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RESEARCHING THE GLOBAL EDUCATION INDUSTRY

COMMODIFICATION, THE MARKET AND BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT

Researching the Global Education Industry

Marcelo Parreira do Amaral
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Christiane Thompson
Editors

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Contents

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List of Figures

List of Tables

1

Introduction: Researching the Global Education Industry

Christiane Thompson and Marcelo Parreira do Amaral

In September 2017, the third Global Education Industry (GEI) Summit[1] took place in Luxembourg to discuss opportunities for better networking between industry and schools. The latter were seen as "learning ecosystems" that are "at the crossroads of innovation," which although often still seen as "bulwarks of outdated practices" may become innovative if well supported. It was organized jointly by the Luxembourg Ministry of Education, Children and Youth, the European Commission (EC), and the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD). Its aim was to give a selected number of ministers, senior policy makers, and industry leaders opportunities to accelerate change, making industry

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actors consolidated partners in education. In his opening speech, Andreas Schleicher, head of the DG Education at OECD, presented the future aims and tasks as follows:

> To turn digital exhaust into digital fuel, to change education practice; that requires us to get out of the 'read-only' mode of our education systems, in which information is presented in a way that cannot be altered. […] What if we could get our teachers working on curated crowdsourcing of educational practice? Wouldn't that be so much more powerful than things like performance-related pay as an approach to professional growth and development? Technology could create a giant open source community of educators and unlock the creative skills and initiative of its teachers. Simply by tapping into the desire of people to contribute, to collaborate and to be recognized for that. (2017, 5:24)

Schleicher's introductory speech already depicts a central motif of the GEI Summit: an extensive rhetoric of innovation and modernization that calls for a radical break with the educational system as it has been run so far. The past of education is presented as a divided, isolated, hierarchical practice that has been essentially a technology- and innovation-hostile island—an island largely severed from the real world and incapable of being innovative. The future of education is painted in bright colors, modeled as an ecosystem of collaborative consumption; creative, entrepreneurial, and innovative, education is portrayed as a future that can only be achieved through transparent collaboration, powered by powerful digital reputational metrics.

The reader may note how the rhetoric of innovation is embellished as a practice of empowerment and liberation. Schleicher mobilizes the image of a "giant open source community of educators" that is completely freed from the bureaucratic regulations that have dominated the past of education: in his view, the cartel-like business model of governments, academia, textbook publishers, and software providers have limited and fragmented education into a "read-only" system. The digital technologies are interpreted as the source for a complete reorganization of the education sector—a "creative destruction" to put it in terms of the famous political economist Joseph Schumpeter (1993). Therefore, it

comes as no surprise that educational innovation, for Schleicher, is thrust forward by extensive entrepreneurialism.

To be sure, this is one of the central ideas behind the GEI Summit: the gathering of policy actors in education and representatives from the industry: "The time is ripe to establish a dialogue between ministers of education and the global education industry," as it was pointed out in the introductory announcement to the first OECD Summit 2015 in Finland.[2] The Summit's aim was and is to establish a platform that allows businesses and generally actors from the economic sector to further their economic interests and penetrate the educational sector accordingly. Thus, the GEI Summits may be taken as a paradigmatic illustration for the current developments of the GEI: the capitalization of the educational sector on a global scale.

This book examines the emergence of new providers and policy actors in education and, more specifically, reflects on how the fast advance of the GEI is likely to transform conceptualizations of ("good") education. Drawing systematic attention to the rationales, processes, and impacts of current developments of the GEI, the book discerns particular expressions and manifestations of the GEI phenomenon. The contributions to this book investigate not only the influence of private and philanthropic actors on education as well as educational policy-making but also the changing role of the state within the GEI. Further, the book explores the role that digital technology and data infrastructures play in the rise and expansion of the GEI, for example, by aligning the allocation of research funding to economic imperatives. Last but not least, the book examines the rationales as well as the rhetoric of the GEI, that is, how the reorganization of education is strategically legitimized.

Following the threads of the GEI requires educational policy research to transgress the usual country-based design. The chapters of this volume build on a global perspective in order to grasp and theorize these complex developments. The reconstruction and conceptualization of agency in complex networks is of utmost importance to understand the roles of philanthropists, international organizations, and other mediating figures in the GEI. As Stephen Ball explains in his chapter, researching the GEI means to follow and analyze the flow of relations, ideas, and money. It is

central to understand how local edu-preneurs draw on global references and are able to use them to their own advantage. Generally, we are faced with complex and heterogeneous relations in the expansion of the GEI. This has immense consequences for disclosing the operation of transnational organizations, philanthropic foundations with a global reach, states, and so on. However, being entrenched with new edu-economic imaginaries, educational policy studies will have to re-evaluate whether its own central concepts still enable it to grasp the current developments in appropriate ways.

In the remainder of this introduction, we address some of the concepts that are used to apprehend phenomena related to the GEI in order to show how they need to be resituated in terms of the GEI. Starting from the state of the art concerning the GEI, we will turn toward central categories such as commodification and financialization, placing them in the ongoing discourse of the GEI. The conceptual framework provided here will also demonstrate how the studies presented in the chapters are of utmost importance for educational researchers, policy makers, and graduate students in a range of academic disciplines who are trying to gain a better understanding of these developments. In the final section of the introduction, we present a short overview over the chapters included in the book.

The Global Education Industry

In the first section, we have already touched upon the central imaginary of the GEI, that is, the establishment of an "ecosystem" or policy infrastructure that is oriented toward business opportunities concerning educational goods and services on a global scale. In fact, the recurring Summits illustrate a number of aspects that are central to our researching the GEI. First, the Summits draw our attention to the *size* and *global influence* of the institutions and actors that arrange the Summit and take part in them. Researching the GEI precisely focuses on the increasing impact that comes from these platforms, coalitions, and connections of very different actors toward a global market sphere of education. Second, they also indicate that the emergence of the GEI is strongly related to the

delegitimization of how (public) education has been organized so far, which raises key questions as to the social aspects of education as a public good. We mentioned Schleicher's criticism of the educational system remaining in a "read-only" mode. The GEI is about constructing and fostering educational imaginaries of innovation and modernization that call for the substitution or disruption of education systems as we know them. Third, the Summits allow us to discern how *policy-making* lies at the heart of establishing the GEI. In other words, they structure, facilitate, and optimize business opportunities, for example, for the IT industry to promote and market information and communications technology (ICT) in schools. As defined by Antoni Verger and colleagues:

> The GEI is an increasingly globalized economic sector in which a broad range of educational services and goods are produced, exchanged and consumed, often on a for-profit basis. The GEI is constituted by its own sets of processes, systems of rules, and social forces, which interact in the production, offer and demand of educational services and goods. (Verger, Lubienski, & Steiner-Khamsi, 2016, p. 4)

Researching the GEI thus entails analyzing these sets of processes, systems of rules, and social forces and structures, as mentioned by Verger et al. However, reconstructing these processes, rules, forces, and structures poses education (policy) research some important analytical challenges. Examining the GEI has to avoid presupposing the global coherence or unity, as we need to discern clearly between the lenses and concepts we use to apprehend these phenomena and the research object. In this context an important issue is the fact that the term "Global Education Industry" has been appropriated by its proponents in order to brand its imaginaries of a worldwide innovation (cf. OECD, 2017; Schleicher, 2017; Tooley, 2001). Related to this, the analytical categories used to grasp the dynamics and impact of the GEI in the education field need to be sharpened, a topic we return to in the next section. In addition, the manifold actors involved in the GEI operate in diverse contexts and networks, and have various relations among themselves and with state agencies. Thus, discerning these differences in type, capacity, and scope as well as in logics of action and practice becomes crucial. Finally, extant research has rightfully stressed

the importance of going beyond economic theory that focuses primarily on rationality and interests to include sociological description and analyses of non-economic and non-material factors as well as of the institutional and social contexts that make, maintain, and transform industry sectors. Against this background, researchers in the field turned to Pierre Bourdieu's concept of field to understand the GEI as a contested and socially structured space (Lingard, Rawolle, & Taylor, 2005; Verger et al., 2016, p. 11).

In summary, in researching the GEI, education policy research has to emphasize its analytic perspective and present studies that can unveil and theorize adequately the complexity, the different manifestations, and the functioning of the GEI. In this sense, research needs to examine the rationales and logics of action of myriad players as well as their modes of operation. Assessing the impact of these developments, as we argue in this volume, will greatly profit from recent social theory literature assessing the current social, cultural, technological, and political transformations in which the ascendance of the GEI is embedded.

In the following paragraphs, we concisely recapitulate the manifold actors in the GEI by referring to the recent literature. The next section discusses central categories of analysis of the GEI.

When contemplating the globalized market of education, *large companies and corporations* come to mind. They have become key actors in the field of education. A very good example of this is Pearson, the world's largest edu-business that is becoming a public policy actor globally (Hogan, Sellar, & Lingard, 2016; Porter, 2014). Alongside these bigger companies, one can find a growing number of *philanthropic foundations*, like The Michael & Susan Dell Foundation (see Ball, in this volume). Even though these foundations are independent from the companies, their programs and ideas are geared toward opening market opportunities for the respective companies (Au & Lubienski, 2016). A third important group within the GEI are *international organizations* like the OECD, the World Bank, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (Ridge & Kippels, in this volume; see also Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). The example of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) studies shows plainly the enormous power and influence the OECD has gained since 2000 in setting educational agendas and market opportunities (Spring, 2015). The *state* is another actor of the GEI

that should not be overlooked. In the context of the GEI, the state takes over important functions, especially as facilitator or moderator of marketization (Au & Lubienski, 2016) as well as provider of funding. However, the state can also be a competitor that partakes in constructing the imaginary of "educational excellence" (see Erfurth, in this volume).

In addition to these actors with global reach, there are numerous actors that (also) take up the function of mediation and facilitation in the GEI. These might be *renowned individuals*, like the already-mentioned Andreas Schleicher or James Tooley, a professor at the University of Newcastle. As Ball has shown in his research, Tooley is an important figure providing ideas regarding how to assemble and coordinate policy networks (Ball, 2012, p. 38). Furthermore, the scaling of policy infrastructures is dependent on *advocacy networks*, that is, more or less organized circles or groups that agree in furthering particular educational ideas and projects (see Lubienski, in this volume). A third group of actors exert their mediating and facilitating role in the GEI by *consultancy and advice*. In the German context, for example, consultancy corporations are increasingly approached for remodeling universities as science businesses (Mautner, 2005; see also Gunter & Mills, 2017).

The reference to the university can be taken as an indication that this list of important actors in the GEI is not yet complete: educational institutions also become actors within the GEI, for they undergo entrepreneurial transformations. Thus, it is not only the growing number of private schools that operate for profit that play a role in the GEI. Rather the emergence of the GEI turns pre-schools, schools, universities, continuing education—not to mention students, parents, teachers, and so on—into entrepreneurial actors. Universities, for example, compete for the best students and best graduation rates to secure their (global) market position, or they open a branch campus abroad. This process of globalization is fueled by the growing sector of digital technology. An illustrative example is the fast-growing business *Udacity*, a company that offers online classes as a means for companies to train their employees (see Amos, in this volume).

Given the multiplicity of actors, the various levels of their engagement, and their global reach, it is crucial to understand the common reference points and aims that enable concerted action within the GEI. In other

words, what are the rationales, semantics, and imaginaries that produce the symbolic order of the GEI? How can we understand the emergence and expansion of the GEI given the diversity of actors and relationships? It is one of the aims of this collection to delineate the corresponding processes, rationales, logics, and modes of operation of the GEI. From there, it will be possible to give a theoretical account of the current developments and clarify what this means for education.

In the following paragraphs, we reflect on the central categories of the GEI. They may arguably be viewed as both its products and its producers. In other words, they help throw into sharper relief the different rationales and logics that underpin the various manifestations of the GEI. We address them in order to bring into view the dynamics and differentiation that the GEI brings to the educational sector.

Central Categories of the GEI

There are numerous concepts that are used to grasp the penetration of economic rationales into the educational sector. *Economization, marketization, privatization, commodification,* and *financialization*—all these concepts highlight different aspects of the neoliberal process: they have to be seen in relation to the complexity of the neoliberal process in its multifaceted and multiscalar quality. In the context of the GEI, they can be helpful to grasp the quantitative and qualitative changes that the educational sector has undergone in the recent past (Mundy, Green, Lingard, & Verger, 2016; Normand, 2016).

In the field of education, the category of *economization* is used to refer to the process of rephrasing or reformulating educational processes in the language of economic transaction. This reformulation of education was an important step to situate education in a market environment. The emergence of new public management in times of the crises of public funding of education was and is an important entry point to anchor economic thinking, norms, and procedures in the provision, management, and evaluation of education (see Hartong, Hermstein, & Höhne, 2018). With the rise of the GEI, we notice the unlimited global reach and power of economic actors to place and sell their products. We also observe that

the *development and enactment of educational policies* can be described as a field of *strategic interaction and trade* (Verger, 2012).

To be sure, the construction of tradable commodities is of utmost importance for the economic penetration of the education sector. *Commodification* precisely means the construction of education as a tradable good to be advertised and exchanged like other products of consumption or use. Education becomes implemented in the exchange of values. It is important here to recognize how this value exchange is permeated by political rationalities (Appadurai, 2012). These rationalities imply—to put it in Foucauldian terms (Foucault, 2000)—governmentalities, that is, forms and ways to constitute subjectivities by provoking specific modes of governing oneself and others. This is how entrepreneurialism is implemented in learning and schooling. Focusing on the GEI, the emphasis has to be directed toward the ways that entrepreneurialism is transformed into a global agenda and reform project (Verger, Fontdevila, & Zancajo, 2016). Furthermore, the establishment of policy infrastructures that increasingly enable the construction of commodities, for example, by data mediation services, cannot be overestimated (Hartong, 2016). Privatization (see below) and commodification have to be seen in close connection, but the later *emphasizes the cultural dimension of transforming the meaning and understanding of education into a tradable or consumable good that can be marketed globally*.

Ever since the beginning of modern political liberalism, the notion of the "(free) market" was linked to the idea (or ideology) of an impersonal and neutral institution that mediates social interests. In classical economic thinking, the market is the sphere where individual efforts can be transformed into individual wealth and social advancement. There is an operative and symbolic coalition within the imagery of the "market" that has become the core of neoliberal market rationality: the "market" is the sphere where social prosperity and individual well-being are realized. To be sure, the role of education in this cannot be overestimated. On the level of the GEI, *marketization* refers to the production of *market readiness* for those educational goods, services, and policies but also people that are deemed indispensable for economic growth, public health, social, and individual well-being on a global scale. At the same time, the

established market relations weaken former structures and infrastructures of education (Lawn, 2013).

Privatization understood as the shift of public money into the private sector and provision of education by private agents that were formerly provided by public agents (Fitz & Beers, 2002, p. 139) has long been a topic that had to be treated in the context of nation states and their respective traditions as well as institutional frameworks (Adamson, Astrand, & Darling-Hammond, 2016; Burch, 2009; Robertson & Verger, 2012; Verger, 2016). Verger, Fontdevila, et al., (2016) have delineated six paths toward education privatization that discern the contextual dispositions, agents, and mechanisms of privatization, for example, "education privatization as a state reform" (as in Chile and UK) or "scaling up privatization" (as with the school reform in the US; see Verger, Fontdevila, et al., 2016, p. 11). In the context of the GEI, one may notice the increase of complexity that comes with the globalization of policy infrastructures as well as the global diffusion of privatization (ibid.) while at the same time recognizing the concentration of power and agenda-setting capacities (e.g. in the World Bank or the OECD).

Increasingly, education has become an object of investment and means of profit making by the interests of education businesses, technology companies, and philanthropic organizations on a global scale (Verger, Fontdevila, et al., 2016). Related to the processes discussed above, the term *financialization* refers to contemporary changes in social formation due to an increasing role financial capital plays in everyday life (van der Zwan, 2014). As Peters and Besley note, "Credit and investment are metaphors that now help determine an individual's (and family's) place in society […] [instigating] a new finance culture that includes fundamental shifts in attitudes to money, investment, credit, [and] risk" (Peters & Besley, 2015, p. 22). This apparent shift in the relationship between society and finance, however, instigates veiled effects expressed in "a deepening culture of risk-taking and strategic deployment of assets" (ibid.). More and more realms of social life depend on the hidden workings of financial services—and education is no exception, although to a lesser extent in some countries "where education remains largely publicly funded and so always politicized" (ibid., p. 35). When viewing education services globally—including not only its provision and management but also research, publishing, testing, and so forth—the last few decades brought about the

emergence of global players in the field. Education has developed into a substantial global business with low market capitalization, resulting in global players' efforts to tap into this business with expectations of high profit margins (cf. Ball, 2012, pp. 116–136; Spring, Frankson, McCallum, & Banks, 2017). The term *financialization* in education, therefore, describes the growing dependence of education provision, management, research, and so on, on finance capital (loans, borrowing, student debt, impact investment, etc.) as well as the financial operations in the stock market with education products and services (brokering, investing, speculating, etc.).

Related to the concepts discussed above, we also refer to the *digitalization* of education to call attention to a key driver of the global market in education. Over the last two decades, we have experienced the establishment of powerful imaginaries and objectives concerning "digital technology and education." To mention just a few: digital learning environments stand for the optimization and individualization of learning. The establishment and accessibility of the Internet have been praised as a space to make knowledge accessible and enable social participation. Furthermore, the use of digital technology is said to provide knowledge management "without frictional loss": along with the growing computing capacities, the storage, analysis, and prognostic evaluation of data promises to be a powerful instrument of educational governance (Sellar & Lingard, 2014). Briefly, the innovation, optimization, and the increasing accessibility of learning and learning processes fuel the digital transformation of the educational sector.

For the expansion of the GEI, the significance of digitalization cannot be overestimated. In the coming years, the e-learning market is expected to reach a market share worth hundreds of billions of US dollars. Furthermore, technological innovations in education, for example, the use of digital devices in classrooms, open up new markets and new customers. In his contribution to this volume, Ball mentions the enormous opportunities that digital technologies can unfold for educational innovation in the Global South. Along with the digital forms of educational provision comes an understanding of learning and of the learning subject that is oriented toward competitiveness and effectiveness. This brings about far-reaching changes of social interaction and communication within educational institutions (for universities cf. Selwyn, 2014).

Another dimension of digitalization that is highly relevant for the GEI is that the collection and management of large data infrastructures offer new modes of educational governance (Fenwick, Mangez, & Ozga, 2014; Lawn, 2013). Data infrastructures have to be seen as an essential complement for managing and monitoring educational institutions (see Hartong, in this volume). Policy researchers have remarked that digitalization has brought about a de-territorialization of governance (Lewis & Lingard, 2015). They also represent a necessary ingredient of new public management because they translate and mediate the measurability of educational processes. Moreover, the analysis and manipulation of data can be used to develop ever more and better educational products and services. As Karin Amos argues in her contribution, there is a disruptive quality in the development of the digital domain. To be sure, the GEI Summits discussed at the beginning of this introduction are precisely geared toward the uprooting of traditional education through digital innovation. The complexity and intransparency of how data is collected, algorithmically evaluated, shared, and used (in ever-growing data networks), therefore, represent an important task for the educational policy and practice research (Williamson, 2016, 2017).

Researching the GEI: An Overview of the Book

Most of the authors in this collection presented their research at a Symposium on the *Emergence of a Global Education Industry* held in February 2017 at the Goethe University Frankfurt in Germany.[3] The contributions to the symposium focused on the various manifestations of the GEI, types, features, and networks, and on the consequences these manifestations have for educational research, policy, and practice. One approach to grasping the manifestations of the GEI is to discuss different actors and networks that influence not only the provision, management, and evaluation of education but also both policy-making and research activities in the education sector. The chapters included in this volume examine how education has become an object of investment and profit through the involvement of philanthropic organizations (e.g. the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, the Gates Foundation), international orga-

nizations (for instance, UNESCO or the European Commission), local policy networks, and education businesses and technology companies operating on a global scale.

The analyses of the GEI provided in this book also include the rationales and activities of the abovementioned agents of the GEI as well as the close collaboration of governmental and non-governmental agents. The chapters further systematically discuss these actors' strategies for exerting influence and producing "evidence" to promote preferred policy ideas, suggesting conceptual tools that can illuminate policy advocacy networks. In this context, the role of global infrastructures such as large digital data systems used in school monitoring are examined with respect to their impact on education governance.

Regarding educational theory, the contributions to this volume examine the impact and consequences of the advance of the GEI for conceptualizing and reflecting about education—for instance, in terms of changes in education provision by large international firms and their impact on the organization of educational institutions and practices. What does the strong intertwinement of policy and research imply for the distribution of funding? How does the popularization of "expert knowledge" constitute and regulate an "evidence-based educational laboratory"? Finally, how do digital innovations exert a disruptive quality on educational institutions? The chapters address these developments and dynamics and offer important conceptual explorations of the challenges related to education policy research, of the narratives and modes of communication in this field, including recognizing their significance for social theory and for our aim of revealing power struggles and self-imposed dependencies.

In his chapter, Stephen J. Ball investigates the topology of education in India with a particular emphasis on small and medium-sized edu-businesses. More precisely, the study focuses on the role of serial entrepreneurs and of angel investors as well as the proliferation of education start-up businesses. Ball reconstructs how reform and profit are interrelated and how a business ecosystem emerges in which educational and social problems are transformed into business opportunities. What is remarkable about this development in the Indian education sector is how it supplements and displaces the state's provision of education.

Clara Fontdevila and Antoni Verger examine the emerging strategies of legitimization that the corporate sector employs for the purpose of shaping educational policy. Based on a comprehensive literature review, the authors present five different strategies that reinforce the privatization of education: lobbying, networking and brokerage, knowledge mobilization, supporting and instrumenting community-based advocacy, and the sponsorship of pilot experiences. The analysis demonstrates the wide range of strategies that corporate actors utilize, even though they are not necessarily concerned with direct education provision. As Fontdevila and Verger show, the corporate actors draw not only on economic capital but also political as well as symbolic capital to influence educational policy.

Christopher Lubienski is concerned with advocacy networks in the context of market-based educational policies. The chapter presents the findings of an empirical study on the networks of intermediaries that process, present, and promote evidence for policy makers in and across several major American metropolitan areas. Overall, the study indicates that intermediary organizations operate at quite a distance to traditional expertise and to measures of evaluating knowledge claims. His chapter points to the shortcomings of a popular approach to studying advocacy coalitions, namely the Advocacy Coalition Network developed by Sabatier and colleagues. Lubienski characterizes education policy networks as "marketplace of ideas" diverging from the usual meaning: ideas do not compete for supremacy, but rather, they are bought and sold among the policy networks.

Natasha Ridge and Susan Kippels' chapter turns toward UNESCO and its relationship with various private sector organizations. Referring to UNESCO's budget crises, the authors recapitulate the organization's opening toward the private sector. The analysis exposes the educational as well as ethical conflicts that arise from UNESCO's partnerships with private actors. Particularly, it captures the change from a multilateral donor organization that is committed to "education for all" to a brand for sale. The private sector involvement may, in some cases, even lead to a participation in activities that go against UNESCO's education mission, thereby putting its reputation at risk.

The role and position of educational research in the current policy agenda of the European Union is the topic of Marcelo Parreira do Amaral's

chapter, which links policy developments at European and national levels as well as in science to the GEI. With a particular focus on the Horizon 2020 research framework program, he investigates the impact of knowledge generation activities in the social sciences and the humanities: it is the so-called European Knowledge-Based Economy that dominates our understanding of as well as the orientation of educational research. Referring to a call for proposals on lifelong learning, Parreira do Amaral illustrates the tensions and limitations within this approach to educational research. Using Germany as an exemplary case, it is shown how the changing knowledge regime has an impact on educational research as well as on the social epistemology of the educational field. He raises concerns about the implications and risks of a completely "embedded" educational research, that is, one where there is no difference or distance to the dominant economic imaginaries.

In his chapter, Bob Lingard addresses aspects of privatization and commercialization of public schooling systems that are seldom noticed or recognized: the role of edu-businesses with respect to the establishment of data infrastructures for the governing of school systems. Here, the establishment of network governance comprising edu-businesses and philanthropic as well as state actors is particularly relevant. The chapter draws on two case studies that investigate the relation of ed-techs to data infrastructures: the Australian National Schools Interoperability Program (NSIP) and the InBloom data infrastructure initiative in the US. The first case discloses the networked governance mode through collaboration between governments and ed-tech companies. The second case follows the attempts to provide a single platform for sharing data about schooling. Finally, Lingard discusses the issues of data privacy raised by the public.

Sigrid Hartong deals with the expanding datafication and digitalization in the sphere of education. More specifically, her chapter reconstructs the complex, cross-sectoral, and cross-scalar relations of the digital expansion in school administration and school monitoring at state level in the US as well as in Germany. As Hartong shows, for both countries, there is a coincidence of transforming the state-level monitoring system and the rise of supra-state (federal) standardization. Since the 2000s, this serves as the basis for actor networks between ed-tech vendors, state

actors, philanthropic figures, and intermediary figures, such as the *National Center for Education Statistics* in the US. In comparison, the German reforms in the past two decades appear less commodity oriented than those in the US. On this point, the changes of education through digital transformation as well as the power of ed-tech are hardly called into question.

The chapter by Marvin Erfurth examines the role of International Education Hubs (IEH) in terms of the establishment of an interconnected global education policy space. The IEH, created in order to attain a competitive advantage in the global economy, brings together global players in the provision of education, training, research, as well as education policy. As the author shows, the IEHs are of particular interest for understanding the roles of the state as power connector. Drawing on the theoretical approaches of Cultural Political Economy, Erfurth analyzes the educational and social imaginaries in the United Arab Emirates' Vision 2021 and how this creates a semiotic-discursive space of a uniting effort to prevail in the global knowledge-based economy.

In her chapter on the globalized expert, Christiane Thompson examines the popularization and proliferation of evidence-based education as a global project of innovation. As the discursive analysis of a TED talk by Andreas Schleicher shows, everyone is addressed to take up the position of global expertise. The chapter demonstrates the significance of the globalized expert in Pearson's data platform "The Learning Curve" as well as in its online learning platform "Revel." Particular focus is placed on authorization, that is, practices and strategies that are used to present evidence-based knowledge as legitimate or reasonable. By inviting everyone to participate as a globalized expert, Pearson can present itself as a quasi-public actor that works for educational innovation while at the same time strengthening its market position.

The topic of the chapter by Karin Amos is the role of digitization and algorithmization in the rise of the GEI. Amos provides a succinct analysis of how successful start-ups in higher education transform education from a modern to a late-modern institution in a disruptive fashion. Using the case of an e-advising system at the University of Arizona, Amos shows how the implementation of digital instruments follows the idea of personalized medicine: to bring out the best in every individual. The devel-

opment of personalization and singularization (Reckwitz) is characterized by the paradoxical surrendering of autonomy to gain autonomy and by the elimination of the public aspect of education.

The chapter by Stephen Carney unfolds around a critique of education policy research that strongly favors the superordinate view of method and research. According to Carney, what is often missed in education policy studies is the global complexity of the GEI and the incommensurability of perspectives for the subaltern. Referring to the story of Ganesh, an exploited Nepali migrant worker who returned injured from the United Arab Emirates, Carney portrays the "imaginative scape" that is constituted by education reform, development ideology, hard labor, and consumerism in Nepal. In view of this imaginative scape that is "always intoxicating and necessarily fraught with risk," Carney sketches the rather chaotic ensemble of reason, desire, fear, and seduction that captures public education.

The concluding chapter by Marcelo Parreira do Amaral and Christiane Thompson goes beyond the description and analysis of the different expressions and manifestations of the GEI phenomenon by discerning different but overlapping rationales, logics, and modes of operation identified from a more synthetic reading of the chapters included in this volume. The chapter closes by raising questions as to the social dislocations gaped open by the GEI phenomena and interrogations of theoretical lenses that guide our analyses.

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Notes

1. Third Global Education Industry Summit, Luxembourg, 25–26 September 2017. Retrieved online: http://globaleducation.onetec.eu/index.html [last 21 July 2018].
2. In 2015, Helsinki hosted the Summit; in 2016, the summit took place in Jerusalem, Israel. See the Annexes provided in OECD (2017) for brief reports of the meetings. In 2018, the Summit will take place in Estonia in September in Tallinn. Retrieved online: https://www.eu2017.ee/news/press-releases/preparations-were-made-paris-next-years-global-oecd-summit-educational [last 21 July 2018].
3. See: "*Economization, Commodification, Digitalization: The Emergence of a Global Education Industry.*" Symposium at Goethe-University, Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 16–17 February 2017. Retrieved online: http://www.symposium-gei.eu/Symposium/ [last 21 July 2018].

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