GLOBALIZATION & REFORM OF EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

EDM9207
“School Reform in a Global Context”

Lecture 2
Leslie N.K. Lo (leslienailo@cuhk.edu.hk)
Globalization and education

- Nurtures awareness of competition
- Rapid flow of educational ideas and seemingly ‘good practices’
- Prompts international comparison and benchmarking
- Prompts educational borrowing
- Prompts in(ter)flow of experts
- Rise of industry for validation & QA
Convergence of ideas & action?

- academic achievement
- centralized administration
- teacher-oriented teaching & learning
- multi-faceted development
- decentralized administration
- student-centered teaching & learning
In the WEST: Change of Mind about the role of State

- ‘Welfare state’ and public policies
- What should the state’s role be in public affairs?
- Who should decide who gets what?
- What should be the overriding principle?
- Freedom
- What are the impediments?
* Public law corporations with tripartite control.
The State and its Schools (1)

- Beliefs that governments should pay for, organize, and operate mass schooling for the young, i.e. intervene in education.

- But to ensure WHAT?
The State and its Schools (2)

Critics said that public schools, products of democratic institutions, are:

- Subordinates in a hierarchic system of control;
- Having policies imposed on them by diverse constituency groups and public officials;
- Lacking in autonomy;
- Local monopoly, making exit of students difficult;
- Sensitive to dictates of politics: politicians seek support from constituency groups, e.g. teachers’ unions and associations of administrators, thus employment for weak principals and teachers;
- Having difficulty in arriving at unity of purpose, consensus of what is ‘good’.
The State and its Schools (3)

Under state domination, mass public schooling has manifested some salient problems:

- Declining test scores
- Loose academic standards
- Lax discipline
- ‘Rising tide of mediocrity’
- Americans: ‘Feeling good and doing bad’
The Market as Remedy

- Individuals should have freedom to...
- Freedom to choose
- Market affords choice
- Market breeds competition
- Competition breeds quality
- Quality enhances education
Market & Educational Quality

- More choice by ‘customers’
- More say by parents
- More accountability for performance
- More competition for higher standards
- More innovative approach to education
- Chubb & Moe (1988) advocated private schools that have clearer goals, stricter requirements, more interactive relationships, and operate in less constraining institutional environments; that deregulation would allow self-governing schls to compete and to operate autonomously around parental and student choice, and with curriculum by customer preference.
What has been done in the UK? (1)

- Policy shift under Thatcher against the ‘welfare state’ and for ‘choice’
- Emphasis on ‘small state’
- Inspectorate went private
- Took power away from local education authorities (‘national system locally administered’)
- Wrestled with teachers’ unions and prevailed
What has been done in the UK? (2)

  - Broke up power blocs: Greater London Council and Inner London Education Authority broken up into boroughs;
  - Abolished Schools Council, natl. body for curclm & assmnt controlled by unions;
  - Established Nat. Curriculum with KLAs, and national testing of schl performance;
  - Allowed schl to opt out LEA control & draw $ from central gov’t: ‘grant-maintained schools’;
  - Schl-based teacher education;
  - Privatize school inspections.
What has been done in the UK? (3)

- Education Reform Act (1988)
  - Central gov’t control over curriculum. *The National Curriculum 5-16* (’87): Foundation subjects for compulsory years (w/ programs of study, attainment targets for key stages, assessment for ages 7, 11, 14, and GCSE at 16).
  - Gave parents more choice over schooling; parents to know school performance.
  - School governors more power, weakened LEAs.
  - City technology colleges supported & linked to private business.
What has been done in the UK? (4)

- School rankings first publicized in 1992, with set of test results.
- Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) established to inspect schools and reports on performance.
- 1993 Ed Act: demonstrated state’s commitment to marketization; governing bodies of LEAs asked to opt out of local school system’s control and go into competitive market.
- 5% real growth in ed spending every year since 1997 (Labor Party in power from 1996).
What has been done in the UK? (5): Stressed Accountability

- Pay $, but expecting results
- Set national achievement targets: by 2002, 80% 11-yr-olds reached Level 4 or higher in nat. Eng. tests, 75% pass math.
- In 2000, 75% 11-yr-olds reached L4, from 57% (1996); 73% passed math, from 54%. Then it stalled when 14-yr-olds made slow, steady progress. Eng. Target for 11-yr-olds moved to 2006.
- Critics: ‘Only dragged up bottom layer’; ‘variation in test standards caused rise’; ‘sharpest increase in science, but it has had no gov’t intervention’; ‘intense efforts on border-line students’; ‘practice tests and booster classes’.
What has been done in the UK? (6):

**Impact**

- Testing, school league tables, and performance targets seemed to have raise academic standards.
- High-stake testing and performance targets changed education, narrow curriculum to suit tests.
- League tables crude: raw scores compared schls with very different student population.
- Schls concerned over profile of achievement; basic functions of school not only helping students to learn but also to achieve;
- Standard gap ./ Eng. Math and Sc and other subjects widened.
What has been done in the UK? (7): Teachers’ Dissent

- 2004, National Union of Teachers (largest) threatened to boycott national tests for 7-yr-olds.
- Survey of 30,500 teachers found that:
  - 80% believed tests were stressful to children
  - 50%+ agreed that tests undermined professional judgment
  - 90%+ said that tests diminished students’ access to a balanced curriculum
  - Vast majority agreed that tests added to their workload
  - 5% agreed that tests raised standards.

**2004 Pilot:** Emphasis on teacher-crafted assessment rather than testing
Observation on school reform in UK

- Government intervention → law → marketization
- Market based on rational choice of individuals; but are parental choice rational?
- What is being valued? Performance as per test results
- Schls compete for what? ‘Motivated’ parents and ‘able’ students
- Schl leaders → managers & publicists
- Teachers → reluctant coaches
- The politics of ‘performativity’ (Ball)
What has been done in the US? (1)

- Policy shift under Reagan (1980) from equity issues and entitlements to excellence & minimum standards
- Prior 1980, studies by Coleman et al (1966) and Jencks et al (1972) suggested home background, not school input, was determinant of student performance
- 1980s school reform: middle class weary of quality of public schooling
- Reform reasserted importance of conventional curriculum, basic literacy & numeracy skills: ‘Back to Basics’
- Emphasis on market, free choice, and customer preference
What has been done in the US? (2)

- *A Nation at Risk* (1983)
  - US schools were failing
  - Academic standards falling
  - Graduates compared unfavorably with counterparts in trading nations
  - Perceived decline led to public dissatisfaction & political intervention

**BUT**
- ‘Excellence in schooling’ policies of ’80s tended to be based on:
  - Urban rather than rural or suburban schls
  - Large rather than small schls
  - Elementary rather than secondary schls
  - Low SES rather than high SES schls
  - Performance indicators: basic skills tests rather than higher-order thinking
What has been done in the US? (3)

- Policies to increase academic rigor & remove intellectual softness from schl activities:
  - At least 40 states:
    - Increased graduation requirements
    - Revised student testing
    - Provided academic enrichment progs.
    - Upgraded teacher certification
  - Over 20 states:
    - Adopted legislation to increase teachers’ salaries
    - Set more homework
    - Wrote more demanding textbooks
    - Lengthened school day and school year
What has been done in the US? (4)

- Political control of schools changed: from local school board → (tax reform) → state legislature
- National gov’t no constitutional power to intervene in local education, but it has $ for local projects (7% of education $) and can persuade politicians (‘bully pulpit’)
- Tremendous challenge: large country with 15,000 local school boards & 110,000 schools
- State governors emerged as the most active forces for school reform in the 1980s.
What has been done in the US? (5)

- New wave of reform since 1986:
  - Attention to teaching and organization of schls
  - Movement from centrally organized agencies to ‘autonomous schools’ that could react to market forces
  - Schools and local authorities to be lean and flexible in structure
  - Symbol: dismantling of the huge Chicago public schl system (like Inner London LEA)
  - Other noteworthy measures dealt with teachers, curriculum & teaching: ‘new career ladder’ (NY), ‘curriculum framework’ (Calf.)
What has been done in the US? (6)

- Third wave of reform in 1990s with emphasis on market and product excellence
- Applied free market concept to schls
- Emphasized choice of parents and students
- Stressed competition among schools
- The Charter Schls Movement emerged
- The business sector was brought in
- Emphasis on standards intensified
What has been done in the US? (7)

- ‘No Child Left Behind’ (Bush, 2001)
  - Stressed standards, assessment, rewards & penalties
  - Annual tests for 3-8 graders in reading & math, once in high school (2005-06), and at least once in science in elementary, middle, & high schools (2002-08) for states to receive federal $
  - Vouchers for students (in disadvantaged schls that failed to make consecutive progress for 3 consecutive years to transfer to higher performing public or private schls or for supplemental ed services
  - Grants for innovative efforts to expand parental choice; start-up $ charter schools; tax saving up to $5000 for K-12 expenses
  - States & schls that made most progress in narrowing the “achievement gap” rewarded $, states that failed to meet performance objectives would have administrative $ taken away
  - $ for reduction of class-size, $ for K-2 reading programs, $ for math and science enhancement for univ-schl partners
Observation on School Reform in US (1)

- Choice, market, $, testing prevailed
- State → law+$ → marketization & higher performance (Is $ coming? Can the 7% solution fix broken schls?)
- State-based uniform testing for 3-8 graders (used in Texas, yielded comparable data schl to schl) loathed, some proposed a nat. test
- Shaming failing schools becomes political weapon, a form of coercion; failing schls are usually those in inner urban areas for minority students
- Accountability has a price? Attention now directed to test scores rather than education; schools more committed to standard, traditional, whole-class teaching methods and curriculum (Apple)
- Increasing power of the ‘evaluative state’
Observation on School Reform in US (2)

- Some claimed the brightest students were the victims because not enough attention given to them, as their scores, already high, would not do much for pulling up scores for schls because of ‘ceiling effects’; $ for ‘gifted education’ shrinking because it is needed elsewhere
- Some claimed the poorest students and immigrant students were victims because former stuck in worst schls and $ for bilingual and multicultural ed is also shrinking
- Performativity (results) and managerialism (indicators) in education
- Brought in market, undermined schl and local authorities
- Brought in parents, challenged the power structure of schooling with a new player.
School Reform in Hong Kong

- Rush to reform in pre-1997 (Lo)
- Comprehensive reform in 1997-2001, ECR7 & Reform of Ed System
- Emphasis on lean and efficient administration: merger ED & EMB, Inspectorate → regional offices
- Emphasis on choice (brought in business ideology, stressed parental involvement, strengthens DSSchls but weakened ESF)
- Emphasis on competitiveness (stressed falling standards, weak preparation for the world of work (esp. English), weak teachers and principals, glorified accomplishment of other systems of ed)
- Emphasis on performance (set indicators, re-introduced basic competence tests, QAI → self-evaluation, RAE & TLQPR for universities, posted information for school choice, benchmark tests for teachers)
School Reform in Hong Kong (2)

- Emphasis on a romanticized past (state, business, parents)
- Attention to international benchmarking (PISA, TIMSS)
- Parents brought in to change power structure of school management and used to serve as a counterpart of teachers and unions
- Business leaders brought in to influence policy-making in education and to influence community views of education.
REFLECTION......
Has the State’s Control of Schools been weakened by reform?

- Not really.
- State created public education & other public institutions such as health care and welfare, but has found their growth to be too enormous to be efficient and effective, and hard to control.
- Recent reforms saw the emergence of a new set of alliance of state, parents, and business in education.
- State has used power, money, selected data, and new forms of vigilance, surveillance, ‘performance indicators and appraisal’, and even ‘public shaming’ as forms of control.
- State has taken it upon itself to keep us all up to the mark in a ‘process of “governing without governing”’ (Olssen).
How successful were the reform according to proposed measures?

○ Levin 2003:
  ○ Efficiency
    ● Leaner state (yes, but contracted jobs for new projects)
    ● Enhanced test scores (for certain schls in UK & US)
  ○ Equity
    ● Structural constraints hard to deal with (SES, capital & social capital distribution)
    ● Learning gap still exists
  ○ Choice
    ● Enhanced choice for the middle class, NOT for the poor, NOT for minorities
  ○ Social Cohesion
    ● Most ed policies cannot be stand alone.
The Quasi-market in Education (1)

- Difficult to have real market in ed, can talk about ‘quasi-market’ (Walford, 1996)
  - In ‘quasi-market’ of education, $ need not change hands ./ ‘purchaser’ & ‘supplier’
  - Society compels family to make some sort of purchase that is already on offer
  - On supply side, institutions providing schooling not necessarily privately owned or have profit maximization as main objective
  - On demand side, ‘purchaser’ is not necessarily the ‘consumer’ of what schools offer
- Children can ill-afford to shop around; realistically one chance of receiving basic schooling; if wrong choice, personal costs of changing school is high.
The Quasi-market in Education (2)

- Some consequences of marketization of schooling:
  - Differences ./ schls can develop, such that families the value education see schls within a local hierarchy of desirability
  - Desirable schls selecting children and families rather than families choosing schls
  - Wrong decision, no ‘money back guarantee’
  - Possible deepening of polarization of rich & poor if ‘marketization of ed’ is not handled well.
On New School Leadership

- School leadership today has to constantly deal with change: reform directives, weighing priorities (in self, schl, community), and not forgetting performance for survival: dealing with paradox, ambiguity, uncertainty, conflicts, dissent, resistance.
- Outwardly, the changing world
- Inwardly, the internal culture of schl
- What is the primary task of leadership?
  - Accomplish through governance, rules, incentives, high productivity, high performance?
  - Accomplish through building conditions for reflection, on dialogue, mutual respect for ideas and growth?
- ‘Total quality management’ (emphasis on quality & largely technically driven); ‘transactional leadership (give & take); ‘transformational leadership’ (flexibility and pragmatism); ‘interactive leadership’ (emphasis on participation and enhancement of self-worth).
Reflection on popular concepts for School Leadership

- Some of the concepts sound good, but their cross-cultural application should be rigorously examined
- ‘Organizational restructuring’: Demise of the Pyramid to flatter organizational arrangements, i.e. groups and group work
- ‘Empowerment’
- ‘Ownership’
Reflection on popular concept (1)

- Why do we try to transform the Pyramid into flatter organization?
George W Bush (*Time*, 6 Sept. 2004) concluded that flattening the hierarchy is what prevents him from being isolated by power:

- **Organizational restructuring**

  *If I were interviewing a guy for the job of President, I’d ask, How do you make decisions? How would you get unfiltered information? Would you surround yourself with hacks? Are you scared of smart people? I’ve seen the effect of the Oval Office on people. People are prepared to come in and speak their minds, and then they get in there, and the place overwhelms them, and they say, ‘Gee, Mr. President, you’re looking good.’ I need people who can walk in and say, ‘Hey, you’re not looking so great today.*
Reflection on popular concepts (3)

- What does ‘empowerment’ mean?
- What kind of organizational context does ‘empowerment’ assume?
- Empowerment of teachers may be easy in a society based on a tradition of participatory democracy.
- Empowerment of teachers may not be as easy in a society based on hierarchical relationships and expressed itself in the ‘concentric circle of relationships’.
‘Concentric circles of human relationships’
(差序格局)
Let’s get on with Reform

- What is & what is not originally envisaged by reformers?
- Can $ solve the problems?
- Can power solve the problems?
- Reform is changing minds
- The fallacy of educational borrowing