Scott, D., Terano, M., Slee, R., Husbands, C., & Wilkins, R. (2016). *Policy transfer and educational change.* London, UK: SAGE. Pages: 144. ISBN 978-1-4739-1331-8

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Policy Transfer and Educational Change touches upon a critical issue in the field of comparative and international education: the travel of educational ideas across jurisdictions. This book examines the reasons for India's failure to achieve school improvement through introducing foreign education reforms. The authors aim to develop and articulate a methodology, which they called a policy-learning model, to help future researchers, educators, and policy makers understand how policy ideas travel and influence educational practices within classrooms.

The book is composed of seven chapters. Chapter one provides a theoretical background of the study, with a focus on the notions of policy implementation, education reform, and policy learning. To begin with, the authors indicate that institutional incapacity, in particular administration inertia, is a key problem, which has been ignored by the majority of literature discussing the effectiveness of policy implementation. By administration inertia, the authors refer to administrations' resistance to change. They argue that the primary function of educational administration in most developing countries, for example India in the case of this book, "is not to develop and/or implement educational policies, but to position leaders and groups using appropriate mechanisms to do so" (p. 4). Under this context, reforms or policy changes challenge existing institutional behaviours. Therefore, Scott, Terano, Slee, Husbands, and Wilkins propose the importance of understanding the existing education system and curricula, along with the policy discourses, contexts, and actors that have made policy-making "a 'messy', complex and contested enterprise" (p. 5).

Adopting a historical perspective, the authors in chapter two explore the development of the education system in India. A shift has been observed from the traditional Hindu education focusing on the elitists to the successive governments' education policies emphasizing inclusiveness and the success of all students. In addition, the authors elaborate on the relationship between the central government and the states in India. The central government and state governments share responsibilities for education. The central government is responsible for policy-making, promoting innovation, and framework development. The state governments are actually running the education system. In the last section of this chapter, Scott et al. examine two major education reforms in India. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), introduced in 2000, is a program aimed to achieve universal access to elementary education. This reform focuses on the notion of equity by emphasizing equal opportunities and meeting the needs of disadvantaged students. It is suggested that even this reform has led to greater access and enrollment rates at the primary stage of education, the drop-out rate of students from disadvantaged groups still remains high in India. The Right of Education (RTE) is another reform introduced in 2009. It adopts discourses such as "compulsory education", and specifies varies stakeholders' responsibilities in providing free and compulsory education for all children in India. However, the RTE is found difficult to implement due to local contexts especially in rural schools. Large pupil-teacher ratios, and lack of drinking water and usable toilet facilities are suggested as obstacles to achieve the goals listed in the RTE.

Chapter three answers the questions about how and why certain education policy ideas travel well globally. The authors use *Teach for All* and *the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)* as examples to support their assertion that these widely adopted ideas share significant similarities such as

promoting accountability based on test results, and emphasizing the effectiveness of education systems in terms of student achievement. They further explain the reasons why these ideas are so influential through the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) proposed by Pasi Sahlberg. Five features are identified in GERM, including standardization through high stakes testing, focusing on literacy, numeracy, and science, limiting the purpose of teaching and learning to increased learning outcomes, using corporate management models instead of valuing moral goals, and adopting test-based accountability system. Based on these ideas, Scott et al. identify three themes in this book. First, the travel of education policies to India happens in a context in which India is increasingly open for international organizations' suggestions on improving educational performance. Second, there is an inconstancy between the key ideas of the borrowed reforms and the ways these reforms are developed locally. The third theme is about implementation, which refers to the interplay between the ideas of education reforms, how these ideas are translated into practices, and the outcomes of these practices.

Chapter four examines the teacher training programs in India. It starts with an illustration on a series of teaching and learning models, including craft knowledge, executive technician, professional learner, scaffolding, coaching, goal-oriented teaching, mentoring, and peer learning. Based on these models, the authors examine the Bachelor of Elementary Education Program in India, which is a four-year teacher training degree program. They conclude that the program has many strengths such as reflecting a pedagogy with great emphasis on reflection and practice, and connecting theory and practice. However, weaknesses are also proposed. For example, dispositional learning is omitted. The authors suggest that the syllabus needs to include various forms of assessments and how these assessments work in different settings. In addition, the authors also look at several other curricula developed by the Indian National Council for Teacher Education. They argue that the syllabi show weak connections between curricular objectives and learning approaches, and there is a lack of details in relation to the identification of the learning approaches and how they can be applied. In the last section of this chapter, the authors propose four dimensions of policy implementation: internal relations of the new policies, the ways how existing system works, the implementation site, and the institutionalizing and sustainability process. They further question the moral accountability of actors who are involved in the implementation of policies.

In chapter five, Scott et al. illustrate the concepts of school autonomy and decentralization, and provide a review of the development of school leadership literature. In particular, case studies concerning school autonomy in Australia and England, and leadership development programs in England are demonstrated. In addition, leadership development programs from Ontario (Canada), Victoria (Australia), Singapore, New York City (US), and Hong Kong are suggested to share significant commonalities, and the authors argue that there is a tension between the need for the standardization of leadership practices in terms of professionalization, and the increasing school autonomy which requires greater attention for diversity. Furthermore, the authors explore the decentralization reform in Bihar, India, specifically in relation to the SSA, which attempts to bridge the gender and social gaps in school enrollment, and promote educational equity. Five strategies were adopted by the local state. The first strategy was to conduct an objective review and assessment of the local education system with an emphasis on local contexts. The second strategy was to establish a long-term financial partnership between the central government and state government. The third strategy was to encourage the involvement of local communities and organizations in school-based intervention programs. The fourth strategy was to develop a resources support system adopting a sustainable and inclusive perspective. The last strategy was to promote community-based monitoring by adopting a management information system, which correlates school data with community-based information. However, the authors argue that this reform in Bihar is "a case of centralised decentralisation" (p. 84) meaning the student academic evaluation system is still highly centralized, and the guidelines for school-level educators are vague and limited.

Chapter six explores the development of inclusive education, and identifies important features in related policy development. Key themes including global citizenship education, personalized learning, education for migrant children, and community involvement in schooling are discussed. The authors propose that to remove the barriers that prevent marginalized students from educational equity, curriculum needs to acknowledge and reflect the diverse values and student identities. In the context of India, the *Right to Education (RTE) Act* was introduced recently, which aims to provide equal education opportunities for students with diverse background, especially girls and ethnic minorities. However, challenges are found relating to teacher recruitment, poverty, and social values such as traditional gender roles assigned by

society.

The last chapter focuses on the policy-learning model, which the authors of this book advocated for. The authors indicate that the uniqueness of the policy-learning model is its build-in of a learning process. They argue that such learning process happens at both the site of formation and the site of implementation. In addition, Scott et al. assert that it is problematic to focus on "the apparently exemplary practice" particularly practices that learnt from the field study tours as these practices can be partially represented (p. 120). Three aspects of a learning process are proposed: (1) the structure of the learning object, (2) the capacity of the learning object to maintain its original shape, and (3) the capacity to resist or allow learning to take place.

This book provides an informative review on education reforms that India has learnt from elsewhere. First, the authors offer detailed theoretical background on each reform that has been discussed in this book. For example, in addition to demonstrating the implementation of inclusive education policies in India, with specific focus on the *RTE Act*, chapter six starts with a historical review of policy development for inclusive education globally. In addition, existing literature concerning theoretical frameworks and key themes related to inclusive education is explored as well. This attention to the global policy context helps readers understand the flow of educational ideas, and situates Indian education reforms in a larger picture. Second, Scott et al. recognize the significance of context in conducting policy research. When discussing policy implementation in India, national contexts such as school enrollment rate, school conditions, access to facilities, local literacy rate, gender and ethnicity issues, and social values are explicitly demonstrated. This investigation into contexts has largely contributed to a better understanding of the challenges that are faced by the Indian government to implement transferred policies. It also provides implications for the interplay between policies, policy implementation, and effects of policies.

One of my suggestions for this book is to consider the agency in the borrowing country in the process of policy transfer. To understand this issue, it is critical to clarify the concepts of "policy borrowing" and "policy transfer". The use of these terms is contested (Phillips & Ochs, 2004), yet many scholars have been using them interchangeably. To be specific, "borrowing" implies a traditional understanding of policy movement, which sees the borrowing country as a passive recipient who is expected to give something back in return. This understanding of policy mobilities ignores the fact that all stakeholders in a policy process have agency, and the decision that has been made is a result of the interactions and negotiations between various actors at both national and international levels. Moreover, it has been observed that what is transferred are mainly discourses rather than actual practices, and policy transfer is often a result of political interrelations (Halpin & Troyna, 1995; Phillips, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004; Wei, 2017). Therefore, when trying to answer the question of why particular policies are transferred, the power relations between stakeholders across jurisdictions need to be examined.

In addition, this book pays great attention to the question of why certain educational reforms such as *Teach for All* have been significantly influential worldwide through investigating similar features of these global policy ideas. Understanding the global policy convergence requires us to move beyond the world culture approach, which emphasizes the success of particular models, and asserts that education systems globally are becoming similar (Baker & LeTendre, 2005). Instead of focusing on worldwide commonalities and seeing globalization as irresistible, a number of scholars propose that the transferred models of schooling are often general guidelines, and the ways in which local actors respond to these introduced ideas are various depending on historical, economic, social, and cultural contexts (Beech & Artopoulos, 2015; Steiner-Khamsi, 2000, 2004, 2012). The notion of adaptation is essential for studies researching policy transfer to capture the ways in which foreign policy ideas are translated and recontextualized locally (Spreen, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2012).

As a whole, this book provides a crucial contribution to the understanding of global policy transfer, and the implementation of foreign education policies in India. More importantly, it sheds light on the influences of local contexts on the promotion of education reforms such as decentralization, professionalization, and inclusive education. Further detailed, context-specific studies are encouraged to consider the concept of recontextualization and power relations when conducting research on the travel of education discourses globally.

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