Focus on World Order

Educational Multilateralism and World (Dis)Order

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Most educators and educationists today operate with considerable awareness of the global forces that affect their work—be it in terms of the rising emphasis on technology and information in the classroom, the aggressive popular discourse on preparing children and nations for a competitive international information economy, or the issues raised by an increasingly diverse, border-crossing population of learners. Yet it is perhaps symptomatic of our times that a mounting sense of the global dimension of domestic educational issues has not been accompanied by attention to formal cross-national cooperation.¹ This lack of attention is particularly glaring given the current widening of interest in the potential for multilateralism and international organization to temper and redirect processes of globalization toward a more humane world order.²

This article draws on a 20-year tradition of research on international educational cooperation by scholars in comparative education. Its primary starting point, however, is not comparative education, where scholars have yet to engage in the larger re-evaluation of international organization in education that is called for here. To date, comparative education research on international organizations has tended to follow three lines of argument. Historical case studies of single organizations have suggested that the “problems” of educational multilateralism lie within the structure and management of the

¹ This is in contrast to earlier periods of heightened international awareness, as in the periods before and after World War I and immediately after World War II, each of which saw numerous calls from educators for more elaborate forms of international cooperation in education.


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organizations themselves.\(^3\) In contrast, neo-Marxist accounts have viewed the educational development policies and practices of multilateral organizations primarily as instruments of Western neoimperialism.\(^4\) Finally, accounts by world institutionalists have underscored the role of international organizations in constructing a world culture characterized by homogenous national educational policies linked to "modern" ideals of nation and citizen.\(^5\) Unlike neo-Marxist accounts, this literature has remained silent about the conflicts and contradictions that accompany the global spread of these ideals and practices. Overall, none of these accounts pays much attention to the different forms that educational multilateralism has taken since 1945, nor to how it has changed over time.

The passing of the post-1945 world order, the intensification of globalization beginning in the 1980s, and the effect these two developments have had on collective institutions for promoting domestic and international welfare all suggest the need for a critical re-evaluation of international organization in education.\(^6\) This article lays the foundation for critical reflection on the significance of educational multilateralism in the context of evolving


patterns of power and inequality in a rapidly changing world system. It explores how educational multilateralism has responded and contributed to the broader reordering of international political, economic, and social reforms since 1945.\(^7\) To do so, I review the history of educational multilateralism as linked to an interpretation of twentieth-century world order drawn from the work of critical theorists in international relations.

**Educational Multilateralism, Critical Theory, and World Order in the Twentieth Century**

Scholars of international relations have long considered the rapid expansion of formal multilateralism—defined as "an institutional form which coordinates relations among three or more states on the basis of generalized principles of conduct"—as among the most distinctive features of the postwar interstate system.\(^8\) Many have argued that formal multilateral organizations such as the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions (the International Monetary Fund [IMF] and the World Bank) acted as important institutional mechanisms in the construction of relative political stability and economic prosperity after World War II.\(^9\)

This article draws primarily on the work of critical theory scholars to build a framework for understanding changes in international relations. Their approach begins with a historical exploration of how successive international orders have evolved through a dialectical interplay among three distinct, but interlocking, sets of relationships: the evolution of a world capitalist system, the relations of power among states, and the historical development of social forces and relations of power within what Robert Cox calls "state/society complexes."\(^{10}\) This global historical framework is in turn used to understand postwar multilateral institutions not simply as instruments controlled by nation-states but more broadly as arenas within which states

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\(^7\) The concept of "world order," as R. Falk pointed out 2 decades ago, suggests a purposive arrangement of relations within which some pattern of stability has been established at an international level ("Contending Approaches to World Order," in *Towards a Just World Order*, ed. R. Falk, S. Kim, and S. Mendlovitz [Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1982], pp. 146–74). Almost invariably its study has carried within it normative questions inseparable from the identification of the actors and the dynamics of world order itself. See also Rosenau, "Governance, Order and Change in World Politics."

\(^8\) J. Ruggie, "Multilateralism: The Anatomy of an Institution," *International Organization* 46, no. 3 (1992): 571. This paper focuses on formal multilateral organizations, an important component of multilateralism.

\(^9\) Political science debates about the way in which international organizations contribute to world order can be found in the journal *International Organization*. For a collection of seminal articles on the topic, see P. Diehl, ed., *The Politics of Global Governance* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1996).

and other social forces continue to struggle and construct the shape and meaning of world order itself.¹¹

Critical international relations theory draws from Antonio Gramsci’s work on the construction of societal compromises in early twentieth-century capitalist societies, in order to explore the relative stability and potential for change across different historical periods. Gramsci argued that the basis of stability could be found in processes of mediation between capital and civil society that included the development of consensual ideologies and institutions. He showed how the modern European state had begun to use consensual rather than coercive means to mediate various class interests, an approach that included constructing notions of citizenship and national identity, popularizing the theme of national progress, reinforcing public institutions, and institutionalizing the civil and political rights of liberal democracy.¹² Later critical theorists argued that the construction of such consensus (or “hegemony” as Gramsci termed it) also contained an inherent tendency toward contestation and change.¹³ Thus, the extension of rights and the development of public institutions opened up a distinctive political space, an expanding “civil society.”¹⁴ In this new political space lay the potential for the development of powerful social forces whose demands could escalate beyond political and civil rights to include a more fundamental redistribution of resources.

Domestic patterns of compromise and contestation always have had an international dimension, insofar as domestic social relations have been embedded in a steadily integrating world economic system.¹⁵ Critical international relations theorists, however, emphasize the unique way in which these patterns of national societal compromise were stabilized into the postwar world order through purposive forms of intergovernmental cooperation, particularly the creation of multilateral institutions. They also show how


¹³ Thus the notion of counterhegemony. By far the most influential of recent critical theoretical accounts of the political space opened up by consensual institutions is J. Habermas, Theory of Communicative Action, vol. 1 (Boston: Beacon, 1984).

¹⁴ The term “civil society” as used by Gramsci refers to the distinctive political space and the collective institutions created as part of the development of the twentieth-century capitalist-democratic state. Civil society is the arena in which hegemony is both constructed and contested; it is the realm of ideology and of voluntary association.

counterhegemonic social forces emerged at a transnational level and played a part in the evolution of this new multilateralism. In this framing, critical theorists move away from classical accounts of postwar international relations that place cold war politics and U.S. hegemony at the center. Although these remain important factors in shaping the postwar order, critical international relations theorists set out to explore how postwar multilateralism provided a distinctive political space, through which an "imagined" world order was negotiated, constructed, and (at times) contested.\textsuperscript{16}

These basic insights can be used to explore the evolution of educational multilateralism since 1945 as a product of the post–World War II world order, one in which the West's consolidation of the Keynesian welfare state came to be explicitly linked to the development of a stable, liberal world economic and interstate system. The central structures of postwar multilateralism—the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions—supported the stabilization, expansion, and further integration of a world capitalist economy. Their work also was linked to the cold war project of incorporating developing nations into the Western society of states. As is widely noted, these institutions spread a model of national development that emphasized modernization. At the same time, however, they also encouraged development based on the societal compromise reached in Western societies, one emphasizing state intervention in domestic social welfare and the creation of national educational systems. Their programs and activities helped to extend notions of rights and entitlements, and often were seen in relation to broader ideals and expectations about redistribution at a global level. I thus describe these institutions as part of a limited regime of "redistributive multilateralism." Of course, sharp contradictions existed between ideologies of equality and redistribution embedded within multilateral institutions and the actual commitments of Western nations. Yet by spreading new notions about redistribution and entitlement and by helping to create new nation-state actors, postwar multilateral institutions constructed new political spaces within which opposing social forces might later come together to demand alternatives.

Early forms of "redistributive multilateralism" underwent a first period of major challenge during the 1970s, spurred by rising Third World demands for a new world order and rapid changes in the world economic system. Multilateral institutions responded by developing alternative ap-

\textsuperscript{16} C. Murphy and E. Augelli thus view multilateral organizations as components of an emergent international civil society, defined as "the realm of international institutions, including informal norms and practices of state officials and private citizens operating across state boundaries, international regimes created by explicit agreements among states, international nongovernmental organizations, and formal intergovernmental agencies" ("International Institutions, Decolonization, and Development," \textit{International Political Science Review} 14, no. 1 [1993]: 76). See also Murphy, \textit{International Organization and Industrial Change}.
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approaches to "redistributive multilateralism," some of which focused on poverty alleviation and others on more radical promises of global entitlement. Although these alternatives remained sharply constrained, as reflected in the limited flow of new resources and new models into the educational development work of multilateral organizations, they also had important consequences.

An even greater challenge to educational multilateralism occurred as part of the erosion of the postwar world order after the mid-1970s. In that period, dramatic global changes in the nature of production and exchange helped to undermine the societal compromises embodied in the Keynesian welfare states of the advanced capitalist world. They also led to the fragmentation of the Third World and the economic marginalization of many developing countries. Among the many shifts in multilateralism and interstate relations of that period, the most important for educational multilateralism are (1) the erosion of funding for "redistributive" forms of multilateralism, in a move that has broadly paralleled the dismantling of domestic social welfare institutions and the introduction of neoliberal approaches to public policy—neoliberalism advocates deregulation and the opening of national markets to international trade and competition and emphasizes the use of market mechanisms in public service delivery and a more limited role for the state; (2) the strengthening of "disciplinary" forms of international cooperation, that is, those that support the containment of domestic demands for social programs, as typified both in IMF/World Bank programs of structural adjustment and in the diffusion of neoliberal approaches to public policy through multilateral organizations like the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); (3) the emergence of "defensive" forms of multilateralism aimed at promoting the competitiveness of blocs of advanced industrial countries (e.g., the OECD, European Union [EU], and North American Free Trade Agreement [NAFTA])—such institutions are exclusive rather than universal and contain much more limited mandates for the promotion of social security, equality, and common welfare than the postwar multilateral institutions of the UN.

The Postwar World Order (1945 to mid-1970s)

The end of World War II marked the emergence of a relatively stable period worldwide, particularly among the West’s advanced capitalist states. It also saw the rapid growth of international multilateral organizations with mandates linked to the preservation of this order and of educational cooperation as an important focus for multilateral activities. J. G. Ruggie describes this as a period of “embedded liberalism,” because a liberal commitment to the expansion of the world market as a foundation for progress came to be
embedded in domestic and multilateral institutions seeking to balance and stabilize the market itself.\textsuperscript{17} At a national level, the postwar era witnessed the rise of the Keynesian welfare state, in which high-wage full employment and social security were guaranteed through rapidly expanding consumption and production. Internationally, a set of multilateral institutions was formed whose purpose was to buffer economic fluctuations, provide for peace and security, and diffuse this liberal, modernizing approach to national development.

In many ways, these consensual institutional frameworks arose as a defensive alternative to the communist model for domestic and international redistribution being consolidated in the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries. Yet international agreements such as the Atlantic Charter and the United Nations Charter, which refer to goals including “full employment” and “social security,” make it clear that the formation of postwar multilateral institutions also must be traced back to the rise of social security and welfare entitlements in the West during the first half of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{18} Postwar multilateral arrangements were distinct in the way they tied the goals of security and peace to both the expansion of a stable, liberal world economy and the development of national society security and welfare institutions.\textsuperscript{19} The United States played a central if often ambiguous role in this effort, acting not simply as the traditional military-economic hegemon but also as the leading proponent of an international consensus among Western states about the nature and constituent parts of a world order itself.\textsuperscript{20}

The evolution of educational multilateralism reflected the broader patterns and contradictions that emerged within this new formulation of security and world order. In the heady years following the Allied victory, governments and nongovernmental actors converged around the notion that


\textsuperscript{18} The Atlantic Charter, which was signed by Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill on August 14, 1941, called for “Enjoyment by All States . . . of access, on equal terms, to the trade of the world” and “the fullest collaboration between all nations . . . with the object of securing . . . improved labor standards, economic advancement and social security.” The signatories of the UN Charter agreed to work toward “higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development” and to find cooperative solutions for “international economic social, health and related problems; and international cultural and educational cooperation.” World Peace Foundation, \textit{United Nations in the Making: Basic Documents} (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1945).


\textsuperscript{20} The anomalous role played by the United States in formally endorsing a view of world order that included full employment, social security, and welfare entitlements has been relatively underexplored. It is largely discounted in the neorealist and neo-Marxist literatures.

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education should be considered a key issue for international organization.\textsuperscript{21} Support for educational multilateralism erupted from many directions, and among the core Allied powers it was considered a key to the postwar reconstruction of the interstate system via the denazification and scientific and technical development of Europe.\textsuperscript{22} Less-developed countries argued that it was crucial to international “equalization,” a position supported by Soviet representatives.\textsuperscript{23} A vocal group of predominantly U.S. nongovernmental organizations and educators viewed international cooperation in education as a necessary foundation for a peaceful, democratic, and civilized international society.\textsuperscript{24} In this they were supported by the French, who sought the continuation of the League of Nation's International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC).\textsuperscript{25}

What eventually emerged, through negotiations between 1942 and 1946, was the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (Unesco), a specialized UN agency that was autonomously governed by a general conference of delegates from member nations and an executive board of nominated, but politically independent representatives.\textsuperscript{26} The organization was to be financed through weighted assessments on member

\textsuperscript{21} The idea for an international body for educational and cultural cooperation was, of course, not entirely new. It had been broached by nongovernmental actors as early as 1910, and their advocacy had led to the formation of the International Bureau of Education (IBE) and the IIIC under the League of Nations. Both institutions were primarily focused on educational exchange. On the pre-1945 history of educational cooperation, see P. Rosello, Forerunners of the International Bureau of Education (London: Evans Brothers, 1944); and J. Kolasa, International Intellectual Cooperation: The League Experience and the Beginnings of Unesco (Warsaw: Zaklad Narodowy im. Ossolinshkich, 1962).


\textsuperscript{23} Jones and others note that delegates from Brazil, China, and Venezuela were among the most active supporters of the formation of an international body for educational and cultural cooperation at the San Francisco founding conference of the United Nations.


\textsuperscript{25} The leading spokesman for an international educational organization at the UN founding conference was Henri Bonnet, a member of the French delegation and former director of the IIIC.

\textsuperscript{26} Major decisions are made by the general conference, in which each member nation has one vote. The executive board governs the organization between general conferences. It originally comprised “independent” representatives nominated by the General Assembly. As the cold war escalated in the 1950s, however, members of the board were political appointees of member states. As a specialized UN agency Unesco is relatively autonomous, though it is expected to report to the UN Economic and Social Council and to work within the spirit of the council’s main resolutions.
nations, and Unesco was given a mandate to promote a wide range of global educational and intellectual relations via responsibility for five thematic areas: education, culture (including libraries, museums, and fine arts), science, social science, and mass communications. In each field, Unesco was to act as an arena for intergovernmental debate, a clearinghouse for information, a regulatory or norm-setting body, a provider of services and programs to member states, and a supporter of nongovernmental linkages and exchanges—all, it might be added, within a budget that never exceeded that of a midsized university.27

During the 1950s, Unesco and other postwar multilateral institutions faced profound uncertainty about their future roles. Many of these institutions, especially the United Nations and its specialized organizations, have mandates that contain universal notions of civil, political, economic, and social rights and redistribution (including the right to education).28 Thus, Unesco's constitution commits it to promoting the "common welfare of mankind" as well as a universal right to education. Yet the U.S. decision to channel its resources for postwar reconstruction bilaterally under the Marshall Plan left UN specialized agencies such as Unesco profoundly underfunded. The U.S. decision also signaled the UN's rapid politicization as East-West tensions intensified. The gap between Unesco's wide mandate and limited budget as well as between the formal universalism of its mandate and the increasingly divergent interests of its member nations made the organization profoundly unstable. These tensions had two key side effects. First, the involvement of nongovernmental actors—who had played a crucial part in establishing many of the UN specialized agencies and in advocating the inclusion of social welfare goals in the UN charter—was quickly displaced by a primary engagement with states and governments.29 Second, as the organization became more firmly tied to the politics of the interstate system, support for more practical efforts of regional and national educational planning emerged as the central focus of its activities.

This emphasis on the development of national educational systems and plans was enhanced by the sudden availability of large-scale funding for "redistributive multilateralism" in the 1950s. In this decade, as U.S. government officials became convinced that the Third World held the key to both the expansion of a liberal world economy and the containment of communism,


28 See Article 55 of the UN Charter and Lumsdaine (n. 19 above), pp. 212–15. The Bank's articles of agreement mention raising standards of living and development but do not refer to redistribution, equity, or poverty. The right to education was included in the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaims that "everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages." The 1951 International Conference on Public Education sponsored by Unesco and the IBE unanimously adopted the declaration's stance on compulsory education.

funding for international development became the center of attempts to integrate postcolonial nations into the Western world order. European nations quickly followed the American lead, at least in part to deal with the erosion of their colonial empires. By the early 1960s, virtually all OECD countries had opened bilateral "development assistance" programs and increased their funding for multilateral institutions. The World Bank had shifted the bulk of its lending to the developing world, while the rapid expansion of voluntary contributions to the United Nations had resulted in four out of five UN dollars being spent on international development.

The early history of Unesco illustrates how the ideals of a rights-based redistributive multilateralism inscribed in the UN charter and the mandates of its specialized agencies were transformed into a practical, often technical, focus on national development and modernization by the sudden explosion of funding for international development through multilateral and bilateral channels. During its first decade, Unesco had supported the development of international civil society through assistance to a large number of international nongovernmental organizations in education, science, and culture and had worked with teachers' organizations and in associated schools. Its executive board had been made up of professionals and intellectuals, not diplomats. During the 1960s, however, these modes of operation fell to the margins. The executive board was reconstituted as a committee of member-state representatives, marked by cold war rivalry. The focus on intellectual cooperation shrank in relation to new programs supporting national educational expansion and educational planning. In 1958, Unesco's general conference invited the secretariat to undertake a survey of educational needs in the developing world. In 1960, the conference declared that education would be Unesco's foremost concern. A series of regional conferences followed in which targets for educational expansion were set alongside

30 R. Wood, From Marshall Plan to Debt Crisis: Foreign Aid and Development Choices in the World Economy (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986); C. Murphy and E. Augelli, America's Quest for Supremacy and the Third World (London: Pinter, 1988). The most famous articulation of the U.S. position can be found in point 4 of Truman's inaugural address of 1949 (see Wood), which promised increased technical assistance for the developing world and linked this to the containment of communism and to future economic benefits from the expansion of world trade. The United States subsequently supported the opening in 1949 of a technical assistance facility in the UN, the Expanded Program for Technical Assistance.


32 K. Lee, "A Neo-Gramscian Approach to International Organizations: An Expanded Analysis of Current Reforms to the UN Development Activities," in Boundaries in Question, ed. J. MacMilland and A. Linklater (New York: St. Martin's, 1995), pp. 144–62, esp. p. 153. These funds were channeled through the United Nations Special Fund (formed in 1958) and the UN Expanded Program of Technical Assistance, later consolidated into the United Nations Development Program in 1965. They were also channeled directly to UN specialized agencies like Unicef through voluntary contributions from member states.


34 Sewell, Unesco and World Politics (n. 22 above), pp. 219–21.

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assessments of the need for increased international assistance.\textsuperscript{35} Unesco had emerged as the central mediator between developing-country demands for educational funding and the resources for development now available from Western governments through the United Nations, bilateral aid programs, and the World Bank.

In its role as mediator, Unesco both represented and helped to define Third World educational needs. It played an important role in the construction of an elaborate ideology about the relationship between education and economic development, helping to popularize emergent research on the economics of education and linking its new education development activities to Western enthusiasm for educational expansion.\textsuperscript{36} Throughout the 1960s, Unesco also became a nodal point for the involvement of other international organizations in education. Cooperative agreements were signed with the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) in 1961 and the World Bank in 1964, while funding for an Experimental World Literacy Program was granted from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 1965. In 1963, Unesco initiated its work on international educational statistics, and the semiautonomous International Institute of Educational Planning was formed under Unesco auspices.\textsuperscript{37} Moreover, a special unit devoted to educational finance and planning was created in Unesco in 1964. In each of these arrangements, Unesco’s foundational commitment to education as a basic, universal right became ever more deeply embedded within the fashionable language of national planning and economic modernization.\textsuperscript{38}

The rapid rise of resources for educational assistance (see Table 1) strengthened Unesco’s authority and expanded its task, allowing the organi-

\textsuperscript{35} Karachi for Asia, 1960; Addis Ababa for Africa, 1961; and Santiago for Latin America, 1962. Conferences on compulsory education were also held in Bombay (1952) and Cairo (1955), yielding the first requests to the World Bank for education finance.


\textsuperscript{37} Both of these were funded by the World Bank. The Ford Foundation also funded the International Institute of Educational Planning.

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<td>1. Bilateral educational aid (OECD countries)</td>
<td>3,412.5</td>
<td>3,628.8</td>
<td>4,038.1</td>
<td>5,962.4</td>
<td>4,596.9</td>
<td>4,073.4</td>
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<td>2. World Bank lending to education</td>
<td>230.3</td>
<td>409.5</td>
<td>636.9</td>
<td>772.9</td>
<td>1,785.3</td>
<td>1,663.6</td>
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<td>3. Unesco:</td>
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<td>a) Total regular budget</td>
<td>329.1</td>
<td>355.1</td>
<td>469.8</td>
<td>532.7</td>
<td>721.4</td>
<td>423.8</td>
<td>417.9</td>
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<td>b) Education programs</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>114.0</td>
<td>162.2</td>
<td>137.0</td>
<td>169.3</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>89.3</td>
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<td>c) Extrabudgetary support for education programs</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
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<td>83.3</td>
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<td>4. Unicef</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>78.0</td>
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<td>U.S. dollar deflator</td>
<td>.16</td>
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zation to move beyond East-West tensions and the constraints of its limited core budget.39 Yet these resources also embedded Unesco’s approach to education in the discourses and practices of a larger international development regime, where the promise of universal rights and global redistribution was being interpreted and enacted in very specific and limited ways.40

Some of these limitations can be seen in Unesco’s failure to get donors to direct resources toward its key causes: literacy and mass public education. International development assistance in education during the 1960s and early 1970s largely remained focused on secondary, vocational, and higher education in fields directly linked to economic modernization. Assistance also continued to be offered primarily in training and expertise through bilateral aid programs, keeping it tied to the goods and services of Western donors.41 Furthermore, OECD countries continued to prefer bilateral channels for development aid, which allowed them to divorce assistance from broader negotiations between the North and South about the institutions of world order while tying it to their own domestic services and geopolitical interests.42

Even deeper limitations are suggested by how Unesco framed its own goals and purposes in education. Increasingly, Unesco adopted a technical/planning approach to educational multilateralism. It defined educational problems using Western schooling as a prototype and constructed the purposes of educational assistance around the provision of top-down scientific planning and attention to finance. Furthermore, the organization placed responsibility for mass education at the doorstep of “national political will,” a framing that simultaneously circumvented notions of global redistributive entitlement and justified Unesco’s concentration on national educa-

39 Sewell, Unesco and World Politics; and “Unesco: Pluralism Rampant” (n. 22 above).
42 Wood (n. 30 above); Cox, “Education for Development”; Lee (n. 32 above); M. Marchand, “The Political Economy of North-South Relations,” in Political Economy in the Changing Global Order, ed. R. Stubb and G. Underhill (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1994), pp. 289–301. The West’s resistance to more inclusive decision making within world order was underscored by the decision to open the International Development Association (IDA) under the Western-dominated World Bank rather than the United Nations. The United States played the lead in this respect. Ruggie thus concludes that the United States did not wish to see international organizations with extensive independent powers, while its limited support for development reflected the truncated pattern of social security measures established under the New Deal. Ruggie, “Multilateralism” (n. 8 above), p. 592.
tional systems. Such an approach paralleled the wider development regime, where problems of global welfare and human security were viewed essentially as issues of national economic modernization, solvable through the provision of technical, depoliticized forms of Western expertise and the more limited transfer of technology and capital to the South. The outcome of Unesco’s work, as recent research has suggested, was the spread of an educational model that embedded learning within an ideology of state-led economic modernization and married this to concepts of individual productivity and national citizenship.

The limits of Unesco’s apolitical, nation-state focused, and technical-scientific approach to educational multilateralism reflected the larger constraints and limitations of Western involvement in “redistributive multilateralism” during the postwar era. These limitations have caused many comparative education scholars to conclude that the educational development activities at the core of postwar educational multilateralism were simply a way of incorporating newly independent nations into a Western world order. Yet the subsequent history of multilateral organizations in the 1970s suggests that these institutions also were constructing a new political space within which radical demands of Third World states vis-à-vis the West could be formulated.

**The Rise of Basic Needs (Late 1960s to Early 1980s)**

In the mid-1960s, a countermovement among Third World nations developed within the United Nations and its specialized agencies, spurred in part by their declining share of world trade and supported by socialist and communist models of national development. Third World demands ultimately crystallized around an alternative image of international relations and world order. Incorporating the structuralist critique put forth by Raúl Prebisch and the UN’s Economic Commission on Latin America, less developed countries argued that unequal and exploitative economic relations between North and South lay at the root of underdevelopment. Beginning with the formation of the Group of 77 in 1964, and culminating in the

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43 Thus efforts to build the social and political foundations for education—as, e.g., through promoting the work of teachers and teachers’ unions and building relations across nongovernmental sectors—were neglected by Unesco. M. Finnemore notes a similar pattern in the evolution of Unesco’s work in science policy, which moved from a promotion of transnational nongovernmental scientific cooperation to the diffusion of state-centered models of national scientific planning (“International Organizations as Teachers of Norms: The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and Science Policy,” *International Organization* 47, no. 4 [1993]: 565–97).

44 Arndt; Escobar; Ferguson.

45 McNeely (n. 5 above); McNeely and Cha (n. 5 above); Fiala and Lanford (n. 5 above); Ramirez and Boli (n. 5 above).

46 Altbach (n. 4 above); Arno (n. 4 above); M. Carnoy, *Education as Cultural Imperialism* (New York: D. McKay, 1974).
1974 UN General Assembly resolution for a "New International Economic Order," developing countries made a series of radical demands. These included new mechanisms of international economic regulation (in particular, to ensure stability in commodity prices and access of developing-country trade to first-world markets); the direct redistribution of global wealth from the North to the South; and the transfer of global economic decision making to the more democratic institutions of the United Nations.47

Though few OECD members showed enthusiasm for such broad structural changes, several factors lent strength to these demands and shaped how they were taken up within multilateral organizations. The years between 1968 and 1974 saw the beginning of escalating economic change, which included a partial undermining of U.S. economic hegemony (linked closely to the U.S. defeat in Vietnam and the rise of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries), a decline in Fordist production patterns and erosion of expansion among OECD economies, the decoupling of finance from industrial capital, the erosion of the Bretton Woods monetary agreement, and an oil shock. For a period of perhaps 10 years, there was limited consensus among OECD countries about how to respond to these global changes. Neoliberal and monetarist theories emphasizing free trade and limited government intervention were only beginning to gather strength in Anglo-American countries, while arguments for the expansion of global Keynesianism—in which notions of redistribution were tied to higher rates of consumption and production—also proliferated. At the same time, the domestic stability of the Keynesian compromises embodied in Western welfare states was hotly contested by new youth, women's, peace, and antiracist movements. Both economic uncertainty and the rise of new political actors domestically led to a broad questioning about the world order.48

Meanwhile, the expansion of social programs in the North continued to strengthen public support for international development that emphasized the redistributive and compensatory components of the Keynesian welfare state model of national development, especially among the more social-democratic of Western states.49 A combination of expanding aid budgets, new demands from a coherent Third World bloc, and uncertainty in the West about global economic foundations spurred alternative approaches to

49 Lumsdaine (n. 19 above); Noel and Therien (n. 19 above).
development among multilateral institutions. Each alternative sought to mediate the demands of the Third World and the increasingly divergent interests of Northern donor countries.

Calls for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) in the United Nations were taken up most clearly in the activities of Unesco, where decision making is strongly influenced by the majority status of Third World countries in the general conference. A 1974 report from a panel that included NIEO architects Raul Prebisch and Samir Amin trenchantly critiqued Unesco’s educational activities and enhanced the focus on endogenous and cultural dimensions of learning. These new themes were not easily translated into a clear program of action, however. Throughout the 1970s, debates about educational development in the organization’s secretariat and general conference got mired in broader questions of UN restructuring and North-South relations. In the struggle to give a more practical focus to such ideas as lifelong learning and endogenous development, education-sector work became more regional and diffuse. Unesco entered what E. B. Haas has characterized as a period of “turbulent non-growth.” The organization failed to find a guiding rationale to bridge the radical demands of developing countries and the liberal developmentalist ideologies of its core country members. As a result, Unesco lost the confidence of bilateral donors and other multilateral organizations, which had begun to overshadow Unesco with their less-politicized approaches to educational multilateralism.

A second paradigm for educational multilateralism emerged out of the UN’s service-oriented programs, UNDP and Unicef. Because such organizations do not have representative general assemblies and rely primarily on the voluntary contributions of Northern donor countries, they experienced Third World calls for a NIEO less intensely. Their approach to these demands was to focus on meeting “basic human needs,” arguing that earlier forms of development assistance, focused on emergency relief and modernization, had neglected the poor. Service-oriented programs consequently advocated channeling assistance instead to basic social services—education, health, and nutrition.

The basic-needs approach described in table 2 gained the support of the more social-democratic OECD countries, which led to a rapid expansion in Unicef’s funding base. It was also an approach with broad popular appeal, leading to successful national fundraising campaigns and the support of emergent international nongovernmental development organizations.

52 Lumsdale; T. Weiss and L. Gordenker, eds., NGOs, the UN and Global Governance (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1996); M. Black, Children First: The Story of Unicef, Past and Present (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
was taken up perhaps most completely in the work of Unicef, which the UN General Assembly designated in 1976 as the lead agency for basic-needs programs. Here educational aid experienced its most profound shift in practical terms. The basic-needs or basic-services approach called for a concentration on basic and nonformal education, targeting the poor and vulnerable, greater attention to community participation in service delivery, and moving away from the top-down, system-level planning approach previously promoted by Unesco.  

55 This shift caused strains in the relationship between Unicef and Unesco, which led to a weakening of their cooperative agreement. H. M. Phillips, Unicef and Education: A Historical Perspective (New York: Unicef, 1987).
gin of basic-needs programming, having been tainted by growing skepticism within donor countries about formal schooling's contributions to the alleviation of poverty.\footnote{54} As a result, the more easily implemented and highly visible strategies in health, nutrition, and sanitation (e.g., programs of immunization and oral rehydration) experienced a rapid increase in Unicef funding during the 1970s. Funding for education, which stood at 27 percent of overall Unicef programming in 1972, declined to 13 percent of expenditures in 1979.\footnote{55}

The World Bank also responded to the challenges of the 1970s with an alternative approach to development, which it termed "redistribution with growth." Less radical than either the NIEO or the basic-needs alternatives, this strategy reflected the Bank's relative insulation from developing-country demands and the stability of its resource base.\footnote{56} Nonetheless, because the World Bank's legitimacy and funding depend on serving the broader goal of Third World development, it was forced to respond to the challenges to traditional models of economic development contained in NIEO demands. Its redistribution-with-growth approach helped to expand its legitimacy and increase subscriptions to the International Development Association (IDA), the World Bank's concessional finance facility, at a time when its traditional focus on infrastructure had begun to be discredited and expanding commercial financing for development threatened its predominance.\footnote{57}

Redistribution with growth emphasized investment in the productive capacities of the poor, especially via rural development projects. It did not include the transfer of income, consumption, or assets to the poor; it paid little attention to the structure of production or the government's economic role; and it ignored redistribution at an international level.\footnote{58} As such, it fit neatly the liberal model's conception of development as economic growth and

\footnote{54} The annual report of the OECD DAC in 1972 ([n. 41 above], p. 133) thus notes: "By the beginning of the 1970s, however, it had become clear to many in both the developing and developed countries that formal education in the developing countries had reached an impasse, financially, economically and socially, and that the repair of the existing machine was not enough." See also the proceedings of the Ford and Rockefeller Funded Bellagio Conferences 1972 collected in F. Ward, ed., Education and Development Reconsidered: The Bellagio Conference Papers (New York: Praeger, 1974).

\footnote{55} Phillips; Black. Unicef's education sector activities have stood below 10 percent of program expenditures for most of the 1990s, despite attempts by then newly appointed head of Unicef, Jim Grant, in the early 1980s to get basic education back on the Unicef and wider multilateral agenda.

\footnote{56} The bank uses the subscribed capital of its members to raise commercially competitive loan funds on international capital markets. Funding for the more concessional loans offered through IDA rely on replenishments by core donors. Decision making within the bank is weighted according to the size of member subscriptions, giving clear advantage to advanced capitalist countries.


integration in a world economy that had been inscribed in the organization’s articles of agreement.\textsuperscript{59}

Initially, education showed signs of being an important element within the Bank’s new redistributive strategy. As early as 1968, the Bank’s new president, Robert McNamara, began to press for the expansion of educational lending, which he linked both to individual productivity and to social stability.\textsuperscript{60} Phillip Coombs was hired to undertake an analysis of the relationship between education and rural poverty, which resulted in the broadening of the Bank’s education sector work. A 1974 sector paper announced a new Bank interest in primary and nonformal education.\textsuperscript{61}

Yet despite initial signs of enthusiasm, education remained peripheral to the bank’s poverty programs, which in turn amounted to less than 15 percent of World Bank expenditure in the 1970s.\textsuperscript{62} Education spending continued to be concentrated at the secondary and tertiary levels. And while the Bank rapidly developed in-house expertise in education, this suggested more a continuation of Unesco’s earlier emphasis on educational planning and finance, albeit with a greater emphasis on education and economic productivity, than a clear departure. Nonetheless, through its superior access to information and research, the frequent use of cofinancing, and the sheer volume of its loans, the Bank was on its way to becoming the most powerful multilateral organization engaged in the external support of mass education. Bank loans for education rapidly expanded between 1968 and the late 1970s, through both IDA and its traditional lending mechanisms. By the end of the decade the World Bank had become the largest single provider of finance for educational development (see table 3).

In many ways, the scope and implementation of the new focus on poverty in educational multilateralism during the 1970s suggests a continuation of the contradictions that had surfaced in the educational work of Unesco during the 1960s. In all three multilateral organizations described here and among most bilateral donors, resources still flowed predominantly toward

\textsuperscript{59} World Bank, from their website, (www.worldbank.org) (World Bank, Washington, D.C., 1996). Gibbon comments, “pro-poor policies in these years were firmly within—and constituted a logical extension of—the prevailing development model. Poverty in rural areas was identified with so-called ‘subsistence’ agriculture, low levels of productivity, and ‘backward’ technologies. Mitigating it therefore involved a crash program of modernization, the main effects of which would be to raise productivity, as well as the marketed surplus and thereby incomes” (pp. 194–95).

\textsuperscript{60} Finnemore, National Interests in International Society, p. 108.


secondary and tertiary education and to the technical and scientific fields associated with modernization. Ironically, it was in the World Bank and the more service-oriented UN specialized agencies—both removed to some degree from NIEO demands through their resource base and mandates—that the new consensus about redistributive multilateralism focused on poverty was most successfully translated into new programs and resources for educational development. Here the new poverty programs and their educational cousins offered solutions that were targeted rather than universal, focusing on practical, short-term interventions.

The new poverty agenda thus embodied the emergence of an international consensus that incorporated the humanitarian and social democratic impulses of a large group of core countries while it set significant limits on the South's demands for a new world order. These limits were underscored by the erosion of U.S. funding for development assistance and the rise of World Bank loans as the largest single source of development finance in the later 1970s. In this context, the poverty-alleviation approaches to international development and education that emerged in the 1970s could be considered an attempt to construct "an international welfare program to be carried out as far as possible by the poor themselves." 64

In drawing this conclusion, however, we should not forget that limited, yet substantial, changes did occur in the practices of multilateral organizations during this period. These included new attention to the poor as agents in their own development and a recognition of diverse, locally based approaches to development. They also included growing support for multilateral—

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63 Wood, p. 234.
64 Cox, "Ideologies and the New International Economic Order" (n. 47 above), pp. 271, 279.
eral forms of development assistance and increasing bilateral aid, due in large part to the expansion of this support among the smaller advanced capitalist countries, as well as a growing number of nongovernmental channels for development assistance (see table 1). The demands of Third World countries and the uncertainties about development in the West did contribute to the rise of alternative frames for thinking about and engaging in educational development. We are only beginning to understand the part these alternatives played in embedding new notions of entitlement in local identities, in ways that have come to feed the rise of national and transnational demands and collective action today.65

After 1980: Toward a Neoliberal World Order?

The years between the mid-1970s and the early 1990s were marked by fundamental change in both domestic and international orders. A period of major economic restructuring—often now referred to as “globalization”—saw the displacement of a Fordist pattern of production and accumulation in the West by new service- and technology-based industries. Globalization also could be seen in a series of shifts in the world economy, including an escalation of international financial capital flows, the rise of new economies in the South and East, and the emergence of increasingly transnational patterns of production controlled by multinational corporations. Many Third World countries suffered from declining raw material prices and mounting international debt. Their economic marginalization, combined with the growing differences between the industrializing and marginalized among them, weakened the Third World coalition and its ability to pursue NIEO demands. At the same time, many OECD countries abandoned Keynesian economic policies and replaced them with monetarist and neoliberal approaches aimed at adjusting national economies to the globalizing world economy. These policies and the rise of neoconservative political regimes steadily eroded the welfare and social security provisions underlying the societal compromises of the postwar era66 and contributed to widening gaps between rich and poor.67


66 A vast literature exists on these changes. On the shift from Fordist patterns of accumulation to what is often called “post-Fordism,” see D. Harvey, The Condition of Postmodernity (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990); A. Lipeitz, Mirages and Miracles: The Crisis of Global Fordism (London: Verso, 1987); and A. Amin, ed. (n. 2 above). For an excellent overview, see Stubbs and Underhill, eds. (no. 42 above).

Changes in international political economy had major repercussions for postwar multilateral organizations. Central decision making about the world economy became more firmly entrenched during the 1970s in institutions that excluded both developing countries and popular nonstate actors—the Group of Seven, the OECD, and the IMF. Within these predominantly Northern institutions a new vision of world order was born and steadily spread among OECD countries, one that argued for limited state intervention and saw an unencumbered global market as the most efficient arbiter of resources and guarantor of growth. This ideology was further strengthened by the collapse of the Soviet Union, which marked both the end of viable alternatives to Western, capitalist development and the erosion of a central argument for development assistance spending. The decline of the postwar era's limited redistributive multilateralism intensified after 1989, while new defensive and disciplinary forms of multilateralism took center stage among OECD countries. These broader shifts in international political economy and multilateralism precipitated major changes in international educational cooperation.

The Erosion of Northern Support for Redistributive Forms of Educational Multilateralism

One of the most important changes in international political economy affecting educational multilateralism during the 1980s was the gradual decline of Northern support for all kinds of "redistributive multilateralism." This can be seen most starkly in the decline of development-assistance funding from the United States and the United Kingdom—the earliest neoliberal reformers—and their contentious approach to the UN during the 1980s. It also can be observed in the overall stagnation of development assistance in real terms from many OECD countries during the 1980s and the decline of aid after 1990. Educational assistance has been disproportionately

68 The "Group of Seven" (G7) first met in 1975 and was intended as an economic issues forum for the leading industrial democracies, including France, the United States, Britain, Germany, Japan, and Italy. Canada was admitted to the group in 1977, and Russia now joins the G7 as the "Political 8" (P8) after each G7 summit.


71 Cox, "Multilateralism and World Order" (n. 10 above); Ruggie (n. 8 above).

72 Murphy and Augelli (n. 16 above); Lee (n. 32 above).

73 Official aid from the OECD countries hovered at about .35 percent GNP during the 1980s and declined even further in the 1990s to .27 percent of GNP. Funding for the United Nations development programs has also decreased since 1990 (voluntary contribution to UNDP alone dropped 45 percent between 1982 and 1986), and the United States remains in substantial arrears. See Lumsdaine (n. 19 above); OECD, Annual Report of the Development Assistance Committee (Paris: OECD, 1996); Griffin (n. 70 above). The acuteness of the decline in aid funds is especially marked if the increasing proportion of
affected by these declines, excepting that assistance provided by the World Bank, whose rapid expansion of lending for education is described below. Bilateral educational aid fell from 15.6 percent of OECD development assistance in 1980–84, to 11.1 percent in 1985–89, and finally to below 10 percent after 1990. Multilateral support for education also stagnated during the 1980s, though the percentage of multilateral resources spent on education has increased in the 1990s.

One illustration of the pressures contributing to the erosion of redistributive multilateralism in education is the decline of funding and support during the 1980s for Unesco, which at the beginning of the decade already had faced almost 10 years of disagreement between Third World and Western members over its primary purposes and roles. Unesco’s predominantly Third World membership continued to make demands based on arguments related to the NIEO—most notably through calls for a New World Information and Communications Order. These views were fundamentally at odds with the increasingly neoconservative agenda of the organization’s major donor, the United States. They also came at a time when the Third World’s cohesion and power within the UN had itself begun to fragment. The U.S. decision to withdraw from Unesco in 1984, followed by Britain and Singapore in 1985, marked a further decline of the only mechanism for postwar educational cooperation founded on universal membership and the equal participation of nation-state members in decision making. It also signaled the beginning of a decade of U.S.-led attempts to reform the United Nations around more narrow, technical tasks.

In practical terms, the withdrawal reduced Unesco’s already small budget by about a quarter, which deepened the already wide gap between Unesco’s large mandate and modest resources when combined with cuts in UNDP funding for Unesco education work in the 1980s. For the rest of the

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76 Marchand (n. 42 above), p. 294.

77 Britain's new Labour government recently announced that it had rejoined Unesco.

78 Lee.
decade, Unesco’s work in education remained highly diffuse, spanning the practical attention to planning and information gathering set out in the 1960s and the wider, more speculative and philosophical work on education and culture established in the 1970s. By the 1990s, all traces of the radical demands from the 1970s had been removed from Unesco’s policies, as the organization began to give its wide-ranging work in education the greater focus and functionality being demanded of UN organizations by its Northern members. This is most clearly reflected in three recent moves: its sponsorship of the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA), the expansion of its work on literacy to include research on illiteracy in the North, and the creation of a new flagship publication, the World Education Report. Yet despite these efforts, Unesco’s funding base remains limited. The United States has declined to rejoin the organization, and Unesco, alongside other UN specialized agencies, faces new challenges from the increasing intensity of U.S. demands to rationalize and downsize the United Nations.

The Rise of Defensive and Disciplinary Forms of Educational Multilateralism

As advanced capitalist countries slowed their support for the redistributive forms of multilateralism embodied in UN institutions during the 1980s, they also began to heighten their involvement in other forms that shut out developing countries. Examples of this include the OECD, which increasingly became a forum for Northern countries to discuss the expansion of regional economic multilateralism to help a bloc of advanced capitalist countries adjust to a new world economy (e.g., NAFTA and the EU). These forms of multilateralism can be described as “defensive,” insofar as they equipped advanced capitalist countries with educational defenses suitable for heightened competition in the context of economic globalization. They are “disciplinary” in that they helped diffuse neoliberal approaches to public policies developed in the United States and Britain, placing particular emphasis on the use of cross-national comparison to show the relative efficiencies of downsizing the state and reorganizing the public institutions in which the rights and entitlements of the social welfare compromise were forged.79

Relatively little has been written about the educational activities of these multilateral organizations and arrangements, and more needs to be learned about how they are changing the overall shape of international relations in education. Some of these new multilateral agreements, such as NAFTA, contain no notions of common welfare and social security, while others, including the EU, only recently have begun to incorporate common agreements

79 See Gill (n. 69 above); and Colclough and Manor (n. 48 above) on the rise of neoliberal ideas and the role international organizations have played in their spread. Cox, “Multilateralism and World Order,” describes new regional and defensive forms of multilateralism.
and norms in respect to social welfare and social security. The EU’s approach to educational cooperation has remained significantly more limited, focusing primarily on intellectual exchange and transferability of diplomas and degrees rather than redistribution or equality of opportunity.80

Among these new types of multilateralism, the OECD provides perhaps the clearest example of a shift toward defensive and disciplinary forms. The OECD has displaced Unesco as the central forum for educational policy coordination among advanced capitalist countries and is now the main multilateral provider of cross-national educational statistics and research in the North.81 The OECD’s central focus in education for almost 2 decades has been how to adjust education to changing economic requirements in the context of stagnating budgets.82 In recent years its work has been profoundly shaped by the U.S. emphasis on privatization, choice, standards, and cross-national testing—issues that reflect a much broader reordering of domestic politics in that country.83

"Education for All" and the Neoliberal Reorganization of Educational Aid

The rise of neoliberalism within the advanced capitalist world had a somewhat paradoxical impact on educational aid. As we have seen, it contributed to a decrease in overall donor funding for international development assistance and especially to the destabilization of the UN development activities so key to redistributive forms of educational multilateralism. Yet it also contributed to the creation of stronger, more centralized mechanisms for setting and implementing international educational policies, especially through the World Bank. It is primarily under World Bank auspices that the broad multilateral support for basic education inherited from the 1970s was reformulated during the 1980s to fit the global neoliberal ideology and structure of the late twentieth-century world order.

During the 1980s, the focus on poverty alleviation to which education had become attached in the World Bank was displaced by macroeconomic reform and adjustment. The overarching goals of these programs were to free up prices and markets, increase the economy’s export orientation, re-

81 The OECD held its first ministerial-level conference on education in 1978, and these have been continued at 6-year intervals.
82 See also J. P. Hautecoeur, “A Political Review of International Literacy Meetings in Industrialized Countries,” International Review of Education 43, no. 2/3 (1997): 135–58, on the way in which industrialized countries have reframed literacy around a “defensive” agenda.
83 Papadopoulos (n. 36 above); M. Carnoy, “Structural Adjustment and the Changing Face of Education,” International Labour Review 134, no. 6 (1995): 653–73. This is necessarily an oversimplified account of OECD work in education. A more complete study of OECD work in education would, I believe, show it to be the locus of much cross-national debate and contestation, not least between ministers of education and ministers of finance, between Anglo-American and European approaches to adjustment, and among these and domestic educational interests, such as teachers unions.
duce the size of government, and liberalize trade—each considered essential for creating the conditions for future economic growth and competitive advantage in an integrating world economy. For a variety of reasons, however, these strategies failed to raise economic growth rates and often hurt the poorest populations. At the same time, the emphasis on limiting public spending and imposing user fees for public services tended to further undermine the already shrinking public-sector budgets of indebted countries, with negative impacts on education.84 But they did insulate international finance from the mounting Third World debt crisis and contributed to a heightened role for the bank and the IMF as “managers of the global economy.”85

At least initially, structural-adjustment programs also inhibited bank lending in education and other social sectors.86 Yet by the second half of the 1980s, the bank had begun to address these areas again under pressure from the United Nations, like-minded countries, and nongovernmental organizations.87 Unicef (and later the UNDP) played a particularly important role here, rapidly developing capacities for research and advocacy and using these to publicize the social costs of adjustment and push the bank toward a return to the basic-needs approaches of the 1970s.88 Unicef also took the


85 Wood (n. 30 above), pp. 320–22; T. Biersteker, “The Triumph of Neoclassical Economics in the Developing World: Policy Convergence and Basis of Governance in the International Economic Order,” in Rosenau and Czempiel, eds. (n. 2 above), pp. 102–31; S. George and F. Sabelli, Faith and Credit: The World Bank’s Secular Empire (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1994). Structural adjustment programs assumed (wrongly, as it turned out), that the world economy would continue to expand in the 1980s and that Western countries would not impose protectionist barriers to Third World trade. In the absence of these preconditions, the harsh conditionalities of adjustment loans actually had negative effects. In many cases World Bank and IMF loans were not even offsetting debt service on past loans, so that many countries in the 1980s and early 1990s were experiencing a negative transfer of resources back to the Bretton Woods institutions. See Wood, p. 239; and G. K. Helleiner, “The IMF, the World Bank and Africa’s Adjustment and External Debt Problems: An Unofficial View,” World Development 20, no. 6 (1992): 788.

86 This point deserves some clarification. — Sanford (n. 62 above) points out, spending in social sectors during the 1980s did not decline dramatically, but neither did they grow at the rate suggested by the bank’s commitment to poverty alleviation in the late 1970s. See, e.g., World Bank, World Development Report (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1980). There is also considerable evidence that bank research staff committed to poverty alleviation, the most famous being Mahbub ul Haq, were squeezed out. See Gibbon (n. 57 above); and Wood.

87 Like-minded countries include the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, and sometimes Canada, a group that historically has promoted greater attention to humanitarian and poverty issues in international relations. The influence of these countries is greatest on the Bank’s IDA facility, which relies on donor governments for regular replenishment.

lead in promoting greater attention to basic education during the 1980s, initiating the idea of a WCEFA that gained the sponsorship of both Unesco and the World Bank.\textsuperscript{89}

World Bank education-sector staff were, in turn, exceptionally well-prepared to take advantage of these pressures and advance their own cause within the organization and among the wider development community.\textsuperscript{90} By the late 1980s they had both a convincing rationale for expanding educational lending—supported by a decade of research showing strong links between basic education and agricultural productivity, wages, health, and child welfare—and a coherent framework for financing improvements in educational quality and efficiency in line with the Bank’s neoliberal approach to public-sector reform.\textsuperscript{91} Nonetheless, it is unlikely that the rapid expansion of the Bank’s work in education (especially basic education) after 1989 would have occurred were it not for the profound challenges to the Bank’s own role that surfaced through the rise of commercial finance for development in the early 1990s along with the concurrent deterioration of donor support for IDA. Lending in basic education and other social sectors provided the same kind of legitimation and role enhancement in the 1990s that the Bank had gained through its “redistribution-with-growth” strategies in the 1970s.

How far has the Bank’s new approach gone toward embedding educational multilateralism in the neoliberal hegemony of the late twentieth-century world order? The Bank’s recent educational prescriptions, in line with its renewed interest in poverty alleviation, echo the marriage of populist and modernization arguments forged in 1970 World Bank discourse: education enhances individual productivity and overall economic growth, and it ensures political stability through greater equality. At the same time, these new strategies are remarkably close to the defensive and disciplinary approaches to educational reform being debated among advanced capitalist

\textsuperscript{89} See C. Chabbott, “Constructing Educational Development: International Development Organizations and the World Conference on Education for All” (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University School of Education, 1996); World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA), “Meeting Basic Learning Needs: A New Vision for the 1990’s” (background document for the World Conference on Education For All, Thailand, March 5–9, 1990); Black (n. 52 above). On the origins of the WCEFA, see also the reflections on it found in interviews with Aklilu Habte and Manzoor Ahmed in Unicef, \textit{Unicef Education News} (New York: Unicef, February 1997). Jim Grant, head of Unicef, initiated the idea of a world conference, which he modeled on the highly successful Alma Alta conference on health in the 1970s. As Chabbott, Black (pp. 227–40), and the interview with Habte in Unicef make clear, Grant imagined that educational change could be elegantly packaged in a series of deliverable, depoliticized, technological solutions, much the way that immunization and oral rehydration had become the hallmarks of multilateral success in health in the 1970s.

\textsuperscript{90} Jones, \textit{World Bank Financing of Education}.

countries.92 They emphasize the more efficient use of inputs (teachers, texts, and tests), the introduction of privatization and choice to increase efficiency, greater reliance on cost recovery through parent and community participation, and a shift of resources from higher to primary education.93 Perhaps even more important, the Bank’s educational prescriptions have been implemented through new, disciplinary modalities of educational multilateralism: programs of sector-wide educational financing and adjustment and the strategic use of policy- and conditionality-based lending. In a sense, this shift completes the historical displacement of grant-based forms of development cooperation delivered through multilateral organizations democratically accountable to sovereign member nations. It also raises the Bank from a role as the largest single financier of international educational development to being its most powerful ideologue and regulator.

Yet World Bank efforts to lead the “education for all” movement have remained fraught with contradictions, both at the level of ideology and of practice. Some of these are amplifications of earlier contradictions in educational multilateralism—the Bank continues to emphasize economic outcomes of education rather than its intrinsic value and utilizes a top-down, expert-led, depoliticized model of change clearly at odds with the realities of implementing educational reform.94 There also has been considerable debate and resistance to its educational agenda, reflected in the unease and conflicting goals that have characterized relationships among the WCEFA partners (the World Bank, Unesco, and Unicef), who cling to the development alternatives of the 1970s.95 Few UN organizations or their academic

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95 See The Habib and Ahmed interviews in Unicef. The different perspectives on educational development held by these organizations is significant but should not be overstated. Samoff, e.g., found a remarkable homogeneity among donor assessments of education in Africa. J. Samoff, Analyses, Agendas and Priorities in African Education: A Review of Externally Initiated, Commissioned and Supported Studies of Edu-
and nongovernmental supporters miss the irony of the Bank's efforts to marry neoliberal policy-based lending to its bid for greater legitimacy as the mediator of "global welfare" and as an "advocate of the poor." 96

Perhaps the most important rupture in the Bank's neoliberal framing of education for all can be found in its failure to rally wider financial support and donor cooperation for its basic education agenda. This time, the failure to raise finance for educational multilateralism reflects not simply a preference among donors for bilateral forms of development assistance over multilateral forms but a broader disengagement of advanced capitalist countries from notions of international development and redistributive multilateralism—a disengagement ironically fueled by the neoliberal vision of world order that the Bank has helped foster. Perhaps not surprisingly, the Bank appears to be hedging its own bets in response to the broader crisis of redistributive educational multilateralism. It is intensifying efforts to build "partnerships" with international and domestic nongovernmental organizations and yet seems to see its own future in enhancing and selling its policy expertise to governments. 97

Revisioning Educational Multilateralism in a Changing World Order

In examining the embedding of education within the broader fabric of post-1945 multilateralism and world order, three major periods emerged: (1) an initial period of institutionalization between 1945 and 1965, which saw the rise of a limited redistributive form of educational multilateralism; (2) a period of contestation beginning in the late 1960s and ending in the late 1970s, during which Third World demands combined with continued support for a social welfare model of development and uncertainty about the world economy to open the way for alternative approaches to international development; and (3) an ongoing period of major transition in the world order starting in the late 1970s, during which neoliberal, defensive, and disciplinary forms of educational cooperation emerged as the broader project of redistributive educational multilateralism steadily eroded. I have attempted to show how, in each of these periods, the forms that educa-


97 Nelson; World Bank, Priorities and Strategies for Education, pp. 153–54; S. Heyneman, "Economic Growth and the International Trade in Educational Reform," International Journal of Education Development (in press); Moore (n. 48 above). These same strategies are being attempted in other UN organizations—both Unicef and Unesco have announced that they will in the future focus more on policy, planning, and advice giving and less on direct support for projects. Both are seeking to enhance "partnerships."
tional multilateralism took were related to broader political and economic contexts.

In conclusion, it is appropriate to consider briefly the future of educational multilateralism and the stance comparatists might take in this regard. I argue that educational multilateralism drew upon the "embedded liberalism" of the postwar order, and both its ideological and material origins can be traced to the institutionalization of a purposive approach to multilateralism that envisaged the promotion of a Keynesian welfare-state societal compromise within advanced capitalist countries. This was accomplished through the expansion and consensual regulation of international economic and political relations. Though vestiges of this order remain in place, it is clear that the postwar order's domestic and international compromises have been displaced by economic globalization and the emergence of neoliberalism as the guiding paradigm for public policy.

One response in comparative education has been self-congratulatory. In the emerging landscape of educational multilateralism, scholars such as Stephen Heyneman speak confidently of a secure market for the "trade" of ideas about educational reform and a growing demand for educational experts in the newly opened market economies of the former Soviet bloc. Yet the neoliberal, laissez-faire worldview so closely associated with this stance flies in the face of the mounting insecurities and evidence of (dis)order around us. It disregards important lessons about the balance between market and society that critical theorists, as well as scholars like Karl Polanyi, drew so clearly from the struggle against commodification that led to the rise of the welfare state and that subsequent scholars have linked to the rise of limited forms of redistributive multilateralism after 1945. Perhaps most important, it ignores the calls for new institutions of global governance that have become predominant among transnational actors—evident in the environmental movement; in nongovernmental campaigns to extend global social rights and entitlements and to increase the accountability of organizations like the IMF, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization; and in the recent election of social democratic governments within the EU.

98 Heyneman.
99 This characterization of the current state of international affairs as "insecure" and "disorderly" is common across neorealist, Marxist, and interpretivist international relations theories. For an eloquent account, see J. Rosenau, *Along the Domestic-Foreign Frontier* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
Another response would take the history of societal compromise during this century seriously. It would study and support transnational movements capable of winning a new, more global form of societal compromise, and it would ask, alongside scholars like Cox, what role multilateralism might play in building the social foundation for the emerging world order. "Multilateralism, if it is to seize the opportunity opened by these developments, will be dualistic—one part of it being involved in the present predicaments of the state system, another part probing the social and political foundation of a new order. . . . The segments of multilateralism that take on the task of envisaging a world order in this perspective will also foster linkage among supportive social forces . . . and thereby help to build a political base for a globally coherent alternative." 102 Creating the social and political foundations—the societal compromise—of a more just world order in an era of globalization will surely involve the construction of more humane, democratic and effective mechanisms of global governance, particularly around issues such as education, which are tightly bound into international notions of equality, social security, and opportunity. This article has offered a historical starting point, an exploration of the social foundations and contradictions of formal multilateralism in education since 1945.