EDUCATION AS A PRIVATE OR A GLOBAL PUBLIC GOOD: COMPETING CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS AND THEIR POWER AT THE WORLD BANK

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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This thesis presents the argument that the World Bank’s education policies are discursively inconsistent due to the concurrent adoption of conceptual frameworks – namely the neoliberal and global public goods frameworks – which are arguably in conflict with one another. More specifically, the World Bank presents education as both a public and a private good. This assessment is reached via a critical analysis of the Bank’s education policy discourse. The Bank’s policies are furthermore argued to be grounded in market economics and therefore are in tension with the notion of education as a human right – a legal and political framework, advocated by other development organizations, but neglected by the Bank. Over the course of this thesis, neoliberal influences on the World Bank’s education policies are critiqued on several levels, including potential ethical ramifications concerning equity, discursive logic and questionable use of evidence.

This dissertation furthermore suggests that the Bank can re-conceptualize education in a light that does not engender these critiques, by embracing a rights-based vision of education. It is argued that it is not necessary for the Bank to relinquish an economic conceptualization of education, and that it is possible for the human rights and economic discourses to go hand-in-hand. Despite some tensions, education can be supported by both a public goods and rights-based framework, and that via such measures as collaboration with organizations that conceive of education as a right and reducing the dominance of economists within the organization, the
Bank’s policies will become aligned with this rights-based vision. This thesis argues that World Bank education policies can take steps toward improvement if the neoliberal notion of education as an exclusive, private good is abandoned in favour of education as a non-exclusive, public good, and a right.
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### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BWP</td>
<td>Bretton Woods Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEC</td>
<td>Development Economics Vice-Presidency</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
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<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
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<td>EKE</td>
<td>Education for the Knowledge Economy</td>
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<td>ESS</td>
<td>Education Sector Strategy</td>
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<td>ESSU</td>
<td>Education Sector Strategy Update</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTI</td>
<td>Fast Track Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GMR</td>
<td>Global Monitoring Report</td>
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<td>GPG</td>
<td>Global Public Good</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIPC</td>
<td>Highly Indebted Poor Countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>IBRD</td>
<td>International Bank for Reconstruction and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communications Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDA</td>
<td>International Development Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFC</td>
<td>International Finance Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFI</td>
<td>International Financial Institution</td>
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<tr>
<td>IO</td>
<td>International Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCSPE</td>
<td>National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>OED</td>
<td>Operations Evaluation Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>Public-Private Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRS</td>
<td>Poverty Reduction Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>Structural Adjustment Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPRS</td>
<td>Sourcebook for Poverty Reduction Strategies</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>WBG</td>
<td>World Bank Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCEFA</td>
<td>World Congress on Education for All</td>
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<td>WDEFA</td>
<td>World Declaration on Education for All</td>
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<td>WDR</td>
<td>World Development Report</td>
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  - ii. Education as non-exclusive and available for all to consume.
  - iii. Education as extending to all countries, people and generations.

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For Aaron,

with love and appreciation
Chapter One: Introduction

Rationale for this Study

Over the course of its 66 years, the World Bank has been the subject of countless books, articles, media reports, and dissertations. While a consensus seems to exist on the Bank’s degree of influence and power, less agreement is apparent with regard to its effectiveness and success in achieving its mission: to alleviate global poverty. Moreover, much has been written that questions the ethical implications of the Bank’s policies. And these criticisms abound concerning the Bank’s work in education.

My earliest exposure to the World Bank was exceptionally negative, as the target of criticism within the popular media, largely as the result of the anti-globalization movement of the 1990s. With little knowledge as to its history or operations, my vision of the Bank, from the outset, was critical. And I was certainly not alone in this perception. In fact, even now, when I tell friends and family that my thesis topic is the World Bank’s education policies, the response is quite uniform: that such a corrupt and wicked organization must make for a fascinating doctoral study. Yes, it is certainly fascinating. Although not for the reasons most assume.

The World Bank first holds a particular interest for me in light of its dominant role in both education and development in general. The World Bank is, as Woods describes, an “extraordinary international institution,” due to the power associated with its financial clout and expertise (2006, p.179). Moreover, given the Bank’s size and the expansive nature of its operations, its power extends globally and is unmatched by any other institution (Easterly, 2006; Marshall, 2008; Wade, 1996; 2007; Weaver, 2008; Woods, 2006). The Bank is a unique entity in international development. Furthermore, as the largest single provider of funds and expertise to
education projects in the world, it holds an unrivaled place in the field of international education. The Bank has in many ways spearheaded the spread of formal education systems worldwide via its expertise, research, financing and policies. And perhaps as a result of its influential position, has arguably been an ideological leader concerning optimal forms of financing and provision of schooling (Jones, 2007).

Of course, given the Bank’s authoritative position in education policy, much has already been written on its role. While I appreciate and have employed many of the past critical analyses conducted on the topic of the Bank and education, this thesis approaches the Bank’s work from an alternative angle. The Bank has been the target of persistent criticism, and has been, I believe, at times excessively critiqued and even vilified in academic literature, as well as by the popular media. In light of an often black and white perception of Bank activities that I have encountered – both in my readings on the organization and in my casual conversations with friends – I aim to give a thoughtful analysis of the Bank’s incredibly complex role as an innovator of educational policies. I do this by not only examining its policy documents, but by doing so within a historical and institutional context.

Moreover, this dissertation grapples with a common theme in the literature on such general subjects as international development, education, and economics – the seemingly irreconcilable conflict between the state and the market. It is my belief that it is possible to bridge the support of the state’s and market’s roles in education, and move forward to creating effective and ethical international education policies, and this dissertation aims to elucidate how.

The overarching purpose of this thesis is then not limited to analyzing the World Bank’s policies, but hopes to improve them via elucidating the root of their problems, and by offering a

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1 These include Alexander (2001); Bonal (2002; 2004); Coclough (2000); Jones (1992; 2005; 2007); Klees (2002; 2008); Mundy (2002); Samoff (1996; 1999), amongst many others.
means by which the organization can create more consistent, effective and ethical educational policies.

Extending well beyond the Bank, this topic is of relevance to the educational policies of other aid donors, along with policy-makers, administrators and entrepreneurs in the educational field. Given the current landscape in education, a multitude of actors in the field of education policy must grapple with whether or not, or to what extent, the private sector should be engaged in schooling. And, moreover, I believe that this analysis of the World Bank can be used as an exemplar for the complexities of education policy development in general.

And so, yes, the World Bank is of particular fascination for me, but because of its complexity and influence, not simply its role as some global immoral force. I want to make explicit that my aim is not to simply add another manuscript onto the already large stack of work that criticizes the World Bank. While emphasizing many critiques of theories, policies, conceptual and economic frameworks, this thesis is not meant solely as a critical analysis. I invoke these criticisms with an aim to overcome them. Moreover, the arguments presented in this thesis broadly apply to the wider and multifaceted debate surrounding the inclusion of the private sector in education. It is by examining and learning from the Bank’s policies and the problems that persist within them that we might move forward to improving education globally.

This thesis specifically investigates the Bank’s policies concerning basic, primary education. This is not to omit the significance of market mechanisms in early childhood, secondary, tertiary or higher education. However, the privatization of each level of education manifests in different ways, with separate rationales and results. To discuss all levels would be far beyond the scope of this thesis. I chose primary education mainly because it is the level with

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2 I employ a definition of basic education that focuses on the completion of primary schooling, aiming at the acquisition of basic skills (see WDEFA, 1990).
which I am most familiar, having been a primary school teacher myself, and moreover, it is associated with certain global conventions, such as Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals, which I had an interest in examining in the context of the World Bank’s work.

Finally, a rationale for this study must include what almost goes without stating. Education is widely considered one of the most significant inputs to not only economic development, but also poverty alleviation, social mobility, gender equity, health and democratic participation. Tomasevski summarizes the value of education: “…education is an end in itself rather than merely a means for achieving other ends. Education should prepare learners for parenthood and political participation, it should enhance social cohesion and, more than anything, it should teach the young that all human beings – themselves included – have rights” (2003, p.33). Yet over 70 million children worldwide are currently without access to even a basic level of education. And for many of those who do attend school, the quality is questionable, and access is inequitable (UNESCO, 2006; 2009a; UNESCO and UNICEF, 2007; World Bank, 2009). In critiquing the policies of the largest contributor of funds to educational programs globally, I aim to take an, albeit small, step towards remedying the unacceptable current state of education worldwide.

Philosophical Argument Made in this Thesis

This dissertation provides the following argument: The World Bank’s education policies are discursively inconsistent due to the adoption of conceptual frameworks – namely the neoliberal and global public goods frameworks – which are concurrently employed by the Bank and are arguably in conflict with one another. More specifically, the World Bank presents education as
both a public and a private good. This assessment is reached via a critical analysis of the Bank’s education policy discourse found in its various documents. The Bank’s policies are furthermore argued to be grounded in market economics and therefore are in tension with the notion of education as a human right – a legal and political framework, advocated by other development organizations, but neglected by the Bank. Over the course of this analysis, neoliberal influences on the World Bank’s education policies are critiqued on several levels, including potential ethical ramifications concerning equity, discursive logic and questionable use of evidence.

I furthermore argue that the Bank can re-conceptualize education in a light that does not engender these critiques, by embracing a rights-based vision of education. However, I argue that it is not necessary for the Bank to relinquish an economic conceptualization of education. I therefore argue that it is possible for the human rights and economic discourses to go hand-in-hand. Despite some tensions, education can be supported by both a public goods and rights-based framework, and that via such measures as collaboration with organizations that conceive of education as a right and reducing the dominance of economists within the organization, the Bank’s policies will become aligned with this rights-based vision. This thesis argues that World Bank education policies can take steps toward improvement if the neoliberal notion of education as an exclusive, private good is abandoned in favour of education as a non-exclusive, public good, and a right.

**Theoretical Stance**

I acknowledge that in taking a stance in this thesis that accepts both a degree of market involvement in education, as well as an advocacy for the charter of human rights, I am adopting to an extent a liberal philosophical position. In taking a position where I support a policy
recommendation where the notion of education as a right is compatible with a conception of education for economic development, I am allowing for a liberal conception of education and development policies – which in turn leaves me open to some of the major critiques of the liberal standpoint.

In brief, liberalism, in its classical philosophical form, essentially places individual rights and freedoms as paramount. As defined by Hudelson, classical liberalism centers upon: “a commitment to the liberty of individual citizens. Freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly were core commitments of classical liberalism, as was the underlying conception of the proper role of just government as the protection of the liberties of individual citizens. Also central to classical liberalism was a commitment to a system of free markets as the best way to organize economic life” (Hudelson, 1999, p.37). Liberalism, at its core, endorses “the freedom of individuals to lead lives of their own” (Callan and White, 2003, p.96). Often viewed as a logical extension of the “Enlightenment project,” liberal social and political theory gives primacy to individual goals, and the role of the state is to primarily protect an individual’s rights, and so a liberal standpoint is generally also non-interventionist. Therefore concepts of free-market capitalism, non-interventionism, and freedom of choice are grounded in liberalism. Political philosophers who have championed individual rights, such as John Locke, Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill and Adam Smith, are commonly labeled philosophical liberals.

The influence of liberalism can be seen in several concepts throughout this thesis. The first and most blatant is as a precursor to the more recent philosophy of neoliberalism, which I define in detail and critique primarily in Chapters Three and Five. It is important to note that the neoliberal standpoint is arguably a distortion of liberal principles and advocates for such
concepts as individual freedom and limited government to an excessive degree. I, personally, do not support a neoliberal framework for development nor for education, and this position is stressed throughout the thesis via a steadfast critique of neoliberalism and its manifestations.

Another way in which the influence of liberalism is apparent in this thesis is that it is considered the philosophical grounding for the free-market. Therefore, market-based economic theories, such as the theory of public goods, as well as its reformulation as global public goods, are also grounded in liberalism. My thesis, while critical of the concept of global public goods, indeed concludes by advocating its adoption for international education policy. I must confess, then, that I am in part sympathetic to a liberal stance in my argument.

Moreover, the Declaration of Human Rights has also been widely considered a liberal document. Such individualistic notions as rights to freedom of religion, opinion and expression – each of which is given an article in the Declaration – are arguably rooted in a liberal standpoint. So too are the notion of a right to own property, and the freedom from interference with privacy and home. The liberal vision of government as the protector of individual rights arguably informs the human rights concept, with its emphasis on individual freedoms. The Declaration is grounded in liberalism, and I advocate the adoption of certain articles within it for developing a framework for international education policy (Brown, 1999; Freeman, 2002; Ishay, 2007). Moreover, as will be discussed below, my support of education as a human right is linked to the argument that education is a contributor to citizenship in a social democracy. The social democratic tradition is furthermore rooted in liberal political theory (Marshall, 1950; Norman and Kymlicka, 2003).

Also detailed below, I do, however, acknowledge several critiques of the concept of human rights, although continue to support this conception. That I invoke Amartya Sen in my
concluding argument – who can be labeled a liberal theorist in both his advocacy of the charter of human rights, as well as the free-market – furthermore demonstrates that I continue to sympathize with liberalism.

Despite my apparent sympathetic philosophical stance on liberalism, I acknowledge that several critiques of the theory have been forwarded. I will discuss these in brief primarily in this introduction. Critiques of liberalism have been often levied from the standpoint of communitarianism, where an individualistic life is posited to be overly detached from others, isolated from a community wherein discussions occur, compromises are potentially made and consensus can be achieved. A liberal society is then fragmented, and as a result, individuals care less and less about the fortunes of others. This critique argues that placing individual needs over those of wider society has political implications, giving a foundation for an inequitable, potentially discriminatory and repressive society where the rights of minority groups are subjugated to those of powerful individuals. As a philosophical foundation to capitalism, a liberal position is also subject to critiques of capitalism, argued by Marxist and neo-Marxists to be inherently inequitable and exploitative. Moreover, liberalism is argued to rest on faulty assumptions, for liberals stress individualism without adequately addressing that our individual identities are in fact, at least in part, a result of our community and relationships with others (Callan and White, 2003; Gutmann, 1985; Portelli and Menashy, 2010; Walzer, 1990).

These criticisms can indeed be levied against some of my positions forwarded in this dissertation. However, I hope that my thesis will adequately defend against these critiques, although my position is generally presented in reference to a particular context (for instance in reference to advocating for education as a human right, or as a global public good), and so I will not state explicitly that I am defending against critiques of liberalism. In fact, given space
constraints, a discussion on liberalism will be limited to this introduction and briefly in Chapter Five. Moreover, this is not a thesis arguing either for or against liberalism. Nor does it provide a broad critique of capitalism. That would be quite a different dissertation.

On the whole, I believe that my theoretical stance in this thesis is difficult to label. While I am sympathetic to liberalism, I also acknowledge its shortcomings. At the risk of simplification, I accept – to an extent, and appreciating its flaws – the current economic structure of society, along with its philosophical foundations.

**Critical Analysis of Policy Discourse**

This thesis provides a critical analysis of policy discourse, or to put it another way, examines policy documents themselves for the statements made and discourse employed. What follows is then an attempt to analyze thoroughly the World Bank’s education policy documents to determine the answers to such questions as: What conceptual frameworks are being adopted? What positions are advocated? What evidence is being employed and why? What concepts and positions have been omitted? Beyond these preliminary questions, I further wish to critically evaluate the policy documents for logical inconsistencies, such as contradictory statements or logical fallacies. As this dissertation is in the humanities tradition, I attempt to philosophically evaluate the World Bank’s policies in light of the ideological, conceptual and logical framing of arguments.

Policy analysis is conducted in various ways depending on the purpose. While much work labeled “policy analysis” is conducted in order to inform the making of policy, acting as a research basis upon which policy is designed, my thesis is an analysis of existing policy. As Codd describes: “Analysis of policy can… take two different forms: (a) analysis of policy
determination and effects, which examines ‘the inputs and transformational processes operating upon the construction of public policy’… and also the effects of such policies on various groups; and (b) analysis of policy content, which examines the values, assumptions and ideologies underpinning the policy process” (1988, p.235-6). This thesis is primarily an analysis of policy content, and more specifically, the content of policy documents themselves.

Moreover, what follows can be considered a critical policy analysis. In my analysis of World Bank education documents, (including publications, reports, policy papers, conference proceedings, and websites) I investigate the underlying ideological and conceptual frameworks informing the Bank’s policies, always taking into account “the political nature of policy making...” and the associated complexities (Taylor, 1997, p.25).

Specifically, this thesis focuses on discourse. A definition of what constitutes discourse differs depending often on the discipline and purpose of the analysis being conducted. Often adopted in studies of literature, a discursive analysis can be limited to language usage in texts. However, when applied to the examination of policy documents, discourse analysis takes into account the policy-making context and process. As Codd describes: “Fundamentally, policy is about the exercise of political power and the language that is used to legitimate that process” (1988, p.235). Taylor offers a similar description: “From a discourse theory perspective, policy making is viewed as an arena of struggle over meaning… From this perspective then, policy texts represent the outcome of political struggles over meaning” (1997, p.26).

My focus on discourse is not limited to textual analysis, but is a reflection of the political, ideological and organizational context in which policies are designed and developed. The interconnection of the text, the process by which the text is designed, and the social context of the policy-making process are all considered within a discourse analysis. Policy documents are a
part of broader policy process, and an analysis of the discourse has implications for how one thereby analyses the institution within which the documents are written (Fairclough, 1995; Janks, 1997; Taylor, 1997). By this approach, the complexity of policy making can be brought to light. The early chapters of this thesis are therefore meant to provide a historical and organizational context for the critical policy analysis that is conducted thereafter.

Specifically, for this dissertation, primarily in Chapters Four and Five, I deconstruct the official discourse of the World Bank. As Codd describes: “The deconstruction of official discourse, in the form of documents, reports and policy statements, treats such texts as cultural and ideological artifacts to be interpreted in terms of their implicit patterns of signification, underlying symbolic structures and contextual determinants of meaning… Policy documents in this kind of analysis do not have a single authoritative meaning. They are not blueprints for political action, expressing a set of unequivocal intentions. They are ideological texts that have been constructed within a particular historical and political context. The task of deconstruction begins with the explicit recognition of that context” (1988, p.243-4).

In particular, I present the discourse of the World Bank’s education policies as signifying certain conceptual frameworks grounded in economic theory. I moreover identify these frameworks via the apparent omissions in the Bank’s documents. For instance, the lack of rights-based discourse further denotes the Bank’s economic framings.

In terms of a specific process, in analyzing Bank discourse, I looked for patterns within single documents and between various documents, identifying specific terms and phrases that repeatedly denote a certain conceptual, or ideological, framing. I moreover identified discursive changes over time, so as not to assume, for instance, common discourse employed in the early 1990s applies to Bank policy today. In conducting this analysis, I made connections between
documents, identified contradictions, ambiguities, and omissions. From this examination, I determined the ideological and conceptual frameworks employed.

This analysis is provided within the context of the World Bank as an organization. This thesis is a discursive analysis of “the process of production of the text as well as on the organization of the discourses which constitute it and the linguistic strategies by which it masks the contradictions and incoherencies of the ideology that is inscribed in it” (Codd, 1988, p.246). For example, by identifying contradictions in the context of an international financial institution, I can hypothesize as to why more than one conceptual framework is being adopted within the policy documents.

From this policy analysis I do not simply wish to offer criticisms. In light of the problems I identify, I furthermore hope to advance a means by which policy design might be improved to reduce inconsistencies and issues that I identify. In terms of the subject I examine, I believe that bridging the market and state-based arguments for education provision, via collaboration on policy development from those who advocate both sides of the debate, along with embracing alternative perspectives, can offer a means by which policy can be made more consistent, ethical, and effective.

I must acknowledge that a critical policy analysis, and of discourse primarily, has its limitations. There is a limit to what can be deduced via policy documents, and by a research study of this nature. However, for the purposes of this thesis, which is essentially a philosophical investigation, a critical policy analysis provides what I believe to be a coherent, thorough and question-provoking examination of one facet to international education policy.
Introduction to Central Concepts

Throughout this thesis, three broad recurrent themes can be identified. I would consider these the “central concepts,” or major thematic areas at work in this dissertation. Here in this introduction, I will now give a brief overview of each of these themes in order to provide a foundation when each is revisited throughout the dissertation.

The public and the private and education policy.

The distinction between the public and the private has been a subject of debate since Ancient Greece, with Plato pondering the two realms. Through the Middle Ages, and into the sixteenth century, such notable political philosophers as More, Locke and Hobbes have contrasted the public and the private (Mansbridge, 1998). Current debates continue the attempt to define what constitutes the public versus the private. Most now cite an economic distinction, where “private is contrasted with public to characterize that which lies beyond the states’ boundaries, such as the market…” (Starr, 1988, p.8). However, some scholars have focused on cultural aspects to the debate. For example, some argue that the private/public distinction must be reformulated when analyzing the roles of women (Waring, 1999). Given that many things are easily depicted as existing in both the private and public spheres, and that the boundaries of each realm are easily blurred, the debate persists.

While much of this debate has focused upon what constitutes the public and private “spheres,” this dissertation examines the connected issue of what is considered a public good. What constitutes a public good is equally as debated, and according to Held, is “currently in a state of confusion” (1970, p.18), while, as Mansbridge states, “will probably always be, and should be, a contested subject” (1998, p.4). Various definitions have been forwarded that provide a means of making the distinction between a public and a private good, often dependent on a
philosophical or disciplinary position. As Mansbridge describes, “the contrast between public and private good retains, rightly, a strong normative thrust” (1998, p.9). Despite this, economists have attempted to methodologically and analytically determine what constitutes a public and private good. For instance, later in this thesis, I present Samuelson’s theory of public goods as delineating those goods which are not adequately provided by the market, basing this distinction on the notions of non-rivalrousness and non-excludability (Kaul, et al, 1999; Samuelson, 1954; Stiglitz, 2002).

As Starr states: “Many things seem to be public and private at the same time in varying degrees or in different ways. As a result, we quarrel endlessly about whether some act or institution is really one or the other” (1988, p.7). Education exemplifies this quarrel, for it presents a case of a service, or institution, considered by many to be significant in both the public and private spheres. Levin describes “the peculiar nature of education”:

> It addresses public interests by preparing the young to assume adult roles in which they can undertake civic responsibilities, embrace a common set of values, participate in a democratic polity with a given set of rules, and embrace the economic, political, and social life which constitute the foundation for the nation. All of this is necessary for an effectively, functioning democracy, economy, and society…At the same time, education must address the private interests of students and their families by providing a variety of forms of development which will enhance individual economic, social, cultural, and political benefits for the individual…Embedded in the same educational experience are outcomes that can contribute to the overall society as well as those which can provide private gains to the individual. (2000, p.3)

And so, as will be detailed in this thesis, education, and in particular basic education, can be categorized a both public and a private good. However, as Chapter Four will examine in detail, I forward a conception of education – as a “global public good” – focusing on its consumption as non-exclusive and available to all, which is a normative stance. I contrast this conception of education to one which allows for schooling as exclusive – a private good.
In addition, this thesis largely focuses on the issue of private sector involvement, or market mechanisms and their introduction to education. As an education policy reform tool, the introduction of the market to education is now considered widespread and growing (Plank and Sykes, 2003). However, the support of private engagement in education can be viewed in one of two ways. Based on a distinction made in a 1993 article by Keith Hinchliffe, privatization measures in education can be either forwarded as “unfortunately necessary” or “inherently desirable.” I adopt this distinction to frame the two ways in which one might envision the inclusion of market mechanisms in education. Those who advocate public sector financing and provision of education as optimal, and as will be argued in this thesis, as a public good, may accept some private sector engagement in education. This involvement, however, must be limited and only adopted if education’s consumption remains public – as non-exclusive and available for all. Only when privatization is deemed “unfortunately necessary” to meet demand or perhaps as a temporary solution while public sector capacity is increased, is it to be permitted under a conception of education as a public good. Moreover, this position necessitates that the private sector ought to be only employed for such development goals as education in the case that “private actors are able to be held to some form of direct accountability where there is no effective alternative” (Alston, 2005, p.770).

On the other hand, those who advocate the inclusion of market mechanisms as the most effective way to reach educational goals of quality and access, thereby do so under a framing of private sector involvement as “inherently desirable.” It is argued from this neoliberal-based perspective that, for instance, the introduction of a competitive market in education will necessarily serve to increase quality, accountability and efficiency. In addition, privatization is argued from this standpoint to reduce the state monopoly on education which perpetuates
ineffectiveness and corruption and hinders innovation. However, as will be detailed in Chapter Five of this thesis, given that market mechanisms in education risk excluding certain students from accessing classrooms, and moreover exclude some students from an equal quality of education, those promoting privatization of education allow for a conception of education as a private good – as exclusive. The notion of private sector involvement in education as “inherently desirable” is therefore deemed problematic.

In light of this distinction, I posit in this thesis that the World Bank straddles both sides of this debate, and as a result engenders an arguably contradictory view of private sector participation in education.

*The dominance of economics.*

This dissertation emphasizes the dominance of the economic frameworks which inform the World Bank’s education policies. Moreover, the third chapter details the field’s predominance within both international development and education policy in general, not only within the Bank. However, it is my position that this dominance is indicative of a wider phenomenon, where economics has become a master discipline more universally. Of course, economics is a broad field, encompassing a variety of theorists ranging from pure free-market advocates and monetarists, to post-Keynesians and neo-Marxists. However, as argued by Marglin, there does exist a single, “well-established church of economics” which might be characterized as “mainstream” or “standard,” or which I detail in Chapter Three as “neoclassical” (Marglin, 2008, p.5-6).³ There indeed exists a consensus concerning what “economics” is, and this is arguably hegemonic, where few divert from basic principles of, for instance, the value of competitive markets.

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³ Throughout this thesis, unless noted otherwise, my references to the term “economics” is to “neoclassical economics,” which will be defined in detail in Chapter Three.
Wade terms this particular conception of economics as a “monoculture” when describing its pervasiveness throughout academia, in particular its inroads into the fields of political science, political economy, and international relations (2009). He argues that this dominance comprises “part of one of the mega-trends in American academia – the application of economic analysis (especially neoclassical analysis) to traditionally noneconomic areas such as political science, international relations (IR), law and sociology; a trend which some critics have called, unkindly, ‘economic imperialism’” (2009, p.106).

Chapter Three describes the rise of economics as a field of dominance within international development and in education. Marglin argues that a multitude of factors contributed to the rise of economics – and in particular its associated assumptions surrounding human nature – over the course of a relatively short period: “The transition from war to peace, the discovery of growth, the growing familiarity of individualism, the emergence of consequentialism, the mutation of passions into interests, and the idea that demand was unproblematic…” all fed into a perception that self-interest within economic behavior was “not only legitimate but praiseworthy” (2008, p.114).

This dominance, as will be discussed throughout this thesis, is problematic insofar as it subjugates other lenses through which to view society. For instance, a focus on the economic outputs to education subjugates other aims, such as teaching for equity or social justice. Economic analyses of development programs arguably emphasize what is most cost-efficient for productivity, as opposed to what might increase, for instance, democratic participation or equity. For example, scholars have argued that the focus within economic programs such as microfinancing, on increasing women’s contribution within the market, commodifies women and does not necessarily increase their true empowerment within their households (Rankin, 2001).
The dominance of economics within such fields as development and education de-personalizes policies and reduces them to quantifiable outputs, which often ignore non-economic impacts. Moreover, economic-based policy design often undermines and undervalues notions of community, as well as diversity of cultures (Marglin, 2008; Rao and Woolcock, 2007a; 2007b). The consequences of this dominance then extend to the realms of social justice and equity, where human beings are impacted by reliance on a single discipline that may neglect social and ethical factors. As Tomasevski argues: “Economists tend to have in-built blinkers that steer them from people to figures” (Tomasevski, 2003, p.70). And simply put by Rao and Woolcock: “development is about a lot more than just economics” (2007a, p.1).

Many of these criticisms place a specific focus on the recent escalation in influence of neoliberalism. Beyond the dominance of economics in general is an arguably hegemonic acceptance of neoliberal principles, which, as already described in reference to the earlier discussion on liberalism, and will be dealt with in much greater detail in Chapters Three and Five, embodies an unquestioned faith in free-markets, competition, and non-interventionist policy strategies, grounded in assumptions surrounding excessive individualism and self-interest. Neoliberal economic principles engender the strongest critical response in this dissertation, as the conception of education as a private, exclusive good is argued to be grounded in neoliberal presuppositions.

However, that economics in general have come to dominate the two fields upon which this thesis focuses – namely, international development and education – it is the status of the wide field that is a central theme throughout. For even the concept of education as a global public good, which I argue is superior to a neoliberal vision, is an economic conceptualization of education.
The thesis concludes with how to bridge the conception of education for economic development with that of education as a human right – a non-economic alternative framework. I therefore attempt to shift away from the arguably paradigmic vision of economics as the superior and most authoritative discipline under which to design development and educational policies.

**Education as a human right.**

This thesis argues that the World Bank’s education policies are grounded in two, often times opposing, conceptual frameworks, yet which are both grounded in market economics. However, as will be argued, a third framework exists which is readily adopted by other international organizations – the concept of education as a human right. I argue that the World Bank neglects the rights-based notion of education in favor of an economic conceptualization.

The concept of a human right has at its core a legal foundation, although philosophically it is grounded in the concept of “natural rights” as theorized in the 17th century by John Locke. Locke posited that specific rights existed naturally, and that each human held these rights from one’s essential nature in being human. Moreover, a government is only viewed as legitimate if it allowed for the respect of these natural rights. As a reformulation of Locke’s notion, the modern, legal conception of human rights also pertains to a government’s responsibility to ensure human rights for its citizens. Locke’s concept of natural rights was arguably the ideological basis of revolutions in 18th century America and France. In modern times, it was the atrocities committed in the Second World War that brought the concept of rights to the international stage (Donnelly, 2007; Freeman, 2002; Hunt, 2007; Ishay, 2007; Sen, 2006).

It was in December of 1948 when human rights were introduced into international law, with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly. The UN is then arguably the institutional centre of human rights advocacy.
While the Declaration of Human Rights was designed with the intention of preventing future horrors such as those perpetrated by the Nazis in the Second World War, the list of rights set out in the Declaration is quite expansive. Articles are included dealing with freedom from racism, discrimination, slavery, torture, and the rights to legal protection, to equal rights within marriage, to own property, to practice religion and freedom of expression. The Declaration also called for the right to a certain standard of living, which includes adequate clothing, food, and health care. Finally, as stated in Article 26i of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory” (United Nations, 1948). The Declaration was drafted shortly after the inception of the United Nations Organizations, when a Human Rights Commission was formed and convened, over the course of two years, eighty-one meetings which informed the final Declaration (Freeman, 2002; Ishay, 2007).

A major argument supporting the above article of education as a human right was closely connected to the notion of citizenship in a democratic state. As Marshall argues:

> The education of children has a direct bearing on citizenship, and, when the state guarantees that all children shall be educated, it has the requirements and the nature of citizenship definitely in mind. It is trying to stimulate the growth of citizens in the making. The right to education is a genuine social right of citizenship, because the aim of education during childhood is to shape the future adult. Fundamentally it should be regarded, not as the right of the child to go to school, but as the right of the adult citizen to have been educated… Education is a necessary prerequisite of civil freedom. (1950, p.16)

By allowing all citizens the right to education, “education policy could be harnessed to cultivate and promote virtues like civility, tolerance, public-spiritedness, and a sense of justice” (Norman and Kymlicka, 2003, p.217). The right to education was therefore considered intimately tied to the rights of others, and so the notion of education as a right included a compulsory element. Compulsory education moreover was considered vital to a liberal, democratic state: “It was
increasingly recognised, as the nineteenth century wore on, that political democracy needed an educated electorate… The duty to improve and civilize oneself is therefore a social duty, and not merely a personal one” (Marshall, 1950, p.16).

Of course, education as a human right is also a right for the individual. As the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) state in their 2007 joint publication, A Human-Rights Based Approach to Education for All: “The goal of a human rights-based approach to education is simple: to assure every child a quality education that respects and promotes her or his right to dignity and optimum development” (p.1). Since 1948, this goal has made notable progress, and further international declarations demonstrate an increasing global commitment to the right to education. Most notable is the World Declaration for Education for All, established in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990.4 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 also included and defined the right to education. In 2000, at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, nations reaffirmed the commitment to Education for All, where the Dakar Framework for Action outlined further how education can act as a catalyst for other development goals, such as health, equality and democracy. The Millennium Declaration in 2000, which set out the Millennium Development Goals, includes as number two universal access to primary education by 2015. All these international agreements contain language grounding the conception of education in a human-rights based framework (Alston, 2005; Chabbot, 2003; Tomasevski, 2003; UNESCO and UNICEF, 2007; UNESCO, 2009a).

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4 It should be noted that WDEFA at Jomtien, as described by Tomasevski “did not affirm education as a human right but spoke about ‘access to education’ and ‘meeting learning needs’,” which she argues reflected an ambivalence towards government obligations to provide and finance education (2003, p.93). However, later EFA documents, such as the annual Global Monitoring Report, explicitly tie the EFA mandate to education as a right (2009; 2010).
The right to education has three primary practical dimensions. The first is the right of access to education, which includes the availability and free access to basic education, with an aim to access at all levels, along with equality of opportunity to attend school. The second dimension is the right to quality education, including a curriculum that is “broad, relevant and inclusive” and a “child-friendly, safe and healthy environment” (UNESCO and UNICEF, 2007, p.28). Finally, the right to education includes the right to respect within education, including the respect of a student’s identity and participation rights. These three dimensions are all deemed critical and interrelated under a conception of education as a human right (Tomasevski, 2001; 2003; 2006; UNESCO and UNICEF, 2007). Tomasevski reframes these dimensions in referring to the “4 As” as facets to the right to education: available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable (2001; 2006).

The conception of education as a human right, despite its apparent widespread support on the international scale, is not without its criticisms. I will describe these in brief, along with some refutations of these critiques. The human rights debate is very old and complex, and unfortunately it is beyond the scope of this thesis to espouse and engage in the many debates with justice. Those criticisms which most apply to this thesis will be dealt with in detail later in the body of the dissertation.

First, there are critiques levied against the concept of human rights in general. A major argument criticizes the human rights claim to universality, with an associated grounding in a Western and, as discussed, liberal tradition. The Declaration of Human Rights is considered “universal,” and was the first legal document to make such a claim on an international scale (Freeman, 2002; Sen, 2006). This universality arguably denotes assumptions concerning its

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5 Sources which provide comprehensive descriptions of the debates surrounding human rights include Dunne and Wheeler, 1999; Donnelly, 2003; 2007; Ishay, 2007; Sen, 2004; 2006
applicability to all people, regardless of context, and so potentially assumes that universal human values exist. It is questioned, however, if there can be rights that are, in fact, universal (Brown, 1999; Donnelly, 2003).

This assumption of universalism has been depicted as “cultural imperialism” where Northern, or Western-derived values have been imposed on all people. Given that the Declaration was ratified in 1948 by primarily Northern, or Western nations, it is arguably “based on their own cultural assumptions…” and so “the human rights framework reflects ‘Western’ cultures and values and pays little attention to other cultures’ assumptions and experiences” (UNFPA, 2008, p.20). Ishay further explains the debate: “On the one side of the debate, universalists – from either a liberal or a socialist persuasion – have criticized the cultural rights backlash against Western values as another rationale for repressing women and domestic minorities. On the other side, cultural rights advocates have argued that universalism remains another mechanism for the West to impose its (imperial) values regardless of indigenous patrimony” (Ishay, 2007, p.389).

Several theorists, however, reject these critiques of imperialism. For instance, Freeman argues: “We have seen that human-rights universalism is sometimes accused of ‘cultural imperialism’. The concept of human rights is, however, universal and egalitarian: all human beings are equal in rights. Imperialism is by its nature inegalitarian, and objections to imperialism normally assume some form of moral egalitarianism. Thus, the concept of human rights, far from being imperialistic, provides the basis for criticizing imperialism…” (Freeman, 2002, p.107-8).

Moreover, the human rights framework has evolved since 1948, to take into account criticisms, new processes, such as globalization, and cultural shifts. For instance, “Rights such as
the rights to reproductive health, and to be free from gender-based violence, have been elaborated… In 1993 – 45 years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted, and 12 years after CEDAW [the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979] – 171 nations at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna confirmed that women’s rights were human rights… This process demonstrates the ability of the international human rights framework to recognize cultural change as it is taking place…” (UNFPA, 2008, p.21). Donnelly echoes this response by arguing that all human rights require elaborate justifications and widespread consensus resulting in what he terms “the international normative universality of human rights,” which is subject to evolution and change (2003, p.1). And in terms of the earlier mentioned communitarian critique of the Declaration’s liberal basis, Freeman argues: “… the charge that the concept of human rights entails the neglect of community is unfounded. Since Locke, theorists of rights have emphasized the necessity of community for the protection of rights” (Freeman, 2002, p.107).

A further critique of the concept of human rights is the argument that upholding certain economic and social rights is currently impossible for certain country governments. To hold them accountable for not upholding these rights would be unethical. This is what Amartya Sen (2004) terms the feasibility critique, and as it is a primary critique behind those who argue against the concept of education as a human right, is explained in greater detail later in this thesis. In Chapter Seven it will be argued that, given a vision of human rights as aspirational, it is not problematic to aim towards these human rights as goals, despite that they may not be feasible now.

Critics have furthermore cited tensions embedded in the specific call for the right to education. “A rights-based approach to programming is not a magic wand. It does not provide
simple solutions to challenges that have proved intractable for many years. While providing a principled framework and a methodology for its application, it can also expose tensions, real or apparent, between different rights, among rights holders, and between rights and responsibilities” (UNESCO and UNICEF, 2007, p.20).

For instance, there is an apparent trade-off between the push for access to school and the likelihood of providing quality education for all children, given potential constraints surrounding both human and fiscal resources. Increasing access may mean higher teacher-student ratios and less per-capita funding toward materials and other classroom resources. Moreover, measures to increase equal access to education may also be less cost-effective. For instance, it has been shown that smaller “satellite” schools within villages are more likely to be attended by girls for they are not required to travel long, potentially unsafe distances to larger schools. This strategy is a less cost-effective measure. However, rights-advocates stress that budget constraints are not an excuse to discriminate against any student in denying access. What is instead required is fiscal responsibility and attainable long-term strategies by governments and an understanding by donors that increasing access may mean an increase in lending (UNESCO and UNICEF, 2007; Tomasevski, 2001; 2003). This argument connects to the aforementioned feasibility critique, which as will be unpacked in Chapter Seven, can be refuted on the grounds that simply because providing access may be challenging, does not mean it should be discounted.

There are also tensions associated with the fact that many children in developing nations work, and that schooling in its traditional form may remove children from the labour market which may be of necessity to maintain their families’ incomes. This criticism is associated with the broader universality critique of the human rights mandate, which assumes that universal rights must be applied to all, regardless of context. The notion of pulling students from their
traditional roles and placing them in daytime schooling may have indirect impacts on the family structure and income. Rights-advocates, however, are aware of this criticism and believe that measures can be taken to alleviate the potentially short-term negative impacts of schooling.

UNESCO and UNICEF provide the following solution to this criticism: “It is also incumbent on governments to provide education that offers a viable alternative to employment in terms of its quality and relevance; to introduce policies that address the poverty and livelihood insecurity that force many children into work; and to make education sufficiently flexible and inclusive to allow those children to attend who have no choice but to work” (2007, p.25).

And so, given this albeit brief account of the rights-based conception of education, I must admit some limitations. However, I maintain throughout this thesis that it is the optimal framework for international education policy, and one that the World Bank can indeed invoke were it to alter the conceptual framing of its policy discourse.

**Research Questions**

Given the above rationale, description of and background to my thesis, I endeavor to answer the following three research questions:

1. What conceptual frameworks underpin the World Bank’s education provision policies?
2. What are the implications of the adoption of these frameworks, particularly in light of the conception of education as a human right?
3. How might the Bank overcome the problems that arise from the adoption of these frameworks?
Outline of Chapters

Chapter Two, entitled “The World Bank as an Organization and Factors Contributing to its Policy Development” is intended to provide a broad context for the later analysis of the World Bank’s education policies. Following a history and description of the institution’s structure and operations, an account is given of some of the major critiques that have been levied against the Bank’s work in general. The complex issue of policy development at the Bank is then presented in order to lay the groundwork for the critical analysis of the Bank’s educational policy discourse that will be conducted in later chapters. Chapter Two furthermore provides a description of the Bank’s educational operations. In this chapter I begin to examine the central issue of economics as the dominant discipline operating at the Bank.

The third chapter, “A History of Economics and the Economics of Education: Detailing the Dominance of a Discipline,” aims to give a foundation for my argument that, via the employment of conflicting economic frameworks, the Bank promotes a contradictory conception of education, while highlighting the dominance of economics in the fields of international development and education policy. This chapter attempts to give an overview of those theorists and theories that most apply to this thesis, while drawing attention to the assumed superiority of the field of economics.

Chapter Four, “Public Education and the World Bank: Education as a Global Public Good,” begins the analytical component to this thesis, where a critical policy analysis of the Bank’s discourse is conducted in order to examine in detail one way in which the World Bank conceptualizes education, as a public good. After providing a history of public education systems and the more recent international advocacy of universal public education, I examine in detail the conceptual framework which I present as underpinning the Bank’s advocacy of public education:
education as a global public good. Furthermore, in Chapter Four, I provide a detailed discursive analysis of the World Bank’s education policy documents, pointing to how they are informed by the global public goods framework.

The fifth chapter, “Privatization of Education and the World Bank: Education as a Private Good,” also elucidates the World Bank’s conceptualization of education. However, a very different conclusion from that of Chapter Four is reached given the analysis of a different set of discursive evidence. Chapter Five gives explanations of the various manifestations of market mechanisms in education and the rationales behind their advocacy, including charter and voucher programs, as well as fully private and for-profit schools. Following a brief elucidation of how these market mechanisms are grounded in neoliberalism, an analysis of World Bank education policies is conducted to determine the extent to which the Bank advocates for market mechanisms under a neoliberal framework. Criticisms of these privatization measures are then given, placing focus on neoliberal assumptions surrounding the superiority of private education, as well as potential equity ramifications of privatization policies in education. It is argued that the Bank, in its advocacy of private participation in education, thereby risks a conception of education as exclusive, and so a private good. This conception is in contrast to the notion, as determined in the previous chapter, of education as a global public good.

Chapter Six, “Competing Conceptual Frameworks in World Bank Education Policies,” aims in part to show how the employment of the global public goods and neoliberal frameworks, together, potentially bring about contradictions when applied to policy simultaneously. This mutual adoption is problematic, for when the World Bank adopts both in its education policy, a contradictory stance is endorsed leaving questions as to where the Bank’s mandate truly lies. Beyond this, as also argued in Chapter Six, there are important intersections between the two
frameworks. For instance, both were initially developed as domestic theories but have since been applied on an international scale, as well as mutual foundations in economics as well as liberal political philosophy. These intersections in fact engender criticisms that potentially make their employment problematic. As will be argued, their shared critiques are primarily derived from their common foundation in market economics. Chapter Six furthermore individually weighs the compatibility of each of the neoliberal and global public goods frameworks with the conception of education as a human right.

Chapter Seven endeavors to provide a means by which the Bank might reduce the inconsistencies and problematic features of its education policies, as determined in previous chapters. Entitled “Improving International Education Policies: Bridging the Economic and Rights-Based Visions of Education,” Chapter Seven attempts to move forward from the previously elucidated critiques and asks if and how the Bank might re-conceptualize education in a light that does not engender these problems. Given its authority and capability, I argue that the Bank ought to remain a force in the educational aid and policy arena, but that it ought to embrace a conception of education as a human right. I argue that it is possible for the rights-based and economic discourses to go hand-in-hand despite some tensions. I propose as a possibility that via closer collaboration with organizations that conceive of education as a right, the Bank’s policies will become aligned with this rights-based vision. Moreover, via a reduction in the dominance of economists at the Bank, a paradigm shift may occur where alternative conceptualizations of both development and education can be embraced.
Chapter Two - The World Bank as an Organization and Factors Contributing to its Policy Development

Introduction

This chapter is intended to provide a broad context for the later analysis of the institution on which this dissertation focuses – the World Bank. After a concise history of the Bank and description of its current structure, operations, and mandate, I will give a brief account of some of the major critiques that have been levied against the Bank’s work in general. This is followed by the particular issue of policy development at the Bank, which is provided in order to lay the groundwork for the critical analysis of the Bank’s educational policy discourse that will be conducted in later chapters. In order to elucidate the many forces at work in its policy development, I attempt to detail the many factors that contribute to inconsistencies and other policy problems at the Bank. As a central concern, I present the issue of economics as the dominant discipline operating at the Bank. This is argued to be the case in all sectors, including education.

A History of the World Bank, its Structure, Operations and Mandate

It is difficult to adequately convey the magnitude of the World Bank’s role in international development on the world stage. Its size in terms of resources, staff, influence and complexity overshadow all other global governance and international financial institutions. In many ways, the Bank holds “a near monopoly on the business of development…” (Marshall, 2008, p.xv). Much as its motto – “Our dream is a world free of poverty” – suggests, the Bank’s central mandate is to increase the social and economic development of the world’s poorest countries. It
does so via the provision of financial resources, advising, research and publishing, training and coordinating aid (Jones, 2007; Marshall, 2008; Weaver, 2008). The World Bank has extended its role in development to a wide array of sectors, from agriculture, infrastructure, and mining, to governance, gender, and nutrition. With over 10,000 staff, most stationed at its headquarters in Washington, D.C., but more than 3,000 working throughout the world in country offices, the Bank’s reach reflects its power (World Bank, 2010i). As Marshall describes: “The World Bank consists of a complex set of multinational, multisectoral, multidisciplinary institutions that are involved in almost every aspect of development – which means, in practice, virtually every issue imaginable” (2008, p.2).

The World Bank, while an entity unto itself in terms of governance and financing, is actually an official organization of the United Nations (UN) system, as a specialized agency. It currently consists of five branches. When the Bank is spoken of, it is generally in reference to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) – which lends to middle-income nations and creditworthy less-developed countries – and the International Development Association (IDA) – which focuses on the poorest nations, providing them with interest-free loans (World Bank, 2010f). The Bank’s other, smaller, branches complement the lending arms, including the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) and the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). Finally, there is the International Finance Corporation (IFC), providing advisory services and investments in only the private sector of developing countries (IFC, 2010a; World Bank, 2010i). The three branches with educational programs – IBRD, IDA and IFC – will be the focus of this thesis.6

6 From here on in this dissertation, references to “the World Bank” or “the Bank” include both the IDA and IBRD, unless noted otherwise.
Although it is primarily a financial organization with the purpose of lending capital to developing nations, the Bank must also be viewed as public-sector institution, governed by a cooperative of country governments. However, it is notable that this governance is not democratic. Voting power is determined by financial contribution, and so those governments with the most economic clout hold most sway in terms of policy at the Bank. The United States carries most weight at the Bank as its largest shareholder. Reforms in voting structure are currently underway to give greater voice to developing countries, most notably China. Of its 186 member countries, its policies are ultimately made by its Board of Governors. The Board, which is the decision-making body for IBRD, IDA, and IFC activities, consists of one representative and an alternate per member country, although voting shares are weighted to reflect financial contributions. Furthermore, procedures exist where, via By-Laws, decisions can be made without a Board meeting by the President and 24 Executive Directors alone – one for each of the 5 largest shareholders, and 19 representing the other 181 member countries (Marshall, 2008; Woods, 2006; World Bank, 2010i).

Widely viewed as a funding source, it is true that the World Bank provides access to significant resources. The Bank disburses roughly $25 billion annually in the forms of loans or concessional grants. But given this financial power, its role in policy formation surrounding global economics and development strategy is equally important to note. The Bank can be furthermore viewed as the epicenter of an “epistemic community,” disbursing not only funds but also knowledge – in the form of research, publishing and hosting conferences – in a more intellectual than financial role (Haas, 1992; World Bank, 2010i). The “Knowledge” Bank, or its Analytical and Advisory Activities department, is a significant component of the Bank’s work
(Broad, 2007; King, 2002). For, as will be detailed later in this thesis, much of the Bank’s policy work is informed by its own research (Kapur, 2006).

The World Bank emerged from a conference of 44 nations at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, in July 1944, and was officially established in 1946 as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), alongside the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Reflecting the vision of economist John Maynard Keynes, the initial purpose of the Bretton Woods organizations was to provide financial stability and fiscal support to reconstructive efforts following the Second World War. At the onset, Bank loans were primarily to reconstructive projects in infrastructure, such as transportation (roads, highways and railroads) and power generation. In light of its current position of power and size, it is notable that the World Bank was not deemed of much significance for its first couple of decades (Marshall, 2008; Jones, 2005; 2007; Peet, 2003; Weaver, 2008; Woods, 2006). As Goldman describes: “In the beginning, the World Bank was just an afterthought” (2005, p.52).

In 1960, the Bank began to provide “soft” or “concessional” loans through a new branch called the International Development Association (IDA). Poorer nations (apart from those in Europe, Japan and South Asia, which up until this time had the majority of IBRD funding), were now entitled to loans through the World Bank. Significantly, IDA loans were to be interest-free. Derived from grants given by the richest members of the Bank (in contrast to the IBRD, whose funds came primarily from interest payments), IDA loans were given to less creditworthy clients, and were designed with a lengthy repayment period of fifty years. The Bank then opened the door to a much wider borrower pool, and more varied activities in the development arena, including such “soft sectors” as health and education (Jones, 2005; 2007; Marshall, 2008; Peet, 2003; Weaver, 2008; Woods, 2006).
The relatively minor role played on the world stage by the Bank altered dramatically with the presidency of Robert McNamara in 1968. It was McNamara who shifted the Bank’s focus from reconstruction to poverty alleviation, and who emphasized lending to the poorest countries in the world and increasing development via addressing “basic needs” (such as sanitation, nutrition, and basic health and education services), which until then was not viewed as economically prudent nor practical (Goldman, 2005; Jones, 2007; Marshall, 2008; Peet, 2003). In order to gain support for his expansive development mandate, McNamara altered the Bank’s approach and attempted to depict the Bank’s work as “rational, politically and economically necessary, and profitable. The effort required a new organizational culture and a much grander development science” (Goldman, 2005, p.74). McNamara’s experience as the US defense secretary, running the Pentagon, and as the head of the Ford Motor Company, fed into his vision of a new organizational structure of the Bank and its policies. He therefore attempted to spur a paradigmic shift at the Bank, one which gave primacy to empirical measurement and analysis (Goldman, 2005; Wade, 1996; 2001; Woods, 2006). This paradigm persists today, and as will be discussed below and throughout this thesis, is argued to be at the root of several criticisms of the Bank.

The McNamara era, while extending the reach, influence and power of the Bank, also contributed to an increase in the amount of debt owed by developing country governments in the form of loan repayment. The debt crisis of the late 1970s and early 1980s fueled even further dependence on the Bank and IMF, and forced borrowing governments to follow a specific economic doctrine that included increasing exports, removing trade barriers, and reducing spending, along with increased private sector involvement in such public services as health and education. These became known as the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). Under Bank
president Clausen (from 1981 to 1986) and chief economist Krueger, the SAPs became arguably the most critiqued development policy of the century. By focusing on immediate economic growth, and increasing national GDP, the Bank was accused of neglecting longer-term poverty-alleviation economic strategies. It has been argued that as a result of the SAPs, poverty increased, while education, health and employment levels decreased in the developing world (Cammack, 2004; Moore, 2007; Peet, 2003; Wade, 2002; UNICEF, 1989). Under the cloud of debt repayment, SAPs resulted in what many termed a “lost decade” for the Bank’s borrowing countries (Goldman, 2005).

Therefore, beginning in 1995, under the presidency of James Wolfensohn, the Bank attempted to mitigate the impact of the SAPs, introducing a different, more holistic and country-ownership-based approach to development, whilst continuing to advocate several of the economic measures introduced in the 1980s. At this time, partly resulting from critical voices on the SAPs, the Bank also initiated debt relief policies for what were termed Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC). The HIPC policy gave additional assistance to countries “facing an unsustainable debt burden beyond available debt-relief mechanisms, and an established track record of reform and sound policies through IMF- and World Bank-supported programs” (Woods, 2006, p.163). However, despite an explicit agenda away from SAPs, the Bank under Wolfensohn, and followed by Paul Wolfowitz in 2005, continued to be vilified by many for its policies rooted in what was believed to be a neoliberal economic agenda and the Washington Consensus (both of which will be defined in detail later), subjugating concerns surrounding equity, social justice and poverty alleviation in favour of economic control and debt repayment. As exemplified by the anti-globalization movement of the late 1990s, discontent with international financial institutions, their perceived imperial power and disregard for the well-
being of those in developing nations, was mounting (Marshall, 2008; Peet, 2003; Wade, 2001; Weaver, 2008).

The World Bank continues to feed a very large critical literature in both the academic and development communities. Major criticisms concern such varied issues as the environmental impacts of its projects, transparency of its operations, the equity impacts of its work, lack of true country participation in policy-making, its undemocratic governing and voting structure, ineffectiveness, and its minimal allusions to human rights – including the case of education – in its policies (Birdsall, 2006; Broad, 2007; BWP, 2010a; Cammack, 2004; Goldman, 2005; Gutner, 2005; Moore, 2007b; Peet, 2003; Wade, 2001; 2002). Under its current president Robert Zoellick, the Bank is often critiqued as still “arrogant and narrowly focused; many have a critical view of its policies and operations, especially its slow engagement with environmental issues, its association with several unpalatable governments, and its economic advice” (Marshall, 2008, p.7). As will be detailed below, and of special importance for this thesis as a critical analysis of Bank education policies, are the inconsistencies within the Bank’s policy documents and the associated adherence to an economic paradigm, which are major sources of criticism surrounding the organization.

**Dominance of Economics at the World Bank**

Economics as a discipline has held its ground as the dominant perspective from which international development policy has been designed, implemented and evaluated. This trend can be observed not just in development studies, but economics has come to dominate a wide range of non-economic academic fields, such as sociology and political science, indicating what Wade

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7 A detailed description of the discipline of economics, and in particular the neo-classical economic tradition, its history and how it applies to international development and education policy will be found in Chapter Three.
describes as “economic imperialism” (2009, p.106). This characterization is likely due to the impression of economics as a more rigorous, scientific and objective discipline (Arndt, 2002; Marglin, 2008).

The dominance of economics over wide swaths of academia began in the 1960s, coinciding with an equally powerful authority over development policy, including at the World Bank. At this time, the discipline of economics’ claim to being apolitical, rational and objective, as well as scientific in its empirical approach to analysis, appealed to McNamara’s focus on quantifiability. This thinking arguably led to the expansion of the Bank’s lending operations, and as a result, has fed into decades of economic imperialism and a culture at the World Bank where economic thinking trumps other perspectives (Ellerman, 2005; Marshall, 2008; Rao and Woolcock, 2007b; Weaver, 2008).

Staffing at the Bank reflects this influence, where economists are disproportionately represented. “An overwhelming majority of researchers in DEC [Development Economics Department - the department responsible for the writing of the annual World Development Report] are economics PhDs, despite a general interdisciplinary trend in global development theory and practice over the past several decades. This strongly shapes how the Bank as a whole ‘thinks’ about its mission of development and how – or whether – new ideas get into the mix” (Weaver, 2007, p.505). According to Rao and Woolcock, in 2006, of the DEC’s 83 full-time research staff, only 4 were not economists (2007a; 2007b). Bank staff with backgrounds in other social science fields have claimed that the only way they are able to include their ideas in finalized Bank policies is through employing economic terminology (Vetterlein, 2007; Weaver, 2007). Vetterlein’s research on the Bank has found particular challenges for the “noneconomist”
staff, or “staff willing to break with the entrenched technocratic and econocentric culture in the Bank” (2007, p.526).

Wade echoes the belief that staffing plays a central role in how the Bank and its policies are dominated by economic thinking: “…all but a few share the preconceptions of mainstream Anglo-American economics. If they were to show sympathy for other ideas… they would be unlikely to be selected for the Bank, on grounds of incompetence. The organization’s few non-economist social scientists are employed on marginal issues like resettlement and participation, like anthropologists by colonial administrations before them...” (1996, p.31). While the balance between non-economic and economic staff is closer today than at the time of Wade’s study, economistic work is still given primacy. Economic research is more likely to be incentivized, and economists tend to hold the highest positions in the Bank’s hierarchy (Goldman, 2005; Marshall, 2008; Weaver and Leitritz, 2005). As a result, “This creates a kind of disciplinary monopoly; as such development policy at the Bank tends to reflect the fads, fashions, controversies and debates of one discipline” (Rao and Woolcock, 2007a, p.2).

The authority of economists at the Bank throughout its history has contributed to strong criticisms of the organization. This dominance has been described more forcefully by some as hegemonic, or paradigmic, both at the Bank and in international development policy and research in general (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999; Peet, 2003; Vetterlein, 2007; Wade, 1996; 2009; Weaver, 2007). As discussed below, the power of market economics at the World Bank as an ideological perspective, reinforced via essentially the censorship and scrutiny of major Bank publications has been termed by Wade as “the art of paradigm maintenance” (Wade, 1996). This is perpetuated by an internal culture and external influences that hinder dissent (Ellerman, 2005; Rao and Woolcock, 2007a; 2007b; Weaver, 2007; 2008).
In terms of policy development, Wade asks: “How does the World Bank – a large institution, with some four thousand professional staff [now closer to ten thousand] drawn from many countries, producing dozens of public reports a year – manage to deliver what the outside world hears as a single central message?” (1996, p.30-31) As will be described in this thesis, Bank policy documents often seem to be espousing an overarching set of economic tenets which support a single policy position. As shown below, the Bank must, however, at least attempt to appear to be inclusive of the demands of various actors. When alternative perspectives are included, they often appear to be paid only lip-service. Moreover, this overriding economic paradigm is often in conflict with these alternative approaches to policy. And so, when these alternative approaches are incorporated, inconsistencies become evident.

**Policy Development at the World Bank**

As discussed, a paradigm, rooted in the dominance of economics at the organization, arguably exists at the Bank, and its policies reflect the Bank’s attempts to meet a complex set of demands whilst maintaining this paradigm. The following section details the many inputs to Bank policy.

In addition, as argued by Wade (1996; 2002), Weaver and Leiteritz (2005) and Weaver (2007; 2008), the World Bank’s policy papers are riddled with inconsistent statements and contradictory standpoints. This thesis will examine the extent to which this is also the case for its education policies. The major organizational characteristics and ideological influences that lead to the Bank’s policy design and development, as detailed below, provide a context for the argument, made later in this dissertation, surrounding the Bank’s conflicting conceptions of education provision.
As Barnett and Finnemore remind us: “…we must always bear in mind that the external environment presses upon and shapes the internal characteristics of the organization in a host of ways” (1999, p.725). It is the conflict between the Bank’s external environment and internal dynamics that result in what Weaver describes as organized hypocrisy, which arises: “When reform goals are inconsistent, and when they clash with existing ideologies, norms, incentive structures, and routines” (2008, p.5). The hypocrisy Weaver describes elucidates a major source of inconsistency in Bank policy, and that is the split between discourse and action.

Inconsistencies within policies are also defined as hypocritical. For instance, Robert Wade elucidates the various inconsistencies embedded in the 1993 Bank document *The East Asian Miracle: Economic Growth and Public Policy*, and provides a thorough history and analysis of the report’s design and writing in order to reveal the complex nature of the Bank’s policy development (1996). He details to what extent the Bank’s policies are “mere manifestations of competition and compromise among its member states” as opposed to autonomous decision-making on the part of the Bank (Wade, 1996, p.3). Wade’s findings reveal what will be examined throughout this thesis – that policy development at the Bank is often characterized as the World Bank’s effort at paradigm maintenance, whilst attempting to incorporate other perspectives. As a result, inconsistencies are arguably inevitable.

*External forces on policy development at the Bank.*

Various external forces pressure the Bank to conduct operations in certain ways. Actors holding power over the Bank are often at odds with one another, yet the Bank arguably attempts to be inclusive of all concerns. The first major external players influencing Bank policy are the donor states. While the Bank has 186 member states, only a very few would be considered influential
and holding any power over the functioning and lending practices of the institution. For instance, only five donor states are considered primary shareholders, of which the United States is by all accounts the most powerful. Beyond its position as the biggest financial donor, that the Bank headquarters are located in Washington, DC, that English is the working language, and given the disproportionate number of American staff and those educated at US universities, indicates that the US also has a good deal of indirect power at the Bank. Possibly most significant is that, by tacit agreement, the World Bank president is an American (Marshall, 2008; Weaver, 2008; Woods, 2006).

The Bank’s mandate is therefore inextricably tied to the interests of the United States and other major donors. Its policies are then subject to various economic and political swings internal to the wealthiest, Northern nations. As Vetterlein argues: “The Bank is a highly political entity, reflecting the political convictions of its main donor countries…” (2007, p.524). For instance, a predominance of conservative world leaders generally means a more neoliberal-driven economic policy at the Bank. And while certain donors may exert more influence over the Bank than others, conflict between donors, such as the United States versus European governments and, as depicted by Wade (1996), the Japanese, also play a role in the development of Bank policies. For instance, donors have debated such issues as the importance of private sector involvement in Bank projects involving social services, such as health, water and education (Goldman, 2005; Weaver, 2007).

The Bank must, beyond the donor states, also heed the concerns of its “client,” or borrower states. Pressures for the Bank’s reform, in particular, have come primarily from its borrowers. As Weaver and Leiteritz describe: “…borrowing governments are quick to complain about slow and inflexible bureaucratic procedures, leading to delays and excessive red tape
during loan appraisals and negotiations. Given the importance of client demand to the Bank’s continued viability as a business, the need to appear more responsive to client demands is central to the Bank’s reform process” (2005, p.372).

In particular, middle-income countries, who borrow from the IBRD and thereby pay back loans along with interest, are a major source of Bank funds. As a financial institution, the Bank, as a bank, is in the business of lending money. However, in recent years, such countries as China, Russia, and Brazil have turned from Bank funds toward private capital, with potentially better interest rates and fewer conditionalities (Weaver, 2007). Because of this, the Bank has become more motivated to heed the concerns of its clients in order to retain their business. As one would imagine, donor and client states often have opposing demands with regard to Bank policy, and yet the institution is obliged to take into account all concerns.

Finally, apart from its shareholders and those receiving Bank loans, external to the Bank are numerous critical voices that have recently exerted an enormous amount of influence over the Bank’s public image. These include NGOs and civil society organizations, along with academics and media outlets. As Peet describes: “As criticism of the World Bank mounted the institution began to respond, certainly by adjusting its image, and arguably by modifying its substantive policies” (2003, p.134). Various organizations have contributed to the mounting critiques of the Bank’s motives and policies, spurring calls for major reform and, from some, for a dismantling of the institution (Bank Information Centre, 2010; BWP, 2010a; Peet, 2003; Vetterlein, 2007; Weaver, 2007; Weaver and Leiteritz, 2005; Woods, 2006).

For instance, the Fifty Years is Enough campaign, founded in 1994 as a coalition effort of over 200 organizations, published a book and several reports, and spearheaded a campaign for the transformation of the World Bank and IMF (50 Years is Enough, 2010; Danaher, 1994).
NGOs have then threatened the legitimacy of the Bank, forcing it to respond to their critiques, and at least appear to take their concerns into account. NGOs are now widely agreed to act “as a source of new development norms and agendas” (Weaver, 2007, p.503; Woods, 2006). Also lending voices to the chorus of critics of the Bank are media and journalists. In attracting a more general audience, news outlets and investigative television programs have informed the wider public on issues surrounding the Bank’s work. However, the goals of the Bank critics often do not dovetail with, for instance, those of the donor states (Goldman, 2005; Peet, 2003; Weaver, 2008; Woods, 2006). The Bank is arguably accountable to a number of external players, including donor states, client governments, civil society organizations, and the general public. 

**Internal forces on policy development at the World Bank.**

Beyond the external factors acting on policy development at the Bank, there are equally powerful forces at work within the Bank, not only often at odds with the outside world, but many times causing conflict within the organization.

The World Bank is a very large and incredibly diverse institution, with thousands of staff from more than 160 countries, almost a third of which work in over 100 local country offices, and trained in such varied fields as economics, environmental science, engineering, information technology and education (World Bank, 2010i). Given the number of staff and its composition, a good deal of dissent is arguably inevitable. Even within senior ranks, there have been rumours of dissatisfaction with the Bank’s policies. These opposing views, however, have been met with censorship. As Weaver found, “…a number of publicized dismissals and resignations of high-ranking staff have indicated that organizational censorship may actually be increasing as the Bank becomes more sensitive to challenges to its legitimacy by public protests” (Weaver, 2007, p.506). As Ellerman describes, at the Bank, “…feisty independence of thought can quickly lead
Moreover, Joseph Stiglitz, former chief economist and senior vice president at the World Bank (1997-2000), detailed conflict amongst senior-level officials within the Bank in his book Globalization and its Discontents (2002). Conflict amongst senior staff at the Bank denotes characteristics of the organization’s culture and the inevitability of the emergence of tensions within the Bank. However, the fact of high-level dismissals and accusations of increasing censorship suggest that the Bank does not approve of dissent, indicating an effort to maintain a uniformity of views in line with a single ideological position.

**The Bank’s operational culture.**

A hindrance to dissidence at the Bank is reinforced by what Weaver terms the organization’s “operational culture.” This denotes the means through which Bank staff is evaluated, and the weight given to certain types of projects and results. For instance, the Bank is said to bias “projects toward development activities that can produce certain kinds of results, while steering them away from activities that may not produce immediate tangible effects… Considerable weight is given to economic and technical factors that are easy to identify and measure, whereas complex political and social risk assessment that involve ‘soft’ qualitative indicators are usually neglected or distrusted as ‘unscientific’” (Weaver, 2007, p.507). Importantly, staff promotions have been based on loan targets, creating an incentive towards designing and managing large projects perceived as profitable. As a result, individual Bank staff is motivated less by personal inclinations or informed decision-making on what they believe to be the best course of development policy, but instead are often guided by an incentive structure unique to the World Bank (Ellerman, 2005; Weaver, 2007; Weaver and Leiteritz, 2005). The Bank’s internal culture often serves to reinforce the status quo on what counts as overarching purposes of and quality outcomes to projects.
Engrained ideologies at the Bank.

Applicable to each of the internal factors already described, influencing Bank policies is the notion of Bank staff either abiding by and reinforcing, or opposing and endeavoring to alter, paradigms or ideologies dominant within the Bank. These ideological forces can be viewed more practically as resulting in engrained habits, routines, or “norms” of Bank staff behaviour. These are often described as “hegemonic” in and of themselves, for they are accepted so unequivocally by many and altering them is often deemed impossible (Goldman, 2005; Vetterlein, 2007; Wade, 1996; 2002). Weaver and Leiteritz refer to the “Tenacity of Organizational Culture” when describing the incentive structure of the Bank, which inhibits the introduction of change, suppressing efforts to challenge engrained cultural mores at the Bank (2005, p.379). Arguably, dissent on policy will be contrasted with the reinforcement and incentivising of that which is accepted at the Bank. Those attempting to make change must oppose those reinforcing the status quo by abiding by engrained behaviours and ideologies.

The World Bank’s policy documents arguably reflect the organization’s attempt to maintain a paradigm, rooted in a market-based economic ideology, while at the same time appeasing those various actors with views opposing those of the Bank. The Bank’s adherence to a specific economic framework is at the core of many critiques of the Bank, and is arguably a source of inconsistency within and criticisms of its policies.

The Bank’s education sector work is reflective of this adherence to an economic paradigm in its policies. As will be discussed in greater detail in later chapters, because the Bank’s educational work is dominated by economic theories and adherence to them, it engenders several critiques. As the Bank’s policies in education are the focus of this thesis, the following
section provides a brief description of the Bank’s educational operations to provide a context for the critical policy analysis conducted throughout this thesis.

**The World Bank and Education**

*History of the Bank and education.*

The Bank’s involvement in education began in 1963, with loans to projects focusing on school construction and equipment. For instance, in the beginning most of those employed on education projects were architects (Jones, 2007). The Bank’s work in education, beyond mere construction and equipment, grew slightly more in the 1970s, when an Education Department was established, and issues such as equity were brought to light. It was the early 1980s, however, that saw the Bank’s wider reach into educational programming, coinciding with a stronger focus on investment in human capital – where education was envisioned as an investment with a very high rate of return (dealt with in detail in the next chapter) – as a means to economic development and thereby poverty alleviation (Heyneman, 2003; Jones, 2005; 2007; Mundy, 2002). For instance, the 1980 *World Development Report* emphasized human capital development as a key component of the Bank’s development strategy (World Bank, 1980, p.32).

In the later 1980s, it began to institute structural adjustment loans. This saw a more interventionist stance on the part of the Bank, where loans had very broad and extensive conditionalities attached to them. Similar to the SAPs, more specific sector adjustment loans – which also encouraged competitive markets and supported private sector initiatives – focused on overhauling a sector, such as education (Jones, 2005; 2007; Peet, 2003).

The structural adjustment programs of the 1980s coincided with an expansion in the Bank’s educational operations and a stronger focus on educational investments due to their likely
high rate of return. A shift then occurred to more policy-based lending, where loans were attached to conditionalities, including agreeing to IMF macroeconomic programs, such as increased free trade and lower inflation. With the adoption of the later-termed economic policy of the “Washington Consensus,” which further encouraged the private sector and open markets, an overriding policy discourse solidified at the Bank, and in particular in its work on education. Thus, in the latter 1980s, the Bank’s vision of education was informed by the need for human capital and its broader macroeconomic policies which encouraged privatization and user fees, in an effort to increase efficiency and reduce public expenditure (Colclough, 2000; Jones, 2007; Mundy, 2002). Interestingly, the era of the SAPs saw an expansion in the Bank’s education operations, in part due to the fact that any effort to decrease any government expenditure necessarily had to deal with educational spending, which often accounted for upwards of 20% of developing nations’ budgets (Mundy, 2002).

It was also the increasing regard for the human capital approach that gave more legitimacy to an expansion in educational programming. The Bank’s education sector increased its research initiatives as well on the various inputs to education. Findings from research on rates of return in education fed into the policy shift that emphasized increased funding to primary schooling – as opposed to higher education – as most efficient. To summarize, the Bank’s educational policy prescriptions of the 1980s endorsed increased private sector involvement, decentralization of school management and a reallocation of funds from higher to primary education. This mandate was termed by Colclough as the “Edlib” agenda (Colclough, 1996; 2000; Jones, 2007; Mundy, 2002).

Under the cloud of the widespread acknowledgement that the SAPs were ineffective at increasing growth, while detrimental in terms of equity, in the 1990s the educational rhetoric at
the Bank interestingly solidified. As Mundy has noted: “Insiders describe this as a period in which the Bank’s managers moved decisively away from a ‘bricks and mortar’ approach to educational investment, and adopted an explicit and ambitious effort to place education sector reform, and effective educational management, at the core of its lending activities” (Mundy, 2002, p.493). As a result of this effort education lending rose significantly, with continued endorsement of the “Edlib” policies.

In the early 1990s, the Bank consolidated this educational agenda, which approached education both as an investment and as an effective means to poverty alleviation. Basic education loans to poorer nations have since become a focus of World Bank education lending, where in the 2009 *Education Year in Review*, the Bank claims that $1.5 billion of its educational spending supports basic education (Heyneman, 2003; Jones, 2005; 2007; Mundy, 2002; World Bank, 2009b, p.5).

At the beginning of the Wolfensohn era, the Bank’s education sector saw several cutbacks, including a reduction in staff, indicative of a Bank-wide attempt to reduce expenditures and reform its management structure (Mundy, 2002; Jones, 2007). While the focus of its work continued to stress financing of education concerns, some expansion was seen into other realms, such as early childhood education and adult literacy, which can be seen in the 1995 *Priorities and Strategies for Education* (World Bank, 1995). Although the more participatory approach of the Wolfensohn presidency led to a reduction of the rigid approach of the “Edlib” era, several of these policies were maintained by certain staff at the Bank. For instance, privatization supporters continued to publish and advocate for their position within the Bank. But concurrently, by the time of the 1999 *Education Sector Strategy*, the outright advocacy of privatization was muted,
particularly given the mounting criticisms of the Bank’s work in general and in education (Colclough, 1996; Jones, 2007; Mundy, 2002; World Bank, 1999).

Also, until recently, the World Bank housed the harmonized donor program, the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (FTI), which since 2002 has provided additional financing for basic education to developing country governments who have “demonstrated serious commitment” to attaining universal primary education (FTI, 2008; 2009b; 2010). In managing both the trust funds which give this support, the Catalytic Fund for Education and the Education Program Development Fund, the Bank was the key manager of the FTI (FTI, 2008; 2009b; Steiner-Khamsi, 2009; World Bank, 2010e).

Current Bank operations in education.

Currently, the World Bank is the largest provider of funds and expertise to education programs in the world. With approximately 3.4 billion dollars in loans, credit and grants in FY09, the Bank has expanded its education operations to include, as discussed below, a very wide array of educational topics (World Bank, 2009a; 2009b; 2010h). Educational programming at the Bank has expanded to its private sector arm, the IFC, which established a Health and Education Unit in 2000 (IFC, 2001; 2010b).

The Bank posits that a major priority for its work in education is as, to use the term of President Wolfensohn in 1996, a “Knowledge Bank,” housing an extensive amount of educational data, including findings from its own and other organizations’ research, along with best practices in project and policy design (Broad, 2007; King, 2002; 2007; St. Clair, 2006). The technical advice derived from this data is argued to be a source of knowledge beyond the Bank to both borrower governments and other lending organizations (Jones, 2007; Steiner-Khamsi, 2009; World Bank, 2009b).
Its educational research foci are divided into four main topics. First, under the theme of “Education for All,” the Bank provides resources on how to enable governments to reach the EFA goals of access to and quality basic education for all. This includes information on Early Childhood Development, Education in Fragile States (such as post-conflict zones), gaining equitable access to education for girls, as well as how to attain quality education and evaluate learning outcomes (World Bank, 2009b; 2010h).

Second, the Bank has spearheaded initiatives on “Education for the Knowledge Economy” (EKE), where resources are disseminated concerning such topics as information and communications technology (ICT) in education, tertiary education, and making secondary education relevant as a transition from school to working. The EKE agenda is meant to increase and strengthen countries’ human capital base via education (King, 2002; World Bank, 2002a; 2010d).

Third, the Bank’s work extends to assisting governments in how best to improve school health initiatives, including nutrition programs and HIV/AIDS education. Via publications, learning resources, and conferences, the Bank has made child health a critical issue in the educational development mandate (World Bank, 2003b; 2009d; 2010h).

Fourth, and most relevant for this thesis is the Bank’s work on the “Economics of Education,” which broadly includes the support of research, publications, and conferences on the economic analyses of financing and expenditures, educational interventions (including individual Bank projects), school administration and management, learning outcomes and public-private partnerships in education. Also under the umbrella of the Economics of Education, the Bank conducts impact evaluations of its own projects, collaboratively with staff external to the Education unit, including the Bank’s Development Economics Research Group and country
office staff, via the evaluation of, for instance, enrollment data and standardized testing results (Jones, 2007; World Bank, 2010b).

The Bank furthermore houses an educational statistics database (EdStats), compiling data from numerous sources inside and outside of the Bank, including data on enrollment, gender, drop-out and completion rates, teacher salaries, expenditures, individual country profiles on the status of their education systems, and data on individual Bank projects (World Bank, 2010c).

In terms of its lending operations, the Bank’s role as the largest source of aid to education in the South should not be underestimated (World Bank, 2009b). The Bank lends to fund projects worldwide, at all educational levels from early childhood education (ECE) to adult education, in the areas outlined in many of the topics above, but also in additional general areas such as education policy and planning, teacher development, various financing mechanisms (such as cost-recovery and financial management), projects focusing on equity and access for marginalized groups, curriculum, school resources, such as textbooks, assessment resources and educational facilities, including school construction – and this is not nearly an exhaustive list of many broad project activities (World Bank, 2009b; 2010c; 2010h).

From FY05-FY09, the World Bank, by sub-sector, lent an average of 14% to tertiary education, 25% to secondary education, 42% to basic education, and 19% to other educational activities. Regionally, in 2009, much of Bank educational lending was to sub-Saharan African countries, with 29%, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean with 22%, and under 15% for each of the other regions. In 2009 specifically, the Bank concentrated $1.9 billion of its educational loans to IDA countries, and 1.5 billion supporting basic education initiatives (in both IDA and IBRD countries) (World Bank, 2009a; 2009b, p.5).
Furthermore, the Bank aims to alter its operational focus in the future based on research currently being conducted for the latest *Education Sector Strategy 2020*. Recent economic developments including increased globalization and the current global economic crisis have led to some changes in the Bank strategies. For instance, ICT in education is considered by the Bank to be of increasing importance within the classroom, as well as curriculum changes that are required to better suit technologically-driven societies in developing countries. In light of the economic crisis, given that an increasing number of people in the South will be considered living in poverty, the Bank is reinforcing the connection of education to economic development. Also, as past strategic priorities focused on universal primary education, the Bank argues that a shift is required to give equal attention to increase completion rates, quality within education, and access to secondary education (World Bank, 2010a).

The significance of the World Bank’s operations to education in developing nations then cannot be understated. Its reach is incredibly wide, in terms of the borrower nations, the programs it supports and its position as a source of educational research and knowledge. Its education policies are then worthy of a deep analysis, due to their vastness.

Beyond this, though, the Bank’s work in education has been heavily critiqued. This thesis will focus on two criticisms: (a) the inconsistencies within its education policy discourse, in particular its conceptions of education as both a private and a public good; and (b) the neglect of a human rights approach to education. Both of these critiques relate to one of the most forceful and recurrent criticisms of the Bank’s work in education, which has been its economism (Alexander, 2001; Fine and Rose, 2001; Ilon, 2001; Jones, 2005; 2007; Klees, 2002). Moreover, the central problems in its education policy relates to the earlier discussion on the dominance of economics at the Bank in general.
For instance, the Bank consistently refers to externalities – byproducts of economic activity which impact those not directly involved in that activity – when promoting its educational policies, and rates of return are central to determining the success of Bank education programs (Jones, 2007; Klees, 2008). The Bank’s persistent economic framing in its education policies has been described as “what can only be deemed its obsessive attachment to human capital theory” (Fine and Rose, 2001, p.156). The Bank’s economistic approach to education is displayed on its website, where, as described above, such topics as *economics of education*, *public-private partnerships*, and *financing of education* are figured prominently (World Bank, 2010b; 2010f). This thesis aims to unpack and expand on this criticism of excessive economistic thinking by examining the way in which the Bank argues for education as both a public and private good, and its limited focus on education as a human right. This inconsistent and problematic policy stance will be described and analyzed in detail in later chapters.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has aimed to provide a context for the analysis of World Bank education policies. By giving a brief history of the Bank, its current structure and agenda, and an account of the factors contributing to its policy development, a background for this thesis has been established. Furthermore, an examination of the authoritative field of economics at the Bank has provided a backdrop for a critique of the institution, where its economism engenders criticisms of its policy design. The following chapter – an examination of this dominant discipline of economics and the economics of education – will build on this foundation to support my argument that the dominance of economics at the World Bank is a factor in policy inconsistencies, where economic
frameworks are adopted in tension with one another, whilst undermining a legal and rights-based framework concerning education provision.
Chapter Three - A History of Economics and the Economics of Education: Detailing the Dominance of a Discipline

Introduction

Given the disciplinary dominance of economics at the World Bank, as described in Chapter Two, and the aim of this thesis to unpack the Bank’s economic conceptualizations of education as both a public and a private good, it is necessary to provide a description of the broad field of economics, and a more detailed depiction of the specific areas of economic development and the economics of education. This chapter then aims to give a foundation for my argument that, via the employment of conflicting economic frameworks, the Bank promotes a contradictory conception of education. Moreover, this chapter will highlight the primacy of economics in both international development and education policy, which will later be argued to subjugate other ways of conceptualizing these fields. This chapter attempts to give an overview of those theorists and theories that most apply to this thesis – such as the subjects of the state versus the market’s roles in the financing and provision of goods and services, and how the field of economics came to dominate.

A Brief Intellectual History of Economics

The following section attempts to provide a timeline of the history of economics as it applies to the discipline as it currently stands. As an intellectual history, this description will first introduce the major thinkers in the field and their contributions. The history begins with Adam Smith, as he is widely viewed as the first economist in this tradition. Preceding Smith, society was primarily structured around feudalism and mercantilism. These, however, are not to be dealt with here.
*The Classical economic era.*

The field of economics as it is widely taught and studied today arguably began with the classical economic tradition, most notably originating with Smith’s *laissez-faire* economics. Published in 1776, Smith’s *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* provides an examination of the early industrial revolution’s model of economics, along with an argument endorsing the free-market. In brief, Smith concentrates on two main problems in economics.

First, he seeks to explain how society, as an economic structure, functions – or would function free from excessive government intervention. From this, Smith defines the “laws of the market,” providing a detailed account of how the economy and thereby society manages to operate. These laws serve an explanatory function in telling us how certain actions in certain contexts result in predictable consequences. Second, Smith is concerned with progress, or economic growth. For Smith, the economy is not static, it has an objective, to move along and advance society (Heilbroner, 1980; Heilbroner and Thurow, 1982; Smith, 1776/2003).

Smith argued that capitalist society must be separated into classes, where a lower class is responsible for manual labour, primarily on assembly lines, putting into practice ideas and inventions produced by those in a higher class. This “division of labour” is essential for efficient production of materials (Smith, 1776/2003).

Dependent on this division of labour, Smith proposes an ideal economic system founded on the principles of a free market, which is able to operate due to an “invisible hand” – metaphorically used to describe the self-regulation of the market – ensuring that the right amount and variety of goods will be produced. These goods will then be sold for a fair price due to competition between manufacturers and suppliers. The free market is meant to operate separate from the state, and Smith regards government as minimally necessary to ensure the good
functioning of the economy. Much of Smith’s theory is founded upon a specific conception of human nature which assumes that people are primarily motivated by their own self-interest. This allows for competition which in turn ensures that market prices will remain fair (Heilbroner, 1998; Heilbroner and Thurow, 1982; Smith, 1776/2003; Sowell, 2007).

Smith’s assumptions surrounding human nature are familiar to any student of economics today, where people by default are self-interested, rational, and act to maximize utility. Individuals then know what they want and how to attain these self-interested goals, by acting efficiently and rationally. Given the nature of individuals, the economy will function best if people are free to participate in economic activities by their own volition, and reap the benefits of their actions. This depiction of human nature persists, and is at the foundation of much economic theoretical work today (Ardnt, 1978; Heilbroner and Thurow, 1982; Marglin, 2008).

Heilbroner summarizes Smith’s laws of the market: “…the drive of individual self-interest in an environment of similarly motivated individuals will result in competition; and they further demonstrate how competition will result in the provision of those goods that society wants, in the quantities that society desires, and at the prices society is prepared to pay” (Heilbroner, 1980, p.53).

Smith’s laissez-faire economics is widely touted for its disdain of an excessive role for government in the economy for the laws of the market only apply if the market is free to operate without intervention. However, while Smith certainly takes issue with government meddling with the market mechanism, he does believe in government provision of certain services, including education. This conception of education as a public good will be detailed later in this chapter and thesis. All in all, Smith’s vision of free-market society was quite optimistic, and in fact idealistic.
In contrast to Adam Smith’s hopeful vision of society’s progress, Thomas Malthus’ 1798 work *An Essay on the Principle of Population as It Affects the Future Improvement of Society*, detailed the perils of population growth and the depletion of resources. While Smith essentially envisaged a world only bettered by economic growth, Malthus was pessimistic that the human population would surpass resource growth and feared that excessive saving would be “threatened by ‘glut’” where supply would exceed demand (Arndt, 1987, p.12; Heilbroner, 1980). At the same time, David Ricardo also espoused a somewhat bleak view of economic progress. While also concerned about population growth, Ricardo’s primary worry involved class divisions. In his *Principles of Political Economy*, he saw society in three primary groupings – workers, capitalists and landlords, where the landlord in the end was the only group to profit, and at the expense of the other two (Heilbroner, 1980; Heilbroner and Thurow, 1982; Martinussen, 2004). These pessimistic theories were two of the first critiques of market economics, opening the door to later critical work and alternative economic models. Resource and income distribution became steadily more central to economic theory.

For instance, these pessimistic visions were later tempered by the economic theories of John Stuart Mill. Mill argued that the primary concern for economists was not growth, but better distribution. Unlike Ricardo who held an objective vision of economics, Mill believed that distribution is dependent on individual decisions. Mill, a liberal political theorist, had faith in the ability of individuals to change their behaviour, and so, quite optimistically, expected that society would distribute resources effectively and equitably over time (Ardnt, 1978; Easton and Klees, 1992; Heilbroner, 1980; Mill, 1859/1991).

Mill then ushered in an era where growth fell from the priorities of economists. Instead, as Ardnt describes, economists “… felt it increasingly necessary to direct their attention to the
evils, or at least the blemishes, of the existing system – inequality in the distribution of income and wealth, the growth of monopolies and combines, the trade cycle and unemployment” (1978, p.14).

A shift in economic thought can be attributed to Mill, influencing the focus on distribution and class. Significantly, this shift engendered a central concern with the role of government in the economy. Economic theorists have grappled with this issue ever since. On one end of the spectrum are the theories of Karl Marx. Marx’s 1848 *Communist Manifesto*, co-authored with Friedrich Engels, provides a critique of capitalist economies, where exploitation and class inequities are inevitable. Marx developed a labour theory of value, where under capitalism, the laborers must necessarily be paid less than the value of what they produce, if the capitalist is to gain a profit. This exploitation, further exacerbated if one heeds Marx’s assumption that the workers in fact create more value than the capitalists do, results in inevitable tensions within society. As a result of these tensions, a revolution from below would occur and result in a “dictatorship of the proletariat.” Purely centralized socialism, governing a classless society, would replace a free-market, capitalist economic structure (Heilbroner, 1980; Martinussen, 2004; Marx and Engels, 1848/1992).

The era ranging from Smith until Marx came to be known as the “classical era” of economics, contributing such widely used concepts and beliefs as self-regulating markets, benefits of trade and imports, market competition and division of labour, which we now take for granted. The theories from this era were presented by most theorists as mathematically sound, laying the foundation for the claim to scientific neutrality economists today often boast.

Easton and Klees summarize the classical economic era: “The Classical economists… all focused their attention on explaining societal processes of production and distribution and on
identifying the factors that contributed to assuring ‘the wealth of nations.’ The free operation of markets and the uninhibited movement of capital were principal among those they identified” (1992, p.125). The legacy of the classical era is further described by Weintraub as the “classical theory”: “The output or product of an economy was thought to be divided or distributed among the different social groups in accord with the costs borne by those groups in producing the output” (Weintraub, 2010). In time critics of this view emerged, questioning the objectivity of the theory. For instance, the assumption that people always pay the exact amount an item is worth – an objective perception of “value” – was questioned. What some economists saw were instead more subjective factors, later termed “supply” and “demand” (Martinussen, 2004; Weintraub, 2010).

**Neoclassical economics - the current orthodoxy.**

The neoclassical era in economics thus emerged as an advancement of certain classical economic concepts. The term “neoclassical” was first coined in 1900 by economist Thorstein Veblen (whose work interestingly in fact opposed many of the neoclassical tenets). The first “neoclassicists” were followers of Alfred Marshall, whose 1892 work *Principles of Economics,* introduced the “neoclassical synthesis,” a mathematical method of economic analyses (Arndt, 1987; Easton and Klees, 1992; Heilbroner, 1980). Marshall was arguably the first prominent figure in the neoclassical tradition, and his research became “the most important standard work within mainstream economics” (Martinussen, 2004, p.24). To summarize, Weintraub (2010) states that there are three main assumptions embedded in neoclassical economics:

1. People have rational preferences among outcomes.
2. Individuals maximize utility and firms maximize profits.
3. People act independently on the basis of full and relevant information.
Given these assumptions, the neoclassical tradition – which today underpins the vast majority of the economics discipline – tackles as a main problem the allocation of resources. Neoclassical economics is said to be the modern version of classical economics, embodying many of the same assumptions, while advancing more abstract theories via the application of mathematical models, such as the neoclassical synthesis (Arndt, 1978; Weintraub, 2010).

According to Martinussen: “The principal thesis advanced by these neo-classical economists was that free competition and market mechanisms, in all countries and under all circumstances, would bring about a more optimal allocation of production factors and a more optimal distribution of commodities, than a regulated economy with administrative control and central planning” (2004, p.261). Peet provides a similar description:

Basically, neoclassical economic theory asserted that, under conditions of perfect competition, markets yield a long-run set of prices that balance, or equilibriate, the supplies and demands for each commodity. Given certain conditions – such as the preferences of consumers, productive techniques and the mobility of productive factors – market forces of supply and demand allocate resources efficiently in the long run, in the sense of minimizing costs and maximizing consumer satisfaction. And finally, all participants in production receive incomes commensurate with their efforts. (Peet, 2003, p.5)

Developed under neoclassical economics include such widely accepted concepts as supply and demand, where prices in the market are determined by the amount demanded by the consumer. This results in “economic equilibrium,” another readily accepted economic concept. The neoclassical tradition furthermore advances the notion of “Pareto Optimality,” which theorizes that “provided certain circumstances hold, perfect competition leads to efficient allocation of resources and every efficient allocation is a competitive equilibrium” (Blaug, 1970, p.102). It is when these “certain conditions” are not met that “market failure” occurs, and inefficient resource allocation results. Within economics, a debate continues on how best to deal with market failure – and, as will be seen in the upcoming chapters, the associated theory of public goods is major
theme in this thesis. While I am unable here to provide a comprehensive detailing of each major concept under the neoclassical tradition, those listed above demonstrate that a major facet is optimal resource allocation and distribution, which have impacted economic policies in both education and international development. Again, debates surrounding these theories have often centred on the role of state in assuring – or meddling with – the market mechanisms.

Under the umbrella of neoclassicism, economists in the early 20th century developed theories which examine the most optimal role for the state in the economy. For instance, John Maynard Keynes’s 1936 *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, questions a minimal role for government in the economy, and cited inefficiencies which result from deregulated, private sector decisions. Keynesian economics advocates a mixed economy, where the free-market is able to operate, but with a significant role for government in financial regulation and social services. Keynes’s theory was widely adopted following the Great Depression of the 1930s, which he blamed in large part on a blind adherence to free-market economics. Keynesian thought promotes an objective of full employment and supports government intervention in the economy to ensure this aim (Keynes, 1936/1991; Martinussen, 2004; Preston, 1996).

Another economist who further grappled with the role of the public sector was Paul Samuelson. His public finance theory of public goods was grounded in Keynesian theory, and was designed to determine how best to deal with market failures when resource allocation is not optimal, and thereby to determine the best allocation of goods and services by the market or the state. His theory is of particular relevance for this thesis (and will be discussed in greater detail in later chapters), for it is the precursor to the concept of Global Public Goods, which I later argue
defines education as nonexclusive and so questions privatization (Kaul, et al, 1999; Samuelson, 1954; Stiglitz, 2000).

On the other side of the debate stand market advocates, such as Friedrich Hayek, a libertarian, who advanced the notion of individual freedom from government intervention. Beyond a diminished role for the state in commercial activities and a decrease in government regulatory powers, Hayek presented an argument against taxation, for redistributing wealth hinders progress and innovation. For instance, entrepreneurs would be less likely to expand a business (which produces jobs) if their profits are taxed (Kley, 1994; Olssen, 1996; Rapley, 2002).

Finally, Milton Friedman opposed Keynesian economics in favor of “monetarism” and was an early member of what later came to be known as the “Chicago School” of economic theory, where he and his contemporaries vehemently opposed government regulation of markets and society. His economics were informed by his libertarian principles and assumptions surrounding inefficiencies of the state and the value of privatization. These positions all feed into his side interest in advocating school choice and privatization of education. Friedman has been coined an advocate of the neoliberal agenda, which as will be discussed in detail later, underpins many international development policies and educational privatization arguments (Friedman, 1962/2002; Harvey, 2007; Kane, 2002).

The above broad description shows the foundation of what today is generally thought of as the field of economics. There is, however, an evident split amongst prominent economists of the past century, as exemplified by the divergent approaches of, for instance, Samuelson and Friedman on how best to deal with market failure. Samuelson, who took a Keynesian approach, was a contemporary of Friedman, the monetarist. This conceptual conflict is highlighted in this
thesis in the World Bank’s dual adoption of the Keynesian versus Monetarist principles in conceiving of education under both the global public goods and neoliberal frameworks.

Yet despite divergent views on such issues as public goods, the underlying principles of neoclassical economics have been argued to constitute a “metatheory,” and is what Wade (2009) describes as a “monoculture” and others depict as the neoclassical “orthodoxy” or “paradigm” (Easton and Klees, 1992; Martinussen, 2004; Weintraub, 2010). Given this history, one can trace how the field came to dominate a multitude of areas, such as education and international development. And throughout this thesis, when I make reference to the dominance of the field of economics, I am making reference to the field as has been built by the above theorists.

From these brief descriptions, one can see the intellectual precursors to the private/public debate in education. Later in this thesis, it will be shown that Samuelson’s public goods theory is at the root of many of the World Bank’s education provision policies, while in opposition, Friedman’s neoliberal stance informs others. Furthermore, it is of particular significance that these two frameworks which underpin Bank education policies are both economic in nature, to the neglect of other ways of conceptualizing of education and development.

**Development Economics**

The field of international development economics did not emerge until World War Two, at least not as a central concern. Until this time, economists, while certainly interested in economic development, focused on capitalist economies of the “West.” It was the horrors of the Second World War combined with the collapse of colonialism, that brought to the forefront an idealism surrounding the need for a better, more just world. Since 1945, with the creation of the World Bank (then simply the IBRD) and the IMF at the Bretton Woods Conference, and the draft
charter of the United Nations at Dumbarton Oaks, economic development worldwide has
become a major policy objective of developed nations (Arndt, 1987; Rist, 2008).

By the late 1940s, literature on economic development was abundant in academic and
organizational circles. Throughout the 1950s, a narrative which equated economic development
with economic growth was solidified, with very few dissenters. The notion of growth was linked
specifically to an increase in gross domestic product (GDP), or the amount of goods and services
that are produced (Heilbroner and Thurow, 1982; Patnaik, 2005). Most economists sought to
remedy the underdevelopment of some nations with the economic strategies and policies
employed in developed countries. As Albert Hirschman argues, it was in fact the success of post-
war reconstruction in Europe that led to this duplication of economic policies in the developing
nations, based on a (false) belief that growth policies were effective regardless of context
(Hirschman, 1979). Of course, few economists ignored the complexity of development, and most
made some reference to issues beyond per capita gains, such as income distribution and equality.
However, the dominant thread in development economics until at least the mid-1960s was the
notion of economic development as economic growth (Arndt, 1987; Rist, 2008).

It was the emergence of human capital theory and its rising acceptance in the early 1960s
that caused a shift from the focus on growth (Arndt, 1987; Easton and Klees, 1992). Human
capital is a human being’s input into the economy based on his or her productivity. The benefits
of – or rate of return to – investing in a person’s human capital are measurable by an increase in
the individual’s income. Wider social rates of return to investing in human capital are measured
with respect to the public cost, or public investment in human capital, relative to a rise in GDP.
Anything that increases the productivity of a worker can be considered a contribution to human
capital, such as education. For instance, the relative cost of investing in basic education is less
than the argued economic benefits, and so has a high social rate of return (Schultz, 1989; 1995; Sowell, 2007). As Arndt describes “The shift in thinking to human capital, which occurred in just two or three years around 1960, has its origins in the then current preoccupation with economic growth and its causes in developed countries. But it was quickly taken up by those who were writing about economic development. One result was to revive the somewhat dormant interest in technical assistance, as contrasted with capital aid, to developing countries; another was to introduce new themes – investment in education, manpower planning, the ‘brain drain’ – into the development literature” (Arndt, 1987, p.60). Significantly, education here became a critical element in development.

Economists such as T.P. Schultz and Gary Becker brought to light the economic returns of investing in education, as capital formation. While presented primarily as an economic objective, the stress on education caused yet another shift in thinking about development. Education was not merely seen as an investment in a country’s GDP, but indirectly addressed broader social issues, such as equity and health. Education as human capital was a central factor in the move away from a unilateral view of economic development as growth, to the social objectives of development as well (Arndt, 1987; Becker, 1964/1993; Rist, 2008; Shultz, 1989; 1995).

By the late 1960s, various objectives, or ends, became as central to thinking about development as were the means. The improvement of lives, including increasing health and education, or “social development,” came to the forefront of not only academic literature on the subject, but also the mandates of multilateral institutions. Such organizations as the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and the Institute for Development Studies at the University of Sussex began to make statements and publish pieces which not only stressed the
importance of social objectives, but also questioned the development as growth focus of the past few decades (Arndt, 1987; Rist, 2008). This new focus on social elements, including employment and inequality, led to Robert McNamara’s refocusing of the World Bank’s work to the most impoverished nations and people (Gilbert and Vines, 2000; Marshall, 2008; Jones, 2007). The “Basic Needs” approach derived from this vision, and first termed as such by the International Labour Organization (ILO), quickly became a slogan for development in the 1970s. These needs included water, health care, sanitation and basic education (McNamara’s World Bank refocusing at this time was detailed in Chapter Two) (Martinussen, 2004; Rist, 2008).

However, the basic needs approach was not accepted by all. In particular, leaders of developing nations considered what came to be called modernization far more important. W.W. Rostow and his book The Stages of Economic Growth became a blueprint of sorts for modernization. In it, he presented the idea that… “…underdevelopment was an initial state. The West had progressed beyond it, but other countries lagged behind. However, the West could help speed up the process of development in the third world, for instance by sharing its capital and know-how, to bring these countries into the modern age of capitalism and liberal democracy” (Rapley, 2002, p. 15). Modernization theorists did not believe there was much difference between nations, as all were on the same path to the same destination. Some had simply moved more quickly on the modernization path than others (Arndt, 1987; Martinussen, 2004; Rapley, 2002; Rist, 2008).

Not everyone embraced modernization theories. For instance, taking issue with this view were those who came to be known as “neo-Marxist,” or “dependency” theorists. According to this leftist viewpoint: “contemporary forms of economic imperialism have impeded progress throughout the Third World. They argue that economic domination, as exerted by the highly
industrialized countries, is a much more important development-impeding factor than all the internal conditions in the backward countries” (Martinussen, 2004, p.86). Neo-Marxist theory carries a highly critical outlook on international development and aid to Southern nations, arguing that the majority of the world in turn becomes dependent on a small number of wealthy, industrialized countries. This perspective further argues that any lack of development can be attributed to the expansion of capitalism throughout history. The “third world” is then argued to exist due to capitalism and imperialism, which has led to gross inequality and exploitation. These theorists refer not only to economics, but political and cultural dependencies, as well.

International organizations and the governments of developed, Northern nations are considered imperialist and are accused by neo-Marxist theorists as having “actively underdeveloped the peripheral societies – or at the very least obstructed their development” (Martinussen, 2004, p.88; Preston, 1996; Rist, 2008).

Another view of development also emerged from the right. Led by P.T. Baur, some economists viewed foreign aid as “voluntaristic, welfarist, dirigiste…” (Arndt, 1987, p.152). An effective means to development was not to be found in aid. According to Bauer, bilateral aid rarely increased development, and in fact often stifled it. In suppressing an active private sector and civil society, and increasing the likelihood of government corruption, aid is pointless, and often harmful (Baur, 1972; 1981). One can trace Baur’s views to basic neoclassical presuppositions, such as a limited government to spur efficiency. However, as defined below, one can see more clearly in Baur the foundations of the neoliberal approach, in his extreme positions on development.

These viewpoints, while lend a valuable critical voice to the development debate, never really gained much traction. Modernization, along with human capital theory, remained the
primary frameworks for economic development until the 1980s when an even more free-market oriented view of development gained ground, known today as neoliberalism.

**Neoliberalism and development.**

In reference to development policies, neoliberalism can be described as a strong, or extreme, form of free-market economics. In his book *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, David Harvey proposes that:

> 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. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices… State interventions in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum because, according to the theory, the state cannot possibly possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit. (2007, p.2)

Neoliberal-based policies then stress non-interventionist strategies to strengthen the economy and functioning of basic services. In terms of international development in particular, Christopher Colclough depicts neoliberalism as “reasserting the primacy of economic growth amongst policy objectives, believing poverty will thereby be most effectively reduced,” and cites a shared view amongst neoliberals “that the slow progress made by developing countries has been mainly caused by excessive economic intervention by their own governments” (2000, p.6). Also in the context of international development, Mark Olssen examines the major assumptions embedded in neoliberalism:

> … subjects are economically self-interested; that the economy is separate from the rest of society; that the uncoordinated self-interest of individuals correlates with the interests and the harmony of the whole; that individuals are rational optimisers and are the best judges of their own interests and needs; and that a ‘flexible’, that is deregulated, labour market provides the same opportunities for people to utilise their skills and therefore optimise their life goals (Olssen, 1996, p.341).
Similarly, Nelly Stromquist cites the prescriptions of deregulation, privatization, and liberalization as the major tenets of neoliberal development policy (2002, p.26). Derived from these descriptions, the main elements of neoliberalism can be identified as individualism and self-interest, competition and choice, advocating the free market and privatization, and a minimal role for government, and economic growth as a primary aim of public policy. While these major tenets derived from assumptions embedded in neoclassical economics, neoliberalism carries an more strident and unwavering view of these principles.

It is notable that the term “neoliberalism” is rarely, if ever, used in a self-descriptive manner. One would be hard-pressed to find an economist or scholar who would claim to be a neoliberal. The term is instead a label utilized in a critical sense by those who generally oppose the main tenets of the ideology (Thorsen and Lie, 2007). These critics, however, tend to label specific economists (such as Milton Friedman), government administrations (Thatcher, Reagan), policy directives (the Washington Consensus), schools of thought (the Chicago School) and organizations (the International Monetary Fund), consistently as neoliberal (Chomsky, 1999; Dallmayr, 1999; 2005; Harvey, 2007; Peet, 2003; Stromquist, 2002).

A neoliberal approach to development most notably informed the World Bank and IMF’s Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) of the 1980s and early 1990s. As discussed in Chapter Two, as a condition of funding, multilateral financial institutions effectively imposed on developing nations free-market policy prescriptions, such as privatization of state services, trade liberalization, deregulation and slashing of government spending (Cammack, 2004; Marshall, 2008; Peet, 2003; Woods, 2006).

In 1989, John Williamson coined the “Washington Consensus,” which provided a list of “policy instruments,” most of which were similar to those employed as SAPs and exemplify this
neoliberal turn (Birdsall, et al, 2010; Martinussen, 2004; Rist, 2008; Williamson, 1990; 1993).

The Consensus included such topics as cutting public expenditures, outward-oriented exchange rates, trade liberalization and privatization. As described by Williamson, the Consensus includes “…economic policy instruments that I perceive ‘Washington’ to think important, as well as on which some consensus exists” (1990, p.7). The Consensus is widely argued to be a manifestation of neoliberalism into policy, imposed initially on Latin American countries in the early 1990s (Birdsall, et al, 2010; Peet, 2003; Williamson, 1993). The Washington Consensus informed such concrete development policies as “a reduction and transformation of state economic intervention…, an increased reliance on market mechanisms, more frequent use of monetarist policy instruments, and a shift in public-private relations in the direction of greater support for (an increased reliance upon) the private sector” (Biersteker, 1992, p.108).

Most notable for this dissertation is the neoliberal economic policy instrument of privatization in developing nations. As argued by Williamson, “…the main rationale for privatization is the belief that private industry is managed more efficiently than state enterprises, because of the more direct incentives faced by a manager who either has a direct personal stake in the profits of an enterprise or else is accountable to those who do” (1990, p.8). Moreover, privatization was advocated as a means of challenging government mismanagement and corruption. In theory, privatization in developing countries ought to assist the state in freeing up public resources while increasing the efficiency and quality of the private sector via competition (Colclough, 1996; Martinussen, 2004). And while the SAPs introduced privatization as a major

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8 It should be noted, however, that Williamson himself (in opposition to the “consensus”) was a cautious advocate of privatization: “…I am not persuaded that public service is always inferior to private acquisitiveness as a motivating force. Under certain circumstances… I continue to believe public ownership to be preferable to private enterprise. But this view is not typical of Washington” (1990, p.16)
policy prescription to several developing countries, by the 1990s many nations increased
privatization even without World Bank influence (Biersteker, 1992).

Critiques of the SAPs, Washington Consensus and other neoliberal-driven development
policies resulted in the current widespread state of development policy, which takes into account
more participatory approaches. For instance, as described in Chapter Two, current World Bank
policies include more participatory approaches to development and a less steadfast belief in
neoliberal policies. However, as will be discussed throughout this thesis, some critics continue to
debate whether development organizations have left the neoliberal economic framework behind
or if it has persisted in informing policies.

**Equity critiques of neoliberal policies.**

Neoliberalism is a widely critiqued framework. Below I provide some of the major arguments
levied against neoliberal policies. The most notable critiques of neoliberalism centre on its equity
implications. Adherence to neoliberalism is accused of contributing to inequality, given its
disproportionate support for upper classes and developed nations, via the erosion of the social
welfare state. Exploitation is argued to have resulted from neoliberal policies, impacting the
poorest and most marginalized populations in the developing world, whilst decreasing
democracy. Saad-Filo and Johnston describe the influence of neoliberalism: “Although it
enhances the power and the living standards of the global elite and its appendages, it is
destructive for the vast majority. Domestically, the expansion of ‘market relations’ tramples
upon rights of access to food, water, education, work, land, housing, medical care, transportation
and public amenities as well as on gender relations…” and “… democracy is everywhere limited
by the rights of global capital to seize the land and exploit its people…” (2005, p.4).

Neoliberalism has been accused of ignoring class divisions, assuming that all people will be
positively affected by policies. As Evans puts it: “The concept of class and the analysis of class relations is often central to understanding some aspects of the process of economic development. Nevertheless, class is often ignored in most of the mainstream neo-classical tradition and its neo-liberal offshoot. This is in spite of the fact that class, and the associated patterns of ownership of productive assets, often have a crucial impact on both the level of production and its growth” (Evans, 2000, p.57). Differing class impacts are not adequately taken into account in the employment of these policies. Moreover, according to Biersteker, the competition inherent in neoliberal, free-market policies means that inequality between nations will be exacerbated: “Only the ‘fittest’ are likely to survive in this new, increasingly competitive environment” (1992, p.114).

For some proponents of neoliberal agendas, inequity is in fact considered an acceptable byproduct that necessarily results from the implementation of these policies in the developing world. Friedrich von Hayek, often viewed as one of the dominant neoliberal thinkers of the twentieth century, argued that income inequality is necessary for adequate levels of innovation in order to attract investment. He believed that income redistribution acts to oppose innovation. Although inequities may be alleviated by redistribution, Hayek contended that development could not occur without sacrificing equity (Kley, 1994; Martinussen, 2004; Rapley, 2002). Proponents of redistribution, however, argue that this is a deeply unethical price to pay for increased economic development (Rist, 2008; Wade, 1996).

There is furthermore a neo-Marxist critique of neoliberalism, where associated policies have been considered forced upon the South: “From a dependency variant of the institutional approach, the developing countries would never, on their own volition, have embarked upon these particular reforms (or done so with such apparent ‘enthusiasm’) if it were not for the
coercive power of the international financial institutions. The economic reforms are likely to be viewed as having been forced on debt-dependent regimes against the wishes and the interests of the vast majority of their populations” (Biersteker, 1992, p.117). Given this, it is arguable that many countries would never have adopted neoliberal policies and reforms unless they had enormous accumulated debt or were undergoing fiscal crises (Peet, 2003; Saad-Filho, et al, 2005). The North then stands accused of imposing such neoliberal-driven and highly critiqued policies as the SAPs on developing nations.

Finally, the equity impacts of neoliberal policies have been argued to hinder the democratic process in developing countries, along with potentially increasing criminal activity, fundamentalism and ethnic divisions (Rapley, 2002). Furthermore, there are several specific critiques of neoliberalism in education and in World Bank education policy, which will be unpacked in Chapter Five.

The dominance of economics in international development.

As has been seen, the primacy of economics has extended itself to international development policy. In fact, the accepted definition of development is inextricably tied to economics. Even in the case of social facets to development, including gender, health, and education, economic analyses and indicators drive the research and policies which surround them. International development is a field grounded in economics, evidenced by the pervasiveness of economists in development organizations, such as the World Bank, as well as the accepted truths of economic laws in development research and policy. As Rao and Woolcock argue, economics hold “a near-monopoly on determining the content and validity of development research” (2007a, p.1).

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9 This argument at the time was primarily in respect to nations in Sub-Saharan Africa. In terms of Latin America, however, Birdsall, de la Torre and Caicedo (2010) argue that “During the 1990s, most Latin American countries enthusiastically embraced [Washington] Consensus-style reforms…” (p.9).
The economic theorists described earlier in this chapter have been readily adopted to support development theories, even those whose work did not mention “non-Western” societies. In terms of individual theorists, one can see the influence of many economists on development. Smith’s laissez-faire economics and Friedman’s Chicago School have informed neoliberal development policies, including the SAPs and the Washington Consensus, while Samuelson and Keynes’ approaches in many ways underpin current development policies, including the global public goods framework that I later argue underpins certain World Bank education policies alongside its opposing neoliberal approach (Jomo, 2005; Patnaik, 2005).

Many of the critiques of development policies are underpinned by economic theory, as well. For instance, Ricardo’s concerns for class, and of course also Marx’s associated critique of capitalism have been adopted by many theorists who not only lend a critical voice to current development policies – in the form of, for instance, dependency theories – but also as an explanatory device to show how development has evolved, often to a negative place (Patnaik, 2005).

This disciplinary dominance in international development research and policy is arguably problematic. Significant facets to development, separate from economics, including gender, nutrition, governance and schooling, should be arguably informed by their associated disciplines, such as sociology, health, law and education. However, as found by Rao and Woolcock (2007a; 2007b), Sridhar (2007), Vetterlein (2007), and Wade (1996; 2009), and discussed in reference to the World Bank in Chapter Two, international development policies, including those tackling the above non-economic issues, are analyzed through an economic lens. This limited approach subjugates social and cultural aspects to development and devalues research conducted by
experts in the non-economic fields. These and other drawbacks to the monopoly economics holds over development policy will be unpacked later in this thesis.

Regardless, the field of development is tied to economics – the two are in many ways inseparable. The following section elucidates the arguably also inextricable link between economics and education.

The Economics of Education

The discipline of economics is of particular significance to the general field of education. Economists have focused their attention on almost every feature of education, and many educationalists agree that economics is of vital importance to the analysis of, research into, and policy development surrounding schooling. Commonplace assumptions, in light of both developing and developed countries, is that high-quality education is crucial for nations to be “economically competitive,” that economic analyses are required to improve schools’ effectiveness, that education contributes to economic growth and poverty alleviation, that labour markets are dependent on an educated population, and that education is a crucial factor in the “knowledge economy” (Levin, 1989; Taylor, 2001; World Bank, 2010b). And, in light of this dissertation, economic theories and frameworks play a critical role in the design and development of education policies, and economics specifically tends to be the focus of most schooling provision policies. The following section aims to provide an overview of the economics of education, by outlining a brief history of the field, and the major topics of investigation. The objective of this overview, while primarily descriptive in order to provide a foundation for what follows in this dissertation, is furthermore to detail the expansiveness of this
subject area and its authority over the field of education, for the dominance of economics in the area of education policy is a central concern for this thesis.

Cohn and Geske provide the following general definition of the economics of education: “…the economics of education is concerned with (1) the process by which education is produced; (2) the distribution of education among competing groups and individuals; and (3) questions regarding how much should be spent by society (or any of its component individuals) on educational activities, and what types of educational activities should be selected‖ (1990, p.2). As Blaug defines it, the economics of education “deals fundamentally with the impact of education on such phenomena as the occupational structures of the labour force, the recruitment and promotion practices of employers, the migration of labour between regions within a country and between different countries, the patterns of international trade, the size distribution of personal income, the propensity to save out of current income and, most general of all, the prospects of economic growth’” (1970, p.xv). There are therefore a number of both direct and indirect connections between education and economics.

**Historical roots of the economics of education.**

Early visions of education’s critical role in the economy came from Smith and Mill. Smith, in spite of his misgivings concerning government monopolies, in fact supported the public finance of basic education for lower classes. For Smith, the worker on the assembly lines simply “has no occasion to exert his understanding, or to exercise his invention” (Smith, 1776/2003, p.987). The labourer then risks losing any ability to reach a higher intellect “and generally becomes as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become” (ibid). In order to combat this ignorance, Smith suggests a basic education program for the lower classes. The dangers of ignorance, however, tie to essentially keeping the masses in order. Smith states: “An instructed
and intelligent people besides, are always more decent and orderly than an ignorant and stupid one” and that those who are educated are “more likely to obtain the respect of their superiors, and they are therefore more disposed to respect those superiors” (Smith, 1776/2003, p.994). Given their predisposition to superstition and other irrational beliefs and behaviours, without schooling the majority of the population may be more likely to rise up against their government, for they are “less apt to be misled into any wanton or unnecessary opposition to the measures of government” (ibid). Therefore, their education impacts society as a whole, for it lessens the likelihood of an uprising. With the publicly-provided and financed education of the lower classes, capitalist society operates with orderly and obedient workers.

Smith supported an early education that teaches students basic skills which can be acquired prior to their entry into the workforce. This will allow all people the ability to “read, write and account,” skills they likely would not acquire without schooling (Smith, 1776/2003, p.987). It is important to note that his vision of education was not equitable, as different classes were to receive different styles of education, based on their roles within the division of labour. Smith describes two tiers of schooling, one for the “inferior ranks” and another for the higher classes, each instructing a different curriculum. He states with regard to “people of some rank and fortune” that their “lives are not, like those of the common people, simple and uniform” (1776/2003, p.990). Therefore their education can consist of “either useful or ornamental knowledge,” particularly given their ample leisure time (ibid). It is different for the “common people,” with a lack of free time and the intense labour they are meant to perform. Therefore they are only meant to have “the most essential parts of education,” including only basic skills in mathematics and language (ibid). Smith’s division of labour could therefore be supported by this
division of education, and so Smith’s educational philosophy, in spite of the “public” status of schooling, in fact supported a free-market, capitalist economy.

Mill’s views of education also reflect his economic theories. Mill, the liberal, individualist, questioned the idea of a solely state-provided and financed universal education. Although he believed that all should be educated in some respect, he argued that parents should have the option to choose what type of education best suits their children. As he argued in his On Liberty, “If the government would make up its mind to require for every child a good education, it might save itself the trouble of providing one. It might leave to parents to obtain the education where and how they pleased, and content itself with helping to pay the school fees of the poorer classes of children…All that has been said of the importance of individuality of character, and diversity in opinions and modes of conduct, involves, as of the same unspeakable importance, diversity of education” (1859/1991, p.117). Mill believed that government’s role in education be limited to regulation and only financing of those who could not afford fees. One can see in Mill’s educational theories the root of current market mechanisms in education, such as vouchers and other school choice programs.

The contemporary field of the economics of education.

In spite of these historical predecessors, Mark Blaug cites the early 1960s as the time of birth for the current field of economics of education, coinciding with the emergence of human capital theory, most specifically with Becker’s Human Capital (1964/1993), which brought to the foreground the significance of rate-of-return analyses and labour economics (Blaug, 1985). Levin further details the impact human capital theory has had on educational research:

At one fell swoop, the human capital theory enabled the establishment of a field in the economics of education that could explain: (a) the relation between a society’s educational investments and its economic growth; (b) the relation between an individual’s educational investment and the economic returns to that investment; (c) the
relations between the distribution of educational investment within the population and the
distribution of earnings; (d) the demand for education as a response to its profitability as
an investment; and (e) the overall investment in on-the-job training as well as the division
of the financial burden between the worker and the firm…spurring new literature of
studies of rates of return to education for different populations and levels of education
and studies relating educational investment to economic growth and economic
development. (Levin, 1989, p.14)

A shift occurred in the 1970s, with more critical economic work related to the validity of human
capital approaches to education, most predominantly with Bowles and Gintis’ *Schooling in
Capitalist America* (1976). “The centerpiece of the Bowles-Gintis book is the argument that the
economic value of education in a capitalist economy has been grossly misunderstood by
orthodox economists of education. …effective performance in most jobs, argue Bowles and
Gintis, depends very little on directly usable cognitive skills and much more on certain non-
cognitive personality traits. Moreover, these personality traits are also rewarded in the classroom
and hence are systematically encouraged by the education system” (Blaug, 1985, p.18). Bowles
and Gintis drew attention to systemic factors contributing to educational outputs.

The 1970s also saw a more leftist economic approach to government’s role in education,
where, as will be discussed in Chapter Four, an expansion of public education was seen
worldwide (Easton and Klees, 1992). In the 1980s, coinciding with the conservative Reagan and
Thatcher administrations, a surge in private education support began, as will be detailed in
Chapter Five. The school choice movement, as well as the Washington Consensus and
neoliberal economic development policies all fed into the World Bank’s education policies of the
1980s and 90s, as shown in Chapter Two.

Much critical work has emerged over the years surrounding the economic analysis of
education. For instance, questions have arisen concerning underlying assumptions embedded in
human capital theory, and schooling’s correlations with earning. Arguments have been presented
questioning the assumptions that first, perfect market conditions always exist – termed by Easton and Klees as the “fantasy world of perfect competition” (1992, p.132), and also that everything is quantifiable in economic terms (Blaug, 1985; Easton and Klees, 1992; Klees, 1991). One broad critique – that the current economic paradigm ought not necessarily inform all educational policies – will be dealt with in greater detail throughout this thesis.

But despite the critiques, since the 1980s, several persistent themes in the economics of education have remained prominent. These include, but are not limited to: measuring the economic value of education, including contribution to human capital and rates of return to schooling; the financing of education and expenditure, including taxation and public finance of education; teachers’ salaries, teacher supply and the associated impact on educational quality; allocation and the efficient use of educational resources; education, economic stratification and inequality, and; education, economic development and poverty alleviation. Finally, the area of study that most pertains to this thesis, embodying several of the themes mentioned above, is that of education financing and provision, including issues concerning privatization and school choice (Blaug, 1987; Cohn and Geske, 1990; Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985; World Bank, 2010b).

The dominance of economics in education policy.

As argued by Easton and Klees (1992), “thinking about education policy and practice has been heavily influenced, if not dominated, by ideas about education’s role in the economy” (p.123). Even in the case of facets to education that are not instinctively nor traditionally tied to economic analyses, such as curriculum design, pedagogy or teaching techniques, economists have indeed lent a prominent voice, where decisions on these issues are often informed by the likelihood of economic outputs (Cohn and Geske, 1990; Olssen, et al, 2004). The economistic approach has
dominated the education policy landscape, which is considered by critics to be positivistic and technicist, focusing on efficiency and quantifiable outputs (Chan, 2007; Easton and Klees, 1992; Menashy, 2007a; Meyer, 1998).

Education, by most measures, is instrumental in achieving a multitude of goals, which are often either directly or indirectly economic in nature. Adam Smith began this tradition, in advocating public education for “inferior classes,” but only insofar as it supported the capitalist structure and the division of labour (Smith, 1776/2003). This economic instrumental conception holds true for many education policies today, as will be evidenced in the particular case of the World Bank in later chapters. However, as Klees asks with regard to the neoclassical metatheory and the economics of education: “is that all there is?” (1991).

Non-economic motivations arguably acted as a catalyst to the enactment of mass public education systems. As will be shown in the following chapter, public schools, while certainly envisaged to increase human capital, furthermore were designed to increase social cohesion (Blaug, 1970; Boli, et al, 1985; Katz, 1976). And of course, education for social justice and equity, including the field of critical pedagogy, highlights the many non-economic facets to education, whilst also critiquing the pervasiveness of economic analyses and the stress on economic outputs of education.

In fact, the field of critical pedagogy in large part is a reaction to the economistic influence on education policy-making, often focusing on the adoption of neoliberal principles. Such theorists offer a wide range of critiques, from the narrow aims in education of creating an efficient workforce, to the presence of consumerism in schools, leading to the argued commodification of students. Market influences on education are argued to subjugate other aims in education, such as teaching for social justice and equity, along with an erosion of democracy
in education (Apple, 2000; 2001; Freire, 2001; Molnar and Reeves, 2002; Portelli and Solomon, 2001). These critical pedagogues are not critical of conducting economic analyses of educational outputs or aims, but instead are criticizing the dominance and authority of the economic perspective, which suppress other ways of envisioning education.

However, in spite of the critical academic literature, educational policy work often stresses economics (Olssen, et al, 2004; Taylor, et al, 1997). In terms of international development policy, which has already been argued to give primacy to economic research, analyses and outputs, policies specific to international education are then commonly embedded in an economic framework. The World Bank’s education sector touts as major areas of focus such fields within the economics of education as: financing and expenditures, impact evaluations, quality of education (based in large part on the analysis of international standardized test results) and, most significantly for this thesis, public-private partnerships (World Bank, 2010b). As will be dealt with in detail in following chapters, the dominance of economics in education policy has informed the rising popularity of market mechanisms in education. Many critiques of privatization of education, both in general and at the World Bank, centre on its economic grounding.

**Conclusion**

This chapter traced the histories and current status of three separate fields, these being economics in general, and more specifically development economics and the economics of education. From these descriptions, the overarching theme of the dominance of economics was stressed. The aim of this chapter was to give a foundation for the upcoming arguments concerning the World Bank’s educational policies, which are embedded in two opposing economic frameworks.
The emphasis on economics in the Bank’s framing of education policies results in tensions seen in the Bank’s advocating education as both a private and a public good. The Bank’s position is furthermore in tension with alternative frameworks for education and development. In particular, the overarching dominance of economics in the Bank’s education policies engenders a further critique concerning the minimizing of education as a human right.

At the same time, while this chapter primarily gives grounding to future criticisms of economic dominance in general and at the World Bank, it is notable also the undeniable importance of this field. I will argue in the final chapter of this thesis that despite criticisms, the economic framework, whose pervasiveness has be elucidated in this chapter, cannot be discounted in international education policy.
Chapter Four - Public Education and the World Bank: Education as a Global Public Good

Introduction

The following chapter attempts to examine in detail one way in which the World Bank conceptualizes education, as a public good. After first giving a historical account of public education systems and the more recent international advocacy of universal public education, I will provide in detail the conceptual framework which I present as underpinning the Bank’s advocacy of public education: education as a global public good.

Following this I will provide a detailed discursive analysis of the World Bank’s education policy documents, pointing to how they are informed by the global public goods framework. The chapter ends with possible critiques of the adoption of the concept of global public goods, paying particular focus to its potential to undermine a rights-based rationale for education provision.

History of Public Education

While systems of public education have manifested into various forms in present day, most share common characteristics. As mass, institutionalized, and primarily state-financed and managed, public school systems are usually compulsory. Moreover, structurally, they are generally organized by grade and age, with common curricular expectations, at least nationally. In this form, education has become such a critical component to everyday life that the public support of it goes unquestioned. “For most people, education may be the most important element of their social status, and their educational background will have a greater direct impact on their overall life chances than any other element but nationality” (Boli, et al, 1985, p.145). And beyond its significance in light of contributing to social status and mobility, education has come to be
understood as a “fundamental (virtually taken-for-granted) entitlement” (Ball, 2006; Mundy, 2009, p.6). Hence the widespread acceptance of its public finance. As described by Boli et al., “Mass education is very highly institutionalized at a very general collective level. It is remarkably homogeneous in aspiration throughout the world, and this uniformity has led to increasingly homogeneous organizational forms as well” (1985, p.148). It is, however, the institution of education as we know it today that engenders this image and its importance.

The recognizable schoolhouse, with a single teacher guiding a large group of young pupils, sitting at desks in front of a chalkboard, is in fact an innovation in education which only recently began to spread worldwide. And public schools as part of a system only gained their normative status in the last century. In North America and Europe in particular, what began as casual and non-compulsory components to an apprenticeship or affiliated with religious instruction, became a major social institution in the span of only about 50 years (Katz, 1976).

The first of two phases in the development of education systems was the formative period in the 19th century, and second the mass expansion of schooling the last century (Boli, et al, 1985). Beginning with the introduction of the institutionalization of schooling, public education systems became commonplace and integrated into everyday family life only in the 20th century.

The rapidity of this development can be attributed to a few central historical factors. The expansion of public education systems alongside increased industrialization and urbanization was no coincidence. The rise in industrialization was the catalyst to a number of societal changes, widely viewed as “problems,” that could be “cured” by the expansion of schooling. The first of these problems was the perception of increased crime in urban areas, perpetrated by impoverished people. If schools educated the lower classes, and inculcated all young people with the morality of the upper class, education could alleviate a criminal element in the future. The
increased need for a well-trained workforce also played an important factor in the expansion of schooling, for as Adam Smith argued, an educated workforce is more productive and efficient (Katz, 1976; Mundy, 2009; Smith, 1776/2003). Moreover, misgivings surrounding the rise in more diverse populations, such as recent immigrants in the urban areas led to the promotion of schooling as a means of social cohesion, or as Katz describes: “from the very beginning public schools became agents of cultural standardization” and education was “a massive task of assimilation” (1976, p.394). The notion of education as citizenship-building, as a political tool, has also been argued to have played a significant role in the expansion of public schooling in some areas of the world. Education then theoretically served to inculcate democratic and liberal ideals, as well, including individualism and meritocracy (Boli, et al., 1985; Marshall, 1950; Mundy, 2009). Above all, education was a tool of socialization. As described by Boli, et al.: “the unformed, parochial, or even the morally defective child could be molded in desired ways if its environmental experiences were controlled in a rational and purposive manner. Such deliberate socialization was necessary because all of the virtuous goals of society increasingly were seen as attainable only to the extent that individual members of society embodied the corresponding personal virtues. Because society was held to be essentially a collection of individuals, the success or failure of its effort to realize progress and justice was dependent on the nature of the socialization experiences encountered by the individual” (1985, p.157).

The purpose of public education, as described in Chapter Three, shifted somewhat in the twentieth century with the growing recognition of human capital theory. Education as a major factor in the creation of a productive and efficient workforce, and thereby a primary contributor to economic growth and competitiveness, led to a vision of education as vital to a country’s
success. Without a public education system, a nation would be at a great disadvantage economically.

In the twentieth century, a further argument for public education emerged with the argued ability of schooling’s contribution to democracy and social justice. From such philosophers as John Dewey (1916/1997) to Paulo Freire (1970/2000), and more recently those termed critical pedagogues, educational theorists have argued the social value of education. Via reducing inequality, in particular gender and minority groups, and contributing to the dissemination of rights, schooling was argued to act as a force for social change and democratic progress. And as mentioned in the Introduction, public education ensures that citizens can adequately participate in democratic society (Marshall, 1950).

In time, the two primary impetuses for the promotion of public education became first, its contribution to human capital and thereby economic progress, and second, its contribution to democracy, reduced inequality, and thereby social progress. These two factors led to schooling’s accepted normative role on an international scale, advanced globally by international organizations, such as the UN and the World Bank (Chabbot, 1998; 2003; Mundy, 2007; 2009; UNESCO, 2009a; 2009b).

**Public Education and International Development Policies**

The expansion of public education as a normative good on a global scale is most evidenced by the movement towards universal access to primary education. The global advocacy of free and universal education represents the coming together of several actors on an international scale, a convergence of views which can be attributed in part to the process of globalization. Moreover, the global promotion of public education as an accepted good is arguably evidence of the rise of
“global educational norms,” enforced in a standardized fashion by large international development organizations (Ball, 1998; Chabbot, 1998; 2003). What must also be noted is that this global convergence of views may be positively attributed to an international agreement on not only the value of education, but also indicates a global “compact” concerning development in general (Mundy, 2007).

Although the advocacy of universal primary education arguably began with the promotion of education as a human right and the inception of the charter in 1948, the global movement around universal access did not begin in any strong sense until the late 1980s, culminating in 1990 and the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA), and which resulted in the World Declaration on Education for All (WDEFA).

EFA illustrates a widely-accepted and promoted international development policy that advocates public education. In the Declaration, improving the efficiency and capacity of, and increasing financial support to public-sector education systems is stressed. This public-sector emphasis is further evidenced more recently in the EFA Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2009a; 2010).

The Declaration was, at WCEFA, accepted by representatives of 155 governments, 125 NGOs and 33 intergovernmental organizations (Chabbot, 2003). This widespread support is arguably evidence of a normative shift on not only the value of universal education, but in particular public, state-provided education. Interestingly, the three main leaders responsible for the WCEFA represented UNICEF, UNESCO and the World Bank (Chabbot, 1998; 2003). As will be discussed in greater detail later in this thesis, the Bank’s support of EFA can be problematized in particular due to the EFA advocacy of education as preferably public.
EFA, as a global initiative thus indicates an international consensus on the value and right to education, and in particular public education. However, as will be described in the next section, the notion of education as “public” has a more nuanced definition than one would assume. While EFA presents education as a human right, the World Bank’s framing is economic in nature, even its advocacy of public provision. Having provided an overview of the historical and contemporary context of education and public provision, the remainder of this chapter will attend to the World Bank’s conception of education as a public good, or more specifically, as a global public good.

In the following section, I introduce a conceptual framework which I argue is adopted by the World Bank to support its conception of education – in some instances. This “global public goods” framework will be later contrasted with the neoliberal framework that in opposition defines education as a private good.

The Framework Adopted for Public Education: Global Public Goods

The past decade has seen a growing literature on the concept of global public goods and the use of this framework to promote the equitable provision of goods and social services on an international scale. The concept of global public goods has garnered much attention, due in part to the 1999 publication of the book *Global Public Goods: International Cooperation in the 21st Century* by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The discussion on the subject has since entered the policy circles of various actors in the arena of international development. For instance, in 2006 an International Task Force on Global Public Goods met in Singapore and released a report entitled: “Meeting Global Challenges: International Cooperation in the National Interest” (2006). The Task Force included representatives from several organizations with
international relations and development mandates, such as the UNDP, the International Court of Justice in the Hague, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and various country governments and university centres. Similar policy-related discourse on topics as varied as knowledge, disease eradication and environmental sustainability have been grounded in the theoretical framework of global public goods (Carbone, 2007; Kaul, et al, 1999a; Kaul and Mendoza, 2003; Stiglitz, 2006). Yet despite a large current literature on the subject, research into basic education through the lens of this economic theoretical framework has been limited.

While various scholars have commented on schooling, and implied that it can be classified as a global public good, there has been little deep analysis of the theory’s applicability to education. Sen, for instance, briefly discusses the characteristics of “basic educational opportunities,” arguing schooling to have a “public-good component” (2000, p.128-129). Stiglitz has argued for knowledge as a global public good, and the associated value of quality higher education, although defines basic education as a publicly-provided private good (1999; 2000). Marginson has discussed the conception of higher education as a global public good (2007). Kaul, Conceicao, Le Glouuen and Mendoza provide a brief analysis of education (alongside a discussion on health care) and classify it as a service which is “public by design” (2003a, p.45). Kaul and Mendoza further this argument with a slightly more detailed examination of basic education’s possible descriptions under the public goods framework (2003, p.85). The scholars all point to both the private and public components of schooling, and its positive externalities. This chapter expands on these discussions by showing how basic education as a global public good might be defined.

After outlining the applicability of this framework to basic education, I will provide an analysis of World Bank documents and argue that the global public goods framework has, at
least in part, laid the foundation for the Bank’s educational policies. It will be shown that despite not explicitly defining education as a global public good, the World Bank’s conception does indeed fall under the framework.

In terms of the overarching aim of this dissertation, this chapter illustrates one of the primary economic theories that I argue underpins World Bank education policy documents.

**Is Education a Global Public Good?**

*The theory of public goods.*

An adequate evaluation of education as a global public good first requires a basic exposition of the traditional theory of public goods and its recent reformulation as global public goods theory. Paul Samuelson’s 1954 paper “The pure theory of public expenditure” is credited as first presenting the theory of public goods. The theory was further developed by such public finance economists as Richard Musgrave and James Buchanan (Kaul, Grunberg and Stern, 1999b). Public goods theory can be primarily described as a means of classification of goods and services, with an aim to delineate those goods that are not adequately nor efficiently provided by the market. Not to be confused with a publicly-provided good, a public good embodies two major properties: *non-rivalness* and *non-excludability*. If non-rival, a good’s consumption by one individual cannot be diminished by another individual’s use. Therefore, an equal quantity is available to all. When non-excludable, no person can be excluded from the use of the good or service. A common example of a public good is a lighthouse, for it is helpful to any number of boats and no boat can be excluded from the use of a lighthouse. Another example is national defense, for a military is argued to protect all citizens equally, without exclusion (Gazier and Touffet, 2006; Kaul, Grunberg and Stern, 1999b; Stiglitz, 2000).
The classification of a public good can also be made based on what it is not; namely, a private good. Private goods are characterized as both rival and excludable. For example, if one person eats a slice of bread, no one else can have it (excludable). Even if only part of the bread is eaten, its enjoyment for anyone else is diminished (rival) (Kaul, 2000; Stiglitz, 2000).

As Desai (2003) has described, the theory of public goods has changed throughout history. Recent scholarship has challenged the traditional characterization of public goods as overly narrow. Such authors as Gazier and Touffet (2006), Kaul (2006), and Kaul and Mendoza (2003), have critiqued the traditional, or canonical, definition as avoiding the complexities of, for instance, addressing social factors, where goods and services are described without reference to their consumers and providers.

Kaul argues that “publicness in consumption does not depend only on non-rivalrousness or non-excludability. It is often a social construct, that is, human induced” (2006, p.14). For instance, land is classified as a private good for it is both rival and excludable. However, how is land to be classified in cases where it is open and public space (Kaul and Mendoza, 2003)? The consumption of goods and services is also dependent on policy shifts. For instance, the atmosphere is intuitively considered a public good. However, suppose a corporation is limited in the amount of pollutants it releases into the atmosphere due to an environmental sustainability policy. The policy then limits the corporation’s use of the atmosphere. It is then not a public good by the standard definition due to some degree of rivalness. While certainly not a private good, the atmosphere is no longer a traditionally-defined public good due to a policy directive. As argued by Kaul, Conceicao, Le Goulven and Mendoza (2003a), some private goods may be made public by “design.” As will be discussed later, basic education is often placed in this category.
In terms of the traditional definition, goods that are always non-rival in their consumption and never excludable are considered *pure* public goods. These range from moonlight to peace and security. However, pure public goods are quite rare and embody the non-rival, non-excludable properties naturally, without human intervention (Kaul and Mendoza, 2003; Stiglitz, 2000). *Impure* public goods, on the other hand, may only partly meet the public goods criteria, and benefit both the individual and the public, for they might also be considered private goods (Kaul, et al, 1999b). If one person consumes a pure public good, no one else is affected. However, if others are indeed affected by another’s consumption, the good or service has byproducts and it is therefore an impure public good. An impure public good might be non-excludable but rival, such as a public park; or non-rival but excludable, such as television signals (Kaul and Mendoza, 2003; Stiglitz, 2000). A further critique of the traditional theory of public goods accuses it of neglecting the status of impure public goods. As will be shown, basic education can be defined as an impure public good, for it is widely consumed as non-exclusive.

Given these critiques of the canonical definition of public goods, the theory has been reformulated to embody categories which are accepted as potentially fluid and thereby go beyond the traditional non-rival and non-excludable properties. Kaul and Mendoza give the following three-fold revised definition of public goods. Their definition will be used in this chapter as a framework for an analysis of education and more specifically the World Bank’s conception of education:

*Definition 1:* Goods have a special potential for being public if they have nonexcludable benefits, nonrival benefits, or both.

*Definition 2:* Goods are de facto public if they are nonexclusive and available for all to consume.

*Definition 3:* Global public goods are goods whose benefits extend to all countries, people, and generations. (2003, p.87, 88, 95)
Global public goods.

The third definition provided by Kaul and Mendoza introduces a relatively new construction of a public good. Global public goods are defined as “public goods whose benefits reach across borders, generations and population groups” (Kaul, 2000, p.2). This new categorization takes into account recent globalization trends, which in turn have made the national characterization of public goods somewhat limited. Due to the changing nature of what once acted as barriers, such as transportation, communication and markets, the world has become increasingly integrated. As a result, public goods and their benefits (or negative consequences) reach beyond borders (Kaul, Grunberg and Stern, 1999a; Stiglitz, 2006). Globalization has then, in a sense, caused the existence of global public goods (Kaul, Conceicao, Le Glouven and Mendoza, 2003b).

The process of globalization has been argued to be the source of increasing global economic inequality (Rodrik, 1997; Stiglitz, 2002; Stromquist, 2002). The negative impacts of globalization are argued to have contributed to the underprovision of certain public goods, and recent literature stresses that policies on global public goods could address this shortfall. In this way, globalization can instead be used to gain equality, for instance, by allowing for the creation of international mandates that support the adequate provision of global public goods (Carbone, 2007; Kaul, Conceicao, Le Glouven and Mendoza, 2003b).

Many proposed global public goods are not considered pure, but instead are often “kept or made nonexclusive” by international policy mandates and treaties, and are then goods made public by design on a global scale (Kaul and Mendoza, 2003, p.98). These include, for example, human rights mandates, trade agreements, and initiatives aiming at the eradication of communicable diseases (Kaul and Mendoza, 2003; Kaul, 2000).
For instance, the International Task Force on Global Public Goods has proposed “six priority global public goods”:

1. preventing the emergence and spread of infectious disease;
2. addressing climate change;
3. enhancing financial stability;
4. strengthening the international trading system;
5. achieving peace and security;
6. generating knowledge

which are argued to be priorities because “…the benefits of supplying them are substantial, because failing to supply them would be significant and would in some cases have irreversible consequences and because they are important to a range of public and private constituencies whose engagement is necessary for progress” (International Task Force on Global Public Goods, 2007).

As described earlier, according to some scholars, policies on basic education can also be included among global public goods. The following section analyses the potential classification of education as a global public good.

**Education as a global public good.**

According to the traditional definition, education is not considered a public good. One space in a classroom can only be occupied by one student, thus making it excludable. An individual student incurs the benefits. And a higher number of students in a class may impact the quality of the education being consumed, making it rival. Moreover, as a private good, the consumption of education by one student not only affects the amount (or quality) attained by another, but also impinges on the cost. Were education a public good, the price of schooling would be the same for one student as for thirty. In reality, the more students, the higher the cost (Stiglitz, 2000). Education is then, by strict definition, a private good.
However, education has, for some time now, presented a case where a private good is often also defined as a public good (Levin, 1987). As discussed in Chapter Three, Adam Smith even argued for non-exclusive, free access to basic education: “For a very small expence [sic] the public can facilitate, can encourage, and can even impose upon almost the whole body of the people, the necessity of acquiring those most essential parts of education” (Smith, 1776/2003, p.990). In his Wealth of Nations, Smith even utilizes the term “public good” to describe primary schooling (1776/2003, p.994).

In current education policy, this classification of schooling as a public good is based partly on its status as impure, and as non-exclusive by design. Despite the fact that it is clearly a private good, education is often publicly provided with a non-exclusivity aim. This results from its status as a public good by design. According to Kaul and Mendoza, many countries choose to enact policies making “goods available in such plentiful quantities that there need not be any competition over who gets to use them” (2003, p.85). In the case of basic education, pursuing access for all children is, in effect, pursuing schooling as a public good; for if all children have access, its consumption is no longer exclusive (Kaul, Grunberg and Stern, 1999a; Kaul and Mendoza, 2003; Sen, 2000). Therefore, any nation that provides free, universal access to primary education (not to mention compulsory attendance) conceives of schooling as a public good by design. While the consumption of education is, on the one hand, undoubtedly private, it can be argued that depending on policy, it may also be considered a public good.

Education is also classified as an impure public good, insofar as, while retaining its private good status, it has numerous publicly consumable benefits. For instance, education can help the individual, but also has broad societal effects, from economic development to reduced population growth. It can contribute to increased child health, and the basic schooling of a
mother has been shown to reduce infant mortality rates (Kaul, et al,1999a; Shultz, 1989; 1992; World Bank, 2002d; 2005). Moreover, primary schooling has also been shown to increase democratic participation, potentially leading to political stability (Evans and Rose, 2007; World Bank, 2002d; 2005; 2009b). As Sen states: “…given the shared benefits of basic education, which may transcend the gains of the person being educated, basic education may have a public-good component as well... The persons receiving education do, of course, benefit from it, but in addition a general expansion of education and literacy in a region can facilitate social change… and also help to enhance economic progress from which others too benefit” (Sen, 1999, p.128-9). Therefore, it is a unique case of a service where the consumption, while always private, is also argued to benefit the public.

According to Sandler, education may also be defined based on its status as a “joint product” (2003, p.137). Joint products are public goods “for which an activity simultaneously yields two or more outputs that may vary in their degree of publicness,” or where a good’s byproducts affect other public goods (Sandler, 2003, p.137). It is argued that “…education… [is] essential to the successful provision of almost every other public good – and to the enjoyment of the private goods” (Kaul, Conceicao, Le Glouven and Mendoza, 2003, p.45). Sandler provides the example of peacekeeping activities, which may have benefits for not only a nation, but also in stabilizing an entire region. In the same way, education may help a single child, along with her or his family, community and nation, leading to potential public good impacts on the regional or international scale.

The final descriptor for basic education is that of a global public good. This classification is dependent on demonstrating that no children, on a global scale, ought to be excluded from a classroom. Furthermore, given the positive national economic benefits of education, regional and
thereby global economic stability may result. According to the World Bank, education contributes to economic competitiveness, and there are linkages between education and the macroeconomic arena (2005, p.9). Moreover, the negative effect of an uneducated population on a country affects all citizens, potentially impacting regions and cross-border populations. It is also notable that education has been shown to have intergenerational benefits, only further demonstrating its suitable classification as a global public good (Kaul, Conceicao, Le Glouven and Mendoza, 2003a; Schultz, 1989; 1995; World Bank, 2002b).

As a result, international policies toward attaining universal access to education in fact aim to make education a global public good. For instance, the second Millennium Development Goal (MDG) to “Achieve Universal Primary Education” provides a case of a global policy initiative aimed at ensuring school completion for all (United Nations, 2007). Also, the “UN Millennium Declaration” makes a call “[t]o ensure that, by the same date [2015], children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education” (United Nations, 2000). And as discussed earlier, the World Declaration on Education for All similarly advocates basic educational access on an international scale (1990).

If country governments are to provide universal access, no child may be excluded from a seat in a classroom, and therefore education must be non-exclusive and a national public good. Both EFA and the second MDG apply this policy internationally, further illustrating education as a global public good. This is significant, for a population’s access to education may be dependent not on their nation’s policies, but instead on international initiatives, and possibly funding (Deneulin and Townsend, 2007).
Also significant is the indirect influence of education on other global public goods (as a joint product). For instance, knowledge has been argued to be a global public good, and education has an obvious impact on the capacity of a population to attain knowledge (Stiglitz, 1999). The global public good of disease eradication is also arguably dependent on basic education, which has been proven to increase the health of a population (Kaul, et al, 2003b).

Therefore, education’s status as a public good is rather fluid, and can then be defined as such in terms of (a) its consumption by all children due to policy directives (public by design); (b) both its individual and broad societal benefits, from which no one is excluded (impure public good); (c) its importance for other public goods which are dependent upon it (joint product); and (d) its status as a good which is globally non-exclusive and affects cross-border and intergenerational populations (global public good) (Menashy, 2009).

Based on this analysis, education embodies the properties laid out in the three-fold definition of a global public good. First, it has a special potential for being public due to its non-excludable benefits. Second, it is often de facto public due to being nonexclusive and available for all to consume, particularly in societies where there is universal access to education. And finally, it can be considered globally public for its benefits extend to all countries, people, and generations.

The classification of education as a global public good is then conceivable given the reformulation of the theory. The importance of this conception, however, lies in its potential applicability to policy. What follows is a discursive analysis of World Bank education policy documents, endeavors to discern if the Bank conceives of education as a global public good.
It is important to note that there are significant critiques of global public goods theory, both as a general framework and as it applies to education. These critiques will be discussed later in this chapter.

The World Bank’s Education Policies and Education as a Global Public Good

The World Bank and global public goods.

It should be noted that the World Bank has not explicitly endorsed a global public goods agenda with regard to education. However, the Bank has addressed other global public goods in various documents and identified the following five major priority areas, endorsing a global public goods agenda:

- preserving the environment;
- controlling communicable diseases;
- strengthening the international financial architecture;
- enhancing developing countries’ participation in the global trading system; and
- creating and sharing knowledge relevant for development. (World Bank, 2007, p. ii)

These five areas correspond to those laid out by the International Task Force on Global Public Goods (with the one exception of ensuring peace and security – an area in which the World Bank does not operate) (2006).

The Bank has previously engaged in collective action on global problems, but the first documented occasion where the Bank directly discusses global public goods was in 2000 (World Bank, 2001b). More recently, a 2007 Bank paper, “Global Public Goods: A Framework for the Role of the World Bank,” addresses the Bank’s priorities and how it might assist in ensuring the adequate provision of them (World Bank, 2007). In this document, while the Bank acknowledges the traditional definition of public goods, it provides the following description of global public goods for the purposes of the World Bank: “More pragmatic and operational interpretations – as
used in this paper – have focused on those goods whose supply depends critically on international collective action, even though they may not be fully global (they may be regional) and have some excludability (as with some critical components of global knowledge whose use is restricted by patents) or rivalry (as with the exhaustion of high-seas fishery resources or biodiversity)” (World Bank, 2007, p.2).

This description bears a strong similarity (although in a more general form) to the reformulation that is Kaul and Mendoza’s three-fold definition. The references made by the Bank to the Task Force also points to an acceptance of the same definition. The Bank’s conception, however, has a stronger focus on the requirement of collective action, including the support of most major international organizations and country governments, as a determinant of a global public good.

The Bank makes the following statement regarding its involvement in the provision of global public goods: “major contributions to GPG agenda involve (1) working in individual countries to build institutional capacities and systems, finance projects and programs, and analyze and advise on policies that help integrate national interests with global or regional concerns; (2) participating in global partnerships that complement its country-focused work and mobilizing resources for such partnerships; and (3) informing the global debate through research on the costs and benefits of collective action for developing countries” (World Bank, 2007, p.3).

The Bank further states that “priorities should be guided by the Bank’s ‘over-arching development and poverty reduction objectives’” (World Bank, 2007, p.3).

Moreover, the Bank identifies the following four “dimensions” of its commitment to global public goods:

- Working with countries to help bridge gaps between global objectives and national policies and programs.
• Working in partnerships and strengthening financial mechanisms – both existing and new.
• Offering constructive advocacy.
• Providing analytical capabilities, technical expertise and ability to integrate policies across development themes. (World Bank, 2007, p. 5)

These dimensions and measures are significant, for any area identified by the Bank as a global public good would be likely entitled to a specific type of Bank support. However, the few mentions of education by the Bank in its discourse on global public goods are limited to references to HIV/AIDS prevention and how other global public goods may lead to universal primary education (2007; 2010a). In a 2006 Bank-published report by Birger Fredriksen, the phrase “global public education goods” is used to describe the potential benefits of education, and education is depicted as that which “fulfills a potentially important role of promoting global public goods” (p.19). Explicit references to education as a global public good in World Bank literature are therefore limited. The policy analysis below aims to reveal the Bank’s conception of education as a global public good.

**Education, the World Bank, and global public goods.**

To begin this analysis, it must be noted that the Bank’s overarching mandate is to support governments in their country’s development, and so strengthening public sectors in general is given priority (Marshall, 2008). This is evident in the Bank’s discussion on public financing to education, in its recent *Concept Note for the World Bank’s Education Sector Strategy 2020* in particular when referencing the World Bank’s Commission on Growth and Development (2008). In it is stated for instance: “No country has sustained rapid growth without also keeping up impressive rates of public investment—in infrastructure, education, and health… Education makes a legitimate claim on public money” and “Thus public spending on education is justified on the grounds of efficiency and equality of opportunity. It corrects the failure of the market to
allocate enough resources to education, and it also widens access to education beyond those who can pay for it upfront” (2010a). There is therefore clear support for public-sector education by the World Bank.

But beyond this, to determine if the Bank indeed conceives of basic education as a global public good, which has a more nuanced connotation than supporting public provision, World Bank policy documents will be analyzed in terms of the three-fold definition: (i.) Does basic education have a special potential for being public... due to its nonexcludable benefits, nonrival benefits, or both?; (ii) Does the Bank identify education as de facto public by being nonexclusive and available for all to consume?; (iii) According to the World Bank, does basic education have benefits that extend to all countries, people, and generations?

i. Education’s nonexcludable benefits. There are several passages in the discourse of the World Bank’s policy documents that quite explicitly point to the conception of education as public due to its non-excludable benefits (the first facet to the three-fold definition of global public goods). In other words, education is described as having numerous positive externalities, where benefits extend even to those not educated. It is also presented as a joint product in affecting the consumption of other global public goods.

The World Bank’s overarching mandate is to alleviate poverty via economic growth, and so it is not surprising that education’s most common benefit identified by the Bank is that of supporting a country’s economic development, a benefit from which no one is likely to be excluded. This is in part framed as education’s contribution to a country’s human capital. In its 1999 Education Sector Strategy, the Bank argues that a “rise in human capital theory… has provided conceptual underpinnings and statistical evidence” supporting the notion that education is a powerful factor in a country’s economic development (1999, p.6). Basic education is then
deemed not only useful for economic development, but necessary, as described in the 2005 *Education Sector Strategy Update* (ESSU): “…universal primary education is but a beginning step for survival in today’s complex, fast-globalizing world. Only by raising the capacities of its human capital can a country hope to increase productivity and attract the private investment needed to sustain growth in the medium term” (2005, p.47). Economists in the education sector of the World Bank lay a strong focus on education’s impact on both people and economies (World Bank, 2010b). Such World Bank publications as the 2002(a) *Constructing Knowledge Societies* and the 2003(b) *Lifelong Learning in the Global Knowledge Economy* present research focused on rates of return to educational investments.

The World Bank proposes that “Education plays a critical role in supporting knowledge-driven economic growth strategies in two complementary ways: (a) through the formation of a strong human capital base and (b) by contributing to the construction of an effective national innovation system” (2005, p.58). Here the Bank touches on two recurrent themes in their discourse on education. First, the notion of knowledge accumulation as integral to economic development, and second, education’s contributions to scientific and technological innovations.

Education is presented by the Bank as a basis for, what it terms, the “knowledge economy,” where a basic level of schooling is seen to contribute to “building the higher-level skills and knowledge needed to compete in global markets” (World Bank, 2005, p.5; 2010c). The Bank posits education as vital for a country’s ability to increase knowledge production, which is a key contributor to development (World Bank, 2002a; 2010b). If a nation is able to capitalize on its knowledge base, it is deemed more readily able to compete on a global scale and thereby economic growth will follow. As stated in the ESSU: “As knowledge accumulation and application begin to play a role in economic development and as a comparative advantage among
nations becomes more and more a function of technological innovation and use of knowledge… the priority for building up an educated and skilled workforce escalates greatly” (2005, p.48).

The notion of technical innovation embraces ideas of scientific advances that further generate economic growth. For instance, “[s]cientific and technological advances have facilitated higher yields and greater nutritional content in the world’s food supply; helped slow the trends of high fertility and high mortality; and helped spur economic growth in developing countries” (2005, p.58). The Bank cites education as a primary means to science, technology, and innovation, creating a “labor force with the appropriate mix of technical and vocational skills,” to be derived from “a process of life long learning” that “must be built into the education system” (World Bank, 2010d). The World Bank stresses that basic education ought to be relevant to the workforce by teaching “practical subjects, thinking skills, and behavioral skills; and by connecting school and work” (2006b, p.68). This stress on a school-work connection is most notable in the World Development Report of 2007, in the chapter entitled “Learning for Work and Life.” Schools are vital, for they produce students who are able to operate in the workforce, thereby contributing to economic growth (2006b).

One benefit of economic development is decreased income inequality and poverty, which is linked to the Bank’s broad mandate. The ESSU labels the following as a “Strategic Theme”: “Education is central to developing dynamic economies and reducing poverty and must be actively integrated into a countrywide perspective” (2005, p.8). Education is a major component of the World Bank’s A Sourcebook for Poverty Reduction Strategies (SPRS), a guide for nations on developing their own poverty reduction strategy papers. The Bank argues that “Inadequate education is one of the most powerful determinants of poverty, and unequal access to educational
opportunity is a strong correlate of income inequality” (2002d, p.233), and “Failure to provide basic education seriously compromises a country’s efforts to reduce poverty” (2002d, p.234).

Beyond economic development, and the associated effects of poverty reduction and income inequality, technological innovation and productivity, education has numerous social impacts identified by the Bank, pointing to further non-excludable benefits. For instance, education is seen to contribute to increased overall health of a population. The Bank argues that even a basic level of education “promotes the health of parents and children, reduces fertility and child mortality” (2002d, p.234; 2005; 2006). Moreover, school programs are able to reduce the spread of disease and malnutrition. In terms of HIV/AIDS, “education is often referred to as the ‘social vaccine’ because of its strong positive impact on safe behaviors and infection rates” (2005, p.39; 2003b). In particular, the education of girls and women has notable positive health-related benefits. Educated women “are more likely to plan their families and have fewer children; to seek pre- and post-natal care, lowering maternal and infant mortality; and to provide children with better nutrition, ensure they are immunized, and procure appropriate medical care, thereby reducing child mortality” (World Bank, 2002d, p.234).

The education of women and girls is then posited as bringing about numerous benefits, which also include “productivity in the labor market and raising economic output” as “Educated girls and women are more likely to send their children to school and to keep them there longer, and are more receptive to the adoption of environmentally friendly technology that can protect natural resources” (World Bank, 2002d, p.234; 2006a; 2008a).

There is also a strong political educational benefit mentioned in Bank documents. Schooling is said to make a nation more socially cohesive, thus leading to national stability (2005, 2009b). Moreover, “nations in which most of the population is literate and in which all
children complete at least a basic education have higher-quality institutions, stronger democratic processes…” and thus education contributes to the support of democracy (2002b, p.234). It is also hypothesized by the Bank that education is a contributor to better governance. There is then a strong democratic and political dimension to education’s benefits, according to the Bank (2005; 2006b; 2009b).

Education is then defined by the World Bank as a public good insofar as it has numerous non-excludable benefits in the realms of economic development, health and political stability. Schooling is also shown by the Bank to be a joint product in contributing to the consumption of other global public goods. For instance, the aforementioned education benefit of contributing to disease eradication is also argued to be a global public good (International Task Force on Global Public Goods, 2006; 2007; World Bank, 2001b; 2007). In that basic education is posited by the Bank to assist in achieving other MDGs, many of which can be argued to be global public goods, (such as health, environmental sustainability, adequate food production, and poverty alleviation), education is then acting as a joint product (World Bank, 2002d; 2005; 2010a). For instance, the Bank states that “achieving Education for All goals is critical for attaining the other Millennium Development Goals – both through the direct impact of education on child and reproductive health and environmental sustainability…” (2005, p.47). An example provided by the Bank that demonstrates how education acts as a joint product, is its influence on agricultural production, and thereby adequate food supply. The Bank conducted a study in sub-Saharan Africa which “found an additional year of schooling for some farmers to be associated with higher crop-yields not only for them, but also for their less educated neighbors” (2002d, p.243). Whether or not any of these other public goods ought to count as such is, of course, debatable, but it is still apparent that the Bank sees education as a joint product.
It is evident, then, that the World Bank does indeed define education as a public good insofar as it meets the first definition, where schooling has non-excludable benefits in the form of positive externalities. These byproducts are proposed in several areas, such as economic development, knowledge accumulation, scientific and technological innovations, poverty alleviation, health, social cohesion, democratic participation and governance. Basic education is also presented as a joint product in contributing to externalities that are themselves global public goods, such as disease eradication and environmental sustainability.

**ii. Education as non-exclusive and available for all to consume.** The World Bank’s education policy documents further define basic education as a global public good in terms of the second definition, where goods are *de facto* public if they are nonexclusive and available for all to consume. The Bank repeatedly presents basic schooling as a service that ought to be universally accessible and free for all to consume, evidenced moreover by its advocacy of EFA and the second Millennium Development Goal, to promote universal access to basic education (World Bank, 2003a; 2007; World Bank and UNICEF, 2006). The 1999 Education Sector Strategy lays out the rationale for equal access to schooling: “Inequality in educational access and quality must be reduced, since it condemns at least half of the world’s population, and most of the poor and vulnerable, to much worse lifetime prospects than the more fortunate have” (1999, p.7). In the ESSU, the Bank states: “Accelerating momentum on Education for All is an urgent priority” (2005, p.23). The Bank supports the Fast Track Initiative towards Education for All, where low-income countries are eligible for additional support to achieve universal primary education, provided they have shown a strong commitment (FTI, 2009a; 2009b; World Bank, 2010e). The World Development Report of 2007 also promotes “providing quality basic education… for all” (2006b, p.68). The support of a variety of initiatives and the discourse
surrounding education access in its documents points to an obvious support of non-excludable access to basic education.

This non-excludability is further evidenced by the Bank’s recent support for the eradication of user fees for primary schooling, in order to increase equal access. The ESSU states that “[s]trategies to promote equity include elimination of user fees at the primary level” (2005, p.23). The SPRS argues that “[f]ees for school tuition, uniforms, textbooks, and stationery are a significant burden for poor families in many countries. Countries that have eliminated tuition fees, such as Malawi and Uganda, have registered large increases in basic education enrollments” (2002d, p.260). The Bank has also been supportive of collective initiatives which promote the eradication of user fees, such as the School Fee Abolition Initiative, a joint World Bank – UNICEF project (World Bank and UNICEF, 2006). The Bank then supports non-exclusionary access to primary schooling for all socio-economic groups.

The Bank’s support of the third MDG, to promote gender equality and empower women, also ties to the non-excludable vision of education. Included in universal education is, obviously, the education of all girls. Gender equity in education is a strong focus of the ESSU (2005), the SPRS (2002), and the World Development Reports (2003; 2006), as well as a specific topic of several other publications (World Bank, 2006a; 2008a).

Non-excludable access to education is specifically denoted by the Bank as access not simply to any classroom, but to quality schooling. The Bank states: “a critical priority is to narrow gaps in learning achievement across countries, as well as within countries” (2009b, p.75). Therefore, the Bank supports universal access to quality primary school, revealing that basic education is defined further as a global public good, as non-exclusive and available for all to consume.
iii. Education as extending to all countries, people and generations. Finally, as per the third and final definition of a global public good, the World Bank does identify education as a service which may extend to all countries, people, and generations. First, education is repeatedly argued to impact intergenerational populations. A girl’s education has particular effects on subsequent generations, as noted in the following statement: “Other documented externalities are intergenerational: a woman’s additional schooling, for example, can produce benefits that are captured in part by her future offspring, in terms of their better health and higher schooling attainment” (2002d, p.243). Education may also lead to intergenerational equality, for “[i]nvestments during early childhood… can reduce the intergenerational transmission of inequality” (World Bank, 2006b, p.71).

The global benefits of basic education are also argued by the Bank, citing international and regional impacts. The Bank’s education policy takes into account “the links between education and globalization” (2005, p.32). Given the interconnectedness of financial markets, the aforementioned educational benefit of economic development and financial stability has the potential to contribute to regional and thereby global economic stability. The Bank argues that there is a link between education and the macroeconomic arena (2005; 2009b). The economic impacts of education in one country then have spillover benefits globally. Similarly, if education can contribute to the eradication of disease in one country, it assists in ceasing the spread of the disease across borders.

As a joint product, education contributes to knowledge accumulation and may spur a nation’s production of scientific and technological innovations, which have global impacts. The Bank presents cases where scientific breakthroughs in one country have had widespread international repercussions, in such areas as environmental sustainability and agriculture (2002d;
2005; 2010a). Given the regional and global impacts of education’s externalities and the intergenerational benefits of schooling children – particularly girls – it is arguable that, according to the World Bank, education fulfills the third definition of a global public good.

Moreover, the Bank defines global public goods as “…those goods whose supply depends critically on international collective action …” (World Bank, 2007, p.2). As discussed, universal primary education has been promoted by international collective action, in which the World Bank has played a significant part, such as the aforementioned Millennium Development Goals, the Education for All and Fast Track Initiatives, and the School Fee Abolition Initiative.

Therefore, given the evidence provided based on the discourse of Bank education documents, basic schooling fulfills the three-fold definition of a global public good. It has highlighted non-excludable benefits in wide-ranging areas from economic development to health to political stability. The Bank aims to make primary schooling non-exclusive and available to all given its support of universal access initiatives. And it is considered by the World Bank to be a global public good based on its cross-border impacts and intergenerational benefits.

The Bank, in its defining education as a public good, further points to public financing: “Basic education relies heavily on public funds, so large reductions in public revenues could affect school operations, teacher salaries, and scholarships” (2009b, p.4). Moreover, the Fast Track Initiative policy requires that only 10% of education be both provided and financed privately, and so the FTI, until recently housed by the Bank, primarily supports the public sector (FTI, 2009). The Bank has furthermore very recently has made reference to global public goods that might lead to universal education (although refrains from defining it as such): “The Bank’s global reach and experience place it in a strategic position to spearhead the development of global public goods for education in the developing world, such as internationally comparable
testing instruments and the evaluation of the impact of key programs and policies, both existing and new” (2010a, p.7).

Given the Bank’s conception of education as a global public good, it is arguable that it follows that any advocacy of privatization ought to only be in the case where it is “unfortunately necessary” to meet demand and where it does not risk increasing exclusivity. This conception will be contrasted in the following chapter with the Bank’s neoliberal vision of education as a private good, and the associated belief that privatization is “inherently desirable.”

Critiques of the Global Public Goods Framework

The Bank’s conceptualization of education as public has been shown to be grounded in the global public goods framework. It is important to note, however, that despite that the recent abundance of literature on global public goods has generated, for the most part, a positive reception from those in the field of international development, the framework is not free from criticism. Below is a brief account of the general critiques of the global public goods framework.

First, there are widely-held criticisms that question the scientific rigor of global public goods theory, and similar arguments that the new formulation distorts the original, canonical theory of public goods. Second, the global public goods framework is argued to simplify the process of international policy-making by somewhat unproblematically applying a domestic economic theory, meant to be employed only at the national or local level, onto the global scale. Moreover, one is forced to question the use of the global public goods framework given that the agenda, priority areas, and what essentially qualifies as a global public good are all likely determined by Northern bilateral and multilateral organizations. The global public goods construct is thus considered by some to be “western-centric” (Coussy, 2005, p.190). Third,
policies informed by the economically-based global public goods framework potentially
undermine other non-economic rationales for the public provision of certain goods and services,
such as education as a right. This final critique will be introduced here, but dealt with primarily
later in Chapter Six.

Questioning the rigor of global public goods theory.

First, the concept of a global public good has been critiqued for its “theoretical laxity” and its
distortion of the canonical theory of public goods (Coussy, 2005, p.190; Long and Woolley,
2009). Public goods theory, in its original form, posits a public good as having very strict
properties. Given the rigid guidelines for what might be classified as a public good, the new
formulation of global public goods is argued to ignore any meaningful restrictions, leading to, as
Carbone describes, a “catch all to which people can attach anything they want” (2007, p.185). In
particular, the introduction of the “public by design” concept allows for the creation of all sorts
of public goods, for a good or service need only be referred to as “public” by a policy-maker.
Furthermore, a public good by design is often simply just a publicly-provided private good or
service.

According to the canonical theory, a public good is determined by its consumption
properties. The reformulated theory falls prey to a potentially disproportionate focus on the
provision of the good. For instance, education is a service that, under the original theory, is
unequivocally not a public good. This status can only be argued given the new formulation. It is
“de facto non-excludable” based on its being “public by design.” According to Coussy,
education and aid to education cannot be considered public goods “due to the fact that they may
be ineffective, misappropriated, unequally distributed, redundant, etc.,” all of which are factors
impacting education’s consumptive properties, affecting its status as a public good (2005, p.188).
The malleability of the reformulated global public goods theory forces one to question the inclusion of certain social services, such as education. As Long and Woolley describe, the concept of global public goods is then “better understood as a rhetorical device than as an analytical tool” (2009, p.108).

*Unproblematically applying a Northern, domestic theory to the international arena.*

Second, one must question who decides what counts as a global public good, and how this good or service is to be provided. There is a strong likelihood that Northern bilateral agencies and powerful international organizations are those who will set the guidelines for what qualifies as a global public good (Carbone, 2007; Moore, 2004). And as Baser argues: “Developing country needs and interests have not been high on the agenda for most international organizations involved in promoting global public goods,” and any support to achieving global public goods tends to be “top down” (2006, p.245). Therefore, organizations, such as the UNDP and the World Bank, can been accused of prioritizing their own agenda for global public goods, and the global public goods movement is thereby simply another means through which Northern powers can spread their ideologically-driven policies throughout the developing world. Due to “asymmetries in world politics”, where agendas for development are generally made by donors, a policy based on global public goods could be altered into “a new subtle form of conditionality, thus implying a shift in ownership from the national to the international arena” (Carbone, 2007, p.186).

As stated earlier, it has been proposed that the concept of global public goods can be used to offset the negative effects of globalization. As the developing world has arguably suffered disproportionately from globalization, it may be problematic that the global public goods agenda has been dominated by Northern, multilateral organizations. Moreover, by promoting the concept
of global public goods, these organizations are arguably embracing capitalist-based, economic globalization as it is, despite acknowledgement that its spread may exacerbate existing socio-economic inequalities within and between nations. Certain global public goods that have been listed by the Task Force highlight this point. For instance, such goods as “enhancing financial stability” and “strengthening the international trading system” are arguably tied to a capitalist, market-based world economy (International Task Force on Global Public Goods, 2006). Global public goods policies potentially perpetuate the negative aspects of economic globalization via the spread of capitalism – an economic system that is argued to favour Northern nations (Moore, 2004).

Moreover, it is arguably problematic to apply public goods theory internationally due to a different context. For instance, public goods theory was designed with the assumption of a single national governing body which can be responsible for ensuring the adequate financing and provision of public goods. An international government body that is able to take on this task currently does not exist.

**Undermining a human rights-based rationale for education.**

A final critique of the global public goods framework is that, given its foundation in economics, emphasizes benefits, or externalities. In the case of education, this framing contrasts another conceptualization; namely, that of education as a human right, which advocates for universal education in spite of economic benefits and byproducts. The notion of education as a global public good may therefore be in tension with a rights-based conceptualization. This critique will be unpacked in greater detail in Chapter Six.
Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to provide an analysis of the World Bank’s education policies and decipher the extent to which it defines education as a public good. By first giving a historical foundation on public provision of education and associated international development policies, and by defining education as a global public good, the policy analysis which followed resulted in the argument that the Bank’s conception of education is indeed that of a public good. The final critiques elucidate, however, that this conceptualization is not without criticisms.

The next chapter follows a similar format, yet offers a very different analysis. By investigating instead the privatization of education and its associated conceptual framework of neoliberalism, it will be show – in contrast to the conclusion reached in this chapter – that education is conceptualized by the Bank as a private good.
Introduction

Much as in Chapter Four, this chapter provides an analysis of the World Bank’s documents in order to discern the conceptual framework that informs its education policies. However, given the examination of different discourse, a different conceptual framing is identified. This chapter aims to elucidate that the Bank adopts a neoliberal framework to support the inclusion of market mechanisms in education.

The chapter begins with an overview of the history and many manifestations of private sector involvement in education. This is followed by an examination of neoliberalism’s influence on education, both in general and at the World Bank, based on an analysis of its policy discourse. Critiques of neoliberalism and market mechanisms in education are then forwarded, ending with an argument that the Bank adopts a conception of education as a private good – contrasting the conclusion reached in the previous chapter.

Privatization and Education

As Paul Starr describes: “Privatization is a fuzzy concept that evokes sharp political reactions” (1988, p.6). These reactions range depending on how privatization is defined, for there are variations and degrees to which a service might be privatized. Most theorists place the concept of privatization along a spectrum ranging from state to private actors, concerning the provision and/or financing of services. To privatize means a move away from the state in terms of “assets, functions, and indeed entire institutions… [moving] ownership, finance, and accountability out
of the public sector” (Burch, 2009; Starr, 1988, p.13,17). Private sector involvement in education can take a number of forms, where private actors might play a role in the financing, ownership and/or regulation of schooling and its associated services. Private actors involved in education can range from commercial, for-profit entrepreneurs, to non-profit philanthropic organizations, to religious-based organizations or community-owned and administered schools (Ball, 2007; Burch, 2009; NCSPE, 2007; Saltman, 2000).

In this thesis, the privatizing of education can also be described as the inclusion of market mechanisms, and so carries primarily an economic connotation. As Burch describes: “Arguments for privatization derive from standard market theory: As the theory goes, the higher the competition across suppliers, the higher the quality product and the lower the production costs. From this perspective, the outsourcing of functions previously performed by government creates a competitive market for public services, increases the quality of those services, and reduces costs for taxpayers… Privatization is invoked as a means for reducing the control of bureaucracy over government services” (Burch, 2009, p.3). From an economic standpoint, privatization is considered in many ways a good in itself, where services can not only be most efficiently financed and provided, but is also a means to further goods, such as freedom of choice. As will be argued in more detail later in this chapter, privatization of education is arguably grounded in laissez-faire, free-market economic principles. Often informed by Smith’s critiques of government rent-seeking, privatization is a means of avoiding state monopolies, for when solely state-controlled, there are no checks for raising prices and potential exploitation of consumers can occur if no competitors exist. Tied to the criticism of monopolies, privatization is furthermore argued by advocates to increase efficiency and quality. In order to attract consumers,
in a market environment, a business or service must remain competitive. If quality or efficiency is lacking, or if prices are too high, the consumer will go elsewhere.

The public provision and financing of education, which as discussed in Chapter Four became a relatively normative and accepted good by the mid-20th century, by the 1950s was questioned by some economists. Most notable of these was Milton Friedman, who in his chapter, “The Role of Government in Education,” in *Capitalism and Freedom*, criticized the government’s argued monopoly on educational provision and financing, advocating at least partial privatization, in particular the use of vouchers (1962/2002). While theorists and economists continued to argue for privatization in provision and financing on the grounds of choice, efficiency, and competition, a powerful, worldwide privatization movement did not truly begin until the 1990s. Before this time, privatization was limited – for instance, in the 1980s in Chile under Pinochet, and in the United Kingdom in the realm of higher education. In America in particular, private involvement in education was concentrated mainly in non-instructional services, such as transportation, food supply and services, or custodial work. Private schools were generally either elite, high-tuition schools or faith-based (Ball, 2007; Burch, 2009; Plank and Sykes, 2003; Saltman, 2000). In the 1990s, the notion of privatization as a reform tool, employed in order to improve the public school system, took hold and has become a major educational agenda worldwide for the past two decades (Plank and Sykes, 2003). As will be seen below, however, a staunch advocacy of privatization of education in developing countries began somewhat earlier. In the South, schooling was primarily private throughout the 20th century, at least in the sense of private financing via user fees. A movement towards private provision of education with public financing gained traction more recently.
According to the National Center for Studies on Privatization of Education (NCSPE), included under the umbrella of “private schools” are a variety of institutions including charter schools; for-profit, business-modeled schools; and initiatives such as voucher programs (2007). Run by a range of agents from entrepreneurs to religious groups to non-government organizations, private schools vary in terms of their purpose, administrative structure, financing and classroom practice (Ball, 2007; Carnoy, 1997; NCSPE, 2007; Tooley, 2005). Privatization is then a complex concept, in particular when examining what are termed public-private partnerships (PPPs), where private actors are involved to varying degrees, in the financing, provision and/or regulation of education. For instance, Partinos, Barrera-Osorio and Guaquta (2009) provide the follow matrix of public-private partnerships in education10:

Table 1: Matrix of Public-Private Partnerships in Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finance</th>
<th>Provision</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Private Schools</td>
<td>• User fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Private Universities</td>
<td>• Student loans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Home Schooling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Tutoring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Vouchers</td>
<td>• Public schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Contract schools</td>
<td>• Public universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Charter schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Contracting out</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Each form of privatization thus requires a separate analysis and critique. Most, however, are arguably grounded in a vision of publicly funded and provided education as problematic.

10 It should be noted that this matrix is limited as it does not include a breakdown by non-profit and for-profit schools.
Market Mechanisms in Educational Financing and Provision

Private sector involvement in education has many manifestations, which are furthermore varied depending on the country context, including a possible combination of financing, provision, and regulation. Below are descriptions of various forms of privatization, aiming to elucidate the spectrum of market mechanisms in education, and the common rationales provided for their support. The earliest private education facilities were church or faith-based schools, and these persist today, alongside various other forms of privatization (Ball, 2007; Plank and Sykes, 2003).

Those schools considered privately-financed, but publicly-provided, are characterized generally as schools charging user fees to students or their parents. While tuition payments are the primary private financing mechanism for publicly-provided institutions, payment for lunches, uniforms, or textbooks, would also fall under the umbrella of private financing (Colclough, 1996; NCSPE, 2007). Throughout the 1980s the World Bank advocated for user fees, student loans and other such private financing of public schooling (World Bank, 1988a; 1988b). It, however, no longer supports these activities outright.

More commonly advocated by not only the Bank (as will be detailed below), but by many country governments, is the alternate – publicly-financed but privately-provided schooling. These mechanisms are most commonly seen in two forms: charter schools and voucher schemes. Charter schools are those which are privately managed, generally with a unique focus to support specific values and to serve a specific student clientele. By being granted a negotiated “charter,” or contract, the administrators of these schools are given the freedom to develop curriculum, hire teachers, all in line with a unique mandate that can be selected by parents from an array of other charter schools and traditional public schools. Voucher programs offer a similar choice mechanism, where parents are given a publicly-financed tuition certificate that can be applied to
participating public or private institutions, including charter schools. This allows parents to
decide where public funds are to be spent, and the freedom to choose which school best suits
their child’s needs (Ball, 2007; Contreras, et al, 2005; Gill, et al., 2001; NCSPE, 2007; Plank and
Sykes, 2003).

Charter schools and voucher schemes are often referred to as “school choice” programs,
alluding to one of the primary rationales behind their promotion. The notion of increasing the
number of choices a parent has when deciding where to send a child to school is viewed as not
only better for the child, for he or she can attend a school best suited to meet the child’s unique
needs, but also supports parental rights to make decisions concerning their own child’s
education. This is especially the case for lower-income families who could never afford to
choose a privately-financed school for their child (NCSPE, 2007; Patrinos et al, 2009; Plank and
Sykes, 2003).

Beyond the freedom of choice rationale, a number of other arguments are forwarded by
advocates of privatization to support the introduction of market mechanisms to education. These
include the hope that with the administration of a school free from government bureaucracy,
increased innovation will result. Moreover, as discussed, it is assumed that a market where
schools compete for students will encourage higher quality, efficiency and increased
accountability. Also without the rigid regulation found in the public sector, private schools have
more flexibility to cater to student needs. Finally, private institutions are argued to help meet
demand and therefore increase access. As discussed below, even for-profit schools are said to
contribute to equity for they allow more students to attend school by freeing-up classroom spaces
and resources in the public system (Barrera-Osorio, et al, 2010; NCSPE, 2007; Patrinos, et al,
2009).
The increasing existence of these market mechanisms in education in almost every country worldwide is indicative of a widespread challenge to state-centred, public-public schools (Plank and Sykes, 2003). As Smith, and later Friedman and other educational market advocates have argued, public sector provision and financing of education represents a monopoly that traps parents into educating their children in potentially poor-quality schools that do not serve their specific needs. The perception of the public sector as inefficient, bureaucratic, and often corrupt only reinforces the push for private sector involvement.

Given the above rationales, a movement supporting fully private schools – both privately-financed and managed – has also gained traction worldwide. The promotion of education as an entrepreneurial endeavor is grounded in the following assumptions, very similar to those supporting other market mechanisms in education: private schools are more efficiently managed and financed than bureaucratic public schools; competition between schools act to force schools to either improve or lose support; private schools allow for a basic freedom of choice, where parents are not obliged to send their children to a single school model; teachers and administrators in for-profit private schools are subject to a greater degree of accountability than in public schools, where unions and bureaucratic management keeps poor performers in place; and fully private schools can relieve a fiscal burden on the public system by removing a number of students from the public schools (Burch, 2009; Patrinos et al, 2009; Saltman, 2000; Tooley, 2004; 2005).

Despite forceful critiques of these assumptions, which will be detailed later in this chapter, private education has “mushroomed” throughout the world (Tooley, 2005). “Across the world, enrollment in private primary schools grew by 58 percent between 1991 and 2004, while enrollment in public primary schools grew by only 10 percent. Globally, there are approximately
113 million students in nongovernment schools; 51 million are at the secondary level” (Patrinos, et al, 2009, p.3). Many of these schools are argued to serve primarily low-income students (Patrinos, et al, 2009; Sosale, 2000; Tooley, 2004; 2005).

As described, policies to introduce market mechanisms, or privatization in education, and privatization of most services in general, are grounded in certain economic assumptions – or more specifically what I argue to be a neoliberal economic framework.

**Neoliberalism and Market Mechanisms in Education**

As introduced in Chapter Three in reference to development policy, neoliberalism is a concept grounded in specific assumptions concerning economics and human nature. Based on liberal notions of individualism and freedom of choice, neoliberal economics advocates the primacy of free-market mechanisms such as competition in order to achieve optimal efficiency, quality and accountability within services, and is grounded in a critical vision of the state, questioning the capacity of governments whilst critiquing the dangers of state-run monopolies. In light of this description, one can trace the advocacy of privatization of education to a neoliberal framework. Reducing the role of the state in education, spurring competition in order to increase efficiency and quality, and increasing the choices of individual parents all can be viewed as informed by neoliberal ideals.

Therefore, given the rationales commonly invoked to support private participation in education, several neoliberal assumptions are present. As Plank and Sykes detail, neoliberal arguments have levied “...strong claims about the intrinsic frailties and incapacities of states and governments, accompanied by claims for the virtues of markets as instruments for solving a host of public and private problems. The enthusiasm of economists and others for the ‘magic of the
market’ has produced recommendations for privatizing virtually all the activities of the public sector… In education, these arguments have been deployed in support of vouchers and increased private sector participation in educational provision” (2003, p.xi). In particular, the claim against government monopoly via individual parental choice, and the assumptions surrounding market competition are grounded in a neoliberal framework. As increased privatization is considered a central tenet to neoliberal policies, private sector participation in education is argued by critics to be a neoliberal manifestation (Burch, 2009; Ladd, 2003; Plank, 2005; Plank and Sykes, 2003; Saltman, 2000).

It is important to reiterate that many neoliberal-based policies are in fact invoked in order to support increased access to schools. Private schools are often promoted when demand is too great for the public sector to manage, and so are considered a means to achieving education for all. At the same time, quality in education is presumably increased with private sector competition. Despite the fact that most education as a human right advocates disagree vehemently with these assumptions (see Tomasevski, 2003), one cannot presume that the motivations behind neoliberal policies directly contradict those of other educational access policies. As will be seen below, World Bank documents often insist that the introduction of market mechanisms to education is necessary to achieve equal access and quality in education.

Neoliberalism, the World Bank, and Education

Background on education at the “neoliberal” Bank.

World Bank education policies of the 1980s and 1990s stemmed from an assessment of education in the developing world as deeply flawed. Large population segments were denied access to schools and resources were poorly managed. Expenditure on education was then
perceived by the Bank as misallocated, leading to inefficiencies and inequities (Colclough, 1996; 2000). For instance, in its 1988 report *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policies for Adjustment, Revitalization and Expansion*, the Bank cites a lack of funds and poor capacity to manage resources as the central problems within African public education systems, and argued that low enrollment and quality of education was “exacerbated…by the inefficient use of available resources” (World Bank, 1988a, p.81) Therefore, policies were advanced that sought to reform education systems in order to “reduce unit costs, generate additional resources for education and promote greater equity” (Colclough, 2000, p.199). The Bank charged that governments as providers of public education were primarily to blame. As there was little reason to believe governments would act to remedy their countries’ educational problems, or that resources would become available from the public sector, the Bank began to advocate market solutions (Colclough, 1996; 2000; Hinchliffe, 1993; World Bank, 1986; 1988a; 1988b).

At this time, the World Bank was critiqued for promoting education policies rooted in the “dominant economics paradigm,” or a neoliberal economic framework (Alexander, 2002; Colclough, 1996; 2000; Klees, 1984, p.424; 2002). A number of factors contributed to this accusation of neoliberalism. First, given that “Evidence indicates that people are willing to pay for education” the Bank promoted user fees for students (World Bank, 1986, p.17). This would put the cost on parents rather than the state, and scholarships were to be made available for those bright students who could not afford the fees. Student loans were also recommended. This measure was believed to be effective for if students pay, they have greater incentive to work harder. In line with a neoliberal skepticism of central government power, decentralization of education administration was endorsed (World Bank, 1986; 1988).
The 1980s and early 1990s have thus been described as the “Edlib era,” where neoliberal economic principles guided the Bank’s work in education (Colclough, 2000). The Bank in this era argued for the inclusion of market mechanisms in schooling at all levels. This was thought to contribute to cost-efficiency and resource generation, while assisting the public system by reducing their student enrollment and building competition from which higher quality may result. As stated in the *World Development Report* of 1988: “User charges and other benefit-related fees can improve economic efficiency as well as raise revenue” (World Bank, 1988b, p.131). These prescriptions were all in adherence with neoliberal economic principles, and were the mainstay of the Bank’s education sector policy for much of the 1980s and 90s (Alexander, 2002; Bonal, 2002; Colclough, 1996; 2000; Delgado-Ramos and Saxe-Fernandez, 2005; Jones, 2007; Puiggros, 1996).

Although the Wolfensohn-era reforms advocated more country participation, a continued support of private sector initiatives in education remained. As Jones (2007) describes, under Wolfensohn the education sector’s “…stature remained intact as a champion of neoliberal reform in education” (p.206). However, Wolfensohn supported EFA, and it was his push to house the Fast Track Initiative. Also during the Wolfensohn presidency, which as discussed in Chapter Two led the Bank on an alternate path from his predecessors, a shift occurred at the Bank where the abolition of user fees and universal access to primary education came to the forefront (Chabbot, 2003; Jones, 2007). As stated in the 1999 Education Sector Strategy (ESS): “The long-term goal in education is nothing less than to ensure everyone completes a basic education…” (World Bank, 1999, p.vii). Moreover, in the ESS, the Bank emphasized “Basic education for the poorest” (1999, p.ix) and with regard to EFA claimed that “The World Bank is committed to working towards these internationally agreed targets” (p.7). It was then under Wolfensohn then
that the Bank’s position on privatization began to blur. While many critics continued to accuse the Bank of advocating a neoliberal-driven privatization mandate in education, the Bank’s support of universal public sector initiatives, as detailed in Chapter Four, were more evident from this point on as well.

While much scholarly work of the 1980s, and especially throughout the 1990s, presented a consensus that World Bank education policy was rooted neoliberal economics, there has been some recent debate on the degree to which the Bank ought to be deemed an institution that blindly follows this economic framework (Heyneman and Anderson, 2008; Menashy, 2007b). Given the Bank’s support of EFA and other universal access initiatives which present education as a global public good, there is, as argued in Chapter Four, an evident move toward a vision of education as public. However, what follows is an analysis of current World Bank documents that serves to demonstrate that the Bank indeed continues to be influenced by neoliberalism, in particular given that education policy prescriptions based on this framework often manifest in the inclusion of market mechanisms. The framing of the Bank’s discourse surrounding private sector participation in education, while at times presents it as unfortunately necessary to fill gaps left by public sector provision, at other times is presented as inherently desirable, given such assumptions as the ineffectiveness of government and the greater efficiency and quality of the private sector.

Current Bank support of private sector involvement in education.

The neoliberal input into educational provision and financing must be evaluated taking into account a certain degree of complexity, given that the introduction of market mechanisms takes so many different forms and private sector involvement occurs to different degrees depending on political, social and economic context. This complexity should be considered when evaluating
the Bank’s policy discourse, and so it is important to note that the Bank advocates several forms of privatization. “Privatization” is used by the Bank, as Sosale describes, “…broadly to indicate a dynamic progression in the financing and provision (management and ownership) of education…” (2000, p.3). These include various school choice programs, public-private partnerships and funding strategies, such as scholarship and voucher programs. As well, the majority of funding continues to focus on improving public schools (Sosale, 2000; World Bank, 2005; World Bank, 2009b).

However, despite public-sector support, private sector engagement in education is apparently a central theme and of critical importance to the Bank’s recent education documents. For instance, in its 2009 *Education Year in Review*, the Education Sector of the Bank included the theme “Leveraging Private Sector Capacity” as one of five “2009 Highlights” (2009). And the World Bank/IMF *Global Monitoring Report* for 2009 contains a separate chapter entitled “Leveraging the Private Sector Role in Human Development,” which focuses on health and education. Moreover, single reports on private sector involvement in education and other social services have been published by the Bank in the past decade, including the *Private Sector Development Strategy* (World Bank, 2002c), and *Private Sector Involvement in Education: A Review of World Bank Activities in East Asia and the Pacific* (World Bank, 2004b).

Also very significant are those publications authored by Bank staff or commissioned by the organization, and published by the World Bank, which are evidence that a good deal of Bank intellectual resources are channeled into research on, and the documenting of, market mechanisms in education. And as will be shown below via references to them, these publications often aim to justify private sector involvement in education. Recent publications include *Trends in Private Sector Development in World Bank Education Projects* (Sosale, 2000), *Enhancing
Accountability in Schools: What can Choice and Contracting Contribute (Patrinos and Laroque, 2007), Public-Private Partnerships: Contracting Education in Latin America (Patrinos, 2006), Mobilizing the Private Sector for Public Education: A View from the Trenches (Patrinos and Sosale, 2007), The Role and Impact of Public-Private Partnerships in Education (Patrinos, et al, 2009), and Emerging Evidence on Vouchers and Faith-Based Providers in Education (Barrera-Osorio, et al, 2009). As these publications are commissioned, published and therefore vetted by the World Bank, I employ their discourse in this analysis as representing that of the Bank.

Moreover, in only the past five years, the Bank has hosted, at times collaboratively with others such as the International Finance Corporation and Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, eight conferences and workshops on private sector initiatives in education and public-private partnerships, giving additional support to an argument that the Bank is at the epicenter of an epistemic community on privatization of education in developing countries (World Bank, 2010f).

Reflecting the complexity of market mechanisms in education, current World Bank projects supporting private sector involvement in education take a variety of forms. For instance, Bank primary-level education projects labeled in the Edstats database as “public-private partnerships in education administration,” “public-private partnerships in education financing,” or as “private sector provision of education and privatization” extend to both middle and lower-income countries. Some examples include the Indian Elementary Education Project, considered a “privatization” activity. This project encompasses “financial subventions to private aided schools...” Also, the Balochistan Education Support Project for Pakistan, which “aims to promote public-private and community partnerships to improve access to quality primary education for girls in particular,” consists of such components as “establishing community
schools in rural areas” and “supporting private schools” via professional development for teachers and training of staff, along with capacity building for the foundation that manages the schools. As shown in the below table, most Bank projects labeled in their database as public-private partnerships or privatization activities, primarily support governments via capacity-building and technical assistance to in turn support and encourage their countries’ private sector in education, including not only teaching and educational quality, but also school construction and textbook provision (World Bank, 2010c).

Table 2: Sample of World Bank Currently-Funded Education Projects Involving the Private Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>FY</th>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Project Component</th>
<th>Project Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Second Education Quality Improvement Project</td>
<td>School grants</td>
<td>Public-Private partnerships in education administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Reaching Out of School Children Project</td>
<td>Teacher and Principal training</td>
<td>Public-Private partnerships in education administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Second Elementary Education Project</td>
<td>Universalizing access and promoting equity</td>
<td>Private sector provision of education/privatization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Loan in Support of the Education and Training Sector Improvement Program</td>
<td>Equitable expansion of access to post-basic education</td>
<td>Private sector provision of education/privatization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Balochistan Education Support Project</td>
<td>Establishment of community schools in rural areas</td>
<td>Public-Private partnerships in education administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Sindh Education Sector Development Policy Credit Project</td>
<td>Improving access to quality schooling</td>
<td>Private sector provision of education/privatization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Given that the Bank’s mandate is explicitly to support country governments in attaining development, private education support is given via the state, primarily in the form of PPPs. This is not the case, however, for the International Finance Corporation, which will be dealt with later in this chapter.

Neoliberal discourse in Bank education policies.

Based on the discourse employed in its education policy documents, the Bank’s support of market mechanisms in education can be identified as rooted in a neoliberal framework. As will
be shown below, the Bank readily invokes such concepts as inherent problems with public schools, advocating a limited role for the state in education, along with the advantages of parental choice, and the notion that competition can engender greater efficiency and quality. These assumptions will be later unpacked as presenting market mechanisms in education as inherently desirable, and open to several critiques. What follows is an analysis of rhetorical and discursive practices employed by the Bank.\(^\text{11}\)

For instance, Patrinos, et al. use the following arguments to support public-private partnerships in education: “The private sector can compete for students with the public sector. In turn, the public sector has an incentive to react to this competition by increasing the quality of education that it provides…” and go on to argue that PPPs are “…likely to increase efficiency in the delivery of services” (2009, p.4). The Bank argues that “publicly funded private schools are able to provide high-quality education at low cost,” touting the cost efficiency of PPPs (World Bank, 2009b, p.27). Market competition is readily presented as an effective means to increasing quality (see Patrinos and Sosale, 2007; Patrinos, et al 2009; World Bank Independent Evaluation Group, 2006; World Bank/IMF, 2009), and this can only occur via the inclusion of the private sector.

Despite its support of government education systems, the Bank paints an unfavourable picture of public education. The Bank contends that “[i]n many countries public sector provision is close to dysfunctional and rife with corruption” (2003, p.111). Evidence is presented that governments lack the capacity to provide quality education: “Public sector schools in most countries have limited resources to maintain school infrastructure and offer basic amenities for an appropriate learning environment. Aside from the problem of responding to excess and

\(^{11}\) As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, this approach is limited to policy analysis and so does not provide individual project analyses.
differentiated demand, maintaining an appropriate quality of education is also a challenge for the public sector” (Patrinos and Sosale, 2007, p.1). And so while the Bank states that: “Public provision of good-quality primary education at no cost to parents or children” is imperative, it yet goes on to argue that “there is room and need – in low- and middle- income countries alike – to promote increased private participation in education.” (World Bank, 2005, p.34). The Bank recommends: “…greater involvement of the private sector… could help address the following problems: excess demand, low quality of services, inadequate funding, and capacity-building efforts” (World Bank, 2004b, p.21).

Although the Bank claims that “Successful education systems vary widely… Some have almost exclusively public schools, while others provide public support to private providers” (2003, p.111), within the same document stresses that a key contributor to education problems are “dysfunctional” public schools, for “there is no way of making the provider accountable for results” (World Bank, 2003d, p.118). The latter statement seems to imply that public schools are inherently problematic, despite the former statement which makes the claim that some may indeed be successful.

Given the presumed inferiority of public schools, private mechanisms are provided as a response: “PPP contracts can be more flexible than most public sector arrangements. Generally, the public sector has less autonomy in hiring teachers and organizing schools than the private sector does… Flexibility in teacher contracting is one of the primary motivations for PPPs” (Patrinos, et al, 2009; p.4)

Private schools are often depicted by the World Bank as superior to public schools: “private provision is often as good as, if not better than, public provision…” (2005, p.34). In the Bank’s view “Even at a higher cost, this approach [private involvement] might be desirable if
comparable improvement in government service delivery were not feasible” (World Bank and IMF, 2009, p.89). Touting the superiority of private schools, the Bank states: “In certain cases, the educational achievements of students in these schools have been higher than those of students in publicly operated schools, suggesting an academic advantage as well” (World Bank, 2009b, p.27-8), and claims that a priority for the Bank is to support public-private partnerships in stressing the problematic “reliance solely on public partners” (World Bank, 2005, p.83).

In an evident effort to acknowledge common critiques that private sector involvement ignores the importance of the government in education, the Bank proposes that there certainly remains a role for the state in privatization: “Engaging the private sector does not mean a lesser role for government, which will remain central in efforts to achieve the MDGs…[but] means additional responsibilities and somewhat different responsibilities for government as part of expanded efforts to increase access and improve the quality of MDG-related services… analogous to moving from a more closed economy to a more open one” (World Bank and IMF, 2009, p.109). Moreover, “Leveraging the private sector role to achieve the human development MDGs is increasingly in the mainstream, and this trend is likely to continue. It does not mean a lesser government role in human development, but rather a somewhat different and even expanded role” (World Bank and IMF, 2009, p.112). The state in this view is meant to provide more of a regulatory and financing role rather than one responsible for provision.

However, even in a regulatory role, the state ought to be minimized. To demonstrate the “hands-off” approach advocated by the Bank, the Bank provides the following recommendations for the government’s regulatory role in PPPs: “Allow private schools to set their own tuition and other fees… Allow both not-for-profit and for-profit schools to operate… Ensure that PPP contracts give private providers considerable flexibility…” (Patrinos, et al, 2009, p.43).
The government’s role under the neoliberal market mechanisms advocated by the Bank is then minimized. Further demonstrating an advocacy of reduced state in education is the Bank’s support of for-profit private schools, which have a very limited government involvement. For instance, it is recommended to governments: “Provide a sound basis for the private sector. In many countries, the current climate in the education sector is hostile to private providers of education, particularly those that are for-profit. Some governments do not allow any for-profit schools to be opened at all, while others try to limit or tax any surpluses that they may make. However, once governments recognize the benefits that private education can yield to the sector as a whole, they can start by adopting a policy that clearly welcomes private providers and encourages them to establish new schools or universities” and “Give subsidies to private schools” (Patrinos, et al, 2009, p.65, 66). While advocacy of market mechanisms in Bank documents generally refers to PPPs, the Bank’s further advocacy of for-profit private schools is evidenced in its collaborative work with the IFC, which will be detailed below.

It is interesting to note that the Bank depicts its own stance on privatization as “pragmatic” and therefore non-ideological: “…it is important to be pragmatic rather than normative or ideological. Strategies that improve or increase outcomes sustainably over the long term are desirable, regardless of which sector is carrying them out…” (World Bank and IMF, 2009, p.86). However, given the evident neoliberal framing of their policies concerning the private sector in education, an ideological stance is evidently being supported. For instance, Bank documents present the conception of privatization as inherently desirable, with such statements as: “…… disregarding the potential of the nonstate sector to contribute to the health and education MDGs is shortsighted and wasteful. Leveraging the private sector role should be an essential element of pragmatic policies and programs for achieving the MDGs” (World Bank
and IMF, 2009, p.109). Also, as described above, the Bank presents private schools as superior to public (World Bank, 2009b).

Again, the private sector is readily presented by the Bank as more efficient, better quality, and more accountable. It is then arguable that discursively, the Bank attempts to present the involvement of the private sector as inherently desirable, and that without its involvement education will be of lower quality with limited access. This contrasts the discursive evidence presented in the last chapter, which presented the involvement of market mechanisms as unfortunately necessary, only to be employed when the public system cannot meet demand.

*The case of the International Finance Corporation.*

While the Bank’s project work is conducted via governments, funding directly to entrepreneurs in the education sector is not a component of its educational operations, and so education sector policy documents generally do not focus on for-profit providers. However, it is arguable that the Bank indirectly supports for-profit, fully private initiatives based on policy discourse surrounding regulation and the government’s role, and given the case of the International Finance Corporation. As described above, the Bank indeed recommends some allowance to be made for fully private, for-profit schools, in recommending that governments reduce the “hostile” environment for private for-profit institutions and providing them with subsidies. And while the Bank is not in the position to directly supporting the for-profit sector, its private sector arm has taken on this role in education.

The relatively recent involvement of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) in education financing highlights the support of for-profit education, as the IFC limits its investments to private sector projects. The IFC has the task, distinct from the other four branches of the World Bank Group, of supporting the private sectors of emerging markets. Founded as a
separate arm of the Bank in 1956, and initially named the International Development Corporation, the IFC grew out of a belief that economic development, and thereby poverty alleviation, was dependent on a robust private sector (IFC, 2010a). Moreover, it was observed that private entrepreneurs were not being effectively supported by lending agencies (Bell, 1981). The overarching aim of the IFC was – and remains – to allow developing countries to attain sustainable economic growth via providing investments in, and advisory services for, the private sector (IFC, 2001; 2010a).

IFC educational contributions did not begin until the mid-1990s, with only one project approved per year until 1997 (IFC, 2001). According to the IFC’s policy documents, at this time, the IFC was responding to two main shifts underway surrounding the perception of education in developing countries. First, the policy environment in developing nations was becoming more accepting of private sector engagement in education, particularly if it meant an increase in quality provision, due to a near-universal acceptance that human capital was integral to a nation’s economic growth. Families were also seen by the IFC to be more willing to pay for education than in the past, understanding its contribution to a child’s future success and associated family stability (IFC, 2010b; 2010c). For-profit schools were already on the rise, in response to a growing demand. Second, in all levels of education, this demand was not being addressed adequately. Demographic changes and an increasing dissatisfaction with public schools made access to quality education limited. Moreover, the late 1990s saw an increase in primary school completion in many countries, resulting in a greater demand for secondary and tertiary education. The middle classes, in particular, were being underserved (Ellena, et al, 2002; IFC, 2001).
Yet beyond meeting this increasing demand, the IFC had further rationales for supporting the private sector in both education finance and provision. As discussed earlier, private entrepreneurs could arguably assist the public sector in alleviating the financial burden of schooling all children. According to the IFC: “Private education can indirectly benefit the lowest socioeconomic groups by attracting families who can afford some level of fee away from the public system, thereby increasing capacity and per student spending for the students who remain in the public system” (IFC, 2001, p.5). Private education is thereby argued to promote social mobility in allowing more resources to support the poor in the public system. Furthermore, the IFC posits that the private sector will increase efficiency and effectiveness in education, and can promote diversity and encourage innovation (EdInvest, 2001, p.19; IFC, 2001, p.6).

From 1997 to 2000, IFC investments in education jumped from 1 million to 54 million USD per year (IFC, 2001). As of March 2010, according to the IFC, its 63 private education projects have a total value of $1.5 billion, operating in 31 countries. Reaching 1.2 million students, beyond its financial products, the IFC provides advisory services whilst arguably stimulating employment in the education industry. The IFC is now the world’s largest multilateral investor in private education in emerging markets, having provided $481 million in financing, $30 million of which was invested in 2009 (IFC, 2009; 2010b).

This increase in IFC investments points to a significant force in the World Bank Group behind private sector reforms in education, in particular for-profit schools. In fact, the IFC criticizes even private non-profit schools, such as philanthropic or religious schools, for they are “subject to the same problems of productive inefficiency that characterizes public non-profit provision” (IFC, 2001, p.17). Based on the claim that “it is evident that marketization and privatization are transforming education and that the business ethos and practices are
increasingly acceptable” (2001, p.v), the IFC invests in businesses considered financially sustainable, meaning that the for-profit sector is support by the IFC. Schools that attract investment from the IFC must then be considered profitable (EdInvest, 2001; IFC, 2001).

Collaboration between the World Bank education sector and the IFC has grown in recent years. Despite the fact that they are essentially autonomous organizations, the IFC has stated that it “is actively collaborating with other parts of the World Bank Group to capitalize on the strengths of each institution” (IFC, 2001, p.8). The IFC argues that “there is much to be gained from extending collaborative efforts between IFC and the World Bank for both better country and regional knowledge and for a clearer understanding of the appropriate role for the public and private sector in each environment” (IFC, 2001, p.16). From the Bank education sector’s perspective, the IFC’s work in education can “complement” that of the Bank’s by incorporating aspects of the IFC’s education strategy into its own (World Bank, 2005, p.23). And although “IFC support to the sector [is] still in a nascent stage and evolving” and “the Bank and IFC have complementary but distinct institutional priorities,” the Bank expects a growing “close collaboration and alignment of IFC support with its own education strategy” (World Bank, 2005, p.23).

The World Bank and International Finance Corporation then accept specific and differing roles in supporting the private sector of education in developing nations. For instance the Bank “can provide ‘early stage’ equity and loan capital to finance investments in the private education sector” and “can help to increase the attractiveness of the private sector as an investment target” via capacity building and financial support (Patrinos, et al, 2009, p.69). At the same time, the IFC can provide direct financial support and advisement to entrepreneurs in education sectors. The Bank’s vision of the IFC as an integral player in their education policy is further evidenced
in the *Education Year in Review*, where of only two points made in a subsection of “Leveraging Support for Education,” “IFC Support to Private Sector Education” is listed and described in detail (2009b, p.39). Bank documents further employ successful IFC projects in education as evidence to support their public-private partnership policies (Patrinos, et al, 2009, p.58; World Bank, 2009b, p.8; World Bank and IMF, 2009, p.103).

This convergence of views on privatization is further evidenced by the increase in publications on the subject of privatization and public-private partnerships by both branches, including reports from “EdInvest,” a joint Bank/IFC project to disseminate research and information on private education. As well, of the eight conferences on private education hosted by the Bank, three of them were joint initiatives with the IFC, and others included speakers from the Health and Education unit of the IFC (World Bank, 2010f). A closer relationship between the two branches of the Bank in education seems to indicate a growing consensus on the desirability of the private sector in education in Bank policy.

The Bank education sector and the IFC also dovetail in their views on private education regulation and the role of country governments in PPPs. In 2008, the IFC’s Health and Education department conducted an online discussion on regulation of private education, a summary of which was published in an EdInvest newsletter, “The Evolving Regulatory Context for Private Education in Emerging Economies” (2009). This summary described the following conclusions reached in the discussion: that governments ought to regulate private schools “with a light touch” and that “in order to thrive, the private sector needs incentives rather than strict regulation” (EdInvest, 2009, p.2).

Although one cannot depict the Bank and IFC as the same organization, they indeed share several commonalities and it is notable that their work is moving in a closer direction. This,
along with the analysis of past and current World Bank education policy documents highlights the Bank’s endorsement of market mechanisms in education, including PPPs and fully private schools, demonstrating the influence of the neoliberal economic framework at the level of discourse. The Bank has evidently taken a variety of strong discursive steps to legitimize the role of the private sector in education. The Bank’s discourse demonstrates that this conception of education is grounded in a neoliberal framework. As discussed below, it thus frequently defines education as an exclusive, private good, and moreover, privatization as inherently desirable.

Critiques of the World Bank’s Support of Private Sector Involvement in Education

The following section describes some main criticisms of the Bank’s advocacy of market mechanisms in education. To summarize, first, data employed in much of the research presented to support the Bank’s position on privatization is Bank-generated, which is problematic for the perspectives are arguably limited. This evidence is moreover derived from a small number of cases in middle and high-income countries, assuming results can be replicated in the developing South. Furthermore, Bank publications often present a logically questionable argument where they cite evidence of an increase in private educational providers worldwide to support the idea that there then ought to be private providers and so privatization should be supported by the Bank. And finally, the Bank often argues that government is inherently unprepared to adequately provide education, which is not always the case. Based on the critiques of evidence and logic employed in Bank documents, one must question the Bank’s persistent claim that privately-provided schools are necessarily superior and preferable to public schools.

Second, beyond these critiques of the Bank’s documents and their logical and empirical grounding, the Bank’s support of fully private schools is argued to not adequately address
several equity-related issues surrounding privatization, which will be unpacked below. Third, even in the case of publicly-financed and privately-provided education, critiques can be forwarded concerning potential equity ramifications as well as the associated reduction in democracy in education. It is thereby argued below that in both the cases of fully-private schools, as well as PPPs, the Bank’s support of market mechanisms in education run the risk of exclusivity and allowing for education as a private good.

**Questioning the World Bank’s Evidence and Arguments.**

The research invoked by the Bank to support market mechanisms in education are predominantly derived from a single source – namely, the Bank’s own “knowledge” work. In-house research accounts for an enormous component of the Bank’s operations, and the World Bank has been described as the world’s single largest research body on international development (Broad, 2007; BWP, 2004; Kapur, 2006; World Bank OED, 2003). As noted in the most recent external evaluation of the Bank’s research operations, in 2006 the Bank spent 2.5% of its budget on research (approximately $600 million annually), and from 1998-2005, Bank research and consultants commissioned by the Bank produced over 4,000 reports and publications (Banerjee, et al, 2006; Kapur, 2006). The dominance of Bank-produced research is evident upon examination of references in education documents such as the *World Development Report* (2004), the *Education Sector Strategy Update* (2005), *The Role and Impact of Public-Private Partnerships in Education* (Patrinos, et al, 2009), the *Global Monitoring Report 2009: A Development Emergency* (World Bank and IMF, 2009), and the *Concept Note for the Education Sector Strategy 2020* (2010a).

That the Bank employs primarily its own research to support its policy recommendations is problematic for, first, it “narrows the diversity of views” (Kapur, 2006, p.167). The majority of
researchers employed by the Bank are not only from the North, but also educated in Northern universities (Kapur, 2006; Weaver, 2008). Given this fact, the perspectives generated arguably risk uniformity, and ought to be informed by more diverse backgrounds, including those with more intimate knowledge of the Southern context, to which these policies are applied.

Furthermore, the Bank’s limiting of evidence to that derived from its own research represents a conflict of interest, for alternative views are limited when there is an unquestioned acceptance that Bank research is sound and rigorous (BWP, 2004). An Operations Evaluation Department (OED) report from 2003 critiqued the Bank’s knowledge work on these grounds. However, Bank-generated research continues to disproportionately inform its policies, including those in education (Broad, 2007; King, 2007; King, et al, 2005). Evidence presented by the Bank which supports private sector engagement in education can therefore be accused of bias, for the research it invokes arguably supports a Bank-driven agenda, thereby lacking objectivity.

Also in light of the Bank’s choice of evidence, research marshaled by the Bank to demonstrate the superiority and effectiveness of PPPs is derived not from the developing South – for which Bank policies are primarily designed – but instead from upper and middle-income countries. For instance, the Education Year in Review (2009b, p.24), the World Bank/IMF Global Monitoring Report (2009, p.100), and reports by Patrinos, et al (2009, p.6), Patrinos and Sosale (2007, p.17), and Barrera-Osorio et al (2010, p.151) cite evidence to support vouchers from OECD countries such as Sweden, Canada, Denmark, Korea and the Netherlands. This data, while possibly accurate, is questionably applied to developing nations, where context is drastically different. For instance, the effectiveness and accessibility issues involving private schools in countries with well-established, high-quality public education systems are arguably quite different from those in developing nations. The assumptions embodied in the
unproblematic employment of this evidence discounts the variation in, for instance, economic or political make-up, and history of public education systems depending on the country.

Furthermore, studies invoked by the Bank have shown that in basic subjects, students attending privately-run schools fare better on standardized tests than those in publicly funded schools (see Woessman, 2005). And teacher “commitment” is considered higher in private schools, for absenteeism and low levels of teaching activity are more problematic in the public sector. The higher academic achievement is argued to result in part from the lower teacher-student ratios in the private schools. The Bank further argues that the existence of private sector schools allow for higher quality public schools, for funds and resources are made available to the public sector due to students exiting the public system (Patrinos, et al, 2009, p.4; World Bank and IMF, 2009, p.100; World Bank, 2010f).

Critics, however, refute these claims in that, first, private schools are not deemed necessarily of higher quality, for in the case of both vouchers, charter schools and fully-private schools, they tend to have a student body born to a higher economic class, and so are more advantaged with better educated parents. As Klees argues:

…it is often observed that students in private schools have higher test scores, on average, than public school students. However… that is because private schools usually have a much more advantaged student body, which have had more learning opportunities from birth…Private schools also let in many fewer students with special needs and learning problems… The public policy question is not whether students in existing private schools perform better than those in public schools but whether students would benefit more from private schools than public schools… Once you controlled variables more adequately so that you were looking at comparable students, public school students did every bit as well as private school students (Klees, 2008, p.219, 20).

Therefore, arguments can be presented which refute the Bank’s claim that private involvement increases the quality of education.
Advocates of privatization make the following claims: several recent studies have shown that throughout the developing world even very poor families are paying fees so that their children may attend private schools. In fact, according to a study of schooling in India, Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya, a majority of poor urban parents choose fully private schools for their children (Tooley, 2005). In several Bank and IFC documents (such as IFC, 2001, p.3; Patrinos, et al, 2009, p.2; World Bank, 2009b, p.25; World Bank and IMF, 2009, p.107), and both the IFC and Bank education sector websites, arguments in favour of private sector involvement begin with data demonstrating that private schools are growing (IFC, 2008c; 2010b; World Bank, 2010b). This is argued to demonstrate a strong parental preference for private schools, implying that private schools are superior.

However, simply because there is a mushrooming of private schools in the developing world does not lead to a logical conclusion that there ought to be more private schools. Parental willingness to pay for an education for their children does not contribute to a pro-privatization argument, it only presents the widespread existence of private schools as a fact. If the Bank were to demonstrate that parents would prefer to pay due to the inherent superiority of private education, then the argument would be strengthened. However, it is simply demonstrated that parents do indeed pay. The Bank documents here commit a logical fallacy, known as the “is-ought” fallacy, which “consists in assuming that because something is now the practice, it ought to be the practice” (Damer, 2001, p.117).

Moreover, the Bank presents the fact of many parents paying fees as parents simply exercising choice, not mentioning that parents may in fact lack any other avenue to adequately educate their children, arguably ignoring the financial burden that school fees may have on their families (Archer, 2006; Watkins, 2004). Instead the facts are employed to support increased
privatization instead of, for instance, improving public school systems. The data that denotes the increase in private schools should not be used as evidence of parental preference. The evidence may demonstrate demand, but not preference.

Critics have also questioned pro-privatization arguments presented that assume private schools will leave more funds to be diverted to public schooling. Advocates of privatization, including some of those authoring World Bank publications, argue that public schools in fact benefit from the existence of private schools, for each student who exits the public system frees up funds which then increases per capita spending on children who remain in state schools. However, as Hinchcliffe points out, “Such arguments… are likely to reflect a misreading of budgetary practices in most countries. Education budgets rarely begin with a fixed aggregate amount which is then divided across levels of education. Rather the overall total is built up from the sub-totals” (1993, p.186). The notion that private education will increase the quality of education in public schools – while in theory is plausible – is unlikely, for the re-routing of expenditures to public schools cannot be assumed simply because private schools have freed-up funds.

Moreover, in that privatization means the removal of a service from the responsibility of the state, educational privatization carries with it an assumption that the state mismanages education. As described above, the Bank documents repeatedly paint a negative picture of pure public education (see Patrinos and Sosale, 2007; World Bank, 2003d; 2004b). However, as Brighouse points out: “states vary in how well functioning they are, and they vary both by structure and by political will” (2004, p.622). To advocate the inclusion of the private sector as a common reform policy, is “excessively pessimistic about the state” (ibid). For instance, problems of teacher and administrator accountability are invoked by the Bank, assuming that educators
won’t be obligated to do their jobs well without a private manager to oversee their work and hold them accountable. However, it is equally arguable that private schools themselves lack accountability. As Saltman argues, public schools “are more subject to public oversight” and provides cases of “countless scandals involving business people bilking schools behind the curtain of corporate privacy” (2000, p.28).

Therefore, the arguments presented by the World Bank to support private sector engagement in education must be questioned, as criticisms can be presented concerning the assumptions embedded in the Bank’s arguments to support private sector involvement, while questions must be raised concerning the evidence employed by the Bank to support these positions.

**Critiques of the World Bank’s support of fully private schools.**

As described above, the World Bank indirectly supports fully-private schools within its policy discourse by encouraging country governments to permit for-profit private schools to operate and free from much regulation, while the IFC supports private financing and provision of education via direct investments. However, private, fee-based schools risk excluding poorer students whose parents cannot afford to pay. This denotes a deeply classist implication of private schooling. Moreover, as education is commonly viewed as one of the most significant inputs to social mobility, if private schools are in fact superior, class structures are only perpetuated by fee-based private schooling. For if wealthier parents are able to send their children to superior schools, their children then have access to a higher quality of education, and thereby better chances at social mobility (Ball, 2006). Private education therefore risks reinforcing class divisions and thereby hinders some from moving out of poverty, whilst excluding children who cannot afford fees.
Furthermore, private education has been found to perpetuate gender inequities in developing countries, particularly when fees come into play. Parents are more likely to spend their income on their male children, while educating girls is often considered an unaffordable luxury. Moreover, it is argued that private schools are less likely to provide remedial programs for poor children with learning disabilities. While it is possible that private schools open doors to some poorer or marginalized students, these account for a very few (Brighouse, 2004; Stromquist, 2002). To summarize, fully private schools “…make the educational prospects for the least advantaged (and for many who are just less advantaged than the mean) even worse than they currently are, and hence diminish their prospects for accessing the unequally distributed benefits of social co-operation… Many… would not even get an adequate education (on any reasonable understanding of adequacy): especially the least talented among the least advantaged” (Brighouse, 2004, p.629).

A further issue may be parental willingness to pay into public schooling if enrolling their children in private schools. As Adnett describes: “Privatized schooling… is likely to lead to increased stratification by parental wealth, and as representative voters lose contact with the children of the poor, they no longer support increases in funding for public schools…” (2004, p.396). Access to private schools for wealthier families therefore threatens to decrease access to quality schooling for the poor.

Fully private schools that are both financed and administered privately can then be critiqued as exclusive. As will be seen below, the Bank’s more common advocacy of PPPs, despite public-sector inclusion, also risks exclusiveness.
**Critiques of the World Bank’s support of publicly-funded, privately-provided schools.**

In the case of charter schools and vouchers, while they may not require private fees, equity concerns still exist. The self-governance of privately-run schools allow their managers, or administrators, to determine which students are admitted, and often lower-income or lower academically achieving students are denied entrance. According to Martin Carnoy: “Better private schools for middle-class pupils may produce higher test scores than do public schools, but mainly by keeping out hard-to-manage or less-motivated pupils” (1997). Moreover, many lower-income, particularly rural, families are limited to sending their children to a school within walking distance of their home (Carnoy, 1997; Fiske and Ladd, 2003b). And higher-income families also tend to be more knowledgeable concerning the options of schooling, for the parents are generally better educated (Carnoy, 1997; Carnoy and McEwan, 2003; Ladd, 2003). According to Carnoy’s research, “less educated families are less likely to search out and use information on the quality of educational alternatives” (1997, p.113).

Additionally, one can question the evidence that privately-run schools are truly of superior quality due to the selective admissions of school-choice programs. For instance, charter schools may simply educate higher-class students with better educated parents. And there is “no persuasive evidence that private schools are more effective than public schools and the evidence that they are more cost-effective is mixed” (Carnoy, 1997, p.114; Lara, et al, 2009; Rouse and Barrow, 2009). Fiske and Ladd’s research in New Zealand found that teachers themselves did not believe that educational quality was increased by school choice (2003a).

It is possible that states can regulate that private providers admit all applicants via a lottery system, and so admissions cannot discriminate. However, a major argument presented in Bank discourse supporting PPPs such as voucher programs proposes that efficiency and quality
will result in large part from minimizing state regulation. One must question where the Bank stands on regulation, asking if indeed state regulation of admissions could be permissible under a depiction of privately-provided schooling as autonomously managed.

Moreover, private involvement may increase exclusivity for it is argued to erode the public schooling system, thereby further diminishing some children’s access to quality education. For instance, the privately-run schools act to lure parents from the public school system. Parents who opt for privately-provided schools may then cease pressuring their governments to improve the management of public schools. This lack of parents voicing dissatisfaction may only increase deterioration of public sector (Plank, 2005; UNESCO, 2009a). As described by Plank, and drawing on the theory of Hirschman, there are two primary ways in which parents can approach their dissatisfaction with schools. First, they may use “voice,” which implies speaking out and urging governments, school administrators and policy-makers to improve the schools. The other means is “exit,” by moving their children to a different school (Plank, 2005). When given an alternative in the form of a charter school or a voucher, many parents choose the exit response. The existence of private schools then reduces the effectiveness of voice. Plank states: “The efficacy of individual and local ‘voice’ is consequently diminished; parents who might once have expressed dissatisfaction at a local school board meeting must now compete to be heard among a variety of competing voices… Rather than seeking change by exercising ‘voice,’ therefore, local actors who are unhappy with their schools may now be more inclined to ‘exit’ the local school system…” (2005, p.13). The value of voice is then diminished, in turn eroding the public schooling system further. A major means by which public schools may improve, by heeding parent complaints, is removed. It can therefore be argued that the lure of privately-run, publicly-financed schools, removed in large part from the state-system, makes
access to quality education exclusive, for it perpetuates the inferiority of publicly-provided education (Pampallis, 2003; Plank, 2005; UNESCO, 2009a; Watkins, 2004). As Saltman describes: “The spread of privatization leaves fewer spaces for democratic decision making, deliberation, and consideration of bolstering the common good” (2000, p.13).

Tied to the absence of parental voice is a more abstract, although no less significant critique of private participation in education. Some educational philosophers have argued that privatization of education may be incompatible with a conception of democratic education. For Dewey, a democratic society is one that aspires to assist in the growth of all its members. The notion of equality is paramount in his conception of a democracy, for it is a society wherein all who are citizens can collectively determine their future “on the basis of their shared social intelligence” (Carr and Harnett, 1996, p.60; Dewey, 1997). In order to attain this collectivity, Dewey believes that “…all the members of the group must have an equable opportunity” and that those governing “…must see to it that intellectual opportunities are accessible to all on equable and easy terms” (Dewey, 1997, p.84, 88). For Dewey, a democracy thus requires a democratic conception of education, wherein the intelligence of all can be fostered equally.

Given Dewey’s conception of democracy and its relationship to schooling, one must question if the private provision of education – even in the case of public financing – is potentially anti-democratic. As it has been shown that those students from privileged backgrounds are more likely to attend and thereby benefit from privately-run schools, they are entering society with an advantage, as opposed to those who may only have the option to attend possibly dysfunctional public schools. Privately-provided schools moreover create a potential class divide where those educated in them may receive a superior education. When it comes time
to create Dewey’s democratic society based on collective decision-making, it is likely that those attending either a fully-private, or privately-run school will have more power.

Also, as stated by Plank and Boyd, “Democracy is not just an instrument for accomplishing policy objectives, or a strategy for increasing the efficiency or effectiveness of public institutions. It is a way of living together in a pluralistic society and imperfect world, a forum in which issues are discussed in an effort to achieve deeper understanding and agreement…” (1994, p.277). It can be argued that the development of this “forum in which issues are discussed” is hindered by the existence of private schools, given the potential absence of parental voice in debating issues concerning public education, leading to a potential “deterioration of democratic space” (Saltman, 2000, p.13). Critiques of private sector involvement in education thus extend to the realm of ethics, where concerns arise surrounding equity, in terms of both social class and gender, and democratic ideals in education.

Critiques can be levied against the World Bank’s support of both fully-private education, as well as PPPs. In both cases, participation of the private sector risks exclusivity, and as will be argued below, engenders a conception of education as a private good.

Education as a Private Good at the World Bank

As has been shown, adopting a neoliberal position supports the inclusion of market mechanisms in education. I argue that this private sector engagement can be furthermore argued to allow for a conception of education as a private, exclusive good. Education as a private good can be defined in direct contrast to a public good, as rival and exclusive. As discussed, education is a unique case where a service can be conceptualized as both a public and a private good, and in terms of the traditional, Samuelson theory, due to the personal benefits, is considered a private good
(Levin, 1987; Stiglitz, 2000). However, I adopt in this thesis the global public goods framework that employs the notion of *excludability* to determine if a good is considered private or public. As a global public good is defined by being de-facto non-exclusive and available for all to consume, a private good is the opposite, exclusive and not available to all.

Again, the notion of a public good should not be conflated with that of a publicly provided good. The public sector does not necessarily provide all public goods. A good or service is considered public based on its consumption properties. For example, a private company can pursue research where the findings benefit the wider public. Therefore the pursuit of education as a global public good does not preclude the inclusion of the private sector. It can be argued that only when private sector involvement leads to schooling as an exclusive service, does it contradict education’s classification as a global public good. I argue, however, that both fully private schools, as well as those considered publicly-financed and privately-provided risk exclusion.

To reiterate from above, exclusion may occur when student fees are required, as in the case of many fully private schools. Education at one of these institutions is exclusive, for generally only those who can afford the fees might attend. The most disenfranchised students are then argued to be left to the inferior public system, or are excluded from schooling altogether. Private schools have equity implications and so risk being exclusive and therefore classify education as a private good.

One could argue, however, that private schools do not create exclusivity so long as there is universal access to public schools. Private schools may in fact absorb demand and increase the number of classroom places. Provided all children have a seat in some type of classroom – regardless of how it is financed or managed – private provision does not interfere with
education’s non-exclusivity. This is plausible, but only if an aim towards universal access does not include the notion of equal quality of schooling.

Despite the fact that the data invoked by the Bank, which shows that private schools are inherently superior, is questionable, some studies have indeed provided evidence that shows a higher quality of private school resources, teacher commitment and student achievement, and it is argued that publicly-funded schools in the developing world are, by and large, sub-standard (Carnoy, 1997; Patrinos, 2000; Tooley, 2005; World Bank, 2005). Even if it is arguable that private schools are academically superior to problematic public schools, critiques remain concerning equity. For given this perspective, those students who do not attend private schools are then likely excluded from higher quality education. And again, private school parents may be less likely to want their tax dollars directed to the management and administration of public schools if their children do not attend them. Poor-quality public sector schools will remain so by the existence of private schools. Students attending public schools are excluded from a potentially better-quality education, given the inclusion of market mechanisms in education. Advocating the private sector as an alternative to inferior public schooling presents quality education as exclusive, and so a private good.

In addition, as also described earlier, publicly-financed yet privately-provided education potentially contributes to the erosion of the public education system, by luring parents to exit the public system, thereby decreasing the voices that would otherwise be used to improve state-run and financed schools. Privatization in this context then also risks excluding those in the fully-public system from a quality education. Moreover, as several authors have argued, there is an exclusionary effect of vouchers and charter schools on disadvantaged groups of children (Carnoy, 1997; Klees, 2002; Kozol, 2005; Ladd, 2003; Olssen, 1996; 2000; Watkins, 2004).
Private sector participation in public education arguably also risks exclusivity, and therefore contrasts the notion of education as a public good, and instead allows for a conception of education as a private good.

In the case of many market mechanisms, including full privatization, as well as PPPs, exclusivity is a danger due to the equity critiques presented. The World Bank’s support of these policies, given discursive evidence, demonstrates that the Bank appears to indeed conceive of private participation as inherently desirable, and education as a private good.

**Conclusion**

An advocacy of privatization, as argued earlier, is grounded in a neoliberal framework. Education as a private good occurs primarily in the case of privatization and the inclusion of market mechanisms, and so is furthermore informed by a neoliberal standpoint. Moreover, the notion of education as private envisions private schooling not as unfortunately necessary (as in the case of the global public goods standpoint), but instead as inherently desirable, given the distinction made by Hinchliffe (1993). To advocate market mechanisms in education, one also presumably supports the associated neoliberal argument that privatization increases competition, quality and efficiency, and is superior to public education.

Given the discursive evidence provided, I argue that the World Bank adopts a neoliberal framing of education, given its advocacy of private sector engagement in education. The resulting exclusivity arguably demonstrates that the Bank defines education as a private good. This is in contrast to the conclusion reached in the previous chapter, based on the analysis of a separate set of Bank discourse. As will be argued in more detail in the following chapter, the Bank presents a contradictory position on its conception of education – as both a public and a
private good. The dual conceptual frameworks, concurrently adopted within the Bank’s
discourse, engender several critiques, which will be unpacked in Chapter Six.

Moreover, a final critique of the neoliberal conception of education is its contrast to the
concept of education as a human right. This, too, will be unpacked in greater detail in Chapter
Six, where it is argued that neoliberal-driven education policies contradict those informed by a
rights-based conceptualization of education.
Chapter Six – Competing Conceptual Frameworks in World Bank Education Policies

Introduction

As previous chapters have detailed, the global public goods and neoliberal frameworks are separate theories which differ in terms of their general descriptions and implications. The two frameworks also arguably contradict one another. This chapter then aims in part to show how the employment of the global public goods and neoliberal frameworks, together, potentially bring about contradictions when applied to policy simultaneously. That the frameworks oppose one another is problematic for this implies that when the World Bank utilizes both in its education policy, they are endorsing a contradictory stance, leaving questions as to where the Bank’s mandate truly lies, and thereby increases the possibility of problems surrounding coherent policy development.

Beyond this, as will be detailed below, there are several intersections between the two frameworks. For instance, both were initially developed as domestic theories but have since been applied on an international scale. The similarities furthermore include their mutual foundations in neoclassical economics as well as liberal political philosophy. Each of these intersections, while possibly supporting the simultaneous employment of both frameworks, in fact engender criticisms, presented below, that potentially make their employment problematic. For, as will be argued, their shared critiques are primarily derived from their shared foundation in economics.

This chapter begins by detailing the contradictions and intersections between the frameworks, both in general, in education, and at the World Bank, followed by an analysis of their common incompatibility with a rights-based notion of education and how this is evidenced in World Bank policy.
Contradictions between the Global Public Goods and Neoliberal Frameworks

Differing conceptions of a private and a public good.

In the context of Samuelson’s traditional public goods theory, private goods and public goods are easily distinguishable, as either rival or non-rival, or excludable or non-excludable. Within the global public goods framework, the lines between the two goods are slightly more fluid, but still there are constant characteristics of each. The neoliberal and global public goods frameworks diverge and often contradict when it comes to what good or service is labeled as public or private.

Table 3: Private and Public Goods According to Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framework</th>
<th>Public Good</th>
<th>Public or Private Good</th>
<th>Private Good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neoliberalism</td>
<td>Public/State Provided</td>
<td>Both publicly and privately provided</td>
<td>Privately Provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Legal policies, such as property rights, civic and political rights</td>
<td>- Health care</td>
<td>- Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Policing, fire department</td>
<td>- Roads</td>
<td>- Milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Education (primary and secondary)</td>
<td>- Automobiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Military</td>
<td>- Commercial knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Research and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Public Goods</td>
<td>Non-rival &amp;/or Non-excludable</td>
<td>Both rival/excludable, or non-rival/non-excludable in consumption</td>
<td>Rival and Excludable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Knowledge generation</td>
<td>- Land</td>
<td>- Milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Communicable disease control</td>
<td>- Education (all levels)</td>
<td>- Merchandise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Health care</td>
<td>- Parks and nature reserves</td>
<td>- Automobiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Peace and security</td>
<td>- Research and development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Military</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Climate change policies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Financial stability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Strengthening the international trading system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As shown above, under the neoliberal framework, these categorizations go beyond the conceptions of rivalry and excludability, but in general entail specific types of provision. Most
goods that are defined as “public” are publicly provided, and those defined as “private” are provided by the market. For instance, according to a neoliberal framing, various types of knowledge – such as “commercial knowledge” – are private, and therefore can be patented and entered into a competitive market. On the other hand, some theorists have advocated knowledge generation as a global public good, for the consumption of this knowledge should be available to all (see Stiglitz, 2006).

Of course, what ought to be provided by the market versus the state has been an ongoing debate. A multitude of arguments on either side have emerged in recent years concerning issues such as health care, pharmaceuticals, water, social security, knowledge and research (see, for example, Feldstein, 1998; Parker and Saal, 2003; Shiva, 2002). Proponents of each framework likely take on each issue with a different lens. Given that the global public goods framework arguably provides a more social-welfare approach, it includes more services defined as “public,” or state-provided than, under neoliberalism, which advocates a minimal state role. And, as will be discussed in detail below, conflicting views on education financing and provision exemplify these contradictory stances on market versus state provision.

Assumptions concerning individual versus collective benefits.

Inherent in each framework are specific notions surrounding whom a good or service benefits, wherein the emphasis is often either on the collective or the individual. Global public goods, given their wide-ranging impacts can also be considered collective goods, giving priority to those goods that impact whole populations on a broad scale. As a global public good is in part defined by being universally accessible and available to all, it has assumed communal, widespread benefits. The reformulation of public goods theory into global public goods in fact can be
attributed to a more collective conception of public goods, which moves beyond individuals and extends to whole populations, globally.

The neoliberal stance, on the other hand, focuses on individual benefits primarily and assumes that any collective benefits can be derived from an individual’s gains. As neoliberalism claims to be scientific, and so apolitical and value-free, there are few suggested ethical imperatives. Any value-laden promotion of neoliberal policies generally focuses on individual freedom of action and choice. In terms of other ethical considerations, it is assumed in neoliberalism that the “invisible hand” will ensure enough fair distribution and that equity concerns need not be dealt with straight-on. As will be argued later in this chapter, liberalism – and so individualism – is at the foundation of both these theories, but far more so in neoliberalism, which rest on a notion of individual interests as paramount. The two frameworks then conflict on who is most meant to benefit from the distribution of goods and services. The neoliberal conception emphasizes the individual whilst the global public good framework focuses on the collective.

Scientific versus scientific/normative underpinnings.

Given this emphasis on collective benefits, the global public goods framework carries with it an understood normative element. Its definition implies an assumption that certain goods and services ought to be publicly provided. This is arguably a moral imperative, where to deny access for certain groups would be considered unethical. Global public goods is a normative conceptual framework, implying that wide social benefits are necessary on an ethical level. Despite that the concept may be couched in economic, “scientific” language, there is still a moral impetus at work. According to the traditional public goods theory, some goods are considered

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12 Except in the case of correcting Pareto Optimality, although it is questionable the extent to which a neoliberal position advocates actively acting to increase Pareto Improvement, for this would be interfering with the market mechanism (see Hall and Gowdy, 2007).
public because they are necessary, but unlikely to be offered at optimal levels unless publicly-provided, which would indicate a market failure. This market failure is problematic because these goods *ought* to be available. And a good or service is in part defined as globally public because it *ought* to be non-exclusive and available for all to consume, as in the case of health, peace and security, or as argued in this thesis, basic education. A good or service is defined as public in part as a normative stance.

The claimed scientific neutrality of the neoliberal framework contrasts a normative framework. For instance, such economic policies advocated by Chicago School economists as monetarism, are based on mathematical prediction models. In the World Bank literature those who advocate for what have been defined in this thesis as neoliberal education policies, argue that their positions are “non-ideological” and “evidence-based” and therefore scientifically neutral (see Patrinos, et al, 2009, p.5; World Bank and IMF, 2009, p.86). Neoliberal ideas are often presented as value-free as a result, and policies based upon them thus are presented as not resting on moral grounds. This is in direct contrast to the normative emphasis of the global public goods framework. A neoliberal policy is presented based on a logical argument, where, for instance, evidence demonstrates that competition increases efficiency. This detached rhetoric supports the claim to scientific neutrality of neoliberal economic policy.

Of course, it is widely argued that neoliberalism is indeed highly normative, and that it is impossible to design public policy free from any moral stance (see, for instance, Chomsky, 1999; Freire, 1997; Mansbridge, 1998). Neoliberal policies, however, readily claim to be grounded in a neutral and scientific, rather than normative position. On the other hand, the global public good framework – while also being economically-based, and so has some arguably “scientific” grounding – is openly normative in nature.
Conflicts in education.

Both the manifestations of education as a private and a public good have been outlined in detail in previous chapters. To reiterate, education as public necessitates it being non-exclusive and available for all to consume. The global public goods framing of primary education requires that there be universal access. This leads to an advocacy of public financing and provision, in being less exclusive than private schools or PPPs. As argued in Chapter Four, the global public goods framework would support privatization only in the case where it is unfortunately necessary.

A neoliberal agenda in education lends itself to a fairly specific model of how to best increase quality, accountability and efficiency in schools. Given the neoliberal faith in competition, creating a competitive market in education is thought to be the best way to create better schools. When faced with a choice, parents as consumers will support better schools. This leads to the support of private provision as inherently desirable.

A further element to education that likely differs between the two frameworks is the overarching purpose of education. In light of economic development as an overriding concern for neoliberal-based development mandates, the aims of education likely concern human capital formation. This ties to the earlier point made surrounding a neoliberal focus on the individual, where an increase in an individual’s achievement is argued to be one of the most productive ways to benefit a nation’s economy. Moreover, as education is considered a catalyst to economic growth, a neoliberal vision of education supports consumerism in education, where students are encouraged to play an active role in the market (Apple, 2000; 2001; Freire, 2001; Molnar and Reaves, 2002).

On the other hand, with a more collective focus, a global public goods-based educational objective likely focuses far more on community, or collective aims. These, which include
economic development, also might include equity, peace and various other social justice aims, which can be fostered via schooling. The simultaneous adoption of the neoliberal and global public goods frameworks thus engenders questions concerning the goals of education, and whether the benefits are to focus on the individual and the market, or the group and society as a whole.

**Opposing frameworks in World Bank education policies.**

To re-iterate what was argued in past chapters, the World Bank presents basic education as both a public and a private good, depicting schooling as both a non-exclusive and exclusive service. These conceptions are grounded in the opposing frameworks of global public goods and neoliberalism, and furthermore present privatization as both unfortunately necessary and inherently desirable.

For instance, the Bank at times gives support to the goal universal access to education, including the abolition of fees, and public education initiatives as EFA and the second MDG (World Bank, 2010a; World Bank and UNICEF, 2006). At the same time, however, other Bank publications stress government corruption and lack of capacity in order to promote PPPs and the private sector. Moreover, while the Bank at times states that its mandate is to support governments in education, it concurrently seems to be supporting for-profit entrepreneurs, particularly given the increase in collaboration with the IFC (World Bank, 2009b; World Bank and IMF, 2009).

The Bank promotes a confusing message on privatization of education, where at times the inclusion of market mechanisms is deemed unfortunately necessary, to meet demand and only in the case where exclusivity is not increased. Yet, on the other hand, the Bank also presents privatization as inherently desirable, to increase competition, and thereby efficiency, quality and
accountability (Patrinos, et al, 2009; World Bank, 2009b). These contradictions are arguably a result of the adoption of the opposing global public goods and neoliberal frameworks to inform Bank education policies.

The various contradictions detailed above between the two frameworks indicate a major shortcoming of education policy at the Bank. Given the conflicts present in its policy discourse, it is difficult to assess where the Bank truly stands when it comes to school financing and provision policies. Furthermore, if education policies rest on a contradictory and confusing agenda, programs informed by these policies may lack direction.

The dueling frameworks, however, dovetail in some respects. Yet these commonalities do not ameliorate the Bank’s problematic adoption of these conceptualizations of education. As will be discussed below, their most notable intersection – a common foundation in market economics – in fact engenders even further critiques of policies that are informed by them.

**Intersections between the Global Public Goods and Neoliberal Frameworks**

*Rooted in economics.*

The global public goods and neoliberal frameworks share a common disciplinary foundation in neoclassical economics. The concept of global public goods does not instinctively nor obviously denote a free-market theory. However, given its theoretical precursor, the theory of public goods, the market-based roots of the global public goods framework are apparent. Samuelson’s theory was initially designed as an acknowledgement that the market may not be suitable to adequately supply all goods in light of market failure (Kaul, et al, 1999; Stiglitz, 2000). Therefore, it was within a market context that the notion of public goods was conceived and initially depicted. The original public goods theory was never an argument against the role of the market, but instead
only attempted to delineate those goods that are subject to market imperfections. And it is to be reiterated that there are actually very, very few pure public goods. If the original public goods theory is taken at face-value, there is little left out of the market’s domain. As for the reformulated theory of global public goods, it too is arguably embedded in market economics. In fact, Coussy describes the framework as “the neoclassical theory of global public goods” (2007, p.190), indicating that it is impossible to separate the concept from its economic roots. Despite that it has been often presented in opposition to the private provision of public goods, there is still a strong market economic foundation to it. The frameworks intersect in their mutual basis in the neoclassical economic metatheory that allows for a strong and necessary free market.

A foundation in economics implies that policies based on either of the frameworks emphasize economic factors. For instance, conceptualizing of education as a global public good rests in large part on a good or service’s positive externalities, where the benefits incurred from an action (such as provision of education) impact those not directly involved in that action. In an analysis of education as a global public good, this classification is made by identifying the non-excludable benefits of providing education to a population. As described earlier, the definition of a global public good focuses on “benefits,” which are often either directly or indirectly economic externalities. For instance, the global public goods of financial stability and strengthening the global trading system, even health and disease eradication, are argued to increase economic development. Yet, even if benefits are non-monetary, the focus on externalities remains. This emphasis implies that nothing is a global public good in and of itself, or for purely normative or moral reasons. As a result, global public goods are never grounded in, for instance, a legal, or rights-based framework but instead are economically-based.
For the neoliberal framework, this root in market economics is obvious, and made explicit by a simple description of the theory. Placing value on the free market, advocating a reduced role for the state in economic activities, along with free competition, are all tenets characteristic of a theory not only rooted in, but reliant on and undoubtedly promoting market economics. Education under a neoliberal framework also addresses positive economic externalities. Moreover, the neoliberal conception of education places a primary focus on education as a human capital and the associated measurable rates of return. A neoliberal framing of education thus emphasizes quantifiable economic outputs, in relation to the cost of education.

As will be unpacked later in this chapter, any theory that underpins an education policy which focuses on economic byproducts or rates of return may serve to undermine other rationales for the public provision of schooling. Most notably, it is potentially problematic for one to advocate education as a human right whilst defining it under either the neoliberal or global public goods framework. In education, it is arguable economic frameworks focus upon economic benefits and do not consider the intrinsic value of education.

**Rooted in liberalism.**

Linked to the common foundation in market economics is a philosophical similarity between global public goods and neoliberalism. Both are arguably rooted in liberal political theory, or liberalism. As discussed in the Introduction, developed by such political philosophers as Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, liberalism is a theory which centers upon the right of the individual, and his or her freedom of choice without intervention or the coercion of others. Governments exist to primarily safeguard individual rights. As a result, liberals generally seek to limit government interventions on society and the economy, and as a result arguably tend to support private sector initiatives (Callan and White, 2003; Hudelson, 1999).
Liberal theory quite obviously underpins neoliberalism. First, neoliberalism stresses a reduced role of government in economic activity. From giving primacy to individual, and private economic activity, neoliberalism shows its liberal foundations. As a highly individualistic framework, neoliberalism assumes individualism and self-interest as core traits of human nature, also pointing to its roots in liberal theory. Of course, many political theorists would argue that neoliberalism is an exceptionally distorted form of liberalism, with an unwarranted blind faith in market mechanisms, and a belief in excessive individualism. Yet still, it is evident that neoliberalism is based, at its core, on liberal principles.

The global public goods framework is not so blatantly liberal in nature. On the surface it does not denote individualism and has a positive perception of the state. However, as discussed earlier the concept is in fact a market theory couched in economic language. This intersection, as described earlier, denotes liberal roots. For example, the concept of global public goods contains an unquestioned advocacy of the free-market mechanism to support development, as evident in such global public goods as strengthening the global trading systems (Kaul, et al, 2003). Given that both neoliberalism and global public goods arise out of liberalism, they are each open to critiques made of liberal political theory.

For instance, the communitarian critique of liberalism posits that under liberal theory, individual interests may subjugate those of the community. However, the global public goods framework is less open to this critique than neoliberalism, for as noted earlier, it emphasizes collective benefits for the policies it informs. It is arguable that in spite of its liberal philosophical roots, the global public goods framework bridges individual and collective interests without necessarily subjugating one for the other. Liberal-based individualism need not be incompatible with a communitarian perspective, unless one takes a radical view of each of
these positions (Portelli and Menashy, 2010). The global public goods framework arguably bridges its liberal roots with a communitarian perspective.

**As applied to both the national and international contexts.**

Both neoliberalism and global public goods are concepts applied to the global scale, yet were each initially developed as domestic economic theories. In the case of neoliberalism, this simple application to the global scale can be attributed to its claim as a scientific, exact theory. As universalizable, neoliberalism is applied regardless of context. This is deemed problematic for evidence has shown that adopting the neoliberal framework has different repercussions depending on various local factors (Evans, 2000). In the global public goods case, proponents argue that the “list” of goods are applicable world-wide, as well. Although not considered as scientifically exact, there is a universalizable element to the framework, which is perhaps rooted in its early development as public goods theory (Coussy, 2007). Furthermore, a problematic feature of this universal application is the lack of global-level regulation, where on a domestic level the state is assumed to take on this regulatory role. Without an international regulator, the global economic and political context is quite different than at the national level.

This unproblematic transposing of a domestic theory to the international scale engenders the critique that Northern agendas are imposed on Southern nations. Given that neoliberal policies such as privatization have been argued to function well given the experiences of the developed world, those who advocate the framework contend that it will serve developing countries equally well. This, however, is assuming that Southern nations expect the same things from their economy and social structures as the North. Critiques are also raised concerning global public goods and their applicability on the South. In the case of both frameworks, theories
that have been developed in Northern, industrialized nations are assumed to be efficient, applicable and helpful everywhere (Baser, 2006).

In both cases the universally applicable nature of the frameworks engenders dependency, neo-Marxist critiques, earlier discussed in Chapter Three, where a Northern theory is essentially imposed on the South. Moreover, the neo-Marxist angle extends to both theories for they share a common foundation in market economics, and in turn reinforce global capitalism. A dual employment of the frameworks may reflect an overriding acceptance that theories which originate in the developed North can be unproblematically applied worldwide, and moreover, any organization which adopts both frameworks displays an unquestioned acceptance of the current global economic structure.

**Intersections in education.**

In terms of education, the main issue on which the two frameworks dovetail is that their focus in arguing for public or private provision rests on evidence of rates of return. Again, this common emphasis results from a mutual rooting in economics. Neoliberalism emphasizes human capital, while the global public goods framework may extend beyond direct economic externalities, such as disease eradication, decreased population growth, and so forth. Despite the fact that many of these externalities are without question positive, as already argued, a focus upon them may be problematic, for the common view of education as a means to something else neglects any inherent worth to education. A dual adoption of these frameworks reinforces questionable ideas surrounding education’s instrumental value. As argued throughout this thesis and in more detail below, this stress on extrinsic economic value is in tension with a notion of education as a human right.
Given issues detailed above, even where the global public goods and neoliberal theories intersect, there are critiques that can be made of their concurrent adoption. These include their common foundations in liberalism, their unproblematic application globally, and their common foci on the economic value of education. It is notable that these critiques in large part rest on their embeddedness in market economics. However, as was discussed above, there are several contradictions that result from adopting the global public goods and neoliberal frameworks which spur further critiques that lead one to question the quality, feasibility, and logic of any policy which rests on both.

**Intersecting frameworks in World Bank education policy.**

The aforementioned intersections between the global public goods and neoliberal frameworks are apparent in World Bank education policies. For instance, the common critique of both frameworks, that the theories are unproblematically applied to both Northern and Southern nations, can also be applied to World Bank policy discourse. For instance, as argued in the last chapter, many Bank policies use evidence from Northern, developed nations to promote policies in the South, including privatization. Moreover, the Bank is widely considered to epitomize a Northern institution, which forces its “developed” policies on its borrowers – including those concerning education.

The common root in market economics plainly informs the Bank’s focus on the economics of education, in terms of not only its policies, but also its research. Even in the case of promoting universal access, the discursive stress is place on education’s economic benefits.

That the frameworks are both economic in nature engenders criticisms for the Bank, where the Bank can be critiqued for perpetuating a particular instrumentalist conception of education, as primarily an investment and a means to economic development. Regardless of the
opposing visions of education, as a public and a private good, the Bank’s adoption of the global public goods and neoliberal frameworks together indicates its sole employment of economic arguments to support its education policies. As discussed below, this is particularly problematic in light of a rights-based argument for education.

**Economic versus Human Rights-Based Frameworks for Education**

Both the neoliberal and global public good framings of education are open to the critique that they each undermine a human rights-based framework for education. Below I unpack how this criticism applies to each framework individually, and at the World Bank given the adoption of an economic conceptualization of education.

*Education as a global public good as undermining education as a human right.*

While this dissertation examines the two primary frameworks that underpin the World Bank’s education policies, as discussed in the introduction, another major framework which has informed education policies and mandates is the conception of basic education as a human right. According to the United Nations, as well as international non-government organizations and those who support the global convention of Education for All, education is considered a human right (UN, 1948; WDEFA, 1990). The human right of education is at the core of a major global initiative to provide universal access to education, carrying with it an understanding that “education is a fundamental right for all people, women and men, of all ages, throughout our world” (WDEFA, 1990).

The human rights and global public goods frameworks for education have some similarities. For instance, Tomasevski cites the “cardinal requirement” of a rights-based education “ensuring free and compulsory education for all” (2001, p.5). She identifies four
pillars of rights-based education, two of which are availability and accessibility, focusing respectively on a government’s obligation to provide enough classroom spaces for all children, and making access to schools universal, meaning free of charge. Therefore, the rights-based rationale for basic education is similar to the global public goods framework, given their common support of non-excludable access to schools. Moreover, the aim of education as a human right also makes a call to global action towards achieving the goal of universal access. As Tomasevski proposes, universal education “requires governments, individually and collectively, to prioritize and equalize funding for education, from the local to the global level” (2006, p.10). And so the concept of education as a human right parallels that of education as a global public good, which also aims at collective action to ensure financing and universal access.

The two frameworks, however, are based in very different disciplines, and tensions between them result. The concept of education as a public good is based in economics, while the notion of education as a human right is rooted in legal and political foundations (Donnelly, 2003; Marshall, 1950; Menashy, 2009; Norman and Kymlicka, 2003; Stiglitz, 2000; Sen, 2006). These disciplinary bases engender different definitions of education. Education as a public good views schooling as a service, and so is then delineated as such given certain benefits, or externalities. Rights-based education does not have this requirement, and views schooling as a legal and moral right, not a service.

Under the rights framework, all children must have access to education irrespective of its byproducts, and more specifically, its role in the market. On the other hand, defining education as a global public good is in part dependent on proving positive externalities, most commonly economic in nature. As an impure public good, education is depicted as providing wide societal

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13 The other two “pillars” are acceptability, focusing on quality, and adaptability, focusing on the right to education for children with disabilities (2001, p.13,14).
benefits, rather than simply to the individual. One of the most commonly cited of these benefits is economic contribution, or human capital (Kaul and Mendoza, 2003; Sen, 2000; Shultz, 1989; Stiglitz, 2000). Positing education as a human right, however, is not reliant on demonstrating economic benefits. Education as a public good, despite its apparent leanings toward public provision, still views students as human capital. For Klees and Thapliyal, “[t]he use of a human capital framework turns the human rights argument ‘on its head’” (2007, p.505). Once again, this is because economic gain bears no relevance if a service is considered a right. According to Tomasevski: “From the human rights viewpoint, education is an end in itself rather than merely a means for achieving other ends” (2003, p.33). It is thereby arguable that supporting the concept of education as a global public good undermines an argument in favour of education as a human right.

As discussed, at its most basic level, the theory of public goods is a theory of market economics. According to Coussy, due to the dominance of free-market economics in international development policy, those advocating the concept of global public goods “are obliged to couch their perspective in the rhetoric of neoclassical theory” (2005, p.178). Given widespread critiques of free-market influences on the provision of social services, the notion of using a market-based economic theory to support the provision of education may be problematic. Human capital, an economic theory, supporting the notion that economic contribution is a priority for development strategies, portrays education policy as primarily a contributor to this growth. In its focus on economic benefits, education as a public good deems economic contribution as critical, and so presents students as human capital. The human rights framework does not engender this characterization.
Therefore, while the global public goods and human rights frameworks bear several similarities, they differ in significant ways. These dissimilarities can be attributed to their respective underpinnings in separate fields, namely, legal and political, and economic. Most notably, labeling a good or service as globally public makes it dependent on, or at least partly determined by market externalities, whereas a rights-based approach does not. This critique is particularly significant for international education policy. Given these tensions, anyone readily adopting the global public goods framework may be concurrently rejecting a rights-based approach to universal access to education, and possibly development in general. There is then a strong basis for arguing against the employment of global public goods theory in international development policy, for it may undermine already existing policies rooted in human rights. Those advocating universal access to education potentially either need to decide between grounding their arguments in global public goods theory, or in the Declaration of Human Rights, or find a way to bridge the two.

In the final chapter to this thesis, where I give greater attention to the compatibility (or incompatibility) of the rights-based and global public goods frameworks, I attempt to argue that an adoption of the two conceptualizations, while problematic, is not entirely inconsistent.

*Education as a private good as undermining education as a human right.*

While the global public goods framing of education is arguably in tension with the notion of education as a human right, the neoliberal framing of education – and the associated notion of education as a potentially exclusive, private good – is arguably in direct contrast with a rights-based conception. Freeman describes the apparent tensions between a neoliberal policy and one that is rights-based: “…economic globalization has dominated recent debates, and this is closely
associated with the ideology of neo-liberalism, which favours free markets and reduced governmental intervention in economic affairs…globalization weakens the international human-rights regime insofar as that regime imposes obligations on states to implement human rights, including economic and social rights, and neo-liberalism is opposed to strong states” (Freeman, 2002, p.153). Privatization then contrasts the “insistence upon states as the actor with ultimate responsibility for ensuring respect for human rights” (Alston, 2005, p.769). Echoing critiques of the neoliberal principle of limited government – including privatization of education – as Tomasevski argues, “The consequence of defining education as a right is the corresponding government responsibility. Law is symmetrical and one cannot exist without the other” (Tomasevski, 2003, p.69). Archer also makes this claim in stating that given the rights-based status of education, “it is clearly the responsibility of the state” (Archer, 2006, p.7).

Furthermore, the third tenet of education as a right as defined by UNESCO is that of rights within education. These include the respect of the individual student’s rights, including respect for his or her identity and background, as well as participation rights. Private providers of education are less regulated than state providers. This lack of regulation – argued as one of the benefits of privatization – also means that private administrators may be less likely to uphold rights within education due to less oversight. As a result, private involvement in education must be questioned given the reduction in government engagement, diminishing the role of the state which holds the responsibility for ensuring rights within education.

Moreover, the first two tenets of education as right – access and quality – may also be jeopardized by the inclusion of the private sector. Despite that supporters propose that privatization may increase access by responding to demand, as discussed in Chapter Five, a counter-argument claims that privatization in fact creates exclusivity and thereby decreases
access. Furthermore, privatization’s removal of parental voice from the public sector may diminish the quality of education in public schools. And, given the lack of regulation, even proponents of privatization agree that the quality of education in private schools is not certain. A rights-based conception of education is arguably incompatible with one grounded in neoliberalism, such as privatization.

The World Bank and Education as a Human Right

The World Bank’s conception of education, informed by both neoliberal ideological leanings and the global public goods framework, engenders its apparent neglect of education as a human right – for economic and rights-based frameworks are arguably incompatible. Given the Bank’s focus on the economic importance of education, the rights-based rationale is arguably ignored, or at least minimized (Archer, 2006; Klees, 2008; Tomasevski, 2003). Archer points to the Bank’s “lack of interest in education rights” (2006, p.11). The minimal attempts that the Bank has made to include human rights into their broad agenda have been criticized as weak (Bradlow and Grossman, 1995; BWP, 2010b; Freeman, 2002; Herbertson, et al, 2010). This is in part due to its self-description as a financial institution and therefore non-political, tracing back to the Bank’s 1945-established mandate to deal in only economic activities, arguably relieving it from making any moral or normative-based policies (BWP, 2010b; Herbertson, et al, 2010). In spite of the evolution of human rights-based policies, including the 1948 Declaration, the Bank’s mandate has only slightly evolved to include human rights (BWP, 2010b; Freeman, 2002; Herbertson, et al, 2010).

Because the overarching goal of the Bank is financial in nature, the organization arguably relieves itself from the duty to explicitly act to uphold human rights – this is not the Bank’s job.
Moreover, given the economic focus of the Bank’s work, an emphasis has historically been placed on quantifiable outcomes of its projects, and the “economic benefits of human rights protections are often difficult to quantify. As a result, the WBG [World Bank Group] has often judged investments successful on the basis of short term economic returns, rather than the extent to which they protect and promote human rights…” (Herbertson, et al, 2010). The economic lens through which the Bank evaluates its work subjugates any evaluation of how rights are impacted.

However, despite the tensions that are apparent between economics and rights, human rights are linked to economic policies, for the results of these policies, and the means by which they are designed and developed, often directly impact human rights (Freeman, 2002; Herbertson, et al, 2010). For instance, as discussed in the earlier mentioned UNICEF document *Adjustment with a Human Face* (1989) along with countless other critiques, the SAPs of the 1980s and 1990s had a detrimental impact on human rights, including education. And as shown in reference to human capital, access to education – which is a human right – indeed increases economic development.

In light of education specifically, in contrast to a rights-based, legal framing, the Bank instead overwhelmingly employs economic conceptualizations of education. However, the Bank’s few referrals to education as a right are of importance. As with other rights, the Bank has indeed made some minimal mention of education as a right. In particular, early on in the Bank’s involvement in education, a few cases demonstrating its conception of education as a right can be found (Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985; Tomasevski, 2003). Soon after these statements were made in the early 1980s, a more robust push towards privatization in the Bank’s policies coincided with the removal of a rights-based presentation of education. One of the few mentions of education as a right is in its *Development and Human Rights: The Role of the World Bank,*
which includes a short section on health and educational investments by the Bank. However, these are discussed under the heading of “Investing in People,” which in fact denotes a more human capital and economic framing of education than one which is rights-based (1998, p.6). The Bank’s more recent support of such rights-based initiatives as the School Fee Abolition Initiative (World Bank and UNICEF, 2006) indicates some support for a rights-based notion of education. Moreover, as EFA and the second MDG are grounded in the conception of education as a right, the Bank’s support for these mandates further indicate some acknowledgement of education as a right. However, these mentions are minimal, and the more recent references to education as a right are included in documents that a co-authored or co-published by UN agencies that have explicitly supported rights-based agendas in development, including EFA. It is arguable, however, that this discursive evidence is a result of lip-service, and a response from the Bank to its many critics. As Freeman points out: “The World Bank has reinterpreted its mandate to include some human-rights problems, but it has done this in an ad hoc way” (2002, p.162). Mentions of education as a right may simply be one of the rhetorical and discursive devices employed by the Bank to appease its critics.

As Tomasevski observes with regard to the School Fee Abolition Initiative, this dual economic and rights-based stance is likely in part a result of differing viewpoints and thereby internal conflict within the Bank. She notes evidence of “…some [Bank staff] advocating the abolition of school fees in primary education in order to combat poverty and another tolerating, if not encouraging them, so as to diminish governmental budgetary allocations through cost-sharing…” and she goes on to highlight that “The extent to which a single institution can combine different, sometimes mutually conflicting roles (to be a leader in capital markets and to
dream about a world free of poverty), is the object of much discussion, within and around the Bank” (2003, p.74).

As discussed in Chapter Two, problems, including inconsistency and hypocrisy, abound when it comes to policy development at the Bank. This issue will be revisited in the final chapter in an effort to explain the problems with policy development at the Bank. And as will also be discussed in the final chapter, economics as the dominant discipline at the Bank will be shown to engender policy problems. For instance, the Bank’s neglect of education as a right can be attributed to the predominance of an economic paradigm at the organization.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has shown that the contradictory nature of the global public goods and neoliberal frameworks engender tensions and confusion within the Bank’s policies. But also, their common foundation in economics is at the root of many critiques, for the adoption of the two economic frameworks is indicative of a disciplinary dominance at the Bank. Most importantly, given the adherence to these economic frameworks, there is minimal referencing of education as a human right. When there is, it can be seen primarily as lip-service, and at times hypocritical. The following final chapter of this thesis offers some possible solutions to the policy problems in education at the Bank by attempting to bridge the economic and rights-based frameworks for education.
Chapter Seven – Improving International Education Policies: Bridging the Economic and Rights-Based Visions of Education

“No two fields have been so closely interrelated in practice, but so separated conceptually, as development economics and human rights” (Freeman, 2002, p.162).

“The world of human rights is small, and dissociated from the world of education or economics… The building of bridges across disciplinary boundaries is therefore necessary to transcend boundaries amongst sectors” (Tomasevski, 2003, p.1).

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to grapple with conclusions reached by the proceeding chapters, namely, that the World Bank’s education provision policies are discursively inconsistent and thereby open to critique. This is due to the adoption of conceptual frameworks by the Bank which are arguably in conflict with one another. The Bank’s policies are further problematic as the frameworks adopted are economic in nature and therefore are in tension with the notion of education as a human right – a final framework, advocated by other development organizations, but neglected by the Bank. The World Bank’s education policies are then critiqued on several levels, including on equity grounds and discursive logic, leaving one wondering where in fact the Bank stands and how it and its partners might progress to accomplish such goals as Education for All.

This chapter attempts to move forward from these critiques and asks if and how the Bank might re-conceptualize education in a light that does not engender these issues. What follows begins with a review of the problem at hand, including a brief description of the problems the Bank faces in policy development, including the issue of the dominance of economics at the Bank, and the potential move towards adopting a rights-based rationale for education. In light of
the Bank’s nature as an international financial institution, I ask if it is possible for the rights-based and economic discourses to go hand-in-hand. I employ Amartya Sen’s theory of development as freedom to support the notion that despite some tensions, education can be supported by both an economic and rights-based discourse, with the notion of education as a right, however, as the prominent of the two.

The next step, however, is how the Bank might endeavor to arrive at this conceptualization of education. Some might argue that it would be impossible for the Bank to let go of its neoliberal economic framing of education policy and argue instead that the Bank ought to reduce, or close, its educational activities. I, however, propose that this move would be problematic, and instead provide some alternative possibilities, including closer collaboration with organizations that conceive of education as a right – such as branches of the UN as well as non-state actors – and reducing the dominance of neo-liberal economists within the institution, in the hopes that the Bank’s policies become more aligned with this rights-based vision. Collaboration may enable a shift at the Bank, where education is framed not under neoliberalism and global public goods – which I believe to be incompatible and problematic – but instead as a global public good and as a right, which while also problematic on some levels, is far more acceptable. The Bank policies can potentially become more consistent and ethical if the neoliberal notion of education as an exclusive, private good, and the associated conception of privatization as inherently desirable, is relinquished in favour of education as non-exclusive and a right, and privatization as unfortunately necessary in some contexts.
Why the Problems with Education Policy Development at the Bank

I forward one main explanation which may shed light on the reasons why education policies at the Bank contain tensions and inconsistencies, which is rooted in the power of the neoclassical economic paradigm at the World Bank. As argued throughout this dissertation, market economics has held a disciplinary imperialism over several academic fields, including international development and education (Klees, 1991; Marglin, 2008; Rao and Woolcock, 2007a; 2007b; Wade, 1996; 2009). Viewed as scientific and empirical and thereby respected for its “neutrality” and rigor, economic analyses play a dominant role at the education sector at the World Bank. Other issues – such as those concerning social justice in education – are subjugated to economic goals (Alexander, 2001; Klees, 2002; 2008; Ilon, 2002; Moore, 2004). This dominance has been described by some critics as hegemonic or paradigmic, and is rampant not only at the Bank but throughout other multilateral and bilateral development organizations. If a single message were to be conveyed by the Bank, it would inevitably be grounded in economics (Rao and Woolcock, 2007b; Wade, 1996).

There are, moreover, incentives for the Bank to maintain this paradigm. The economic grounding for the Bank’s policies is made predominantly by its governors, who are the finance ministers of its member governments, within a bank. The power and influence of this international financial institution demonstrates that the use of economic frameworks has in the past been considered rigorous and acceptable by many of those within the Bank and within the Bank’s donor community. The World Bank’s policies are backed by nations who support the use of this paradigm. It is then important for the Bank to retain an economic framework to potentially keep its position of authority and power in the international financial community. As
well, I would assume that an economic paradigm is important to retain for the economists employed within the Bank to keep their positions of authority at the organization.\footnote{Although this is purely an assumption which would require further research via staff interviews to confirm.}

However, as discussed in the second chapter of this thesis, a multitude of actors external to the Bank, including donor and borrower states, the media and academic critics, insist from the Bank often conflicting priorities. Moreover, the internal dynamics within the Bank, including diversity of staff and viewpoints, institutional culture and engrained ideologies, further complicate the process of policy-making at the organization (Wade, 1996; Weaver, 2007; 2008; Weaver and Leitritz, 2005; Vetterlein, 2007). The Bank likely wants to retain a specific framing for its policies, yet it is compelled to “glue” together a framework which incorporates dissonant views, while attempting to achieve paradigm maintenance. Divergent perspectives, from within and outside the Bank (as described in Chapter Two), are potentially in tension with the dominant economic paradigm that the World Bank won’t relinquish.

As this thesis has demonstrated, in spite of the Bank’s attempt at paradigm maintenance, when its policies are unpacked, problems surface. The Bank’s economic framing is evident in its education policies. The incorporation of the global public goods vision of education may appease some actors who are critical of the Bank’s position, but causes tensions if the neoliberal framing is retained. The incorporation of a human rights conception would further complicate policies, for it is non-economic, unlike the global public goods or neoliberal conceptions.

Given the dominance of the economic paradigm, is it even possible for the Bank to incorporate a rights-based framing of education? How might a conception of education as a human right be forwarded at the World Bank without engendering an inconsistent stance?

While forcing a paradigm shift away from this economistic focus would be challenging, I believe it is possible to make some strides in the right direction. First, I posit that it is not
necessary that the Bank disregard the economics of education as a focus in its policies. It must, however, begin to include a rights-based approach and an honest advocacy of education as a human right to its policy discourse – yes, concurrent with an economic vision of education, but specifically one rooted in the conception of education as a global public good, and not neoliberalism. As I will explain in this chapter, education as a human right and education for economic development can be compatible goals for the World Bank.

**Shifting to a Rights-Based Stance on Education**

As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, there have been many critiques levied against the concept of human rights in general and its application to education specifically. These include tensions surrounding access and quality, universality and diversity, and its Western/liberal groundings (UNICEF and UNESCO, 2007). While these tensions are certainly worthy of concern, one critique holds particular importance in the specific context of the World Bank. It is, as I see it, the most forceful critique of the education as a human right stance that the Bank could potentially propose. This, as Sen (2004) has described, is the *feasibility critique*, which theoretically argues that despite all efforts towards the goal of attaining a certain right, it may simply be unfeasible that the right will be realized for all. Moreover, as Freeman explains: “Critics of economic and social rights argue that many states lack the resources to implement these rights, and therefore they cannot have a duty to do so. It follows that there cannot be human rights to these resources” (2002, p.40).

The Bank, as an economic institution, who must quantify in dollar amounts the likelihood of attaining education for all people throughout the world, arguably has the authority to pronounce that it is impossible given the current economic climate to make this promise. Despite
never explicitly making this claim, it seems a fair argument for an IFI to propose: Education for All is, sadly, not feasible. If the Bank has indeed arrived at this conclusion, it is arguably irresponsible for it to advocate for education as a human right. And so, one might excuse the Bank for its minimal rights-based discourse surrounding education.

This critique of education as a human right carries with it the assumption that in order to be conceptualized as a right, something must be necessarily entirely accomplishable in current circumstances. If this assumption were accepted, then any right which is not considered practically attainable either today or in the near future cannot be considered a human right. Human rights are then only considered as such contingent on their possibility. This vision of the human rights agenda then critiques it for its “aspirational” goals, for included are many rights only attainable in a non-existent, ideal world.

However, this line of argument fails to understand that in essence all rights are aspirational, regardless of practicality. That to attain the right of education for all is immensely challenging does not necessitate that this is a goal unworthy of acting towards. As Sen argues:

…why should complete feasibility be a condition of cogency of human rights when the objective is to work towards enhancing their actual realization, if necessary through expanding their feasibility? The understanding that some rights are not fully realized, and may not even be fully realizable under present circumstances, does not, in itself, entail anything like the conclusion that these are, therefore, not rights at all. Rather, that understanding suggests the need to work towards changing the prevailing circumstances to make the unrealized rights realizable, and ultimately, realized… If the current feasibility of guaranteeing complete and comprehensive fulfillment were made into a necessary condition for the cogency of every right, then not only economic and social rights, but also liberties, autonomies and even political rights may well fall far short of cogency. (Sen, 2004, p.348)

The Bank’s most likely rationale for not explicitly defining education as a human right – that it is not a feasible goal – can then be rejected. Certainly, the rights agenda sets very high, idealistic standards for the World Bank and other international organizations, but I do not see this as
problematic (Freeman, 2002). The right to education does not mean it must be upheld today, right now, everywhere. It means that we as an international community ought to forcefully endeavour towards the realization of this right. It would then not be irresponsible in the least for the Bank to conceptualize of education as a right, and design and write educational policy under this framework.

Given that the above logic would support the Bank in defining education as a right, if the Bank were to deny this conceptualization, it could not employ the feasibility argument. What other rationale could the Bank then propose to explain why education is not considered a right in its discourse? Perhaps it is the relationship of education as a right to its public provision that causes concerns for the Bank, given the Bank’s support of various manifestations of privatization. If the Bank is to continue to adhere to a neoliberal vision of education provision, where privatization is inherently desirable, utilizing a rights-based discourse would be inconsistent, for education as a right only supports privatization in certain circumstances (when no child is excluded). As stated in the Education for All Global Monitoring Report of 2009, strongly informed by a rights-based framework: “...transferring responsibility to communities, parents, and private providers is not a substitute for fixing public-sector education systems” (p.131), reflecting that privatization is not inherently desirable, but instead unfortunately necessary. The global public goods framework, despite its economic grounding, also envisions privatization as unfortunately necessary. As will be unpacked below, bridging the global public goods and a rights-based conceptualization of education may then be possible.

In the previous chapter, I presented a critique that conceptualizing education as a global public good potentially undermines the notion of education as a human right. This criticism is based on the assumption that defining and supporting education policies based on economic
benefits, as is done under the public goods framing, is incompatible with a rights-based view, which supports education for all irrespective of economic benefits. The public goods rationale is economic, in contrast to the legally/politically-based human rights view, and these competing underpinnings promote education from different standpoints. In the following section, I grapple with these competing notions of education for economic development and education as a right.

I believe that it is possible for the Bank to adopt a rights-based framework for education while embracing an economic framing as well. The following section asks if, and in what way, the Bank might retain its economic vision of education while concurrently defining it as a right.

The Compatibility of Human Rights and Economic Development

Questions concerning the possibility of the Bank reframing its conceptualization of education more generally ask how the economic and rights discourses might go together, or, how are economic development and human rights interrelated, and are they compatible? Some have argued that development must come before human rights can effectively be pursued, and therefore the primary stages of development may not support human rights, and while this is unfortunate, is nonetheless acceptable (Goodin, 1979). More recent scholarship, particularly that which has critiqued the impacts of economic globalization, have rightfully highlighted several instances where the pursuit of economic development have hindered the realization of human rights. Evidence of this can be found in critical work on the SAPs, which arguably reduced rights in an effort to increase development (Arat, 1991; Forsythe, 2000; Saad-Filho and Johnston, et al, 2005). Some scholars have suggested that capitalism specifically is in tension with human rights, and therefore any development programme which operates under a capitalist umbrella cannot support human rights (Chomsky, 1999; Held, et al., 1999; Moore, 2007). And so, several
arguments have been made which contend that there is a trade-off either way. Human rights are either subjugated to development, or development must come first, at the cost of postponing the realization of rights. These perspectives would support the idea that for the Bank to concurrently conceive of education under both an economic umbrella and a rights framework is either practically or ethically problematic.

However, these views discount the interconnectedness of economic development and rights. Despite apparent opposing foci, where one stresses externalities and growth, while the other discounts these economic aspects in favour of a legally-based rights framing, the two concepts are in fact largely intertwined within international development policy and practice. For instance, as argued in the World Resources Institute’s A Roadmap for Integrating Human Rights into the World Bank Group, “The goals of human rights and development are inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing. Upholding human rights can help ensure the success of a development project by addressing the root causes of poverty. Conversely, violations of human rights – such as the repression of dissent, loss of community access to food and water supplies, poor health conditions for local laborers, or discrimination against poor communities – can prevent the investment from generating net development benefits” (2010, p.2). Even the Bank itself, in one of its few documents on human rights, states: “The world now accepts that sustainable development is impossible without human rights” (World Bank, 1998, p.2)

In his Development as Freedom, Sen stresses the interconnectedness of economic development and “freedoms,” which includes the realization of human rights, including the right to basic education. While he acknowledges and critiques the damage done by economic globalization and emphasizes the “need for critical scrutiny of markets” (2000, p.123), Sen however also stresses the importance of the market for development. He proposes that: “It is hard
to think that any process of substantial development can do without very extensive use of markets, but that does not preclude the role of social support, public regulation, or statecraft when they can enrich–rather than impoverish–human lives. The approach used here provides a broader and more inclusive perspective on markets than is frequently invoked in either defending or chastising the market mechanism” (2000, p.7).

In keeping with the notion that there is an inherent interconnectedness between the many aspects to development, Sen describes freedoms as both a means and end to development. In his view,

expansion of freedom is viewed as both (1) the primary end and (2) the principle means of development. They can be called respectively the ‘constitutive role’ and the ‘instrumental role’ of freedom in development. The constitutive role of freedom relates to the importance of substantive freedom in enriching human life. The substantive freedoms include elementary capabilities like being able to avoid such deprivations as starvation, undernourishment, escapable morbidity and premature mortality, as well as the freedoms that are associated with being literate and numerate, enjoying political participation and uncensored speech and so on…. (2000, p.36)

Basic education can be viewed both as a means, or an instrumental facet, while also as an end, or a constitutive facet to development. Under the umbrella of what Sen terms a “social opportunity” freedom, education is instrumental in attaining, for instance, freedom from poverty by increasing employment opportunity, and at the same time is vital in achieving an adequate “quality of life” (2000, p.24). I propose that the economic framing of education places focus on education as a means to development, while the human rights framing treats education as an end, with both extrinsic and intrinsic value.

However, one should not assume the incompatibility of the two conceptualizations of education. There are in fact many links between the instrumentalist economic and the constitutive rights-based frameworks. Sen argues that: “The effectiveness of freedom as an instrument lies in the fact that different kinds of freedom interrelate with one another, and
freedom of one type may greatly help in advancing freedom of other types” (2000, p.37). Given this approach, both sides must acknowledge this interconnectedness and value the other framework. Advocates of conceptualizing education as a human right “have to avoid resurrecting yesterday’s follies that refused to see the merits of—indeed even the inescapable need for—markets. We have to scrutinize and decide what parts make sense in the respective perspectives” (2000, p.112). And by the same token, those who give primacy to the economic importance of education must also see the value in a legal, as well as moral grounding of pursuing education for all: “The focusing on the quality of life and on substantive freedoms, rather than just on income or wealth, may look like something of a departure from the established traditions of economics, and in a sense it is (especially if comparisons are made with some of the more austere income-centred analysis that can be found in contemporary economics). … Indeed, the origin of economics was significantly motivated by the need to study the assessment of, and causal influences on, the opportunities that people have for good living” (2000, p.24).

Sen’s approach then encourages a relinquishing of extremes, where human rights advocates and economists cannot come to any common ground. In the case of education, economics and rights are therefore intertwined – for education as a right, as an end to development, is in many ways dependent on economic development to achieve access to quality education. At the same time, education is a vital contributor to economic development. Education thus plays both economic and rights-based roles and so, “bridges these two sets of development ideals” (Mundy, 2007, p.2).

Sen’s view further aides in the argument that a neoliberal framing of education – where private sector involvement in education is presented as inherently desirable – should be rejected, in that it leaves no, or in the least very little, room to conceptualize of education as a right. Sen
himself envisions basic education as a semi-public good, providing many of the same arguments present in my earlier depiction of basic education as a global public good, including a preference for public provision (Sen, 2000; 2004). He also, however, includes education in the discussion on various freedoms and as an end to development. I argue that Sen’s theory supports the compatibility of the global public goods and human rights framing, but rejects the neoliberal vision of education.

It is notable, however, that despite his talk of intertwining freedoms and the mutual importance of means and ends to development, he stresses the “intrinsic importance of human freedom as the preeminent objective of development…” rather than the instrumental facets. From this, I interpret Sen’s theory as supporting the conceptualization of education as a right, or as an end in itself, as paramount over and above education as a means, in the economic respect.

I apply Sen’s theory to my argument for he supports employing a rights-based framework, without rejecting the economic value of education. I present the World Bank’s work in education as neglecting the notion of education as a right in order to maintain solely an economic framing. I argue that the Bank’s education provision policies are informed by two – at times competing – economic conceptual frameworks, as a neoliberal, private good and a global public good. In adopting a different framework, informed by Sen’s work, I propose that a superior vision for the Bank would entail a conceptualization of education as a right, yet keeping the global public goods framing – and so an economic standpoint – as well. In rejecting the neoliberal argument of education as a private good, and so privatization as inherently desirable, the Bank opens the door to a rights-based vision. The chart below outlines the three frameworks for education. One can clearly see the superior compatibility of the global public goods and human rights frameworks over and above either of these with the neoliberal approach:
The global public goods framing of education, as argued earlier in this dissertation, presents private education as unfortunately necessary, and only promotes privatization in the case where it does not increase excludability. As the concept of education as a human right also carries with it the assumed value of public provision, where private involvement is only treated as a necessary step to meet demand, and thereby aide in the effort to attain education for all, a rights-advocate might well see the value in the global public good framework. Despite that EFA proponents see some usefulness in PPPs and privatization, they stress that this does not preclude aiding the public sector (UNESCO, 2009a). The standpoint that privatization is unfortunately necessary in some contexts is thus supported by both the global public goods and human rights frameworks.

That education as a global public good is defined, in large part, based on economic benefits may be the biggest obstacle to finding some common ground with a rights-based perspective. However, given Sen’s theory, it is arguably an extremist view that neglects the instrumental value that basic education has for development. If those who support education as a right can include in their perspective the economic value of education, compatibility between education for economic development and education as a right is possible.

I do believe though that the Bank must adopt a human rights-based stance on education as paramount. This framing would reduce any inconsistencies that may arise in supporting Education for All, and thereby bridging its work with that of the UN and various partner
organizations involved in the effort. At the same time, viewing education as a global public good allows the Bank to retain its economic framing of education.

In sum, I believe that a significant step towards a more consistent educational policy for the Bank entails a move from the neoliberal and global public goods framing to a re-conceptualizing of education as a global public good and a right. The bridging of the economic and rights-based visions of education is possible for the Bank. The next question is how might the Bank effectively act to adopt this vision. I will briefly provide some suggestions in the following section.

**Questioning the World Bank’s Involvement in Education**

Some scholars have suggested that one way to alleviate the problems embedded in the World Bank’s education policies is to reduce, or close, the Bank’s work in education. As I explain below, however, this is a plan I personally do not advocate. William Easterly (2006) offers such a suggestion for the World Bank’s general operations. His argument rests on the fact that the nature of development has altered dramatically since the Bank and the UN were formed over sixty years ago. The many problems facing developing nations have become more complex, intertwined and deeper due to globalization. The World Bank in particular has met these challenges by expanding the scope of its activities. An organization which began as a lending institution to tangible and specific reconstructive projects now grapples with an enormity of issues and associated projects, having to do with just about every aspect of international development (Bradlow and Grossman, 1995; Easterly, 2006; Marshall, 2008; Weaver, 2008).

At the onset, the Bank was designed to grapple with a finite number of reconstructive tasks, as a lending institution. However, “the progressive broadening of the operations of the IFIs
has resulted in their work encroaching into the spheres of expertise of other international organizations” (Bradlow and Grossman, 1995, p.434). For instance, despite that policy concerning education and development initially had a home at UNESCO, the Bank’s expanding scope of work saw it broaden into the educational field beyond school construction and supplies (Chabbot, 2003; Jones, 2007). As some scholars have pointed out, much of the Bank’s ineffectiveness – including problems within policies – can be attributed to this expansion of activities, termed by Easterly as “a really bad case of mission creep” (Bradlow and Grossman, 1995; Easterly, 2006, p.103). Contributing to lack of accountability, difficulties with measurement and evaluation of results, and problems with policy development, the enormity of the Bank’s scope of work is arguably at fault (Bradlow and Grossman, 1995; Easterly, 2006). As proposed by Easterly, in order to reduce its problems the Bank could then scale back its mission, including its work in education.

More importantly, it is a common critique that its economistic outlook on education is simply due to the fact that the Bank is just that – a bank. How else could a bank possibly conceive of education except in economic terms? And so, a scaling back of educational operations is further supported by the argument that a bank should not be in such a powerful and influential position in the field of education, anyhow. As Klees states: “I believe future historians will shake their collective head in wonder that the world today allowed a bank to be the global leader in developing and enforcing education policy” and proposes to replace the Bank with “an entirely new architecture” for aid to education (2010).

I, however, would argue that this reduction in Bank activities, or to replace the Bank altogether, is potentially problematic. It is probable that the loss of the World Bank in education
would have negative consequences for the education aid regime as a whole, and would be a lost opportunity to harness a great deal of capacity.

The World Bank holds a significant place in the educational development arena, due to its capabilities. The amount of education-related publications and research the Bank is able to fund, the size and expertise of the Bank’s staff, and the number of Bank-driven education projects currently being implemented, demonstrates that the Bank’s work in education is incredibly expansive (World Bank, 2009a; 2010i). This is significant, for if the Bank can alter its approach to fit with a rights-based, public-goods framework, any positive implications of this would be far-reaching. Moreover, the Bank has a well-established relationship with finance ministries in developing countries. As a result, the Bank is in a unique position to interface with country governments as an advocate for public education. It would be an opportunity missed not to make use of the Bank’s many capabilities.

As well, from a study of “best practices” on the way development aid is given, Easterly and Pfutze (2008) found that the World Bank ranked highest amongst 48 aid agencies overall, including, for instance, for transparency.15 While this study does not claim that the Bank is an ideal aid institution, free from flaws, it is described as having better aid practices compared to other multilateral and bilateral agencies. This study would support an argument for improving, rather than rejecting, the Bank’s involvement in education.

Furthermore, the World Bank can be viewed – for better or worse – as a “global leader” due to its position in the aid regime. If the Bank reduces or ceases providing loans to education, there could be a “contagion effect” for aid to education. Contagion effects in the international policy arena have been identified in areas such as environmental policy (Holzinger, et al, 2008),

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15 This study, interestingly, can be contrasted with Easterly’s 2006 argument that the Bank ought to reduce certain activities due to mission creep.
free trade agreements (Baldwin and Jaimovich, 2009) and legal policy (Pistor, 2000), where a major policy shift at one source institution acts to influence the policies of other organizations or governments. Due to the already described authority and influence of the World Bank, it holds a potential role as the source of a contagion effect concerning educational aid. If, for instance, bilateral donors or regional development banks follow the World Bank’s lead, there could be a deep reduction in aid to education from various sources.

However, this contagion effect could work in a positive direction, as it has for environmental policies (Holzinger, et al, 2008). If the Bank alters its educational policies in line with a rights-based approach, for instance, other organizations and donors may “catch” this policy re-framing. As discussed below, this positive contagion effect can be encouraged by collaborative efforts between organizations, where the Bank could even broker an alternative conception of education. I believe that the loss of the World Bank in education would be too great if other aid organizations follow suit, and would also miss an opportunity to harness the capabilities that the World Bank already holds. Instead, I posit that the Bank alter its conception of education to incorporate a rights-based stance, while presenting education as a global public good.

**Moving Towards a Rights-Based Stance on Education at the World Bank**

Various means via which the Bank might incorporate a rights-based position in its general work have been forwarded. For instance, the World Resources Institute recently proposed eight targets to be met by the World Bank which will allow the inclusion of rights-based policies. These are:
Short Term – by 2015...
1. Begin an open dialogue on human rights at the WBG
2. Invest consistently with clients’ human rights obligations and responsibilities
3. Improve assessments of human rights risks.
4. Integrate human rights standards into the WBG’s safeguard policies.
5. Limit the types of resettlement that the WBG will support.
6. Use the human rights framework to manage risks in fragile and conflict-affected countries.
7. Empower communities to use the WBG’s grievance mechanisms.

Medium Term – after 2015...

While I support these targets, they apply more generally and not specifically to education as a human right to be upheld by the Bank. In the particular case of education, I believe that a further measure ought to be taken to encompass education as a human right in the World Bank’s work. I propose as a possibility that for the World Bank to move towards a more rights-based and public goods framework for its education policies, it might align and collaborate with other organizations with rights-based educational mandates. In particular, the Bank should work in partnership with those who, along with the Bank, have been leaders in the EFA movement. If the Bank can collaborate effectively with organizations who adopt alternative frameworks for education policies, it can begin a process towards altering its stance on provision from that which advocates privatization as inherently desirable, to one which solely views privatization as unfortunately necessary. As argued earlier in this thesis, the Bank’s current position is debatably a move in the other direction, to a more inherently desirable stance as indicated by, for instance, increased alignment with the IFC.

By a closer relationship instead with the UN organizations, NGOs and other civil society actors (such as ActionAid, Oxfam and the Global Campaign for Education), who also view education as a right, the Bank’s framework is more likely to change. Given their separate original mandates, the Bank’s conceptual framing of its educational policies originated from a
different place than that of other organizations. As an IFI, the Bank understandably promotes an economic framing of most issues, including education. Adopting a rights-based framework entails a move closer to a UNICEF or UNESCO-type stance. This move would be enabled by an increase in collaboration amongst all IOs with educational mandates. Moreover, I argue that the World Bank staff would, in general, not resist this collaboration. A 2009 internal survey indicated that the primary reason many Bank personnel did not emphasize human rights in their work was not the result of a rejection of a rights-based approach, but more because staff did not know how to incorporate rights (World Bank, 2009c). Collaboration would allow the Bank staff to harness the already well-established policies, discourse and practices of those IOs with rights-based visions of education.

In particular, closer collaboration using EFA to frame the discussion, would allow for the Bank to shift its position, for EFA rests on the conception of education as a right. As stated in the Education for All Global Monitoring Report of 2009: “The EFA agenda is rooted in a commitment to human rights and social justice. It recognizes that expanding and equalizing opportunities for education are development goals in their own right” (UNESCO, 2009a, p.7).

While the Bank and other organizations were involved in the EFA initiative from the onset, it is arguable that even then the Bank did not adopt the rights-based framing as was advocated from the perspective of other actors (Chabbot, 2003).

The World Conference on Education for All was first conceived by prominent leaders from three international organizations – UNICEF, UNESCO and the World Bank. As Chabbot describes, while each organization had its own distinct motivations for supporting the effort, UNICEF and UNESCO always presented education as a right. The Bank, on the other hand, was motivated even at the onset of the initiative from a more financial position. “According to many
observers, the World Bank’s interest in EFA was tied to its interest in finding partners to provide grants for the technical assistance needed to plan and implement the Bank’s anticipated education loans in Africa, loans it hoped would revitalize African development efforts in general and restore investor confidence” (2003, p.97). Moreover, Chabbot argues that the Bank’s advocacy of EFA carried primarily an instrumentalist conception of education, where “human rights did not figure prominently in its justification” (2003, p.97).

Yet while the Bank, separate from UNESCO and UNICEF, have each roughly framed education in their own way for the past 40 years or so, there have also been signs of collaboration and consensus on various issues. From consensus on the importance of increasing the participation of in-country civil society actors and local governments, as well as collaboration on the MDGs and the Fast Track Initiative, sharing of statistics and other research, a number of notable and concurrent shifts involving education development initiatives are evident. These shifts are furthermore reflective of a broader consensus in international development concerning both poverty alleviation and equity, and the associated importance of education. It is arguably education’s link to both social justice and economic growth that has spurred this consensus (Mundy, 2007).

However, the one issue upon which consensus has not occurred is school provision and the role of the private sector. While the World Bank is part of this broad consensus on the vital importance of education for all, its neglect of education as a right and continued push for the inherently desirable view of privatization, keeps it apart from other organizations. I propose that if so much collaboration and consensus has already occurred, education provision policies can shift as well.
One possible means of collaboration requires that the Bank, instead of containing its education program within a closed-off department within the institution, work collaboratively with other major organizations in policy development, particularly those with rights-based educational mandates such as UNICEF and UNESCO, along with civil society actors. Moreover, collaboration in its educational research, or “knowledge” work, along with more referencing to research conducted outside of the Bank in its own policy documents, would not only broaden the perspective of the Bank, but respond to critiques that it relies too heavily on its own research. Collaborative efforts, as discussed earlier, with UN organizations have occurred, but unfortunately have been limited.

Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to thoroughly discuss organizational collaboration, I believe that if indeed collaboration has already occurred, bridging the economic and rights-based visions of education via collaborative efforts is also possible. A collaborative effort in policy-making concerning provision and the role of the private sector in particular would not only align the various organizations on the path of a more rights-based vision, but would also serve to create a more consistent policy stance within the Bank itself.

A further way in which the Bank might adopt a rights-based vision of education is through a move away from the entrenched economic vision the Bank currently holds, via a reduction in the dominance of economists working on non-economic issues within the Bank. I believe that shifting to more rights-based policies would be very difficult if there remains an overwhelming dominance of economists – and in particular those considered neoliberal – within the organization. For instance, Rao and Woolcock (2007a; 2007b) have recommended that the DEC increase the number of staff with training and experience in non-economic fields in order to provide a more balanced perspective in Bank research and associated policies. Broad (2007)
echoes this recommendation given his research on the Knowledge Bank. This suggestion could be applied to various departments within the World Bank, including education. Valuing the insight and expertise of, for instance, sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, educationalists, or human-rights legal scholars, would serve to resist and offer alternatives to the economistic lens through which Bank policies are generally defined. The narrow economic framing of education can be re-framed as a rights-based conceptualization by the increased inclusion of non-economic staff whose perspectives are informed from diverse backgrounds, training and experiences. Moreover, change in staffing could alter the emphasis current Bank staff place on quantifiable outcomes, which while evident in economic analyses, are less measurable when examining projects through the lens of human rights. For instance, various outputs of projects ought to be evaluated equally, not prioritizing only those which can be easily measured in monetary terms.

Of course, I do not want to insinuate that all economists are identical – some may demonstrate an unwavering support of neoliberal-based policies while others may take a more Keynesian approach. It is entirely plausible that some economists would support a move away from neoliberalism from within the World Bank. It has been shown, however, that the majority of economists at the Bank have been primarily educated in a neoliberal economic tradition (see Rao and Woolcock, 2007b; Weaver, 2008), which has led them to stress the economic outputs of development policies, while favouring the market over the state as the lead development actor. It is the particular dominance of neoliberal economic analysis which I argue has the potential to subjugate other perspectives on development policies, and this applies to most economists who operate at the Bank.
Perpetuating the cycle of economic dominance at the World Bank signals “paradigm maintenance,” earlier identified as a central problem in policy development at the Bank (BWP, 2006; Wade, 1996). An increase in non-economic staff at the World Bank could potentially engender a paradigmic shift within the organization, by challenging the engrained ideologies that perpetuate the entrenched economic vision of development within the organization.

Again, it is not the case that economists and staff at the Bank do not care to incorporate human rights-based positions into their work, but fighting against such a powerful economic paradigm makes it challenging to see how. Therefore, training and workshops on human rights for current Bank staff can provide them with methods for including a rights-based approach to policy development. For instance, in 2006, the Nordic Trust Fund was proposed to the World Bank with the financial support of Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Finland and Sweden, with the intent of funding internal workshops and other learning programs to educate Bank staff on the relationship between the Bank’s operational work and human rights. The program did not begin until 2009, however, and has been critiqued as limited in its approach, for it has only been piloted for a small number of staff and is not permitted to suggest operational changes. Moreover, the original name of the program was the Human Rights and Justice Trust Fund, but was forced to rename to gain board approval, indicating a continued reluctance on the part of the Bank to openly support rights-based approaches to its policies (BWP, 2010b; Herbertson, et al, 2010). But despite its small scale, the Nordic Trust Fund presents one example of how to integrate a rights-based approach to the World Bank that might be used as a starting point for future programs. It furthermore indicates that within the organization there exist some elements that support the inclusion of rights into the Bank’s work. Much as Amartya Sen is an economist
who also studied philosophy, economists at the World Bank can be enabled to see alternative perspectives through the lens of human rights via education and training.

I argue that an economic conceptualization of education is hegemonic at the World Bank. If economists monopolize the research and policy work, particularly on education financing and provision, it is unlikely that this situation could change. I argue that one of the most effective ways for the Bank to incorporate an alternative lens through which to view education is via the inclusion of staff with diverse education and professional backgrounds, whilst broadening the perspectives of those already employed at the Bank.

I offer the above ideas concerning reform with an understanding that there is a risk that any of these measures could be blocked by internal actors at the Bank or by its governors. They are forwarded as possibilities, demonstrating that there are indeed changes the Bank could adopt which might alter its direction in educational policy-making.

**Conclusion**

This chapter, via first reviewing the problem of policy development at the World Bank and its neglect of human rights in its discourse, has aimed to progress beyond the previous critical chapters in offering an argument for the bridging of the economic and rights-based visions of education in Bank policy. I then provided some practical means through which the Bank might act towards this re-conceptualization.

Education is arguably a unique activity which acts to bridge the goals of economic development and human rights. In endeavoring to accomplish both, I posit that while it is important to acknowledge and unpack critiques, we should not limit our focus on the negative, on the tensions in framing education both ways. Instead, we can adopt a constructive vision of
the Bank, where, if implemented from both perspectives via collaborative efforts and including alternative views, can aide to attain both the economic and rights-based ideals in education.
Conclusion

Given that this thesis has provided a fairly detailed analysis of one facet to a single organization’s education policies, I feel I must remind the reader – and myself – of the broader and arguably most significant reason for conducting such a study. More than 70 million children still do not have access to even basic education. Inequities and discrimination towards marginalized groups continue. Moreover, as education is deemed a determinant of social mobility, these inequities likely reinforce and perpetuate the poverty cycle. If the World Bank’s broad agenda is to free the world from poverty, then despite its 66 years of work, it has quite a long way to go. As I have mentioned, the Bank is – by far – the largest single source of aid to education in developing countries, and is at the center of knowledge generation and sharing concerning an enormous number of educational-related areas. Given this fact, the Bank is arguably in a unique and potentially effective and valuable position to alleviate poverty and increase equity worldwide, via education. It is my belief that the Bank’s position of power in development ought to be harnessed, and that critiques of the Bank’s work should be taken seriously to improve the organization.

The conclusion of this thesis attempts to move forward from these critical perspectives in providing a general policy prescription, where increasing collaborative efforts on education between organizations with divergent conceptual frameworks while reducing the dominance of economics at the organization can engender positive change. My argument is therefore hopeful, admittedly idealistic and perhaps gives too much credit to the Bank’s ability to reform. At the same time, I hope that this thesis elucidates how troubling the Bank’s persistent neoliberal framing of policy is for its educational efforts. As described in Chapter Two, studies of the Bank
have noted the engrained ideologies within which its staff must operate. The paradigms evidently must change in order for real reform within the Bank to occur. Moving towards a rights-based conceptualization of education requires a breaching of the engrained economic paradigm, but I believe this is possible. As Easton and Klees remind us, when taking a historical perspective, “…paradigmatic shifts are inevitable sooner or later” (1992, p.139).

**Revisiting Research Questions**

To conclude this thesis, I will now repeat my initial research questions and provide a brief response to each given the argument and analysis given throughout.

*What conceptual frameworks underpin the World Bank’s education provision policies?*

Given my critical analysis of the Bank’s education policy documents, I argue that the Bank’s education provision policies are underpinned by two conceptual frameworks. First, the Bank conceives of education as a global public good. Basic education is posited as such for it has a special potential for being public due to its non-excludable benefits, non-rival benefits, or both. The numerous educational externalities forwarded by the Bank are considered benefits. Also, education is considered a global public good by the Bank for it is argued that education ought to be nonexclusive and available for all to consume. And finally, as the Bank’s documents explain, education’s benefits can extend to all countries, people, and generations.

The second framework I identify as underpinning the World Bank’s education policies is neoliberalism. This assessment is reached via analyzing the Bank’s advocacy of various market mechanisms in education, which rest on certain neoliberal tenets. For instance, the Bank’s support of private sector involvement is often framed around the value in competition to increase efficiency and quality, as well as the value in giving choice to parents. It is moreover argued that
the Bank’s neoliberal framing of education allows for education as an exclusive service, and so a private good.

**What are the implications of the adoption of these frameworks, particularly in light of the conception of education as a human right?**

Given the two conceptual frameworks I identify, I argue that the Bank’s education policy documents are discursively inconsistent in supporting a conceptualization of education as both a global public good, as well as a private good. The two frameworks are in tension with one another, and so the Bank’s simultaneous adoption of both engenders critiques on logical grounds.

The adoption of the two frameworks is not only critiqued due to their problematic concurrent employment, but each is critiqued individually, as well. For instance, the global public goods framework is deemed problematic for it is a Northern-developed theory which is arguably imposed on Southern nations. And the neoliberal framework is argued to have serious equity repercussions when applied to both international development and education policy.

Finally, the implications of adopting these frameworks are also evaluated in terms of how they intersect, most importantly that they are both theories rooted in market economics. The Bank’s narrow employment of solely economic frameworks to underpin its policies is particularly problematic when examined in the context of the Bank’s evident omission of a conceptualization of education as a human right. By opting to frame its education policies as economic rather than legal or political, the Bank can be criticized for undermining a rights-based rationale, which I argue is a superior conceptualization of education.
How might the World Bank overcome the problems that arise from the adoption of these frameworks?

In order for the Bank to reduce the inconsistencies within its policies, and moreover advocate for education policies that do not engender equity-related critiques, I propose that the Bank relinquish its neoliberal-based policies, such as those advocating increased private sector involvement in education on the grounds that market mechanisms are inherently desirable. Instead, I posit that the Bank employ solely the global public goods framework for an economic framing of its education policies, along with the notion of education as a human right. I believe that despite some tensions, the global public goods and human rights conceptualizations of education are indeed compatible. In this way, the World Bank can bridge the rights-based and economic conceptualizations of education.

In order to accomplish this goal, I propose as a possibility that the Bank increase its collaborative efforts with other IOs that have been vocal in their advocacy of education as a human right. Moreover, the Bank could reduce the dominance of economists – and in particular those supporting a neoliberal agenda – within the organization, and train existing staff on incorporating human rights. In doing so, and moving away from its neoliberal policies, the Bank might reduce the inconsistencies within their education policy documents, while also reducing the criticisms they have faced due to their adherence to neoliberalism.

Directions for Future Research

This dissertation spurs several future research directions – many of which have excited me throughout the writing, yet were not the project of my research. First, a broader study could examine not only the policy documents, but also include staff perceptions of the policy process.
This would require an organizational study of the Bank’s education sector which was beyond the scope of this thesis, written in the humanities discipline. However, a qualitative study including staff interviews would give a different perspective on how the organizational and staff make-up informs educational policy design.

Also, as I have offered here a critical analysis of the World Bank’s work in primary education, a study into the various market mechanisms supported by Bank through its loans at the levels of early childhood, secondary, tertiary and higher education would be valuable as individual case studies themselves, but also in a comparative light. Given the Bank’s various rationales for supporting market mechanisms in each of these sectors, it would be interesting to note if their adoption of certain conceptual frameworks is dependent on the educational level being address, or if there exists an overarching adherence to, for instance, neoliberalism.

I have only touched on the role of the International Finance Corporation in education. Given the private sector arm’s recent involvement in educational investments, I believe it would be an interesting and timely study to investigate the IFC’s motivations in its educational work. More importantly, the influence of the IFC on broader educational policy-making at the Bank is of particular interest to me, both in terms of its role as an investor as well as its position in the education policy epistemic community. That the IFC is furthermore increasing it involvement in health is also notable, and research into its broader human development policies – including both health and education – is needed in the wider academic literature on international organizations.

It would be a logical extension of this thesis to conduct a similar analysis of another international organization with an educational mandate, such as UNESCO. I would be interested to conduct a comparative institutional study of the two most prominent organizations grappling with the issue of international education policy, including a comparison of their policy discourse.
Finally, this thesis proposes that the World Bank provide workshops and other learning programs to its staff on methods for integrating a rights-based approach to its work. An extension of this dissertation would be to design one such program on the specific area of education as a human right, highlighting to staff how they might support educational rights within Bank policy and practices. Much as this thesis has demonstrated that a philosophical approach can contribute to the practical area of policy analysis, so too can such an approach – in terms of educating staff on human rights – lend itself to the improvement of policy development at the World Bank.

Potential Contributions

Given my extensive critiques of the Bank, this thesis may provide some leverage that critics of the Bank can employ to support their work. My dissection of the discourse found in Bank policy documents only reinforces the various accusations of hypocrisy, ineffectiveness, research-bias, and the support of a neoliberal agenda. For instance, such non-governmental organizations as the Bank Information Center and the Bretton Woods Project often employ academic research to offer critiques with an aim to influence the Bank’s policies. Moreover, activists and organizations within developing nations who question the role of the Bank and its projects at the country-level, can forward many of the arguments made in this thesis to support any skepticism or concerns they may have, directly to the Bank. It is my hope that any leverage provided by this thesis to external critics will be used to garner responses from the Bank itself.

The audience for which I have written this dissertation is not limited to academia, but is intended for those in policy-making arenas, in both the fields of development and education, and in both the North and South. From my research, I know that policies, particularly those grappling with the role of the private sector, tend to be informed by conceptual frameworks which embody
ideo logical perspectives. My critique of the World Bank’s education documents provides an exemplar for how to dissect policies in various contexts. Moreover, the suggestions I have forwarded concerning collaboration between and disciplinary diversity within institutions are also relevant for various organizations beyond the Bank. A broader application of this thesis can, I hope, serve to help in the design, development, and analysis of policies, which in turn will result in more effective and ethical international education policy implementation.

Finally, given the potential practical contributions of it, I hope that my thesis might demonstrate the use of philosophy as an analytical approach to the study of policy. As McLaughlin (2000) argues, embedded in educational policy are philosophical considerations, where the content and context of policies reflect assumptions, values and beliefs grounded in specific philosophical positions. While it is understood that education policy is often technically-based, to advocate for any position within policy discourse, is often to furthermore take a philosophical stance.

Philosophy involves both the development and critique of arguments. A policy is often an argument for a particular position. For example, in the case of the World Bank and educational privatization, policy documents can be viewed as arguing for the increased inclusion of the private sector. An argument is presented in a logical format, and via an analytical philosophical method, this argument can be deconstructed and critiqued. Therefore, analytical philosophy not only lends itself to the design of policy, but also the critique of policy. I therefore argue that those aiming to influence, reform or condemn the World Bank would be wise to employ a philosophical analysis of the Bank’s work in order to provide a convincing critique. I hope that this thesis demonstrates more generally that philosophical studies are not only relevant, but critical to making change in the educational landscape.
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