education. However, many parents in metropolitan cities are still not satisfied with their children's English learning. They think that English is a passport for their children to participate in a global context and gain economic capital. Not surprisingly, their children are sent to elite schools and international English centres to attend higher quality English classes taught by native English speakers (NES) According to McKay (2010), what parents invest for their children leads to "an economic divide in the learning of English" (p. 105). A mother in Danang city talks about her son's studies in an English centre:

> NES teachers are very friendly. I know that Vietnamese teachers are also friendly and helpful, but they try to keep a distance between themselves and students. They may let students play games, but always stand and sit on the area around the teacher's desk and blackboard. NES teachers' approach to students is of course excellent. They always go to each student's seat to give support. Children feel that they are working and playing with a friend, not a teacher. For example, they also move on the floor and play with the kids. Vietnamese teachers never do that. They always show power to students. (Le)

Such an elite and ideal English class can only exist in the imagination of the young learners in rural schools while their PEFL teachers simply wish for their school to have basic facilities for language learning.

Entering the stage of primary education, many children in the countryside, the same as in any environment, have talent and aptitude for foreign language learning. However, the poor teaching and learning conditions prevent them from going very far on the path of English learning. The unfortunate reality is that teachers and their teaching approaches in most rural schools do not inspire and motivate children. In contrast, the PEFL teaching and learning practices in many urban schools have been innovated to catch up with current ELT trends in the Asian context.

Teaching cultural practices and values.   Celce-Murcia (2008) highlights that learning a foreign language no longer focuses just on linguistic competence but also on other components, including cultural competence, in the communicative competence model. Understanding the significant role of culture in learning a foreign language, Vietnam educational policy makers emphasise the incorporation of cultural elements from both English-speaking and local cultures into the textbooks (X.V. Nguyen, 2003).

However, in the implementation of this policy, rural teachers might encounter a number of problems in imparting these cultural values to their students when a number of unfamiliar topics and values are embedded in the textbooks. The students in the city are likely to have fewer problems in understanding and applying what they are taught but it can, often, be a big challenge for country students to identify and realise such concepts. For rural students, this can also apply to even the local concepts, not just the 'foreign' ones.

> I can see that children in my school know very little about other cultures, even our own cultural values are unknown to them. Some topics in the text book are unfamiliar to them. For example, most of my students do not even understand such places as: airport, hotel, museum or supermarket (in textbook for grade 4). When teaching this topic, I felt sorry for them, they are too poor to be entitled a chance to visit these places. For example, some of them cannot even imagine what a 'museum' is. I can see a dream in their eyes, a dream of coming to such places. (Thao)

Celebrating Christmas is an example of a cultural practice that is popular in English speaking countries but that may cause difficulties for the rural students:

> When teaching about Christmas to city students, they seem to understand and be more familiar with the practice, to what people do on Christmas…but for the rural children, they have hardly ever heard of this concept or seen this event. (Thuong)

Therefore, it can be a challenge for teachers in rural areas to explain the message and the vocabulary related to such cultural topics. The data in this study showed a tension in teaching English to city and rural students with reference to the teaching of cultural values and concepts. This resulted from the inequality in cultural backgrounds and economic conditions between the two areas. A teacher in a private school talked about her experience in teaching simple values like 'queuing' as follows:

> Besides teaching about festivals, we teach them about the lifestyles of people in developed countries. For example, our children are not used to queuing but we tried to encourage them to practice when teaching about buying food. I asked them to role-play, the children are very excited when learning these courtesies and are willing to do it. They feel they are more polite and civilized people. (Ly)

Besides teaching the literal meaning of a concept, they elaborated on the cultural values and their connotations. These teachers' accounts supported a proposition that despite difficulties, they made every effort to enact their role not only as a language teacher but also as a cultural transmitter. The teachers managed to turn their teaching into interesting lessons with the support of more advanced students and with their own creativity.

> I have also tried to create some visual teaching aids and encourage them to become involved in the activities. It was a nice surprise that many of my rural students can talk about Christmas through their imagination from reading and watching television. (Tam)

The data also suggested that, while teachers in the rural areas were struggling to teach such simple concepts such as 'museum' or 'queuing', the city teachers could challenge and empower their students by teaching about more complicated values or cultural aspects. The underpinning reason could be the higher level of living standards and conditions that allow them to have more experiences of such intricate concepts. For instance, when teaching to city students about the word 'subway' and 'lunchbox', even the city teachers could not find a real example to illustrate because there is no subway in Vietnam and a lunch box is not a familiar item either. However, the teachers were able to teach the terms by associating them with some cultural practice and values:

> I tell them why there is lunchbox and what the children in the UK do with the lunchbox. I also tell them that this is a feature of children's independence. They bring their lunch and serve themselves at school. This is different from Vietnamese children. They are excited to learn about this from their peers, they saw this as a good point to learn. They apply it to themselves and want to change. (Hong)

Through teaching such values, these teachers would expect the students to learn, selectively, some good values from other cultures and disseminate them to their parents, friends and communities.

> I think these lessons are beneficial to them as they grow up and work in any environment; especially if they are equipped with basic social skills to live in an international context. (Huong)

Although the rural teachers were quite optimistic about such content in the textbooks and perceive these difficulties as a professional challenge, their stories have exposed the inequality of access to cultural norms and concepts among students and teachers between regions. This has reinforced the proposition that there exists inequitable access to the cultural values of different countries in English language teaching which results in learning that is of a poorer quality in rural areas.

Stakeholders' Participation and Engagement

Stakeholders' perspectives and participation in PEFL education can also have a great impact on teaching and learning outcomes. 3 of the teachers interviewed acknowledged that education leaders and ELT specialists in the cities were all concerned with PEFL education and made efforts regarding the implementation of innovative approaches to teaching and learning. For example, stakeholders at different levels have specific

and practical strategies for PEFL teachers' professional development (PD), the most prominent of which is a number of training workshops delivered to teachers. All of the teachers interviewed appreciated the beneficial changes for both teachers and learners as a result of appropriate PD policies. In the countryside, English, as a selective subject, is, according to many stakeholders of different levels, less important than numeracy and Vietnamese literacy. Not surprisingly, such differences contribute to inequality of access to English learning between the two areas.

Huong, an experienced teacher and a participant in this study, perceived excellent progress in her teaching performance and students' learning outcomes. She thought that such an achievement resulted from education leaders' support for the innovation of PEFL education. Knowledge of teaching methods she acquired in PD workshops has changed the teaching and learning quality in her English classes, as it has for other teachers:

> When I began teaching, I didn't know how to teach in a child-friendly way. All of the [PEFL] teachers at that time just remembered their prior English learning experiences from their own time in school and then taught in the same way. I didn't use pictures or let children play games. But my teaching practice has changed a lot since 2008. I think the ELT specialist in Danang city and officials in the Department of Education are aware of the importance of English, so they have done all the best things for PEFL teaching.

However, in the countryside, stakeholders' participation suggests more commitment to their administrative duty as leaders than to the development of PEFL education. In a study of educational reform in Vietnam, Hamano (2008) concludes that a lack of PD opportunities will demotivate teachers and manifest as shortfalls of teachers in both quantity and quality. In PEFL education, Grassick (2007) found that workshops for teachers in local areas were limited and sporadic. According to Thao, a teacher in a village school, there has been hardly any training workshops for PEFL teachers in her local area. In the beginning period of PEFL teaching, she felt isolated because she could not share her experiences with colleagues who also taught PEFL. Instead, she familiarised herself with primary teaching approaches by learning from teachers of numeracy and literacy at school but she found there were differences between English and Vietnamese. She was unable to consult other PEFL teachers because English teaching and learning at the primary level was new to everyone.

> I had to learn everything by myself. I figured out appropriate teaching methods. When I had any problems, I couldn't ask anyone in the school because I was the only one who taught English. Sometimes I consulted the ELT specialist in the Department of Education, but she said PEFL teaching was not her concern. She even told me that she was not responsible for PEFL teaching because that was the business of individual schools. The principal seemed to understand my difficulties, he observed some of my classes, but gave no feedback because he had no idea of ELT.

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Stakeholders' participation is also exhibited in parents' involvement in their children's English learning. The emergence of English as a global language raises parents' awareness of the importance of this language for their children. As well as sending their children to international English centres, parents in cities have a variety of ways to become involved in their children's English learning. An increasing number of parents in metropolitan cities are competent in the English language, and so they can capitalise on their English expertise to help their children at home. Lan, a PEFL teacher at a renowned private school in Hanoi, talks about how parents are consulted to study English with their children:

> In the meeting between parents and teachers in my school, I explain to them the content of the English curriculum. I also instruct them how to join in with the kids' English learning at home. For example, I encourage them to watch a cartoon in English with their children for 15 minutes. And then they can ask the kids to remember some words. Some parents are good at English; we encourage them to talk to the kids in English at home.

Most parents in the countryside do not have a strong academic and professional background and are less well equipped to get involved in their children's learning in the same ways as urban parents. Also, they seem to have little to no idea of the global impact of English. If they are interested in the schooling of children, they just think that it is important to invest in mathematics and Vietnamese literacy:

> Many parents think that English means nothing with primary pupils. They just want their kids to study maths and Vietnamese. Some pupils didn't concentrate on the lessons in class; I told the parents the kids' problems. But they didn't care. Some even told me "no need to teach English to the kids in primary schools". I felt a little bit hurt when they made such a comment. (Thuong)

CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the inequality of access to English language education at the primary level between urban and rural areas in Vietnam. The findings strengthen the proposition that inequality of access comes from teaching and learning conditions, teaching and learning methods and the level of engagement of different stakeholders. The emergence of these issues indicates that the implementation of the national language policy from macro- to micro- level in Vietnam has neglected the geographical and economic features of the stakeholders. These inequalities can, therefore, impede the success of the current operational policy and quality of PEFL.

Despite numerous efforts and generous funding from the National Foreign Language Project 2020 targeted towards improved language teaching and learning conditions, the voices of the participants in this study appeal for greater investment to provide sufficient facilities and materials in rural schools, which are those with the least opportunity in foreign language learning, as discussed by L. Nguyen

(2007). Indeed, this inequality of access in PEFL is reflected in the teachers' efforts to overcome the difficulties in their learning and teaching conditions. This current research has revealed a need for the provision of more, and better, teaching facilities along with academic support and professional development for rural teachers so that they can apply updated methods and knowledge to their teaching.

Empirical data from this study also suggest the ineffectiveness in the current model of professional training conducted by the MoET every summer, in which teachers are asked to participate in an intensive training programme with local experts. This form of training has proved to be a waste of money and effort due to the unavailability and lack of frequency of such activities. A number of models have been proposed to replace the transmissive approaches to the PD of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) (Burns & Richards, 2009). In particular, the social theory of learning by Wenger (1998) and socio-cultural perspectives (Johnson, 2009) are being implemented in a variety of EFL contexts that are similar to Vietnam. Given the paramount importance of the local context for teachers' PD, Johnson (2009) raises awareness that "L2 teacher education must take into account the social, political, economic and cultural histories that are located in the contexts where L2 teachers live, learn, and work" (p. 6). Therefore, a community-based model of professional development involving monthly in-service training from such professional institutions as TESOL, British Council and/or Universities' language teacher educators should be implemented.

This chapter also recommends the involvement of stakeholders at community levels in the process of professional development for teachers. It is evident from the data that teachers working in very humble learning and teaching conditions are eager to learn and to change. However, they receive little support from higher levels of management. In such contexts, there should be exchange programmes between teachers in cities and rural areas to further teachers' professional development. In the meantime, so as to avoid the increasing inequality in PEFL between regions, it is necessary to raise parents' social awareness of the importance of English in contemporary society so more adequate attention can be paid to their children's learning and development. Other possibilities for further research exist as well. Having found these inequities in the implementation of PEFL between rural and urban stakeholders, it would be interesting to investigate how any changes to these indicators could relate to improvements in city and country students, in order to better inform language policy planning and learning.

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11. EDUCATION ACROSS BORDERS IN HONG KONG

Impacts and Solutions

ABSTRACT

International and cross-border student mobility is not a new phenomenon. Each year, millions of students access a better education by crossing their national borders from less developed or newly-industrialised countries to Western, industrialised countries. These students are participating in tertiary education, school education and pre-school education.

This chapter focuses on cross-border students, known as 'transfronterizos', specifically those who cross the border between China and Hong Kong for their school or pre-school education. It describes the impacts (and difficulties) that such a movement of students has on various stakeholders, including governments, schools and teachers, local parents/students and Chinese parents and the 16,000 commuter students. It, then, explores some potential solutions for these difficulties.

The discussion will centre on the general issue of student mobility in countries other than students' home country that occurs, under the impact of globalisation, in order to access a better quality education and on the resultant inequity issues this creates for both cross-border students and local students.

INTRODUCTION

Tens of thousands of 'transfronterizos' students cross their national and internal borders to other countries or administrative regions for their education. These students migrate between two cultures, two languages and two nations or regions each day, straining the resources of public school districts. These students can be found as far apart as the Mexico–United States border and the China-Hong Kong border (de la Piedra & Araujo, 2012; Leung, 2012).

16,000 Hong Kong-born students, who live in mainland China, daily cross the Shenzhen (China) – Hong Kong border, one of the busiest borders in the world, for their school or pre-school education. The issues of cross-border students (跨境學童) (CBS) are complex and place tremendous impacts on different stakeholders, such as Hong Kong local schools, Hong Kong parents and their children, CBS parents and their children.

The next section of this chapter conceptualises 'cross-border' education. It outlines different frameworks, including Knight's model which is adopted in this discussion. The section thereafter discusses the methodology, while the third section examines the impacts on various stakeholders and considers some possible solutions that could be introduced by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government. Finally, the key points of the argument are summarised and concluding remarks presented.

CONCEPTUALISING 'CROSS-BORDER' EDUCATION

Often scholars use the terms 'transnational', 'cross-border' and 'borderless' education to understand the concept of education across borders but enormous confusions have arisen about the meaning and extensive use of these terms. The term 'cross-border' is often used interchangeably with 'transnational', 'offshore' and 'borderless' education (Knight, 2006). To understand the meaning of education across borders, we attempt to conceptualise 'cross-border' education. Cross-border education refers to the movement of students, programmes, providers, curricula, projects, research and services in the education sector across national, jurisdictional boundaries (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] & World Bank, 2007). However, Knight (2006) perceives cross-border education as a very complex issue and emphasises its historical processes. In doing so, she develops a framework based on 'what moves' and 'under what conditions', arguing that, in the context of globalisation, it is significant to examine the processes which include why, how and where education moves across borders (Knight, 2006). Following Knight, in order to understand the processes of cross-border education, we briefly address the historical roots of cross-border education and illustrate the relationship between globalisation, internationalisation and cross-border education. Then, we trace out what Knight calls 'what moves' under 'what conditions' from one country to another to assist our conceptualisation.

Industrialisation helped to move education from the elite to the masses and, later, to universal access in the Western world (Trow, 2006, cited in Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2010) but the emergence of globalisation has enormously impacted on the international dimensions of education (Knight, 2006). In the post- World War II period, the forces of globalisation have helped to increase students' enrolment worldwide (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2010) and, related to this trend, since the mid-1980s global economic forces have led to the internationalisation of education. Due to this internationalisation of education, international students' mobility and programmes across borders have increased inordinately. Consequently, a mutual relationship has developed between globalisation and internationalisation. Internationalisation has shaped the notion of globalisation on the one hand and has operated as an agent of globalisation on the other (Knight, 2006).

Internationalisation of education refers to "the multiple activities, programs, and services that fall within international studies, international educational exchange,

and technical cooperation" (Arum & Van de Water, 1992, p. 202, cited in Knight, 2006). Consequently, internationalisation, as a specific policy and programme, is largely undertaken by governments and academic institutions who direct the education sector on how to handle globalisation (Altbach, 2005). Internationalisation is defined in two ways: 'internationalisation at home' and 'internationalisation abroad'. 'Internationalisation at home' consists of strategies and techniques that are designed to create an international dimension in the home campus experience. In turn, 'internationalisation abroad' includes sending students to study abroad, establish overseas branches of a university or the development of collaborative programmes (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2010). The overall features of internationalisation of education reflect the notion of cross-border education which, therefore, is identified as a subset of educational internationalisation (OECD & World Bank, 2007).

Knight (2006) proposes 4 categories – people, programmes, providers and projects/services – that are used to classify "who/what" moves across borders (p. 358). The first category – people –includes students, professors, scholars and experts who move from one country to another. The student moves across borders to attain a degree or participate in a study programme abroad, undertake fieldwork, a course or an internship, and/or to enrol in a semester-long or a year-long programme. The financing of students' participation in these programmes is from self-funding, home country fellowships or host country awards, exchange agreements and private sources. At the same time and in the same way, the global flow of academics, scholars and experts from developing countries to developed countries has increased with cross-border education. Academic talent is relocating from developing countries to, mostly, North America, Western Europe, and Australasia because countries in these regions are able to offer a better salary and working environment (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2010).

Alongside the student, academic and expert mobility from one country to another, cross-border education has expanded into programme and institutional movement (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2010). In the last decade, the numbers of international programmes, identified as the second category by Knight, have also increased. These programmes may be delivered in face-to-face mode, distance mode or both (Knight, 2006). Often, reputable universities develop collaborative programmes between their institutions in different countries. Likewise, the third category – providers – involves the physical or virtual movement of educational providers or institutions across borders (Knight, 2006). Over the years, some universities have set up fully-fledged campuses or replicas of their existing universities in developing countries. For example, New York University established its 'sister' university in Abu Dhabi (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2010, p. 25). Many universities are recruiting international faculty members and international students, and are incorporating international and contemporary perspectives in their curriculum, through which means higher education is becoming a part of international business to earn foreign revenue for host countries. The fourth category – projects/services – covers the wide range of education-related projects and services moving across borders. The activities

include multifaceted initiatives, for example curriculum development, research and benchmarking, technical assistance, e-learning, professional and capacity building programmes. Often the projects and services are initiated as part of development aids by the government, institutions and international organisations (Knight, 2006).

We have adopted Knight's (2005) framework of cross-border education in this chapter. It recognises the processes of cross-border education on a global scale and identifies what moves, under what conditions, in the education sector and across borders. More importantly, her framework addresses the fact that global economic forces have been leading the internationalisation of education and contributing to the increased mobility of students and faculty, programmes, institutions and projects across borders. Based on this framework, we examine the processes of cross-border education, which includes why, and how, education moves between China and Hong Kong.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach we have taken is a broadly qualitative one, using case study as a strategy of inquiry. We have adopted the illustrative case study because the concept of education across borders has been developed in Western countries and, later, spread to other parts of the world. Hong Kong is one those places, wherein cross-border education has become a material part of Hong Kong's education system over recent years. Therefore, the case selected is an instrumental example (Stake, 2008). We identified Hong Kong as one model of cross-border education as Hong Kong-born children, aged between 5 and 14, who reside in China with their parents, are crossing the Chinese-Hong Kong border to study in Hong Kong. Throughout this case study, the methodological intent was the development of a detailed, thick description (Geertz, 1988) of a situation-specific case (Stake, 2008) that illustrated the impacts of this cross-border education in Hong Kong. To examine this case, we first used international literature to theorise the concept of cross-border education on a global scale. Then, we focused on the specific issue of education across borders happening between China and Hong Kong, based on daily news and government documents about cross-border education. We also used secondary, statistical data from the Hong Kong government to examine this case.

HONG KONG CONTEXT

A case in the Court of Final Appeal of Hong Kong, in 2001 (Director of Immigration v. Master Chong Fung Yuen), confirmed that Chinese citizens born in Hong Kong enjoyed the right of abode in Hong Kong, regardless of the Hong Kong immigration status of their parents. In other words, babies born in Hong Kong to women from mainland China are entitled to the rights of a citizen of Hong Kong. A large number of pregnant women travel from mainland China to Hong Kong to give birth to ensure their children's right of residence. Children of mainland Chinese women who

were born in Hong Kong increased from 1,250 (2.6% of total number of live births in Hong Kong) in 2002 to 32,653 (36.9% of total number of live births) in 2010 (Leung, 2012).

The impact of this case was exacerbated by the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS), which allowed travellers from China to visit Hong Kong, on an individual basis, from July 2003. Prior to the scheme, mainland residents could only visit Hong Kong on business visas or on group tours. The outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in Hong Kong from March to June 2003 resulted in a sharp drop in the number of both mainland and overseas visitors, adversely affecting the tourism industry to a serious level. The IVS provided a significant economic contribution of Chinese travelers to Hong Kong, but also created other social problems in Hong Kong, cross-border students being one of them.

Shenzhen-Hong Kong cross-border students （深港跨境學童）are students who are born and study in Hong Kong but live in Shenzhen, mainland China. They come over the border control points (Lo Wu, Lok Ma Chau, Shenzhen Bay, Sha Tau Kok and Man Kam To) each school day to Hong Kong schools located, mostly, in the North District, the Taipo District, the Yuen Long District and the Tuen Mun District. Figure 1 shows the number of CBS in three categories (kindergarteners, primary students and secondary students) between 2004/05 and 2012/13. During these periods, the total number of students increased more than 4 times, from 3,803 in 2004/05 to 16,400 in 2012/13. The kindergarten, primary and secondary students increased 10 times, 2.5 times and 4.5 times respectively. More importantly, the percentage of annual growth of student numbers is more than 20% between 2010/11 and 2012/13.

Academic Year	Kindergarteners	Primary Students	Secondary Students	Total students	Annual change (in %)
2004/05	733	2,589	481	3,803	
2005/06	962	2,998	538	4,498	18%
2006/07	797	2,878	799	4,474	-1%
2007/08	1,456	3,466	937	5,859	31%
2008/09	1,780	3,910	1,078	6,768	16%
2009/10	2,681	4,090	1,267	8,038	19%
2010/11	3,786	4,575	1,538	9,899	23%
2011/12	5,700	5,400	1,700	12,800	29%
2012/13	7,454	6,749	2,197	16,400	28%

Figure 1: The number of cross-border students between 2004/05 and 2012/13

Source: (Leung, 2012; K. Y. Li, 2013)
Note: Academic year is from Sept to July the following year.

The Chinese government does not provide public education to these CBS, who are without *Hukou* (戶口). *Hukou* is a household registration system at the town or city level in China. Originally, this system was one of the major tools of social control employed by the state to limit population mobility within China (K. W. Chan & Zhang, 1999). Cheng and Selden (1994, p. 644) noted the situation that, in the 'old days', "without registration, one cannot establish eligibility for food, clothing or shelter, obtain employment, go to school, marry or enlist in the army". Nowadays, *Hukou* is still an important means by which your identity is recognised if you are to access local benefits. Most CBS parents cannot afford the expensive tuition fees of private schools in China so feel they have no alternative but to send their children back to Hong Kong to enjoy 12 years of free education. This 12-year free education includes 3 years of early childhood education with government education vouchers and 9 years of primary and junior secondary education.

IMPACTS

The growth in numbers of CBS has created a range of impacts on the different stakeholders, which includes Hong Kong schools, Hong Kong parents and their children, and CBS parents and their children.

Impact on Hong Kong Local Schools

Increased numbers of classes.   Since the large increase in CBS studying in Hong Kong, schools, especially those located close to the Hong Kong-Shenzhen border, increased their numbers of classes where space permitted: by the end of 2012, the Hong Kong Education Bureau had added 24 classrooms to 4 rural, primary schools in the North District (Singtao Daily, 2012). Previously, due to the low fertility rate of Hong Kong women, some schools were forced to close down, so the admission of CBS provided a new momentum to maintain the operations of these schools.

Increased class sizes.   Without the possibility of further expansion of school boundaries, increasing the class size seems to be the only option to meet such a huge demand of the growing CBS. Primary 1 class sizes have increased from 30 to around 39 to 42 in 2013 (Singtao Daily, 2013). This increase in class size, however, is going in the opposite direction to the implementation of 'Small Class Teaching' suggested by the Hong Kong government in the last few years when the government advocated better education by reducing the class size of all grades in primary schools in 2014/15 (HKSAR Education Bureau, 2008).

Excessive workload for teachers.   Massive workloads and more pressures are being placed on teachers. As well as their normal teaching duties, teachers are now required to have cultural and value awareness and sensitivity of two different social systems: capitalism in Hong Kong and socialism in China. Language is another barrier for

teachers communicating with CBS whose mother tongue is Mandarin while Cantonese is the local language in Hong Kong. A large-scale survey conducted by the International Social Service, Hong Kong Branch, reports that "80 percent of respondents [Hong Kong teachers] perceived that it is more difficult to teach cross-border students, with more than half contending that the English proficiency of students is low. Another 42 percent of respondents complained that the parents of cross-border students could not give guidance in their children's studies" (Fan, 2012, para 2). Hong Kong teachers find it difficult to reach the CBS parents to discuss their children's education because the parents live in China and cannot enter Hong Kong without a visa.

Strain on school resources required to support CBS.   More resources are required for schools to cater for the needs of CBS, especially in language support and family issues. Currently, the schools can apply for the School-Based Support Grant to support CBS learning, such as the provision of supplementary English classes (Yuen, 2012). Teachers may need extra resources to conduct home visits in order to understand the cross-border students' living environments and family situations because, for example, there may be limited support from relatives and friends if the CBS' families are from other provinces in China, which may have psychological effects on the CBS (Law, 2007).

Impact on Hong Kong Parents and Their Children

Unsecured school places for their children.   Hong Kong parents are unable to secure places for their children in the local schools in the North District. It is inconvenient for them to send their children to schools in other districts and so they are reluctant to do so. It is also against government policy to allow the children to attend neighbouring schools. As a consequence of the insecurity of placements at local school, Hong Kong parents feel angry and protest because, for example, they are forced to queue for days and nights outside schools just to collect the application forms (S. Chan & Kao, 2013). One angry mother quit her job to concentrate on getting a place for her son, sleeping overnight at two kindergartens. She expressed her frustration and anger: "When I was pregnant, I had to compete with the mainlanders for a hospital bed. Then it was baby powder. Now, it's school places. This is so unfair to local parents" (Siu, 2013, para 4). Hong Kong parents have setup a mothers' group (named Sheung Shui - Finling Mama group) to protest and register their complaints of the inconveniences and perceived injustices, such as long queues outside kindergartens.

The increase in class size may affect the quality of education.   Constructing new schools to accommodate these CBS is a long-term solution, whereas the increase of class sizes is only a short-term solution to reduce the shortfall of student places in the North District. Local parents worry that the quality of education will fall when the size of the class increases and they are hoping that the class size will be reduced in the future.

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Impact on CBS Parents and Their Children

Affordable cost of study in Hong Kong.   Some parents in China are faced with the choice of sending their children to expensive private schools in Shenzhen or to public schools in Hong Kong, since CBS are not entitled to public education in local government schools in China without Hokou

(Wong, 2001). Thus, many parents who do not have *Hokou* decide to send their children to Hong Kong for their education. Although CBS are required to travel a long distance to Hong Kong, part of their travel costs are covered by the Student Financial Assistance Agency of the Hong Kong government under Student Travel Subsidy Schemes. The average annual subsidy for each successful student applicant is HKD$1,703 (equivalent to approximately US$220) in the academic year of 2012/2013 (The Student Financial Assistance Agency, 2013). Other benefits are School Textbook Assistance, Subsidy Scheme for Internet Access Charges, Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme and Comprehensive Social Security Assistance.

Limited understanding about their children studying in Hong Kong.   Due to limited communication with schools, and the cultural barriers between the two regions, CBS parents know very little about their children's studies in Hong Kong: CBS parents expressed that they were not really familiar with Hong Kong (Yuen, 2010). Without much knowledge about the school system of Hong Kong, CBS parents play a passive role in their children's education in Hong Kong (Yuen, 2012).

Insufficient knowledge and skills to guide their children in their homework.   Many CBS parents have low English proficiency and limited knowledge about Hong Kong, so they cannot offer much help with their children's homework. Unsustainable financial pressures may be imposed on the families when CBS parents arrange private English tuition for their children.

Insufficient time for after-school activities.   With a long travel time and fixed school bus schedules between Hong Kong and Shenzhen, CBS have limited participation in after-school, extra-curricula activities although they may play at classmates' homes nearby. Yuen (2010) reports "the majority of CBS took part in extra-curricula hobbies with classmates/friends who are living nearby" (p. 13).

Language barriers.   Language differences result in communication difficulties since many of the CBS are more fluent in Mandarin than Cantonese. Thus, it is harder for them to connect with local students. Also, they often find English and traditional Chinese writing to be very hard (Yuen, 2010).

Safety issues on roads.   Without the company of their parents and teachers, CBS become exposed to some safety issues when they travel on roads by themselves.

Firstly, due to limited pick-up/drop-off points at some border control points, CBS may need to get on or off the cross-border coaches or school/nanny buses in crowded areas. This exposes them to personal safety issues such as the dangers of traffic accidents and kidnap. In addition, CBS are used as smuggling tools: Customs reported 10 smuggling cases that used CBS to smuggle smart phones into mainland China (M. Li, 2013).

<div align="center">SOLUTIONS</div>

Both Hong Kong and Shenzhen authorities are searching for different methods to tackle these problems.

Various Ways of Providing Education In China To CBS

It is proposed that the Hong Kong government should build and run some government schools in China (Takungpao, 2013). Under the principle of 'One country, two systems', the establishment of Hong Kong schools in Chinese territories is too costly and complicated an arrangement (Wong, 2001). However, creating Hong Kong classes with a Hong Kong curriculum in Shenzhen schools was considered possible after a series of negotiations between the two governments in 2010. Up to now, 3 schools in Shenzhen are involved that can accommodate 100 students in total (People's Daily, 2010). Also, the Hong Kong Education Bureau purchased places at 2 private schools in China. When compared with the 16,000 CBS going to Hong Kong, the provision of spaces in these 5 schools is, obviously, limited and inadequate. Therefore, other options need to be considered.

Establishment of a Dedicated School Zone for CBS

To reduce the stressful situation of student enrolment in the North District, the Hong Kong Education Bureau is planning to establish a school network which can provide 3,000 student places to CBS in 2014. 2,800 places will be from 4 district zones close to the border and another 200 places from 3 more distant districts, 30-40 minutes' travel by school bus from the border. The bureau is hoping that this arrangement can meet the demand of CBS. Unfortunately, Tu (2013) reports the results of a survey done by the International Social Service Hong Kong Branch in August 2013 that 70 percent of CBS parents did not agree with the dedicated school zone initiative. These parents argued that CBS already wake up very early to travel an hour to their schools. If, in future, CBS are allocated to school zones well beyond the border, it will be impossible because they will then need to spend 3 or 4 hours, daily, travelling between home and school. Tiredness from such travel will impact the effectiveness of their study. Some parents have indicated that they would not allow their children to study in a Hong Kong school if they are allocated to these school zones.

Constructing a Dedicated Channel in Immigration and Customs For CBS

In order to resolve the safety issues of CBS, both immigration departments have applied various effective policies. They have set up dedicated transport channels for CBS so they do not have to mix with general travellers during peak hours. The Hong Kong immigration has also set up a CBS e-channel to provide more efficiency in the immigration and customs clearance service so that they can attend their classes on time. Additionally, student passports can now be checked without getting off the cross-border school bus.

More Local Support Programs to CBS Families in China

The Hong Kong government is funding and encouraging more Non-Government Organisations (NGO) and schools to introduce various support programmes to CBS families. For example, The Shenzhen Luohu Cross-boundary Students Service Centre was organised jointly by the International Social Service, Hong Kong Branch, and the Luohu District Women's Federation, partly funded by the Community Chest of Hong Kong. This Service Centre provides diversified and tailor-made programmes for CBS and their parents, enabling Hong Kong schools to give extra effort and attention to the CBS as well as their parents. For example, school meetings can be held in Shenzhen, rather than Hong Kong, for the sake of the mainland mothers. With similar assistance, schools can introduce the Hong Kong education system in Shenzhen seminars (Wong, 2001).

CONCLUSION

The issue of cross-border students is controversial in Hong Kong: these students are Hong Kong citizens but their parents are not. Local parents in Hong Kong perceive CBS as in competition with their own children for the scarce educational resources available and, thus, there is a degree of resentment regarding the increasing numbers of CBS who attend schools in Hong Kong.

This chapter has outlined the impacts on different groups and presented some possible solutions to these issues. Additional to those mentioned, since April 2012, Hong Kong authorities have introduced a series of effective administrative measures to prevent pregnant mainland women, whose spouses are not Hong Kong permanent residents, giving birth in Hong Kong. It is expected this will offer some relief to the CBS problems after the academic year of 2017/18. Despite this measure, the annual growth rate of CBS is expected to rise by more than 20% in the coming few years. Therefore, the Hong Kong government will need to formulate, and act on, long-term policies to solve this controversial issue.

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SECTION THREE

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

DAARIIMAA MARAV & MICHELLE ESPINOZA

12. EQUITY AND ACCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A Comparative Perspective from Chile and Mongolia

INTRODUCTION

What do two countries such as Chile and Mongolia have in common? Probably not much but recent government documents, as well as international organisations, have placed Chile as an example for Mongolia to follow, mainly due to its economic success through the exploitation of mining resources. Currently, Mongolia is experiencing a large-scale commodity boom, especially in the mining sector. This has led them to follow Chile as an example for policy-making and enter the fast-track towards the improvement of Mongolia's economy. Furthermore, the World Bank (2009) reports that Mongolia views Chile as a country that has successfully converted its natural resources into shared wealth. To face the challenge of becoming a developed country, both Chile and Mongolia have set their educational policies towards assisting students to succeed in the knowledge economy. This means that an increase in education expenditure is needed and high quality education and skills have to be prioritised (OECD, 2012).

Within the current, rapidly globalising economy and the social changes it has brought, there has been a considerable expansion in access to higher education in many countries, including contemporary Chile and Mongolia. In recent years, our understanding of higher education has been influenced by the knowledge economy, society and labour markets which have shaped the growth and spread of higher education. However, having access to higher education does not ensure equity of educational opportunities. As most of the studies reporting on this issue have been conducted in the industrialised world, very little is known about the developing world. This chapter provides the first comparative analysis of trends in equity of access to higher education between two developing countries from two different continents who share some similarities, such as a market-oriented economy, which have deeply influenced their education systems.

NEOLIBERAL UNDERPINNINGS OF THE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. (Harvey, 2007, p. 2)

Chile has been regarded as the first neoliberal experiment carried out, in the world. This 'experiment' commenced shortly after the military coup, led by Pinochet, on 11th September 1973 (Harvey, 2007). Mongolia, however, adopted a market-oriented approach after 1990, when socialism collapsed.

In 1981, the Chilean educational system underwent a major reform as part of a neoliberal transformation of the whole welfare system. This transformation was carried out by a group of young technocrats known as the 'Chicago Boys' because they had obtained their graduate degrees in the University of Chicago's Department of Economics (Martinez & Diaz, 1996). This educational reform was based on the notion of freedom of the markets and it was conceived, developed and implemented in only 18 months. Nowadays, many of these 'Chicago Boys' are influential members of the Right-wing political parties of Chile: some of them are even Ministers of the current Right-wing government leading the country. Thus, the influence of the Chicago graduates on the decision-making politics in Chile is as strong as it was over 30 years ago, when Pinochet held power. Hence, every policy since developed retains the signature of a free-market economy.

The Chilean Higher Education (HE) system was reformed in the early 1980s from a system of 8 state-financed universities to a system which includes 4 types of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): universities, traditional (members of CRUCH[1]) and private; professional institutes; technical training centres and the institutions in charge of training the armed forces and police (Espinoza & Gonzalez, 2013)[2]. This change in the legislation allowed private parties to create universities which resulted in the geographical expansion of HEIs in the country. Before dictatorship, the 8 traditional universities, which had campuses across the country, reached student coverage of about 140,000[3]. The state contributed 80% of the cost of this system. The rest was covered by student-paid maintenance fees that were differentiated according to the payment capacity of each student and were mainly used to cover materials and food expenses (Kremerman, 2007).

With the 1981 reform and the turn towards privatisation, the Chilean HE system has been acknowledged as one of the most privatised in the world, as well as one of the most expensive for students' families. This openness to the market has led students to seek funds from the private capital markets through the securing of loans guaranteed by the state and the HEIs (Larraín & Zurita, 2008) which, until recently, were paid back at very high interest rates. This has created a scenario in which institutions compete for students, funds and, even, academics, leading to the proliferation of private universities which account for nearly 70 per cent of total enrolment (Ambrus, 2012). Nevertheless, the socio-economic level of the students who access HEIs in Chile remains a key factor in determining what, where and how they are going to pursue their higher degrees. According to Kremerman (2007), only 14.5 per cent of young people who belong to the lower quintile accessed HEIs in 2003, as compared to 73.7 per cent of those who belonged to the highest quintile (i.e. from the richest groups).

The first HEI in Mongolia, the National University of Mongolia (NUM), was founded in 1942 and was not only the first university in Mongolia but heralded the beginning of the HE system in the country. There are 3 types of HEIs in Mongolia: university, institute and college. During socialism, HE was free as it was fully subsidised by the government (Gantsog & Altantsetseg, 2003). Since 1990, a rapid expansion of the HE system of Mongolia was triggered by the liberalisation of the economy and the legalisation of private higher education in the 1991 Education Law of Mongolia (World Bank, 2010). In 1991, Mongolia had 14 public HEIs (Asian Development Bank, 2011). From this time on, a neoliberal approach was taken by the HE system in Mongolia, the Soviet model education system was decentralised and private HEIs were promoted. In 1994, the government started requiring public HEIs to charge tuition fees at levels that would cover the academic staff salaries to reduce the government's HE budget (Batsukh, 2011). The government of Mongolia regulates tuition fees for both public and private HEIs by keeping them low to make HE accessible to its people. As a consequence, public HEIs have been facing financial constraints to maintain their facilities because of the underfunding by the government(Altantsetseg, 2002), and this has led them to increase the admission of fee-paying students.

The 'mushrooming' of private HEIs, largely driven by the fact that they do not pay value-added or profit taxes and also get funding from the government, has led to mass HE expansion in Mongolia. As a result, running private HEIs has become a lucrative business. For example, according to statistics on HE in Mongolia by its Ministry of Education and Science, in the 2000-2001 academic year there were 172 HEIs, consisting of 38 public and 134 private. By the 2010-2011 academic year, there were 113 HEIs in Mongolia: 16 public, 92 private and 5 branches of foreign institutions. The reason that the number of public HEIs decreased was attributed to the fact that the government merged and privatised some public HEIs to reduce government expenditures and as a way to increase the effectiveness of instructional and research activities (Batsukh, 2011). The decrease in the number of private HEIs may have been related to the accreditation process, started in 1999, whereby an external accreditation agency would carry out quality evaluation and assessment according to the Higher Education Law of 1995 (Batsukh, 2011). As a result of this process, some private institutions either closed or merged with other universities.

Through its policies, including the Master Plan to develop the education of Mongolia in 2006-2015 (Government of Mongolia, 2006) and the Roadmap for Higher Education Reform: 2010-2021 (MECS, 2010), and the projects supported by international donor organisations such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and World Bank, the government of Mongolia has been attaching greater importance to the reform of the HE system, to make it a globally competitive education system. The Education and Human Resource Master Plan: 1994-1998 set the twin goals of establishing a world-class university system and transforming Mongolia into a knowledge economy and identified 3 main policies: (1) to upgrade the quality of education and produce citizens who can function effectively in a modern knowledge

economy; (2) to provide education services that can be accessed by students in all parts of the country, including rural areas, and by poor and vulnerable groups; and (3) to improve the management capacity of central and local educational institutions (World Bank, 2010, p. 1). Regarding HE, the Master Plan to develop the education of Mongolia in 2006-2015 aims to improve the coordination of enrolment in HE, create favourable conditions to ensure quality guarantees of higher education training and the improvement of the management and financial system in HE. One of the main objectives in the Roadmap for Higher Education Reform: 2010-2021 is to give equal study opportunities to students to get accessible, good quality education which meets their demands. The aims of the HEIs affected by these documents are similar and emphasise offering an accessible and high quality education for students.

Even though, historically, over the past hundred years, the HE system in Chile outperforms that of Mongolia, we can see from the above that the current tendencies and directions for HE are going on the same track in both countries. They each have adopted a neoliberal agenda for the development and improvement of their HE systems to position their countries within the knowledge economy. Efforts have been made to create a competitive market in which HEIs, as well as other actors involved, have to fiercely fight to find a place in the labour market. But, before discussing this issue, it is also important to consider the factors that may hinder or promote access to and attainment of higher education in both countries.

EQUITY BARRIERS FOR EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

> Equity in education has two dimensions. The first is fairness, which implies ensuring that personal and social circumstances – for example gender, socio-economic status or ethnic origin – should not be an obstacle to achieving educational potential. The second is inclusion, which implies ensuring a basic minimum standard of education for all – for example that everyone should be able to read, write and do simple arithmetic. The two dimensions are closely intertwined: tackling school failure helps to overcome the effects of social deprivation which often causes school failure (Field, Kuczera, & Pont, 2007, p. 11).

This epigraph, taken from a 2007 OECD report, refers to equity in education as having two components: fairness and inclusion. What we set out to do in this chapter is to look at equity of access to higher education in Chile and Mongolia from the policy perspective and include some factual information gathered from documents available on the internet.

Private Versus Public School Education

It has been widely acknowledged that, in Chile, access to universities, in particular, is highly unequal, mainly due to the system used for the selection of students for entry to the traditional universities. This system consists, in part, of a standardised

test which is called the University Selection Test (the PSU)[4]. This test focuses on measuring students' knowledge of curriculum content, thus discriminating against (talented) students who attend poorly-resourced schools that do not adequately cover all the curriculum content used in this test. Students who attend municipal schools (public) are the majority of those who have difficulty in achieving the highest scores and, thus, accessing the best universities (Libertad y Desarrollo, 2011).

The following table (Table 1) was drawn up by Libertad y Desarrollo (2011) using data from the Department of Measurement and Educational Registry-Universidad de Chile (DEMRE) and presents the average score obtained in the PSU, in the areas of Literacy and Numeracy, by students from different school types:

Table 1. Literacy and Numeracy scores by school type

Type of School	Literacy	Numeracy	Average
Municipal	456.26	459.47	457.86
Private-subsidised	489.36	490.48	489.92
Private	603.13	618.99	611.06

Source: Libertad y Desarrollo (2011).

The minimum score required to access university, in Chile, is 450 points. Nevertheless, most of the traditional universities have set their cut-off point between 475 and 500. Indeed, the most prestigious universities in the country (Universidad de Chile and Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile-PUC) have set their cut-off point high above the average, in some cases more than 700 points.

Since Chilean families perceive university education as an instrument to foment social mobility, all efforts are made for their children to enter the HE system. Nevertheless, some of the OECD's more important findings show that:

> …students from low income groups, who attend municipal schools or who are female are significantly less likely to achieve the scores necessary to get into their preferred university, and to be eligible for student grants. Students from low income groups and municipal schools are also less likely to complete their courses at traditional (CRUCH) universities, and tend to take longer if they do (OECD & World Bank, 2009, p.73).

The problem with the massification of access to HEIs is the cycle of reproduction of inequities(Donoso Díaz, 2011). For example, for admission to the traditional (state) universities, secondary students must take the PSU. The higher the score, the more likely it is for the student to be admitted to the best universities. Students with lower scores may choose to enter any other traditional universities (which are, in themselves, very diverse institutions) or a private institution to whom, in most cases, the PSU score is not important. Mostly privately-educated students enter the prestigious universities which are located in the capital city of Santiago. This implies

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that those students who did not receive a quality secondary education are unlikely to obtain a score that will allow them to enter any of the most prestigious universities in the country. In a country like Chile, attending university is seen as a symbol of social prestige. Thus, for families of those students who are the first generation to go to university (about 70% of current enrolments), and who are forced to enter a private institution to realise their dreams, investing in HE can mean that they are putting themselves in a hugely difficult financial position. Furthermore, drop-out rates are high among poorer students and the severity of these consequences becomes more apparent when considers the large debts that those families have taken on to fulfill their children's dreams, as well as their own dreams.

A similar situation occurs in Mongolia where students' socio-economic background and the type of school attended, especially the geographic location of schools, have had a marked impact on access to HE, particularly to public universities, and on their academic achievements in HEIs. The public universities are more prestigious than the private ones because of the commonly-held belief among Mongolians that they are of better quality. This belief is supported by the fact that the majority of graduates who find jobs come from the public HEIs (Begz, 2012). The grim consequences described above, in emotional, social and financial terms, are very relevant also in the Mongolian context.

Gender

Another distinction important to mention is that, within the students attending HEIs, most of them are males. This issue was emphasised by the OECD and World Bank report (2009) as one of the elements of inequity within the Chilean HE system. In Mongolia, however, the number of the students in HEIs has been increasing steadily, especially among females. The table below (Table 2) shows the number of students in HEIs in Mongolia during the last decade:

Table 2. Female students in total number of HEI students

Indicators	Academic years		
	2000-2001	*2005-2006*	*2010-2011*
Total students in HEIs	84,985	138,019	170,126
Females	53,701 (63.1%)	83,871 (60.7%)	101,455 (59.6%)
Students in public HEIs	56,906	91,755	104,431
Females	34,706 (60.9%)	53,650 (58.4%)	58,871 (56.3%)
Students in private HEIs	28,079	45,784	65,306
Females	18,995 (67.6%)	29,832 (65.1%)	42,360 (64.8%)

Source: Statistics on the HE sector by Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (2011).

Supported by the 'mushrooming' of private universities and colleges since the 1990s,the number of students in HEIs doubled between 2000 and 2010: from 84,985 to 170,126 (MECS, 2011). This is not only related to the economic development but also to the fact that education is highly valued and invested in by Mongolians, as they see education as a means of gaining employment and a better life, eventually upgrading their social status. However, access to and equity of educational opportunities in HEIs are questionable as there have been gender and rural - urban disparities among the students and there is a mismatch between what HE offers and the demands of the labour market.

The gender disparity among students in HEIs in Mongolia emerged after the 1990 transition from socialism to a market economy. According to the gender assessment study in Mongolia by UNIFEM (2003), 70 per cent of higher education level students were female. Table 2 shows nearly 60% of the students in the 2010-2011 academic year were female. Though the gender gap in higher education students has narrowed in recent years, it still persists. This is attributed to social and economic changes in Mongolia which took place during the post-socialist or transitional period. For example, following privatisation of livestock, which increased their number, there has been a correspondingly increased demand for boys to tend the livestock herds. There was also a perception by parents that, because it is more difficult for girls to gain employment to support themselves than it is for boys, girls need education more than boys as boys can do any type of job to sustain their lives. Also, when people had to pay tuition fees for higher education which was free during socialism priority was given to girls because, if boys did not score high enough on entrance exams to enrol in HEIs, they could still get relatively high-paying jobs that did not require HE in cities and, also, had employment opportunities for work in developed countries, particularly South Korea (Adiya, 2010; Rossabi, 2005; Steiner-Khamsi & Stolpe, 2006).

Access to Resources

In Marav's (2013) studyabout Mongolian university students' everyday digital literacy practices, there was a discernible difference between levels of students' internet access, based on their origins: urban or rural. 98 public university students majoring in English language completed the survey about their everyday English and internet usage. Their mean age was 21 years (SD=2.16). 43 of them were from urban areas including the capital city – Ulaanbaatar, and two other cities – Darkhan and Erdenet. Though these two cities are usually referred to as 'rural', their official status as cities is maintained in this study. For most Mongolians, Ulaanbaatar is the only city in their country and, when referring to it, they do not even mention the name 'Ulaanbaatar', they just refer to it as 'the city', especially if they live in the rural areas. The rest of the participants, 55 students, were from rural areas. The figure below (Figure 1) shows the differences in online usage among the survey participants.
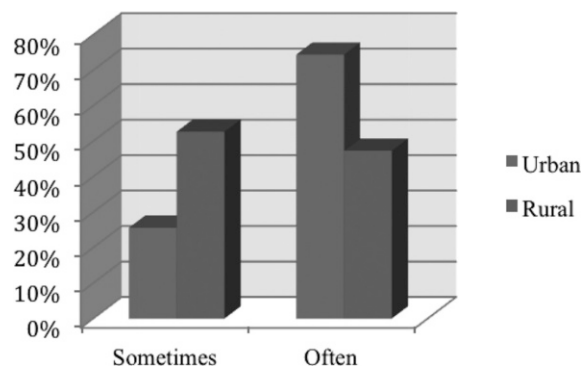
Figure 1. Frequency of accessing the internet.

The differences in online usage can be explained by many factors, such as students' English proficiency, digital literacy and the differences in access to digital media between urban and rural areas. These access variations can be attributed to the lack of internet access points in rural areas depending on the infrastructure development and remoteness, quality of their schooling, people's socio-economic status, that is, education and income level, and lack of computer and internet literacy (Pact Mongolia, 2008). Because of this unequal distribution of 'resources', which is also one of the attributes of all types of capital, in Mongolia urban students enjoy greater advantageous in learning English and using the internet. However, even among urban people, depending on whether they live in apartments or in *ger*(Mongolian traditional dwelling) districts, there can be a digital divide because *ger* districts are, generally, poorly serviced areas on the outskirts of the cities and no internet connection is available in most of them.

Clearly, the inequity caused by online divide and English proficiency not only impacts on the students' academic achievements but, also, on their future employment, as English and digital literacies are media of power through which the students pursue their own interests, learn and, ultimately, find their future employment.

The last decades have definitely witnessed a massification of HE in both Chile and Mongolia, largely explained by the value embedded in higher education and the prestige it represents to people in both countries. HE is considered a path to social mobility by the students' families although evidence is scarce to support the veracity of this view. One of the key elements promoting or hindering access to and permanence in the HE systems in both countries relates to the students' socio-economic backgrounds and the type of schools attended. An important distinction should be made in terms of gender disparity. In the Mongolian context, female students predominate in HEIs while, in Chile, most of the students are males. This eagerness to pursue a degree in HEIs might not find reward in the harsh realities of the labour market for which these students are being prepared.

MISMATCH BETWEEN HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE LABOUR MARKET.

First of all, it should be noted that, in Chile, there is no national source of information to show tertiary graduates' success, or otherwise, in finding jobs within 6 months or a year of completing their studies(OECD & World Bank, 2009). Therefore, it is difficult to provide actual evidence of a possible mismatch between what HEIs offer and opportunities in the labour market. However, since 2001, the Chilean Ministry of Education has been developing the Higher Education Graduate Employment Observatory (Observatorio del Empleo de Graduados de Educación Superior) which has a webpage (www.mifuturo.cl) where information is available for future students to access informationabout the employability levels of 100 tertiary level programmes that represent around 75% of the degrees and programmes on offer in Chile (Uribe & Salamanca, 2007).

Over-supply

According to the OECD and World Bank (2009) report, even though there was a belief that the growth in graduates since 1990 might saturate the labour market and reduce economic rates of return to higher education, until 2003 there was no evidence to support this fear. Nevertheless, some occupations, such as computer engineers, psychologists and journalists, with a high percentage of recent graduates may face reduced future employment prospects. Such a situation of over-supply may lead to a bottleneck at the entry level, since there is a high percentage of professionals with similar characteristics available, making competition for jobs intense (Uribe & Salamanca, 2007).

Shortage of 'Boom' Graduates

The situation is quite different in Mongolia. According to statistics compiled by the Economic Policy and Competitiveness Research Centre (2012) in Mongolia, only 36 per cent of the graduates from local universities in 2011 were employed because of the labour market demand for skilled workers in the mining and construction sectors, the 'booming' sectors in the economy. The statistics (MECS, 2011) show that the most popular field of study in HEIs in the 2010 – 2011 academic year was Social Sciences. This mismatch between HE enrolments and opportunities in the labour market impacts by"bringing about an inflationary rise in formal credentials that had the ultimate effect of lowering their status and exchange value in the labour market" (Tomlinson, 2008, p. 55). Because of this mismatch and, also, mass HE, the value of HE in Mongolia could be perceived as declining.

Socio-Economic Background and Earnings

Another issue that raises concern relates to Chilean universities offering new courses to provide students with specialist qualifications (such as forensic

criminologist, forensic expert or forensic investigator) which have almost no market value (OECD & World Bank, 2009). Of even greater concern, socio-economic background seems to play an important role when it comes to securing a job. Núñez and Gutiérrez (2004)show that the Chilean labour market has a tendency to positively discriminate against graduates from wealthy families who have graduated from elite schools. However, this effect appears to be reducing as time goes by. They also found that upper-class graduates earn approximately 50 per cent more than those raised in lower socio-economic backgrounds. This class earnings gap has no relation to the subjects' productivity, such as academic performance at university, second language proficiency, postgraduate studies, schools' academic quality, geographic origin and other standard controls. According toNúñez and Gutiérrez (2004), this large class earnings gap is likely to be the result of employer discrimination, demonstrating that, at least in part, socio-economic background is more important than academic performance at university in the determination of earnings in the workforce.

Overall, privatisation of the HEIs as a consequence of the neoliberal approach in both countries has brought massification of HE. However, the fact that even though students have access to HE, it is still questionable whether they can have access to quality education or whether they can be immersed in a programme which has value in the labour market. In these circumstances, equity is not ensured.

CONCLUSION

The neoliberal underpinnings of the educational reforms in Chile and Mongolia have led to a pervasive tendency towards commercialisation due to the massification of higher education. The common discourse remains focused on improving the levels of Human Development Capital for both countries in order to have a place in the knowledge economy (Elacqua, Gonzalez, & Salazar, 2005; World Bank, 2010). Within this discourse, equity in higher education is not adequately prioritised. Equity issues are considered as arising wherever young people, who may be assumed to have equal talent or ability to benefit from higher education but have different characteristics or different backgrounds, are experiencing significantly different outcomes (OECD & World Bank, 2009, p. 74).Simply put, all students should be guaranteed not only educational opportunities but also employment opportunities after their graduation.

Educational policies have been addressing inequities among students and improving the quality of HE to meet not only labour market demands but also global standards in both countries. Chile has developed and implemented policies regarding equity and access to HE during recent decades without making a big difference. It is time for a second generation of reforms that allow for the achievement of ambitious goals set by the government in terms of equity and access to higher education. It might not be an easy enterprise since the problem is

mainly due to the severe segmentation of Chilean society, clearly observed when considering the types of schools students attend. Mongolia has been developing similar kinds of policies but it is still a work in progress and the results remain to be seen. For example, from 2012 - 2016, Mongolia is implementing the Higher Education Reform Project invested by ADB to promote equitable access to HE. This project aims to improve state support mechanisms for poor students and students in rural areas, develop policies and mechanisms to attain and maintain gender balance in higher education enrolment, and expand higher education outreach to rural areas (ADB, 2011).As HE contributes to social mobility and equal opportunities with respect to the students involved, it is vital to take the issue of equity of access in this sector seriously, in both countries.

NOTES

[1] The acronym CRUCH stands for the Spanish original Consejo de Rectores de las Universidades Chilenas (Council of Rectors of Chilean Universities) which is an organization that brings together public and private traditional universities created before 1981 or which have derived from them. There are 25 universities members of CRUCH, 16 state-owned and nine private.

[2] According to Kremerman (2007), by 2005 there were 25 CRUCH universities, 36 private universities, 111 technical training centres and 47 professional institutes covering a total of 663.679 enrolled students.

[3] These eight traditional universities were Universidad de Chile (1842), Universidad Católica, Universidad de Concepción, Universidad Técnica del Estado (now known as Universidad de Santiago), Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Universidad Austral, Universidad Católica del Norte and Universidad Técnica Federico Santa María. These universities had regional campuses in which they imparted professional and technical Education.

[4] Previously the evaluation system used to select students for university entrance was the PAA (Academic Aptitude Test) which was replaced in 2003 by the PSU.

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13. FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY IN RELATION TO GENDER EQUITY IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

A Comparative Study Between Australia and Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This study examines gender differences in foreign language anxiety and compares foreign language anxiety experienced by Indonesian learners of English in Indonesia and Australia. Participants of the study were 64 Indonesian learners of English in Indonesia and Australia aged between 16 and 18. They completed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) to measure the level of their language anxiety. The result indicated that males were significantly more anxious than female students in the three dimensions of the FLCAS. Males and females also exhibited different patterns of anxiety level. With regards to the differences between the contexts of language learning, generally students who learnt English in Indonesia were more anxious than those who studied English in Australia

INTRODUCTION

Gender equity in education has attracted educators' and researchers' attention for many decades (Chavez, 2000; Clark & Trafford, 1996; Daniels, Creese, Hey, Leonard & Smith, 2001). It is defined as "parity between males and females in quality of life, academic and work outcome valued by our own society"(Klein, Ortman & Friedman, 2002, p. 4). In other words, both males and females should have equal opportunities and gain parity of outcome despite their (often) different learning styles[1].

A large body of international research has supported the assertion that high levels of participation and achievement in foreign language (FL) learning tend to be primarily attributable to girls (Carr & Pauwels, 2006; Chavez, 2000; Field, 2000): in comparison, boys tend to exhibit low participation and general underachievement. Research has also shown that, in a school environment where options are exercised, which usually occurs at the higher educational level, there were more girls than boys in a language classroom (Chavez, 2000; Clark, 1998). Murphy (2009) points out that there is clear evidence of boys' low participation rate (average 33%) in foreign language learning at an advanced levelin data from the UK (England and Scotland),

Australia and New Zealand. This situation is very similar to Indonesian learners of English as a foreign language. It seems that there it is generally accepted that learning a language is really a female's business and that boys are not expected to be good at languages.

The issue of gender differences has been reported in studies investigating various target languages (Daniels et al., 2001; Field, 2000; Klein et al., 2002; Radwan, 2011), positioning gender as an important variable in second or foreign language learning. If this situation persists, equity in learning a foreign language can never be achieved. Therefore, it is important to be aware of factors that may contribute to males' lack of participation and achievement in foreign language learning. As pointed out by Rudduck (1994)"gender inequalities cannot be easily combated unless the structures that sustain them are understood" (p.130). Based on sociological research findings, some possible factors that may cause the gender differences include curriculum material, student-teacher interaction, peer group pressure and students' anxiety. This article attempts to go beyond merely the identification of differences between males and females in foreign language learning and explore one of the variables - foreign language anxiety - that may contribute to the gender differences, in order to better understand the phenomenon.

In the last twenty years, research on foreign language anxiety has consistently revealed that anxiety hampers students' participation in the classroom, which results in poor performance (Aida, 1994; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Hewitt & Stephenson, 2012; Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004; Meihua & Jackson, 2008; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey & Daley, 1999). Feelings of anxiety not only cause communication apprehension (Horwitz et al., 1986) but also prevent learners from gaining the input of the target language (Krashen, 1981). The primary area of focus for this chapter is to explore boys' and girls' perceptions about the role of foreign language anxiety in a classroom context to find out whether boys' low participation rates in foreign language learning is due to higher levels of anxiety experienced during the learning process in the classroom. The present study also compares the learning experiences of those studying English in Indonesia as their home country and in Australia as an English-speaking country to examine whether the contexts of learning impact on these feelings of anxiety.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Foreign Language Anxiety And Its Effect On Foreign Language Learning

Foreign language anxiety is a state of anxiety experienced by students in a foreign language classroom context. Horwitz et al. (1986) defined foreign language anxiety as "a distinct complex of self-perception, beliefs, feelings and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128). These sensitivities manifest as communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety.

A considerable number of research studies have illustrated that FL anxiety hampers students' learning achievement (Aida, 1994; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Hewitt & Stephenson, 2012; Horwitz et al., 1986). This anxiety feeling is believed to prevent language learners from receiving the language input that, therefore, results in slow progress in the process of language acquisition. In other words, anxiety constitutes an effective filter which blocks the target language input.

The effect of foreign language anxiety on students' achievement was reported in research studies involving students learning various target languages, using different measures of achievement (Aida, 1994; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Hewitt & Stephenson, 2012; Horwitz et al., 1986; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004; Meihua & Jackson, 2008; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999). These studies consistently reported that there was an inverse relationship between foreign language anxiety and achievement. The detrimental effect of foreign language anxiety was not only evident in students' score in integrative tests of the target language but, also, when specific skills of the language - speaking, listening, reading and writing - were measured separately (Elkhafaifi, 2005; Hewitt & Stephenson, 2012; Kim, 2009; MacIntyre, 2002; Phillips, 1992). In addition, a negative correlation between foreign language anxiety and achievement was also experienced by students in different levels of language instruction, ranging from high school students to advanced students, such as pre-service teachers (Rodríguez & Abreu, 2003). Although some research studies (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2006) have claimed that anxiety could bring about a positive effect on language learning, known as facilitating anxiety, more research has reported the negative effect of FL anxiety on students' achievement (Awan, Azher, Anwar & Naz, 2010; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Liu & Huang, 2011).

Gender Issues in Foreign Language Learning

Research studies have shown that boys and girls differed in their behaviour and learning styles when learning a foreign language (Radwan, 2011). One of the differences is, when a lesson is conducted in the target language, boys lose concentration more readily than girls (Thornton, 1999). A more recent study supported previous findings that boys and girls differed significantly in overall strategy used in language learning. Male students preferred a more social strategy and used slightly more memory, cognitive and metacognitive styles than girls (Radwan, 2011)

One line of explanation as to why boys and girls show differences in foreign language learning was put forward by Loulidi (1990). He cited a number of studies that reported on the perception of language learning as a 'feminine' subject. He felt this might explain why more girls have a more positive attitude towards language learning than boys. Loulidi mentioned two factors: social and cultural pressures or, as he put it, "being good at language is quite admirable for girls but unmanly for boys"(Loulidi, 1990, p. 40).

METHODOLOGY

The Setting and Participants

This study was designed to identify and compare FL anxiety experienced by male and female students studying English in Indonesia and Australia. Specifically, the objective of the study was to examine the FL anxiety of 32 (16 males and 16 females) students studying English in year 11 as a compulsory subject at a secondary school in their home country of Indonesia (Group One), as well as a group of 32 Indonesian students (16 males and 16 females) studying English in an English speaking country, Australia (Group Two). Students in Group Two studied English at the Monash University English Language Centre (MUELC) in order to fulfil Monash University's English requirements to gain admission to Monash University. The age range of students was from 16 to 18 years old.

Research Questions

The study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there any significant difference in FL anxiety between male and female students studying English in Australia?
2. Is there any significant difference in FL anxiety between male and female students studying English in Indonesia?
3. Is there any significant difference in FL experienced by students studying English in Australia when compared to those studying English in Indonesia?

Questionnaire

To measure students' level of FL anxiety, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), developed by Horwitz et al. (1986), was used. The FLCAS contains 33 items that are answered on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. For this study, the scale was translated into Bahasa Indonesian and the word 'foreign language' in the original scale was replaced by 'English' and translated into Indonesian as 'Bahasa Inggris'. To ensure the quality of the translation, the scale was independently translated back into English. The anxiety score was derived by expanding students' ratings of 33 items from 33 to 165 (33 items x 5 = 165). Anxiety scores higher than 3.0 would indicate some level of anxiety for items 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, 32 and anxiety scores lower than 3.0 would indicate some level of anxiety for the remaining items. Although the authors of the scale stated that foreign language anxiety includes 3 constructs -*Communication Apprehension, Fear of Negative Evaluation* and *General Anxiety* - they did not designate which items form each construct. Communication apprehension is defined as "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey, 1984, p. 35). Fear of

negative evaluation means apprehension about another's evaluation, distress over negative evaluation, avoidance of an evaluative situation and the expectation that others will evaluate them negatively (Watson and Friend in Collins, Westra, Dozois, & Stewart, 2005). The present study followed Casado and Dereshiwsky (2004) who proposed that the FLCAS relates items to each construct, as well as the reliability of each construct, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Reliability of the FLCAS constructs

Construct	Items no.	Reliability (α) of the construct
Communication Apprehension	9,27,18,4,29,1,3,13,14,20,24,33	0.86
Fear of Negative Evaluation	7,23,31,15,19,2,8,21	0.72
General Anxiety	5,6,10,11,12,16,17,22,25,26,28,30,32	0.70

Procedures

Participants were recruited using posters displayed on the notice board of a senior secondary school in Indonesia and at the MUELC. Interested participants were requested to complete the FLCAS which took them about 30 minutes in total. All participants from the senior secondary school in Indonesia completed the scale during their English lesson in their classroom, and students from the MUELC completed the scale at their preferred time in one of the rooms at the MUELC. Before administration of the scale, students were briefed to avoid bias and misunderstanding.

RESULTS

Data Analysis

The present study utilised a survey method for data collection. Descriptive statistics of participants' anxiety, including means and standard deviations for each item and each construct of the anxiety scale, were calculated to investigate the general situation of students' anxiety in both an Indonesian and Australian context. Then, independent samples *t*-tests were employed to see if there was any difference in their foreign language anxiety between: (1) male and female students and (2) students in Group One and in Group Two.

The results of the analysis indicated that, generally, students experience certain levels of anxiety as indicated by the Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) of their scores on the FLCAS. Descriptive statistics of the total population, based on gender and on context of study, are presented in Table 2.

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Table 2. Descriptive statistics of students' scores on the FLCAS for total population, based on gender and context of study

FLCAS Construct	Total Population (M/SD)	Gender (M/SD)		Context (M/SD)	
		M	*F*	*Indonesia*	*Australia*
Communication Apprehension	3.45/.63	3.625/.47	3.265/.72	3.62/.54	3.28/.68
Fear of Negative Evaluation	3.40/.51	3.66/.45	3.14/.43	3.53/.57	3.27/.40
General Anxiety	2.91/.47	3.04/.39	2.77/.51	2.99/.50	2.82/.44

As shown in Table 2, students experienced moderate levels of anxiety as indicated by the mean of each FLCAS construct in the total sample. It was also evident that students feel more anxious in communication, shown by *communication apprehension having* the highest mean

It appears that males experienced higher anxiety in the three constructs of the FLCAS compared to their female counterparts, demonstrated by the means of the three constructs. An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the scores of males and females. There were significant differences in the scores of males and females on all three constructs of the FLCAS. For the construct of *communication apprehension*, male students' scores (M=3.65, SD= .47) were significantly higher than female students' scores (M=3.25, SD= .72); $t(62) = 2.56$, $p = .01$ (two-tailed). The magnitude of the difference (mean difference =.38, 95% CI: 0.84 to .69) was quite large (eta squared= .09). The second construct, *fear of negative evaluation*, showed a similar pattern. Male students' scores (M=3.66, SD= .45) were significantly higher than female students' scores (M=3.14, SD=.43); t (62)= 4.70, p= .00 (two tailed). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference = .52, 95% CI: .30 to.73) was large (eta squared=.26). The scores of the last construct, *general anxiety*, appear to be the lowest out of the three constructs for both males and females, however male students still scored significantly higher (M= 3.04, SD= .39) than female students (M= 2.77, SD= .51); t (62)= 2.29, p =.03 (two-tailed). The magnitude of the difference in the mean (mean difference = .34, 95 % CI = .43 to 6.3) was moderate (eta square = .07). The analysis also revealed that males and females showed different patterns of anxiety level. Male students appeared to be more anxious on *negative evaluation*compare to the two other constructs as indicated by their highest scores on the *fear of negative evaluation* construct whereas females were more anxious on *communication apprehension*.

Significant differences were also revealed between the contexts, Indonesia and Australia. Generally, students in Indonesia were more anxious compared to those who studied English in Australia. In all three constructs, students in Indonesia showed higher means than their counterparts in Australia. An independent samples

t-test revealed that the differences in two out of the three constructs were significant. Students' scores on *communication apprehension* in Indonesia (M= 3.62, SD=.54) were significantly higher than students' scores in Australia (M=3.28, SD=.68); *t* (62)= 2.18, p= .03 (two-tailed). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference = .34, 95% CI:.028 - .64) was moderate (eta squared=.07). Similarly, students' scores on *fear of negative* evaluation showed that students' scores in Indonesia (M= 3.53, SD= .57) were significantly higher than students' scores in Australia (M= 3.27, SD=.40); t (62) = 2.09, p =.04 (two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = .26, 95% CI = .01 to .50) was moderate (eta squared = .06).The difference in general anxiety experienced by students in Indonesia and in Australia was found to be not significant.

Discussion

The findings of the present study confirm a significant difference between males and females in their level of foreign language anxiety, with males appearing to have higher levels of language anxiety compared to their female counterparts. This finding corroborates previous findings by Na (2007) who found that males experienced higher anxiety in English classrooms. What is different from the findings of the present study is that significant differences were found between males and females in Na's study on the general anxiety construct, while the scores on the two other constructs did not indicate significant differences. We can also see that the findings of the present study contradict previous findings by Abu-Rabia (2004), Clark and Trafford (1996) and Pappamihiel (2001), who found that females were more anxious than male students. Thus, there remains some confusion as to the nature of differences in gender with regard to foreign language learning anxiety.

Despite the conflicting results on gender differences in foreign language learning, the findings of the present study do provide some explanation as to why males tend to be less interested in studying foreign languages and why there could be considered a lack of equity in foreign language learning. The high levels of anxiety experienced by male students may prevent them from continuously learning a foreign language. This is congruent with the findings of Wörde (2003), who found that one of the manifestations of foreign language anxiety is avoidance in the form of, for example, not showing up in class, drawing pictures, organising a diary planner or, even, sleeping in the classroom.

More specifically, gender differences were also shown in the level of foreign language anxiety for each construct. While female students were more anxious about communication, as indicated by a higher mean score of *communication apprehension*, male students were more anxious when dealing with *negative evaluation*. Differences in foreign language anxiety between genders are usually related to different learning strategies that males and females use in learning a foreign language (Abu-Rabia, 2004). The findings of the present study are in line with those of Radwan (2011) that boys and girls differ meaningfully in their strategies of learning a foreign language.

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Boys were revealed to have materially higher social strategies, the strategies that help learners to interact, communicate, cooperate and empathise with others to maximise learning. Therefore, boys were much more worried about what others think of them than girls were. In this study, this feeling was reflected in boys' significantly higher scores on *fear of negative evaluation* compared to girls. On the other hand, female students showed higher scores on *communication apprehension*. This result is congruent with the findings of Jaasma (1997) who reported that females exhibited notably higher classroom communication apprehension compared to their male counterparts. Previous research (Sadker & Sadker, 1994) suggested that females' lower self-esteem was the cause of this communication apprehension.

In relation to the international contexts of the current study, students in Indonesia experienced appreciably higher scores on *communication apprehension* and *fear of negative evaluation* compared to Indonesian students who learned English in Australia. With regard to communication apprehension, it is reasonable to expect students who study English in an English-speaking country to experience less communication apprehension because living in an English-speaking environment. It is understood that an L2 context greatly influences communication variables such as willingness to communicate, perceived competence and frequency of communication (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000). This is congruent with the findings of MacIntyre and Charos (1996) who found that students in an L2 speaking context have more opportunities for interaction, which results in an increase in perceived competence, a greater willingness to communicate and more frequent communication. Participants in this study have spent at least three months in Australia, attended language classes full time and interacted socially with English native speakers. This wide exposure to English helped them to gain self-confidence in speaking and, therefore, they scored lower on the anxiety measures than their counterparts who learned English in Indonesia. Students in Indonesia face a very different situation. They have very limited exposure to English and no opportunities to interact with English native speakers. The only available opportunity to use English in communication was in their English classrooms with the teacher and classmates. In addition, the chance to speak was very limited for each individual, since English class time was not devoted only to speaking activities but also included other skills such as Reading, Grammar, Listening and Writing. Big class sizes of around 35 students also hindered students' opportunities to speak. All these disadvantageous conditions will, undoubtedly, lead students to have higher communication apprehension.

Students in the Indonesian context also exhibited higher scores on fear of negative evaluation when compared to Indonesian learners of English in Australia. Although a previous study by Horwitz et al. (1986) showed that fear of negative evaluation was triggered by having a teacher as a fluent speaker, which was the case for Indonesian students in Australia, this group scored lower on the measure of fear of negative evaluation. This may be an indication that students were in a positive learning atmosphere where students received more encouraging comments rather than negative error correction. Indeed, Indonesian students in Australia did

not feel discouraged by error correction (see Hasan, 2007) as they understood that they needed constructive feedback to improve their proficiency. The higher scores on the measure of fear of negative evaluation of students in Indonesia may be caused by a fear of committing verbal errors, as argued by Young (1991). It may, also, relate to the belief held by most Indonesian students that, in speaking or writing, they should produce grammatical, error-free utterances (Hasan, 2007). This belief has, perhaps, lead them to be very careful in producing the language and, thus, they have developed a fear of making mistakes.

CONCLUSION

This study found that substantial gender differences exist in foreign language anxiety experienced by Indonesian learners of English. Male students reported significantly higher anxiety levels on the three constructs of the FLCAS: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and general anxiety. In relation to context, Indonesian learners of English in Australia had significantly lower scores on communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation compared to those who learn English in Indonesia. However, there was no significant difference on general anxiety found between the two groups of students studying in the two contexts. Teachers need to ensure that male students are encouraged and that their concerns and worries about language learning are accommodated. Positive interactions with teachers and classmates may motivate male students to study a foreign language. Regarding the specific context of this study, there is a need to convince students in Indonesia that, in the process of learning a language, they should not expect perfect and error-free utterances. A belief that grammar is the most important part of a language may prevent students from speaking and may enhance their fear of negative evaluation. Clearly, the sources of male students' foreign language anxiety deserve further research attention and we suggest that further research is carried out but with larger sample sizes than reported here.

NOTE

[1] Daniels et al. (2001) observed that females tended to succeed in a collaborative style while male students preferred a solitary learning environment.

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14. E-LEARNING AS A MEDIATING TOOL FOR EQUITY IN EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA AND ZANZIBAR

INTRODUCTION

For any nation or civilisation to prosper, a tangible harmony has to be fostered between cultural evolution and resource development and a key element of this is the development of human resources through education. Indeed, various studies on the impact of education in developing countries suggest that it is a determinant of economic, social and political growth (Bhalalusesa, 2000; Bloch, Beoku-Betts & Tabachnick, 1998;Cohen & Soto, 2007; Glewwe, Hanushek, Humpage & Ravina, 2011; Hanushek, 2013; Hanushek & Kimko, 2000; Krueger & Kumar, 2004; Mboya& Bendera, 1999).

Many developing countries have made enormous investments in education. Both Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar[1], chose to invest in education to improve the livelihood of their people (Wort, Sumra, Van Schaik & Mbasha, 2007)[2], but have achieved little success in enhancing access to education opportunities among their populations (Alexander, 2008; Brock, & Cammish, 1997;Mzee, 1994).The interventions have done little to circumvent the traditional challenges that have made it hard for disadvantaged populations to gain access to quality education, making Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar classic examples of developing countries that have devoted resources to enhance females' access to quality education, but have recorded little success (Al-Khalifa, 2010;Elofsson &Jartsjö, 2012; Hamdan, 2005; Hassan, 2008; Lexow, Wirak & Salim, 2007;Makame, 2008; Ziddy 2008;

Both a review of the literature and empirical research reveals that there has been limited research undertaken in developing countries that links equity and e-learning platform. To date, much research has focused primarily on access and opportunities to ICTs, open and distance education (Mbwette, 2013) and the move from correspondence to virtual learning environments (Evans, Haughey & Murphy, 2008). Less attention has been given to equity-related issues that originate from communities' socio-cultural factors. Consequently, this chapter focuses on socio-cultural factors to provide us with thick description of how these factors affect equity in education and how e-learning can address the associated challenges that arise (see Geertz, 1973).

The Saudi government has invested heavily in new education systems and girls' enrolment into public schools is on the increase. However, these improvements in enrolments have done very little to eliminate or reduce disparities in women's access to educational opportunities because the structure of the country's public education system cannot sidestep the social norms and cultures that constrain women's realisation of equal opportunities in education (Alaugab, 2007).

Similarly, underpinned by a body of literature, records show that the RGOZ has put a lot of resources into education systems that target the enhancement of girls' access to quality education in Zanzibar (MoE, 1999; MOEVT, 2006 & 2007; RGOZ, 1998 & 2007; World Bank, 2007)[3] but most of those investments have been futile because they have done little to oust some cultures and social norms that undermine girls' access to educational opportunities (Makame, 2008; Morley, et al., 2007; REPOA & UNICEF, 2006; UNICEF 2006; Ziddy, 2008). Despite thesegenerous endowments in education, women in Zanzibar and Saudi Arabia still fall behind their male counterparts when it comes to access, opportunities, equity and quality in education (Akkari, 2004; Alaugab, 2007; Mhehe, 2002).

CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

In this chapter, equity and equality are perceived as separate issues as discussed in UNESCO (2000).The concepts have emerged in the twentieth century, and have developed for historical and cultural reasons[4]. Equity is seen to be concerned with fair-play and offering a level playing ground for both men and women in education, whereas equality is understood and dealt with as a quality which offers equal opportunities to both the genders in its truest sense. In that sense, equity has more to do with the operational proceedings of the education systems of the two countries, their pedagogy, curricula, teaching resources and other opportunities. Equality, on the other hand, is more of an ethos which imbibes the philosophical outlook of the two education systems-a principled, self-declared stance which promises to treat men and women as equal in all respects (see Magno & Silova, 2009).This study seeks to make the case for the use of e-learning as a mediating tool for equity in education (Oliver, 2001)[5]. In particular, it argues that education stakeholders in Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar can use e-learning as a conduit for circumventing some of the social and cultural norms that are currently making it difficult for female students to access quality education at all levels, particularly higher education.

CONNECTING THE DOTS BETWEEN SAUDI ARABIA AND ZANZIBAR

Saudi Arabia is located in Western Asia and Zanzibar, a part of United Republic of Tanzania (URT), is in East Africa. Both countries appear to be two very distant countries, geographically. However historical antecedents, socio-cultural factors, organizational cultures and institutional barriers, cultural expectations for girls/women, narratives related to the challenges of education and trainings of female

students have demonstrated that Arabs and Africans have intense connections and a powerful bond (Harries, 1964; Ingrams, 2007; Pew Forum, 2009). They are being linked, here, for a number of reasons:

First, like elsewhere in the world, there are elements of entrenched patriarchal attitudes, cultural gender roles and gender stereotype endorsement in both countries (Patterson, 2012). History, western and non-western cultures has recorded that this perspective went unchallenged for quite some time. Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar share the embeddedness of the notion of patriarchy in their society where the eldest male is head of the family and men, most times, head the community and/or the government (Hood, 1988). Some scholars are of the view that this male entitlement is misinterpreted in many societies[6]. Literature clearly cites that the patriarchal phenomenon is linked to equality and equity issues.In such a situation, the policies, decisions, strategies and educational institutions are informed by patriarchal traditions, culture and norms, under which the socio-cultural contexts of women's lives inhibit their day-to-day practices. For example, research show that social gendered practices within households and schools influence their schooling patterns (Elofsson & Jartsjö, 2012).

Second, both countries value their history of Islamic legacy and culture. Islam influences everyday's life in both countries such as dressing, dietary rules and other ways of living. Their people are, almost exclusively, Muslims, followers of Islamic rules and principles with a strong identity based upon the tenets of Islam, their belief in Allah and in Muhammad as his Prophet. Official statistics show that the Muslim population in Saudi Arabia is 100% (CIA, 2014).The predominant religions in the United Republic of Tanzania are Christianity and Islam[7]. By its more than 95 % (see Bakari, 2001, 2012; CIA, 2014)[8]. Both countries have multiracial population. The CIA (2014) further explores that the population of Saudi Arabia consist of Arab 90% and Afro-Asian 10%. Zanzibar has a cultural mosaic of ethnicity. According to Bakari (2001, p.4), there are Shirazi; the Africans mainly immigrants from mainland Tanzania; Zanzibari of Arab origin, Asians, and Comorians and other ethnic minority. It is widely believed that there are elements of Arabic heritage and traditions in Zanzibar.

The third connection is religion and secularism which, essentially, define Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar. Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar reflect two polar positions. Saudi Arabia is an Islamic theocratic monarchy in which Islam is the official state religion, while Zanzibar, a part of Tanzania, by its constitution, a secular state which means it has no specific religion as stated clearly in the constitution therefore its people are free to become worshippers of any religion or remain with no religion. Despite of its secularism the constitution of the country guarantees freedom of religion. In general, Zanzibari have the right to worship anything and affiliate in any religious group as long as one does not infringe freedom of another on basis of religion. Specifically, Zanzibari community promotes a moderate version of Islam which is meant to encourage a balanced approach to life.

In relation to the religious tie as aforementioned, the fourth connection is a strong legendary historical tie. Saudi Arabia is the heartland of Islam and the birthplace of the Muslim religion, occupying a special place in Muslim worlds and considered the

holiest site. Nevertheless, it has to be noted beforehand that while the most orthodox form of Islam is embraced in Saudi Arabia, Islam is generally practiced liberally in Zanzibar, although in the last 20 years strict adherence to Islamic practices have increased at an individual and a family level. Compared to Zanzibar, the Saudi model is the closest to principles and practices originally developed when Islam became established in Arabian peninsula.

History has that the first concrete evidence of advent of Islam and Muslims in East Africa was recorded to be as early as 7th century (Levtzion, 2012; Mushi, 2009)[9] (see also Lodhi &Westerlund, 1997, 1999). According to Leurs, Tumaini-Mungu, and Mvungi, (2011, p.2), Muslims arrived in Tanzania centuries before Christians. Historical records show that Islam was established in the coastal region, islands and then spread inland along the trade routes[10]. Generally, the coast is predominantly Muslim and the interior is more Christian. According to Lodhi (1994, p.88), Islam in East Africa did not spread through conquest or settlement, it was introduced through traders and remained to be an urban and coastal phenomenon for a long time. However Lodhi (1994) cautioned that:

> …It would be erroneous to consider Islamic practices in Eastern Africa as Arabic practices, and associate Islam with Arabs, since Islam did not arabise East Africans; on the contrary, Arab immigrants, Islam and Islamic practices got africanised or swahilised, thereby developing Islam as an indigenous African religion! This is also linguistically evidenced by the fact that Arab immigrants became Swahili speaking, adopted the Swahili dress, food and eating habits and other cultural elements (p.88)[11]

Fifth, is the link of languages. While English is the primary language of commerce, administration, and higher education (see Lodhi, 1993) in both countries, forming one connection, the other is formed by the Arabic language. The official language of Saudi Arabia is Arabic and, in Zanzibar, Kiswahili and English but, due to Islamic influences along the coast of Zanzibar, Arabic is mainly used for religious purposes (Amidu, 1995; Bakari, 2001; Bennett, 1978) so its status is strengthened by religious affiliations which, also, partly influence the status of language in education (Pew Forum, 2010). Further, Arabic and Islamic religious studies have had a place in education in Zanzibar since colonial times (Bennett 1978; Loimeier, 2009). Currently, Arabic is taught as a subject at primary and secondary level in Zanzibar and is offered as a major subject at university level.

Despite the geographical distance that exists, evidently there are strong contextual and historical ties between Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar[12]. Importantly, both countries exhibit auspicious signals that they are ready to disturb the status quo, which is (re)considering female access and opportunities in education (see Ziddy, 2008). In this sense, Zanzibar had made an earlier move to consider female opportunities in education compared to Saudi Arabia. Since independence, opportunities for female in education have long been a major goal of Zanzibar. Various directives have laid the foundation of equal opportunities in both countries; however, despite the existence

of comprehensive legislative frameworks, equality and equity issues in education are yet to be achieved (MoEVT, 1999)[13].With regard to education and training, women remain a minority in the fields of mathematics, science and technology, and gender differences persist in both attainment and choice of courses of study. For example, in Zanzibar, because there is a lack of female role models in certain fields and gender stereotyping in career choice is common. Currently, females are encouraged to take mathematics and science subjects in order to bridge a gap that has long existed. Similarly, Saudi Arabia restricts female students' enrolment in certain fields such as Engineering and Architecture. These two examples illustrate that equality and equity issues in education must be taken into account when advocating for policies and strategies to improve educational outcomes. Additionally, in Saudi Arabia, fully single-sex schools are common. Primarily, women in KSA receive college instructions in segregated institutions (female only) while in Zanzibar, the schooling system is characterised by both single-gendered and co-educational environments, according to a random, unsystematic and unofficial pattern. However, gender-segregated schooling is neither a new phenomenon nor restricted to Islamic nations. As Patterson & Pahlke (2011) point out, single-sex schools are common in Islamic countries and also in non-Islamic countries such as Australia, Belgium and New Zealand.

What is important, here, is to establish that the nature of inequalities and inequities in education varies in Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar. However, both countries have made an unproductive performance in terms of equity in education, partly due to shared institutional constraints, socio-cultural and contextual factors. The challenges of gender disparities and equity of access and quality education are prevalent in most countries. Through global and local initiatives, most countries recognise the value of females' literacy and access to school (World Education Forum, 2000), setting targets, such as to eliminate gender disparity on all levels no later than 2015 (United Nation, 2012a & 2012b).In an attempt to address the gap between these goals and the reality discussed earlier, this chapter reports on the peculiar and shared contextual and institutional factors that shape the equity and e-learning discussion.

PERSPECTIVES FROM LITERATURE: SAUDI ARABIA AND ZANZIBAR

As mentioned earlier, there are a number of theoretical discussions about ICT, open and distance learning and virtual learning environments (Mbwette, 2013). However, there has been little theory, reviews and research on e-learning and equity. To gain some understanding of why this may be, three themes are discussed in the subsequent sections: the historical background of female education, development of e-learning and equity issues in education in Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar.

Overview of Female Education: Historical Antecedent

Knowledge of the history of predominantly Islamic societies and the role of religion and culture in shaping societies is crucial for a clear understanding of the factors

that have traditionally undermined women's access to education in these societies (Haughey& Phillips, 2000).The following two subsections discuss the antecedents to women's access to education in Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar and the relationship of this history to the present gender disparities in access to educational opportunities.

Although public education facilities have been in existence in Saudi Arabia since the 1900s, women were only given access to these facilities as late as 1956, the year when the Saudi government decided to go against the wishes of conservative clerics and opened the first public education facility that was exclusively dedicated to girls. Prior to this year, girls were only permitted to attend informal schools that were teaching religious education. Learning the basic Islamic tenets were the primary educational objectives in these informal learning institutions (Al Munajjed, 1997). Education and literacy practices were informed by a rote learning approach and memorising the Quran. Consequently, many women in Saudi Arabia developed the perception that memorisation of the Quran was a sign of intelligence. Zanzibar had similar education patterns and literacy practices for both male and female students (See Loimeier, 2009 for a detailed discussion)

In Saudi Arabia, a number of girls' schools and female campuses have been developed recently. However, little has been done to leverage or mitigate some of the challenges that have undermined women's access to education. The creation of separate education facilities for women, and the restrictions on the nature of educational courses that women can take, have contributed to increased disparities in access to educational opportunities. They have also contributed to the low levels of literacy among Saudi women (Doering & Roblyer, 2009).

Education in Zanzibar evolved through precolonial (indigenous education) (Ziddy, 2008), colonial and postcolonial phases. According to Mushi (2009), Islam and Christianity have played a significant role in promoting education in Tanzania. The history of girls' education in Zanzibar can be traced back to the 8th century when Arabians migrated to the island and developed formal and informal schools that offered religious education and Arabic language courses (Decker, 2010; Loimeier, 2009;McMahon & Decker, 2009; Ziddy, 2008).In the precolonial phase, access to education was for males only and girls were offered domestic training in their homes. Ziddy (2008) noted that, in 1902, secular schools were introduced which taught reading, writing and numeracy. In the government schools, Arabic scripts were replaced with Latin scripts. The teaching of English was introduced by 1918 (Rubagumya, 2003). Decker (2014, p.216) reported that "colonial schools prepared girls for marriage and motherhood by teaching them the 'science' of hygiene, domestic skills and, eventually, biology-lessons designed to replace indigenous forms of sex education". Previous data show that, due to a number of socio-cultural barriers, very few girls were sent to school compared to boys, and very few continued to secondary level. In the early years of the postcolonial phase, the Zanzibar government declared free compulsory basic education for all. Ziddy (2008, p.221) reminds us that no policies were put in place to support the declaration; hence gender disparity in schools remained high. The literature shows that,in the 1930s and

1940s, elite Muslim women in Zanzibari society remained in the home to maintain their respectability (McMahon & Decken, 2009).

In recent years, the Tanzanian government has put in place measures to enhance access to education among women in Zanzibar (Nassor & Ali, 1998; Mrutu, Ponera, & Mkumbi, 2005). As of 2000, Zanzibar has 118 privately owned schools and 207 government schools (Ministry of Higher Education Science and Technology, 2004). The relatively small population of Zanzibar women in the three institutions of higher education underscores the extent of their marginalisation. Traditional perceptions regarding the role of women in society and their history of marginalisation are the main factors that have undermined their access to educational opportunities. Most of the investments in Zanzibar's education sector that the Tanzanian government has made have done little to enhance women's access to education (Makame, 2008). This may be because the social norms and historical injustices that have denied women access to education in the past have not been effectively tackled.

The Development of E-Learning

Saudi Arabia was one of the relatively late entrants to the digital age, establishing formal means of internet access for the general populace only in the late 1990's (Wheeler, 2004). Nevertheless, internet use has expanded exceptionally in the country, which recorded an internet penetration growth rate of 3,750% in 10 years (Internet World Stats, 2010). As discussed in Mirza & Al-Abdulkareem (2011), the country released its national ICT plan in 2003, which included a formal direction towards implementing e-learning and distance learning systems in all levels of education. A National Centre for E-learning and Distance Learning was established, which has since made formal linkages with leading universities in Saudi Arabia for the purpose of conducting research and implementing programmes for empowering Saudi Arabian students with technologically globally competitive, life-long education (Mirza & Al-Abdulkareem, 2011). Since its beginnings, the e-learning industry in Saudi Arabia has grown significantly (Hassan, 2008).

Similar to other developing countries, the establishment of e-learning programmes in Tanzanian higher education institutions is still low (See Mhehe 2002; 2008 & 2013). The National ICT Policy was enacted by the Tanzanian government in 2003 (URT, 2003), which is relatively late (Swarts & Mwiyeria, 2010).Although there are no statistics on ICT in primary and secondary school systems, ICT in teacher training colleges and universities can be traced back to the 2000s. For example, the State University of Zanzibar (SUZA), the only public university in Zanzibar, was established in 2001 (Weber, 2010) and the department of Computer Sciences and IT was not established until 2006 (SUZA, 2013). The other two universities-Zanzibar University and Chukwani College of Education- are both private and were established in the late 1990s after liberalisation of the education sector (Weber, 2010). The three institutions are currently putting in place measures to enhance access to e-learning services (Weber, 2010) and improve the quality of teacher education,

initial training and in-service training, however there a number of challenges such as access, quality, relevance and equity issues (Swarts & Mwinyeria, 2010)

Equity in the Education Sector

There are several factors that adversely affect Saudi women's realisation of equal opportunities in education: oppressive social norms, weaknesses in the public education system, cultural misconceptions and inaccurate perceptions about the role of women in society, all of which have contributed to an upsurge in the prevalence of illiteracy among Saudi women (Alaugab, 2007). In 2007, Princess Noura Bent Abdul Rahman University was established as one of the largest gender-segregated universities, offering 15 diverse subject colleges as new educational opportunities for Saudi women. By 2008, the number of colleges affiliated to this university has increased to 34. Interestingly, 21 of the colleges are supervised by King Saud University, possibly due to the fact that the number of male faculty members is, currently, almost twice the number of their female counterparts (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013). According to Smith & Abouammoh (2013), a considerable 'imbalance' in the faculty member/student ratio in the women-only universities is evident, in comparison with the men's (p. 121).

In spite of the fact that females currently represent over than 60 % of the Saudi university student population (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013, p. 121), there are certain professions in Saudi Arabia, such as Engineering, where the representation of women is negligible. There are a few Saudi, gender-integrated universities, such as Effat University and King Abdullah University for Science and Technology (KAUST), that are trying to bridge the gap by supporting women in Engineering and Science fields. However, the systems put in place to enhance women's access to education have done little to tackle some of the traditional challenges that have been creating disparities in access to education. The extent of these disparities can be demonstrated by the quality of education and facilities, such as 'library and on-line research facilities', in schools dedicated to men being higher than those available to women (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013, p. 122).The Saudi government's reluctance to invest in educational systems that could address the root causes of this disparity is one of the factors that has contributed to the present state of affairs (Glewwe, et al., 2011). Investments in e-learning systems will offer stakeholders in the country's education sector an opportunity to enhance the degree of equality in men's and women's access to education.

The Zanzibar education sector faces similar equity challenges to Saudi Arabia. Although the rate of girls' enrolment at the lower rungs of education is higher than that of boys, the number of boys in higher levels of education is still greater than that of girls. In 2004, the population of girls in the first three levels of primary school in Zanzibar stood at 50.4% (Mercer, 2006). However, in higher levels of secondary education, the percentage for girls dropped to 48.7% while that of boys increased

to 51.3% (Mercer, 2006) and the rate of boys' enrolment in post-secondary learning institutions is also higher than that of girls.

Women in Zanzibar have also experienced challenges in their efforts to access certain courses. In 2000, enrolment of female students in technical training institutions was 30.8% and that of male students was 69.2%. In 2001, the numbers increased slightly for females to 33.2% and decreased to 66.8% for male students (Mercer, 2006). However, in 2004, only 24.2% of women in Zanzibar were enrolled in technical training institutes. Although education authorities have continuously argued that cultural factors are the main factors that have contributed to the low enrolment of women in technical training institutions, an analysis of the state of affairs demonstrates that the root cause of the problem is the implementation of educational policies and investments in education systems that have done little to address the traditional challenges. This problem points to the need for platforms such as e-learning that will support females to access quality education (Makame, 2008; Sutherland-Addy, 2008)[14].

In summary, these are contextual factors that have adversely affected, and continue to erode and undermine, women's access to quality education and educational opportunities in Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar.

CHALLENGES, CONSTRAINTS AND GAPS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

The following section draws upon the previous sections to delve deeper into the challenges and constraints that are prevalent in the education sectors in both Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar. The main focus is to study how the challenges and gaps inhibit access, quality, relevance and equity.

Institutional Constraints and Organisational Culture

Inherent flaws in tutoring have negatively impacted on investments in education and girls' access to education opportunities. Weak teacher recruitment policies, lack of female role models, lack of support for and by females, inadequate remuneration, lack of e-learning publicity, fear of technology and lack of proper training facilities have adversely affected the population of tutors in the public education institutions in Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar (Hanushek & Kimko, 2000; Mercer, 2006; Verspoor, 2008).The insufficiency of teachers has made it hard for learning institutions to develop programmes that cater specifically to the needs of female students (Hanushek & Kimko, 2000; Mercer, 2006; Verspoor, 2008). Most women shy away from education because of entrenched societal norms and institutional policies that are supportive of the view that empowerment of women leads to moral decay. This state of affairs has contributed to girls sharing a disproportionate burden of the school dropout rate in Zanzibar and Saudi Arabia. Literature also informs that the organizational culture of each country deters many women from making visible contribution in the society.

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Quality of Education and Standards-Based Education

Poor education quality is another factor that has adversely affected the policies targeted at enhancing girls' access to education opportunities. The effect of low quality of public education is especially felt in higher education (Swarts, & Mwinyeria, 2010).The rapid increase in university enrolment has compelled education authorities, in both regions, to increase the capacity of universities (Ziddy, 2008). The widening of access has resulted in a decline in the quality of higher education offered in institutions in Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar. This focus on quantity rather than quality has precipitated an upward spiralling in the cost of education and this has, in turn, contributed to a decline in the level of enrolment among female students from marginalised regions (Al-Khalifa, 2010; Hamdan, 2005; Makame, 2008; Ziddy, 2008).

Educational Outcomes and Labour

The absence of tangible educational outcomes for female graduates has also contributed to the failure of education investments that are targeted at the enhancement of women's access to education. School enrolment among women in Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar is similar to that of men but their representation in the labour force is still low (Ziddy, 2008). Ziddy (2008) argues that the correlation between education and access to employment opportunities is important because it influences people's enrolment into public schools and their attitude towards education. When female students realise, from the outset, that they will not have access to the same employment opportunities as their male counterparts, they attach very little importance to their education (Hanushek & Kimko, 2000;Krueger & Kumar, 2004;Verspoor, 2008;Glewwe et al., 2011). For example, in Saudi Arabia, restrictions in women's access to certain courses have contributed to a high degree of indifference among female students(Hamdan, 2005; Achoui, 2009).Such indifference is likely to adversely affect the Saudi government's efforts to enhance girls' access to education facilities and opportunities.

EQUITY CONSTRAINTS INHIBITING WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA AND ZANZIBAR

Although Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar are in different continents, Asia and Africa respectively, both countries share certain social-cultural barriers and factors that adversely affect women's access to education. The next section examines each of these factors in order to establish the intrinsic link between e-learning, equity and equality as a cause-and-affect phenomenon. The aim is to show how e-learning has the potential to address gender imbalances, inequities and inequalities.

Societal Constraints, Cultural Expectations, Norms and Traditions

The cultures of Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar have imposed certain religious barriers, 'cultural expectations' (Mhehe, 2008,p.80) and cultural limitations on women which makes access to literacy and higher education difficult (Beoku-Betts, 1998; Johannes, & Josefhin, 2012; Stambach, 1998, Makame , 2008;). Islamic tenets discourage women's mingling with the outer world, especially when it involves men. 'Unnecessary' mingling is used as a major social deterrent on the grounds thatit may amount to immodesty. Furthermore, there is a popular belief that if women interact with the external environment, it may influence them with so-called modernity and liberating notions, which are considered detrimental and contrary to the Islamic tenets (Mernissi, 1991). So, in theory, sending women out of the home for any purpose is not advocated. Preferably, women are chastened and assigned (secondary) roles of handling household duties, domesticity and bearing children (Mernissi, 1991).The Saudi context replicates the 1930s and 1940s phenomenon of female respectability among elite Muslim women in Zanzibar (McMahon & Decker, 2009; Decker, 2010). Compared to Saudi Arabia, some religious practices are not strictly observed in Zanzibar as discussed earlier in this chapter. In fact, review of literature clearly informs that poor socialization and a lack of role models put women at an inherent disadvantage insofar as accessing higher education is concerned, as do cultural expectations for girls/women and other socio-cultural barriers. For instance, the decision makers in the family unit, mostly men, look down on their sisters and wives who venture out of the home and go to college. Theserestrictive views and practices assure women of a life confined mainly to an in-house existence.

There are, also, strict traditions like early marriages of womenwhich affect their educational prospects (Badawi, 1980).In the case of Zanzibar, the fear of unwanted and teenage pregnancies (pregnancies before marriage) also leads some families to take a decision to wed their children at an early age, as shown in the current study by Elofsson &Jartsjö(2012). Although their research was conducted on a tourist zone area, there is an indication that females' educational patterns are not only affected by what is invested or by opportunities available but also by socio-cultural barriers that are embedded in the society.

From the above deliberations, it is clear that the traditional, bricks-and-mortar education model, wherein women have to venture out of the sheltered, protectionist and prohibitive environment of homes and go to external colleges to obtain education, is the main, stigmatic deterrent that prevents them from attaining higher education in these contexts.

E-learning could help by offering privacy, independence and empowerment through its versatility. Being accessible around the clock, remotely, means that the constraints mentioned above would, at the very least, be loosened as privacy to learn in an independent environment and at one's own pace would eliminate the need to mingle with the opposite sex that potentially jeopardises cultural values. That is, the

flexible nature of e-learning would mean that women would still be able to adhere to their homely and subservient lifestyles while, at the click of a mouse, they can make progress with their academic interests at a time they desire and within the confines of their own house.

Depressing Employment Scenario and the Discriminating Labour Market

Employment is another factor that adversely affects equity in women's access to educational opportunities. The employment rate for females in Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar is much lower in comparison to that of men. This marginalises women, who are left with little option but to work in sectors like agriculture and teaching, which are regarded as secondary and, therefore, are low-paying (See for example Hungi, 2010)[15]. Because women are not adequately educated, trained and skilled for high profile jobs, such as banking and investment, IT or ICT, they do not qualify for them and, conversely, because they see they are not likely to get employment in these sectors, they are not motivated to study these courses in higher education (Boserup, 2007). Apart from other defining attributes, gender inequity in education in Saudi Arabia (Akkari, 2004) and Zanzibar (Makame, 2008) can also be attributed to this depressing employment scenario due to which women forego the initiative for higher education, often voluntarily.

The demographic disadvantage. At present, 19.6% of the population of Saudi Arabia is youth, of which almost 48% is female (Central Intelligence Agency, 2014). According to the 2012 Population and Housing Census, (PHC), out of a total population of 1,303,569 in Zanzibar, 51.6% were females, from which about 56.1% belonged to the working age group of 15-64 (URT, 2013).These are significant numbers that have a dramatic effect on the demographic profile of a country. The implication of demographic advantage is understood as a country possessing the advantage of a vast pool of human resources of working age, which helps the nation gain a competitive advantage and accelerate its growth (Bloom, Canning, & Sevilla, 2003). In this era of globalisation, which has attained an irreversible status, no country can be left untouched by it. More importantly, no country can think of making sustainable progress and development without the constructive contribution of the young work force to the process. However, in the case of Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar, the young ladies, who form a significant proportion of the young work force, face the severe inhibition of educational marginalisation caused by gender inequity (Akkari, 2004; Makame, 2008) subsequently inhibiting their contribution to their country's progress and development.

The limiting age factor. Age limit is an in-built feature of university admission procedures all over the world (Fredman & Spencer, 2003). Like elsewhere, there is an upper age limit to admissions in Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar universities. This is an exclusive feature of brick-and-mortar centres of education which form over 90% of educational institutions in Saudi Arabia in particular (Hamdan, 2005). We argue

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that age limit or labels like 'direct entry' and 'mature entry', as indicated in university prospectuses, may discourage mature, older women from study and that prospective female students who want to pursue higher education after a certain age stand to suffer from this regulation. For example, a young mother from an affluent home who has free time, adequate monetary resources, capability and an earnest desire for higher studies, is still not able to fulfil her graduation dream if she falls on the wrong side of the age limit rule. This point of consideration gains sizeable scope if one considers the large number of potential female students in this category. Subsequently, it also aggravates the demographic disadvantage because countless women from this age group are not be able to be educated and join the national work force.

The age limit rule of physical universities clearly affects the educational prospects of women and, thus, contributes to gender disparity in education systems. The e-learning model can resolve this limitation. As will be deduced in the conclusion of this paper, e-learning emerges as a viable mediating tool for fostering change and neutralising the said equity and inequity issues by infusing skills, education, knowledge, awareness and an exalted world-view in the minds of these young women.

THE MISSING LINK BETWEEN E-LEARNING AND EQUITY

From the discussion, it is very obvious that women are marginalised by the education system and,if supported, schooling by e-learning may be the best platform for addressing this marginalisation[16]. Consequently, the Saudi government or The Ministry of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia should invest in e-learning programmes that focus on the elimination of the traditional barriers that continue to undermine women's access to opportunities in education. The current e-learning initiatives have done little to enhance women's access to opportunities in higher education (Al-Khalifa, 2010). VSAT (Very Small Aperture Terminal) is a classic example of a recent e-learning initiative of the Saudi government to enhance equity in access to higher education opportunities offering cultural, religious and economics lectures to women located in different parts of Saudi Arabia (Al-Khalifa, 2010). This is a step in the right direction. However, although the VSAT e-learning programme has led to an improvement in access to education among women, its mode of implementation has done little to address the traditional challenges that have impeded women's access to education. Constraints in the nature and range of courses offered under this e-learning programme have entrenched existing disparities and contributed to a widening of the literacy gap between Saudi men and women (SACM, 2013). The programme should be extended to offer courses in other fields, especially those deemed 'male courses', such as Engineering, Journalism, Construction, Architecture and others.

On the other hand, Zanzibar should introduce e-learning programmes that are specifically targeted at increasing the post-secondary enrolment of female students in Zanzibar to circumvent some of the obstacles that have blocked their access to tertiary education in the past (Means, Toyama, Murphy, Bakia, & Jones, 2010). In

particular, the programmes should make it possible for women in Zanzibar to access tertiary education in an environment where there is very little disturbance from men.

Secondly, there is a need for the Tanzanian government to reform the education policy in Zanzibar and fully integrate e-learning into the education system. Such a move will eliminate the structural challenges that have prevented women's access to education. This strategy will require regular assessments on the e-learning programme and regular upgrades on the technological infrastructure and human resources put in place to support e-Learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is obvious that quality and equity are connected (Alexander, 2008), therefore, to enhance the effectiveness of the e-learning programmes, education authorities in Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar must also improve certain segments in their education sectors. Based on the literature and on empirical studies from both countries, it is clear that substantial attention is needed to address the issue. We concur with Alexander (2008) that quality education cannot be defined by reference to inputs and outcomes alone and that pedagogical process must be engaged (p.39).We argue that the power of schooling for women cannot be ignored in Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar. However, investing in the expansion of the public education infrastructure or increasing open and distance learning (Komba, 2009), or increasing virtual learning environments (Evans et al., 2008), is not be enough to address the difficulties related to equity, inequalities and gender imbalances (Almohaisen, 2007).

The eminence of education is paramount if these countries are to cope with modernisation and economic and labour market development. Our position, in this chapter, is that the e-learning courses offered to female students in institutions of higher learning must be relevant to the demands of the labour market. Strategies towards that goal will precipitate an upsurge in the rate of women's enrolment in the post-secondary level of education.

Measures should be put forward on how to encourage an increase on e-learning programmes. Both governments should provide more funds for the programmes' implementation; e-learning programmes should be accepted as a valid and valuable form of education, more awareness should be created on the existence of the programmes and relationships should be developed with partners that support e-learning in the two countries.

IMPLICATIONS

This chapter has implications for teacher educators and other educational stakeholders in Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar. The literature strongly suggests that e-learning is a potential change tool that can mitigate the obstacles that have undermined women's access to education opportunities. Clearly, education agencies in both countries have invested heavily in the enhancement of women's access to education but the

outcomes of such investments are still below expectations. Women continue to experience disadvantages with regards to access to quality education and education opportunities.

Obstacles such as societal perceptions about the role of women, seclusion of women in the public education system, and restricted access to certain courses continue to entrench inequity in access to educational opportunities. Education stakeholders have implemented e-learning initiatives, but most of them have been ineffective in addressing equity access questions. This incapacity stems from the fact that they have not, specifically, addressed the factors that have traditionally undermined access to education in Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar. Societal constraints have contributed to the entrenching of inequities in access to educational opportunities. Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar can negotiate and overcome these obstructions through careful integration of e-learning into their education system and eliminating constraints to access. The effect will be to not only increase women's educational access but to also enhance their capacity to access employment opportunities in the labour market. If implications regarding student-centred methodologies and the wider culture are fully considered, the overall benefits of e-learning are numerous.

DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This chapter provided an overview of a socio-historical analysis that examined which socio-cultural factors have shaped the place of women in education in an attempt to build a platform between e-learning and equity. The chapter was inspired by human development approach (see Sen, 1999), and intends to contribute to the literature on equity and equality in Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar. It should be noted that no comprehensible and up to date figures on all higher learning institutions were available, no systematic information on the nature and the scale of inequities in higher education in for both countries. Therefore caution should, however, be exercised when applying the situation beyond the context of Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar. Empirical studies are urgently needed to build on the circumstances we have just explored in this chapter.

NOTES

[1] Zanzibar consists of two main islands, Unguja and Pemba. Its history has been explained in detailed elsewhere in literature. In brief, Zanzibar came under Arabic rule in 1832, and in 1890, it became a British protectorate.

[2] See, for example, Abdalla et al., 2011; Mohamed & Salim, 2011a & 2011b; Nassor & Ali, 1998; Nassor, Abdallah, Said & Salim, 2005; in SACMEQ Project.

[3] See also Augusti, Joel, Mgeni, Msolla & Nihuka, 2012 in SPIDER Project.

[4] The nature and scope of this chapter does not allow a detailed narration of equity and equality theoretical development.

[5] See also Evans, Haughey & Murphy (2008).

[6] See the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2010) on the philosophical work of Simone de Beauvoir in 'Le Deuxième Sèxe' (1958), who famously claimed that one is not born, but rather becomes a

woman, meaning that most of the differences between the sexes are culturally and socially made and then acquired by the individuals.

[7]   There are also few Hindus, Buddhists, animists, and unaffiliated with no religion. Few people follow traditional indigenous beliefs that are based on ancestor worship and nature-based animism.

[8]   There are no reliable up-to-date figures on the exact proportions of Christians, Muslims, and traditional believers in Tanzania. However, some scholars estimate that about two thirds of East African Muslims reside in Tanzania and that in Zan-zibar, Muslims constitute almost 99 percent of the total population (Nimitz 1980).

[9]   To date, no specific written evidence has been established that documents the advent of Islam in East Africa. The earliest evidence (by inference) of a Muslim presence on the East African coast is the foundation of a mosque (see Bakari, 2012, p.4).

[10]   Generally, Christianity expanded during the Germans and then British colonial period .Before the arrival of these Europeans, Muslims enjoyed a hegemonic position in the coast of East Africa (see Leurs, Tumaini-Mungu, & Mvungi, 2011; Bakari 2012).

[11]   By inference, some literature argues that the beliefs of Tanzanians are indicative of the history of the country with Christianity being brought in by missionaries and colonialists while Islam came via the Arabs and east coast trading.

[12]   See Bakari (2001, p.192) for Zanzibar historical linkage with the Gulf countries.

[13]   In 2007/2008, a total of 82 428 students, out of whom 25 342 students were female and 54 919 male, were enrolled in the higher education institutions, an increase of 9% from the 2006 enrolment(see Bailey, Cloete &Pillay, n.d).

[14]   In Tanzania, anecdotal evidence suggests that currently female students outnumber male students in higher institutions of learning because a larger percentage of female tends to take social science course and humanities studies than pure science and engineering (S K. Juma (personal communication, February 6, 2014).

[15]   See also Bailey, Cloete &Pillay (n.d).

[16]   In this chapter, we do not mean to imply that e-learning platform will fix the inequity issue on the spot; however we would like to point out that overt and covert gender biases in our societies make e-learning a hold-all platform for women.

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CLOSING THE GAP

The Move to Equality in Education

INTRODUCTION

This concluding chapter draws from the 14 chapters that have come before it to discuss their implications and findings towards understanding what we have achieved in gaining equality in education across the world. In doing so, the chapter highlights that there are numerous important projects taking place, with fervour, in different international locations. Many developing countries are recognising that equality and inclusion in education are important for strengthening infrastructure, which is necessary for a developing economy. Whilst barriers to this goal are identified, the positive approach is gaining traction, as seen in the fact that more and more people are gaining access to education. Marginalised groups are still experiencing difficulties but, as is acknowledged in this chapter and throughout the book, the difficulties are becoming fewer and access to education is becoming more recognised as essential for each national government to provide. With the widening of access to and the proliferation of available education, other issues have come to the fore, such as a necessity for ensuring that the quality of teaching and access to appropriate resources are also considered.

EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

Discussing the issue of inequality in education only from the point of the disadvantaged is highlighted by Gale (Chapter 1) as being 'odd'. Inequity in education is usually regarded as an issue with the marginalised but rarely is the spectrum of educational success viewed as a problem caused by the elite. Those who have privileged educational experiences, possibly through private education or by virtue of their abode, are rarely considered as a potential barrier to the others. The notion of access to education being uneven suggests there are two reasons for inequity existing in education systems, including education systems in Australia, which is the focus of many authors in this book. First, exclusion based on the ability to pay for (and thus gain access to) the 'best' education is discriminatory. Either education opportunities are freely available to all or public money for the education sector is not put into a

separate, 'private' sector because, it could be argued, to do neither of these has as influential an effect on chances in education as does relative poverty.

In Australia, inequality and inequity vis-à-vis education in many indigenous communities seem to be commonplace (Green, 2011), despite government attempts to redress the imbalance (Griffiths, 2014). However, Ma Rhea (Chapter 3) goes further and suggests that *sui generis* rights of indigenous peoples are not taken into consideration in the 'right to education' debate. Indeed, international research (Lauchlan, Parisi & Fadda, 2013) has demonstrated the need for students to be educated in their local language and not in the dominant cultural language, which usually is imposed upon educational establishments. Why, when some indigenous communities in Australia have English as their second language, is their academic instruction still taking place in a language which is not their first? If there is a seriousness to the debate on reducing inequality or, to put it another way, expanding equality, the language of instruction has to be considered a crucial factor in education planning.

Increasing school enrolments in many developed countries is usually regarded as an appropriate approach. Clearly there is much rhetoric about making education available to as much of the school-aged population as possible. However, the UNESCO (2012) Education for All Global Monitoring Report highlighted many complex issues in this, especially with regard to sub-Saharan Africa. It is not, simply, that an increase in school enrolments puts a strain on a weak system but the quality of education under these circumstances is also brought into question. Outhred et al., in Chapter 5, highlight the importance of commensurate projects which also take into consideration the need for infrastructure analysis and development and bring to the fore the situation in South Africa where one of the main issues is the supply of textbooks to the students. Outhred et al., describe a study, which demonstrated how, when improvement to infrastructure was achieved, the quality of education could be maintained despite the increased level of enrolments. This showed that, while advocating greater take-up of education in the developing world is laudable, equal emphasis needs to be placed on ensuring that the quality of education is at an appropriate standard so that the worthy concept of *education for all* is more than a perfunctory call to arms.

The South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has faced significant challenges in implementing policies, which are commonly experienced across the education sector. As in China, the disparity in the levels of knowledge and infrastructure across South Asian countries is a significant factor. Mullick, Ahmmed and Sharma (Chapter 7) discuss the importance of resourcing and peer support in relation to implementing inclusive education reform (Boyle, Topping, Jindal-Snape & Norwich, 2012). The findings mirror those of other studies discussed in this chapter (and elsewhere in this book) in that the barriers to proper implementation of policies which attempt to bring equity and fairness to the respective country's education system need to be recognised and acknowledged. Once this process has taken place, there is a stronger prospect of achieving the stated goals in improving

the systemic structure for the benefit of teaching staff and students, not to mention the wider community.

Fairness and equity in education can take many forms. A study by Lauchlan, Parisi and Fadda (2013) compared students educated in the local 'minority' language with students who only spoke their local language at home and received educational instruction in the more dominant language. The study found the former group of students were significantly more advanced in various areas of cognitive abilities. Malak, Begum, Habib, Banu and Roshid (Chapter 8) describe a 'landmark' advance in education in Bangladesh where, not only in primary education which is now universally freely available and compulsory, many students are now being educated in their 'mother-tongue'. This is a major improvement and acknowledges the international research, previously discussed, which provides another step towards a fair and equitable education system.

Access to education or a particular aspect of it can be the catalyst for improving the economic status of many people. As was mentioned previously in this chapter, denial of opportunity can be for the purposes of oppressing a certain group in a country e.g. by gender, sexuality, religion, or it can be to maintain a social elite that exists in that particular country. Nguyen, Le, Tran and Nguyen (Chapter 10) discuss their study into the introduction of English as a compulsory subject from Year 3 in Vietnam. The main equity issue they identified was between the urban and rural sectors and they found a lack of a strategy to ensure that this commendable policy was not implemented inequitably across different areas. Nguyen et al. suggest extra planning is required with various stakeholders to ensure that the rural schools are able to implement the policy effectively. As is discussed elsewhere in this chapter, if there is a lack of staff or expertise then highly regarded and well-conceived projects may not have the impact they intended.

On the China and Hong Kong border, there is a slightly different scenario playing out to that of other countries that we have discussed in this chapter. Because the Hong Kong education system is still regarded by many in China, as being of a higher standard than is available in some parts of China (Yuen, 2012) there are over 16,000 'commuter children' who make the journey from home in China to school in Hong Kong every day. This scenario is discussed by Chan and Haq Kabir in Chapter 9 where they put forward practical solutions for consideration by both the Chinese and Hong Kong governments. The difference between this situation and others aforementioned in this book is that this is about aspirational drives to gain better education rather than being deliberately excluded from it, as has been the case with many other countries mentioned in these chapters.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusive education is perennially associated with inequity in the education system. From an international perspective, there is much variance with regard to what, exactly, constitutes inclusive education. Even within Australia, there are different

opinions, from the state to the school level. For example, does inclusion mean that all students, irrespective of any perceived additional support needs, should be educated in mainstream schools or should it be that *most* students are educated in this way? Topping (2012) suggests that inclusion is far wider than just that of where someone is schooled but it is about community factors that do not stop at the school gate.

In education, it still seems that it is regarded as appropriate and justifiable to exclude, to separate even, students by ability from each other. In other facets of society, this is not regarded as appropriate yet it is still promulgated as an acceptable educational approach, even today. In education, the force of labelling and categorising of students, while still accepted practice, does not necessarily contribute to the exclusion of or provide a benefit to the student (Boyle, 2014; Lauchlan & Boyle, 2007). In Chapter 2, Anderson, Boyle and Deppeler put forward an adaptation of Bronfenbrenner's (1976) ecology of education model, and through the different systems (Macro➔Exo➔Meso➔Macro), display barriers to inclusion that may exist due to the complexities of the inclusive education ecological model. As the understanding of this model grows, it follows that better training and awareness of the intricacies of school systems vis-à-vis inclusive education will ensure that a more equitable and fair approach to inclusion will be possible.

EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Educational equity can be viewed from many different perspectives. In China, the notion of equal access to education is argued from the perspective of higher education regional diversity (Zhang, 2012). As a result of the National College Entrance Exam (NCEE) becoming the mechanism for Chinese high school students gaining entry to university, there has been criticism of its regional equity. In Chapter 6, Zhang and Wang argue that the NCEE is an extremely influential policy in China but it is also flawed. They suggest that, whilst a policy may appear to be fair and equitable across all students from various diverse backgrounds, it seems that *some are more equal than others* and the policy has a significantly negative impact on some of the more under-developed regions. They advocate for a complete revision of the policy so as to ensure a more equitable approach to students gaining access to higher education across all provinces in China.

Higher education is an essential, aspirational tool for many people across the world. Ability to become better educated is the corner stone of personal improvement which can lead to greater social cohesion and, as is argued by Molla (Chapter 9), greater democratic participation. Enabling disadvantaged members of society to enter higher education becomes a political decision (Young, 2008) and will enable marginalised groups to become more politically powerful, bringing stronger debate and more involvement in the political process. Instead of restricting access to education to suppress certain groups, access to higher education can provide a more enlightened society, however the question arises as to whether this is always welcomed by national governments. Indeed, Molla states that, in Ethiopia, this has not yet occurred.

As would be expected in today's educational environment, most universities, in some form or another, use eLearning. This can be a way towards greater equity as Mayan, Ismail and Al-Shahrani (Chapter 14) indicate in their studies of gender inequality in Saudi Arabia and Zanzibar, that eLearning could be a significant factor in reducing the disparity by gender that exists in both countries. It is suggested that using distance education methods could be an opportunity to bypass the difficulties of separate classes by gender, which can lead to disparity and inequity in the higher education system. These are cultural issues, which may be especially pertinent in the two countries discussed. However, eLearning seems to have the scope to reduce some of the barriers to equitable education which exist in many countries around the world.

CONCLUSION

It seems that equity and fairness in education may still be some way from existing in a true form. With the many examples of progress highlighted in this book, there is much cause for optimism. It is clear that, in a lot of countries, it is now openly recognised that there are issues affecting the provision of equality in education to as many citizens as practically possible. From the chapters in this book, we understand that there are serious inequities vis-à-vis access to either school or higher education. It is fair to acknowledge that not all those who should be are included and receiving the education that UNESCO and other organisations are working towards. However, what the authors of these chapters have demonstrated is that *equality in education: fairness and inclusion* is not a forlorn hope but one which is coming ever closer and, as time progresses, more and more people around the world are enjoying the benefits of access to a quality education system.

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