Globalisation, Societies and Education

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cgse20

Unpacking the global apprenticeship agenda: a comparative synthesis of literature from international organisations in the education policy field

Ellen Vanderhoven

To cite this article: Ellen Vanderhoven (2023): Unpacking the global apprenticeship agenda: a comparative synthesis of literature from international organisations in the education policy field, Globalisation, Societies and Education, DOI: 10.1080/14767724.2023.2252358

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2023.2252358

Published online: 04 Sep 2023.

GLOBALISATION, SOCIETIES AND EDUCATION
https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2023.2252358

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Unpacking the global apprenticeship agenda: a comparative synthesis of literature from international organisations in the education policy field

Ellen Vanderhoven

School of Education, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK

ABSTRACT

Apprenticeships are experiencing ascendency as a global policy idea, yet their promotion by international organisations remains underexamined. This article presents a comparative synthesis of publications on apprenticeships from the EU, ILO, OECD, UNESCO, and World Bank. Analysis demonstrates that IOs advance a diversity of discourses, apprenticeships acting as a polysemic policy object made malleable to organisational identities and priorities. Nonetheless, IOs' significant, sustained and often coordinated efforts to promote apprenticeships support the notion of a 'global apprenticeship agenda'. The internal complexity of this agenda compels more fine-grained theorisation of IOs' individual and collective policy activity, accounting for variation and contestation.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 19 July 2023
Accepted 23 August 2023

KEYWORDS
Apprenticeships; TVET; international organisations; global education policy; global policy change

Introduction

In recent decades, growing attention has been directed towards the development and promotion of robust technical and vocational education and training (TVET) systems across the globe (Cedefop 2018b; OECD 2010). International organisations (IOs) with an interest in education have taken the lead in calling for greater research into the current state of TVET worldwide, as well as systematic reform in many places (Ananiadou 2013; Cedefop 2015; OECD 2010). In the context of a 'global youth unemployment crisis' (Axmann and Hofmann 2013a), one particular TVET model, namely apprenticeships, has increasingly been positioned as a solution to issues of high unemployment, low productivity, and low economic growth (Axmann and Hofmann 2013a; Grollmann 2018). Indeed, 'in both developed and developing economies, the combination of work and learning in the classroom and the workplace has been an attractive, if not seductive, idea for policy-makers' (Marope, Chakroun, and Holmes 2015, 99).

Despite the apparent ascendency of apprenticeships within the global education policy field, little research has been conducted that critically interrogates the production and dissemination of ideas about apprenticeship on the part of IOs.[1] This article addresses that gap in pursuit of two ends: firstly, to better understand the growing salience and circulation of this policy through interrogation of IOs' role in articulating ideas about apprenticeship; and second, to further expand our understanding of IOs' role in the global education space by bringing insights from an educational area (TVET) that has typically been underrepresented in these debates. Comparative synthesis of IOs' publications on apprenticeship is used to explore the following research questions: namely,

CONTACT Ellen Vanderhoven e.vanderhoven.1@research.gla.ac.uk

what discourses about apprenticeship policy are articulated by IOs in the global education policy field? What specific and shared arguments exist among IOs, and can these be said to constitute a global agenda to promote apprenticeships? If so, what are the features of such a 'global apprenticeship agenda'? As such, this investigation employs the case of IOs' discourses on apprenticeship to contribute to theoretical debates about the production and dissemination of global education policy more broadly.

The analysis demonstrates that a wide range of rationales, goals, orientations, and theoretical assumptions related to apprenticeships are advanced by IOs working in the education field. Indeed, despite important points of commonality, apprenticeships appear as a somewhat polysemic policy object made malleable to the divergent discourses of IOs with heterogenous visions of (vocational) education and distinct organisational identities and priorities. Nonetheless, given the significant and sustained efforts by education IOs (to uneven degrees) to define, promote, and fund apprenticeship programmes in a great variety of contexts, it is argued that the notion of a 'global apprenticeship agenda' is a relevant one. The existence of such an agenda does not, however, simplistically denote isomorphism and indeed highlights the value of a more fine-grained perspective on developments in the global education policy field. Theoretical frameworks that prioritise convergence and inter-organisational consensus appear inadequate for capturing the inter-institutional variation and nuance contained within the 'global apprenticeship agenda'. This article offers an empirical contribution to understanding the 'architecture of arguments' (Niemann and Martens 2021, 6) within global education policy discourses (Niemann and Martens 2021), but also makes a call for deeper and more diverse critical research into global circulation of the apprenticeship policy idea, paying greater attention to the heterogeneity of implicated actors and the multiple scales at which they operate.

The article begins by briefly reviewing key theoretical perspectives on the drivers of global education policy development as well as current knowledge about the principal axes of consensus and contention among IOs in the global education policy field. Section three outlines the methodology and comparative framework of the study. Section four presents findings from comparative analysis of five education IOs' publications on apprenticeships, revealing both convergence and divergence in organisational perspectives. In section five, the findings are reflected on in tandem with the broader academic literature to characterise the landscape of IOs' apprenticeship discourses and consider which theoretical perspectives are best equipped to further our understanding of the 'global apprenticeship agenda'. The article closes with reflections on the implications of IOs' interest in, and treatment of, apprenticeship policy and with a call for further critical research into the 'global apprenticeship agenda'.

Diversity in unity: exploring consensus and contention within the global education policy field

Theoretical perspectives on global education policy development

The drivers of education policy change in a context of globalisation have been the subject of recurrent interrogation and theorisation. Why is it that certain policy models and ideas gain purchase with international actors and across national borders? How do increasingly global flows of ideational, cultural, and material resources reshape education policymaking and norms? From a rationalist perspective, the most effective and efficient policies gain primacy as policymakers engage in empirical examination and rational selection from among international examples (Verger, Parcerisa, and Fontdevila 2019; Weyland 2005). IOs thus facilitate by acting as technocratic circulators of policy knowledge at the supra-national level. This, however, does little to account for the politics of policy.

World Culture Theory (or neo-institutionalism) posits that the hegemonic status of Western modernity, replicated and reproduced within IOs, has produced a reference schema of what

makes a 'modern' nation state. Thus, particularly in postcolonial settings, actors seek to gain or maintain legitimacy through reforms towards these parameters, driving isomorphism in global education policy (Meyer et al. 1997; Ramirez, Meyer, and Lerch 2016). International Political Economy places greater emphasis on material concerns and the ways in which global capitalism is re-forming the global economy along supra- and trans-national lines – a process in which IOs play a decisive role. Consequently, states face new pressures to remain competitive in a global knowledge economy and structural forces produce an inclination towards convergent policy arrangements (Dale 2000; Robertson 2005). In a similar vein, education policy sociology focuses on how neoliberal globalisation has propelled educational systems towards marketisation, privatisation, and New Public Management techniques. This includes highlighting the role that IOs play in constructing a neoliberalised global education policy space (Ball, Junemann, and Santori 2017; Lingard and Sellar 2013). These literatures share an assumption that global actors, including IOs, play a central role in the circulation of policy ideas and that, as paradigms coalesce to limit dissent, as certain IOs gain dominance, and as diverse actors coincide in their policy advocacy, the global education space becomes governed by a relatively unitary set of ideas.

Questioning this persistent focus on convergence, other theoretical frameworks have redirected analytical attention towards inconsistency and contestation within global education policy circles. The constructivist concept of policy translation emphasises the mutating character of travelling policy ideas (Stone 2012), highlighting how local actors' context-responsive modifications (Wilkins et al. 2019) produce an 'uneven evolution' of global education policy (Verger and Fontdevila Forthcoming). Furthermore, the supposed unitary or coherent character of IOs themselves has been challenged; instead conceiving of these organisations as open systems and emphasising the role of organisational friction, actor agency, and internal heterogeneity in producing contestation and ideational diversity (Edwards and Moschetti 2021; Verger and Fontdevila Forthcoming).

Consensus and contention in the global education policy field

Given competing theoretical depictions and explanations of the global education policy field, it is helpful to review some of the main axes of consensus and contention observed among education IOs. These collectively produce an inconsistent picture.

Niemann and Martens' (2021) mapping of the education IO population points to notable, and growing, consensus about the purposes of education. According to their analysis, a liberal collectivist view of education as a social right and duty that fosters political and social participation is a core and longstanding tenet of the education IO community. However, it has experienced gradual decline since the post-war period. Economic utilitarianism meanwhile has gained significant traction. Economic individualism, centred on the individual productivity returns of skill formation, proliferated rapidly up until the 1990s, since when it has plateaued and become an embedded narrative. Economic collectivist perspectives that emphasise education's role in boosting the wealth of nations have only continued to become more ubiquitous over time. A liberal individualist view of education as a means of self-fulfilment occupies a marginal and somewhat redundant position in the face of growing mobilisation of Human Capital Theory (HCT). This convergence of ideas is explained by, on the one hand, economically focused IOs increasingly accommodating liberal understandings of education, and, on the other, typically liberal education IOs increasingly adopting economic reasoning. Thus, 'while the ideational portfolio of IOs has become increasingly similar, the ideas within their portfolios have become more diverse' (Niemann and Martens 2021, 183).

Nonetheless, research also points to the enduring distinctions that exist between IOs and which challenge this narrative of collective convergence. The World Bank (WB) has long been highlighted for its particularly utilitarian view of education and firmly supply-side perspective on skills development (Fergusson 2021; Niemann and Martens 2021). Drawing heavily on neoclassical and neoliberal economic thinking (Klees, Samoff, and Stromquist 2012), the Bank has been known for favouring educational reform that encourages marketisation and competitive individualism

(Robertson 2005). There has been some pushback against this monolithic depiction of a large and diverse organisation (Verger and Fontdevila Forthcoming) and research suggesting that this discursive position is somewhat tempered in practice (Fontdevila and Verger 2020). Nonetheless, the depth of commitment to a recent turn towards liberal collectivist values (World Bank 2018) has been sharply questioned (Klees et al. 2019). By contrast, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) takes a rights-based understanding of education as a fundamental principle (Hollander and Yee Mar 2009; Niemann and Martens 2021). In recent years, it has expanded its primarily collectivist vision to include a greater focus on the personal, emancipatory benefits of education, drawing on the capabilities approach (Tikly 2013; Vaccari and Gardinier 2019). As such, it has been characterised as standing apart within the IO community for its liberal individualist focus and the pursuit of human and sustainable development goals (Elfert 2017; Galguera 2018; Niemann and Martens 2021).

The institutional identities of other IOs have also been found to fundamentally shape their engagement with education policy. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has a clearly signalled economic mandate, which prescribes a primary interest in education as a generator of competitiveness and economic growth (Lingard and Sellar 2016; Valiente 2014), and as learning for work (Moutsios 2009). While, particularly following the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), some attention to well-being, inequality, and social cohesion has emerged in OECD discourses (Carroll and Kellow 2021; Lingard and Sellar 2016), this appears to be consistently subordinated to an economic framework and neoliberal principles (Niemann and Martens 2021; Vaccari and Gardinier 2019). The International Labour Organisation (ILO) shares the OECD's interest in learning for work: it operates under a mandate of protecting working people and promoting their human and labour rights, and, thus, its education policy activity has centred on education for 'decent work' (Maul 2019; Poschen 2009). Nonetheless, this interest is founded on distinct principles, producing advocacy for social protections and 'fair globalisation', in which regulation and social dialogue are used to keep global markets in check (ILO 2008; Maul 2019). Indeed, despite suggestions of recent neoliberalisation of the ILO's position (Fergusson 2021), these two organisations demonstrate consistent divergence in their educational perspectives.

We are left then with an inconsistent picture of the global education policy field. On the one hand, there is evidence to support theories of convergence and suggest that the global IO community increasingly shares common discourses and visions of education. On the other hand, research into the policy work of each organisation suggests that institutional specificities persevere and that theoretical perspectives which incorporate the confounding influence of inter-related contextual factors and agency might be more suitable. It is in this context that comprehensive comparative analysis of IOs' discourses on a given education policy, in this case apprenticeships, appears as a useful exercise for testing some of the hypotheses produced by the existing literature.

Methodology

Reports, conferences, briefings, and toolkits are some of the primary means through which education policy norms develop and are promulgated globally, with different actors holding more or less power to shape and resist normative definitions of 'good' education (Jakobi 2009; Niemann and Martens 2021). Thus, critical engagement with IOs' discursive outputs can de-naturalise the generation of global policy norms. Nonetheless, before further elaborating the empirical strategy of this grey literature synthesis, it should be acknowledged that recognising IOs' discursive power neither assumes uniformity of ideas nor universal acceptance among actors (Edwards and Moschetti 2021; Forsberg 2019). Nor does convergence of ideas necessarily transpose into convergence of practice (Busemeyer and Vossiek 2016; Fontdevila and Verger 2020). Indeed, discursive outputs often contain 'ideas or norms that people successfully *present* as widespread across the world, *whether they truly are or not*' (Anderson-Levitt 2012, 442, emphasis added). Thus, IOs'

own publications offer curated, intentionally (but artificially) coherent representations of their organisational perspective, which provide valuable insight, but which are not presumed here to paint a complete picture of 'what IOs think' (Verger and Fontdevila Forthcoming).

Comparative framework

This paper draws on Niemann, Martens, and Kaasch's (2021, 17–18) description of IOs' 'discursive process' of policy development to elaborate a framework for comparing apprenticeship discourses. First, a problem in need of a solution is defined *(rationale)*, i.e., *the reasons why apprenticeships are needed*. Second, a desired state of affairs is imagined *(goals)* with the achievement of particular outcomes signalling alleviation of the identified problem, i.e., *what outcomes are apprenticeships intended to achieve?* Third, particular realm(s) of intervention are identified as arenas for action *(orientations)* and a means of addressing the problem is selected (in this case, apprenticeships). In other words, *orientations* refer to *the sectors/realms of intervention and policy paradigms that apprenticeships are framed in relation to*. Finally, woven throughout this discursive process are a particular set of *theoretical underpinnings,* which are *the assumptions that generate and support the chosen conception of apprenticeships*, including any theories of change or causal mechanisms relied upon to link rationales, goals, and orientations.

For the purposes of comparison, apprenticeships are taken to be formal TVET programmes that feature a contractual relationship between apprentices and employers or training institutions, a significant and relatively long-term element of work-based learning provided by employers, and (often but not necessarily) entitlement to off-the-job vocational education (Axmann and Hofmann 2013a; Steedman 2012). Furthermore, such training programmes are concerned with 'learning for an intermediate occupational skill (i.e., more than routinised job training), and […] are subject to externally imposed training standards' (Ryan et al. 2010, 5). This therefore does not include 'traditional' (Adams 2008) or 'informal' (ILO 2011) apprenticeships, based on an ad hoc training arrangement with an individual craftsperson. While there is a growing interest in 'upgrading' informal apprenticeship systems, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g., ILO 2011), this involves a different set of policy mechanisms and is beyond the scope of this review.

IO selection

The analysis is based on a semi-systematic review (Snyder 2019) and synthesis of grey literature on apprenticeships from five IOs identified as leading transnational actors in the field of TVET: UNESCO; the ILO; the OECD; the World Bank; and the EU (specifically, the European Commission and TVET-specialist agencies; the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training [Cedefop] and the European Training Foundation [ETF]). Selection of IOs is informed by Niemann and Martens' (2021) identification of six IOs[2] active in education on a global scale, excluding UNICEF and UNHCR as their work does not focus on TVET. Although a regional body, the EU is added given its particular interest in apprenticeships (Valiente, Capsada-Munsech, and Peter G de Otero 2020) and its policy influence beyond Member States (Fargion and Mayer 2015). Together, these organisations span a range of primary foci (economics, governance, development, culture etc.) and areas of intervention (Europe, global, lower, middle- and high-income countries). Thus, the analysis captures a diversity of IOs' perspectives on apprenticeship and offers a holistic synthesis of global policy discourses (Tikly 2013).

Document selection

For this study, grey literature includes reports, briefing notes, press releases, news articles, handbooks, toolkits, policy and evaluation guides, and resolutions that are internally produced, but excludes working/discussion papers and research papers or evaluation reports authored by external

consultants (Fergusson and Yeates 2014). The database(s) of each IO were searched in July 2020 for full-text documents in English containing relevant keywords, with no time limit. The returned publications were filtered for relevance and authorship, based on title and a skim review. A second filter based on full-text review removed documents not giving substantial analytical attention to the topic of apprenticeships. A purposive, non-representative sample of texts was selected for close analysis (Mackenzie et al. 2013; Snyder 2019); an approach intended to mirror primary data collection and analysis. Aiming for theoretical saturation, a cap of 10 publications per organisation was used to aid feasibility (n = 40). Texts authored by multiple IOs are attributed to the lead organisation and the implications of collaboration considered in the analysis. Sampling was based on engagement with the topic, relative importance (e.g., major summary report vs. country-specific briefing), and temporal diversity. Table 1 summarises the search process and lists the final papers selected for extraction, each with a unique referencing identifier.

Data analysis

The approach to extraction and analysis was thematic (Braun and Clarke 2006), combining both deductive and inductive elements (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006). A data extraction framework was developed a priori based on the research questions, identifying the (1) rationales; (2) orientations; and (3) goals of apprenticeships expressed in the documents, and (4) the implied or explicit theoretical assumptions underlying these. Initially, extraction resembled a process of coding, short snippets of text being linked to each category. Once extracted in this way, publications from the same IO were synthesised into one common template and tentative themes were developed within categories (Braun and Clarke 2006). Finally, synthesised data for each IO were analysed comparatively across the four categories and themes were harmonised across the five cases, a process iteratively informed by the academic literature (Prøitz 2015).

Comparative analysis

This section outlines findings from the comparative analysis, discussing in turn: (1) the profile of publications that discuss apprenticeships; (2) the rationales; (3) orientations; and (4) goals ascribed to apprenticeships; as well as (5) the theoretical underpinnings of IOs' conception of apprenticeships.

Profile of documents

When reviewing the filtered and selected documents, the variation in quantity between IOs is striking. While the EU, ILO and OECD have produced dozens of documents in which apprenticeships are often the sole focus, in the cases of UNESCO and the WB, only a handful of documents passed through filtering, the majority focusing on apprenticeships as part of a broader TVET discussion, producing much smaller samples (n = 6 and n = 4 respectively). This is thus indicative of sustained, diverse, and active interest in the topic of apprenticeships from the first three IOs and more intermittent and less committed engagement from UNESCO and the WB[3]. Furthermore, publications from the EU, ILO and OECD are more likely to offer guidance on design and implementation of apprenticeship policies (e.g., EU10; OECD08, 10), implying not just abstract discussion, but active advocacy for apprenticeships as a desirable and desired intervention (see EU06). This is especially notable among ILO documents (e.g., ILO01, 03, 04).

Across all IOs, there is a very limited presence of documents published before 2009 (see Table 1) and a consequent progressive proliferation. Given the discursive interrelation between apprenticeships and youth unemployment (see 4.2.), the GFC appears as a catalyst for increasing interest in apprenticeships. The notable exception to this is UNESCO, with engagement peaking in the late 2000s, but petering off from 2017 to 2020.

Table 1. Summary of document selection process.

	EU	ILO	OECD	UNESCO	World Bank
Databases searched	Cedefop publications database & policy documents and studies database ETF publications database European Commission publications database Skills Panorama resources database	ILO publications database	OECD iLibrary	UNESCDOC Digital Library UNESCO-UNEVOC publications database	World Bank research and publications database
Publications, key word search	831	407	115	119	322
Filter 1					
Publications retained	56	36	37	14	9
Filter 2					
Publications retained, total	38	23	30	6	4
By year Pre-2009	0	0	1	1	0
2009–2012	5	6	12	2	1
2013–2016	17	5	7	3	1
2017–2020	16	12	10	0	2
Purposive sample					
Selected publications, n	10	10	10	6	4
Selected publications, citations	EU01 (Cedefop 2014a) EU02 (Cedefop 2014b) EU03 (Cedefop 2015) EU04 (Cedefop 2018a) EU05 (Cedefop 2020a) EU06 (Cedefop 2020b) EU07 (Cedefop and ETF 2018) EU08 (Cedefop and ETF 2020) EU09 (European Commission 2012) EU10 (European Commission 2015)	ILO01 (Aggarwal 2020) ILO02(Axmann and Hofmann 2013b) ILO03 (ILO 2012) ILO04 (ILO 2017) ILO05 (ILO 2018) ILO06 (ILO 2019a) ILO07 (ILO 2019b) ILO08 (ILO 2020) ILO09 (ILO and OECD 2014) ILO10 (Steedman 2012)	OECD01 (Bajgar and Criscuolo 2016) OECD02 (Jeon 2019) OECD03 (OECD 2010) OECD04 (OECD 2012) OECD05 (OECD 2014) OECD06 (OECD 2015) OECD07 (OECD 2016) OECD08 (OECD 2018) OECD09 (OECD and ILO 2011) OECD10 (OECD and ILO 2011)	UNESCO01 (Molz 2015) UNESCO02 (Subrahmanyam 2013) UNESCO03 (UIS and UNESCO-UNEVOC 2006) UNESCO04 (UNESCO 2012) UNESCO05(UNESCO 2016) UNESCO06 (UNESCO-UNEVOC 2010)	WB01 (Sanchez et al. 2015) WB02 (World Bank 2012) WB03 (World Bank 2017) WB04 (World Bank 2018)

Rationales for apprenticeships

Despite varying degrees of engagement, some endorsement of apprenticeships is common to all the IOs. Furthermore, shared rationales for apprenticeships emerge: Firstly, economic crises (most notably the GFC) and persistent youth unemployment are invoked as catalysts for educational reform towards apprenticeships (OECD08; UNESCO02; WB02), particularly based on the claim that the strong apprenticeship systems found in German-speaking Europe helped mitigate the effects of the GFC (EU05; ILO07; OECD09). Skills shortages and mismatches are identified as a significant cause of youth unemployment (EU09; ILO02; UNESCO03; WB02), to which apprenticeships offer a remedy – addressing issues of relevance and quality in TVET (UNESCO02; WB04), building a pool of intermediate-skill workers, and offering an advantageous blend of technical, general, and soft skills (EU02; ILO03; OECD05; UNESCO04). In turn, skill system imbalances are characterised as a product of rapid developments in the global labour market instigated by technological, environmental, and demographic change (EU03; ILO01; UNESCO03), shifting emphasis to the 'global knowledge economy' and increasing demand for higher-skill workers with greater professional mobility (EU04; ILO04). With the exception of the WB, apprenticeships are also framed as a response to economic exclusion and social inequality (EU07; ILO09; OECD05). By ensuring that (vulnerable) young people transition smoothly from education to employment, apprenticeships prevent marginalisation from the labour market and wider society in adulthood (EU08; ILO08; OECD06; UNESCO05).

Despite these shared rationales, there is still notable divergence between IOs. EU publications place particular emphasis on the need for nations to improve their crisis response and resilience (EU04, 05, 08), likely reflecting the significant impact of the GFC in Europe. Although the ILO also demonstrates a similar interest, this is viewed from the learner-worker perspective rather than that of national governments. Thus, the increasing precarisation and degradation of work is highlighted (ILO09), positioning apprenticeships as a tool for integrating more youth into quality, formal employment (ILO08) and addressing a work inexperience trap among education leavers (ILO05, 10). A concern for social reintegration of youth is echoed in OECD documents, however, in this case, marginalised young people are understood as harbouring untapped potential that could be contributing to economic growth (OECD02, 04, 07), diverging from the ILO's justice imperative towards 'decent work'. More closely aligned to this rights-based rationale, but viewed through an educational lens, is UNESCO, which particularly emphasises the utility of apprenticeships in addressing poor quality and relevance of TVET and satisfying the right to quality education and lifelong learning (UNESCO01, 02). In contrast to all other IOs, the WB is notable for lacking a social rationale for apprenticeships, focusing instead on a current lack of adequate incentives for employers and individuals to invest in skills development (WB01, 02).

Orientations of apprenticeships

As is perhaps evident above, the orientation of apprenticeships is characterised by an intermingling of the education and labour market policy fields. This suggests a tendency – not confined to the case of apprenticeships (Antunes 2016) – to economise education as preparation for employment, whilst also educationalising the issue of youth unemployment (Valiente, Capsada-Munsech, and Peter G de Otero 2020). Only occasionally is the pedagogical nature or value of apprenticeships foregrounded in the selected documents, and the humanistic, civic, and social justice functions of education, where mentioned, are usually subordinated to the economic (Spiel et al. 2018). Furthermore, apprenticeships are consistently framed as a policy tool for development, whether economic, social, institutional, or sustainable, and in any part of the world.

Although present to some extent in all IOs' publications, the WB and OECD display a notable emphasis on the 'skills for economic growth' orientation. In OECD documents, cost-benefit analyses are an important framework used to justify apprenticeships (OECD01, 03), which in turns drives an emphasis on quality, in order to ensure that programmes 'pay off' for apprentices,

firms, and governments (OECD06, 08, 10). The most purely productivist orientation of apprenticeships comes from the WB, with apprenticeships helping to correct imperfections in the labour market, foster a demand-driven skills system, and support economic development via increasing industrialisation and modernisation (WB01, 03). The EU and ILO are distinct in foregrounding apprenticeships as a tool for institutional reform and capacity building. In the European context, apprenticeship systems contribute to a broader project of supranational governance and coordination. Structures such as the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (European Commission, European Social Partners, and Council of the European Union 2013), provide a web of support mechanisms for supra/international coordination and 'peer learning' (EU07; see also EU05), advancing EU harmonisation and cooperation in TVET (EU07, 09; see also European Commission 2002, 2010). The ILO meanwhile positions apprenticeships as a component of active labour market intervention and reform: by ensuring that firms offer high-quality training that corresponds to opportunities for 'decent work' (ILO02), apprenticeships address market failure and 'rebalance the potentially unequal relationship between employer and apprentice' (ILO10, p.8). Thus, broad development is promoted by fostering institutions and labour relations capable of upholding workers' rights (ILO03, 04). UNESCO stands somewhat apart in orienting apprenticeships as part of poverty reduction strategies that use TVET to promote equitable, inclusive, and sustainable growth (UNESCO01, 03, 05). This is strongly aligned with the UN's Education for All and Sustainable Development Goal initiatives and UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development agenda (UN 2015; see also UNESCO06).

Goals of apprenticeships

The goal of fostering economic development and growth is common to all organisations, with expected positive effects of apprenticeships on productivity, competitiveness, and unemployment (EU01; ILO06; OECD07; UNESCO01; WB02). Resilience to crises, both past and impending, are also framed as important outcomes (EU02; ILO08; OECD10).

Two further clusters of goals appear in EU publications: Apprenticeships are called upon to contribute to the 'social cohesion' of Member States and the Union by integrating marginalised groups, fostering personal development, socialising young people into the workforce, and signalling governments' commitment to their populations (EU02, 03, 08, 09). By expanding mechanisms of collaborative governance (across borders), fostering worker mobility, and harmonising TVET provision, apprenticeships are also explicitly positioned as contributing to the project of European integration (EU01, 02, 04, 07, 09).

Again redirecting focus to the learner-worker, the ILO tempers the economic growth goal by emphasising the importance of *inclusion*. Such growth should offer reintegration to those excluded from the labour market and who face inequalities based on gender, race, and disability (ILO05, 07, 09). Furthermore, apprenticeships serve the ILO's 'decent work' agenda, offering a mechanism for bringing more young people under social security protections, stimulating quality employment, and enhancing individuals' bargaining power and agency in the labour market (ILO04, 06, 10). Similar arguments about inclusion of the marginalised are found in OECD documents, however, the goal of this action is distinct – socially marginalised groups and unemployed youth harbour potential productivity which requires 'unlocking' if society is to develop (OECD02, 06, 07, 09). Such marginalisation is 'a squandered investment […] and a potential burden for their countries […] Young people should be an asset to the economy, not a potential liability' (OECD06, p.15). Thus, the social goals of apprenticeships are subsumed under the economic, as economic integration and reduced inequality pay dividends in the form of higher tax revenues, reduced public spending, and political stability (OECD01, 02).

For UNESCO, a primary goal of apprenticeships is the promotion of sustainable development (UNESCO06), the only IO to give the issue significant attention. Poverty reduction, addressing marginalisation, enhanced life-satisfaction, relevant quality learning experiences, social and

political stability, and individual empowerment are all facets of sustainable development that apprenticeships are purported to foster (UNESCO02, 03, 05, 06). When discussing TVET more broadly, UNESCO also outlines an environmental contribution to sustainable development (UNESCO05), but this is not well expressed for apprenticeships.

In contrast to the other IOs, the WB rarely articulates goals for apprenticeships beyond economic growth and development. Notwithstanding, for all IOs, the social benefits of apprenticeships are usually highlighted *in addition to* economic aims and not framed as the predominant goal in promoting apprenticeships. Furthermore, there is a paucity of attention to personal, emancipatory outcomes of apprenticeships – as with other forms of TVET (Tur Porres, Wildemeersch, and Simons 2014). This is even true for UNESCO, usually the strongest proponent of such a perspective in the global education policy field (Tikly 2013; Vaccari and Gardinier 2019). Thus, apprenticeships are understood as an economic investment for individuals and societies, deriving the majority of their value from potency in the labour market. The idea of education as an end in itself is largely absent (Valiente 2014), with social goals framed in terms of 'decent' employment prospects or collective social cohesion benefits. Arguably, even these social outcomes ultimately serve overarching governing structures (whether local, national, or supranational) that benefit from political stability and reduced welfare demands.

Theoretical underpinnings

Underlying this economic focus on apprenticeships is a shared adherence to HCT and productivism. All five IOs present a theory of change whereby apprenticeships enhance young people's employability by aligning the educational offer to labour market demands; smoothing transitions, reducing unemployment levels, enhancing productivity, and boosting economic growth. Divergence emerges in how each IO combines these assumptions with other theoretical concepts.

The EU, ILO, and OECD all integrate an Institutional Political Economy (IPE) perspective (Novelli et al. 2014) alongside HCT. Rather than leaving the skills system to market forces, the state is given a role in incentivising firms' investment and individuals' participation (EU02; OECD04, 05). Although employers enjoy a prominent role in shaping the skills system, their exploitative tendencies are kept in check by an overseeing regulatory state (Robertson 2010). Indeed, there is a significant and pivotal role for state-level and supra-national institutional structures, responsible for quality assurance, governance, and monitoring and evaluation (EU03, 06, 10; OECD03, 09). The ILO is particularly emphatic in its call for regulation (ILO01, 10) to address employment precarity, poor working conditions, and rising inequality – requiring institutions capable of guaranteeing social protections and robust social dialogue involving trade unions (ILO02, 03, 05, 08).

For the EU, this proliferation of governance is intertwined with the theoretical driver of Europeanisation. This rests on the belief that greater integration of European markets, human resources, and education systems to form 'a truly European area of education and training' (EU02, p.14) will result in the maximisation of Member States' individual and collective economic interests. Highly collaborative systems of apprenticeship governance are therefore ideal, strengthening relationships between national and regional governments, employers, social partners, TVET providers, and apprentices/citizens – the Commission adopting a mediatory role as the promoter and supplier of policy knowledge (EU01, 06, 07; see also Martínez-Izquierdo and Sánchez 2022). The ILO's position on apprenticeships is further informed by a normative interest in youth rights and labour law, underscored by an accompanying theory of justice (Langille 2011). The prevention of exploitation is therefore not just important for ensuring the attractiveness of apprenticeships, but is founded on the state's moral imperative to protect young people's rights, health and safety, and well-being, as befits their 'worker' identity (ILO03, 09).

As previously highlighted, sustainable development provides a distinct theoretical underpinning to UNESCO's promotion of apprenticeships. This is evident in the organisation's focus on the

personal and social aims of apprenticeships, alongside economic impacts (UNESCO04, 05, 06), including drawing on the capabilities approach (Tikly 2013). However, although ideas of personal emancipation and wellbeing are well expressed for TVET generally, there is a tendency to revert to the economic aspects of sustainable development when discussing apprenticeships directly (UNESCO01).

The most limited theoretical diversity is found in WB discourses, which rely almost solely on a productivist understanding of TVET and a preference for a private training market (WB01, 02, 04). Grounding its analysis in principles of neoclassical economics, for the WB, light-touch optimisation of the skills system to correct market failures is the limit of the state's role (WB01). This is reflected in the Bank's relatively brief discussions of the institutional structures typically considered fundamental to apprenticeships, apart from when collaborating with the European Commission (WB03). Despite the grander humanistic visions of education laid out in the introductions to recent WDRs (WB02, 04; see also Ngcwangu 2015), WB technical guidance on apprenticeships remains predominantly economistic.

Discussion

Returning to the research questions of this study, let us first consider convergence and divergence in IOs' apprenticeship discourses and whether these amount to a 'global apprenticeship agenda'. As evidence of significant ideational, theoretical, and technical convergence, those IOs drawing most heavily on IPE perspectives (namely, the EU, ILO, and OECD) appear as the greatest proponents of apprenticeships. There is a clear and mutually reinforcing coherence between this theoretical position and apprenticeships as a policy solution: they entail robust systems of governance, collaboration, and oversight, coordinated by state institutions; they offer correction, but not disruption, of markets; and they focus on socio-economic integration of poor and other marginalised young people (Novelli et al. 2014). Such a position reflects the move away from market fundamentalism towards 'good governance' and social protection guarantees that characterise the post-Washington Consensus in global education policy circles (Robertson et al. 2007; Tikly 2013). The shared discursive outlook of these three organisations is further reflected in and reinforced by significant inter-institutional collaboration on the topic (e.g., ILO09, OECD05, 09, 10). Nonetheless, distinct institutional foci remain which challenge a totalising convergence narrative.

The EU intertwines apprenticeships with the broader project of European integration, contributing to the internal cohesion and global competitiveness of Europe (Dale 2009). The demands that apprenticeships produce for collaborative governance structures, supra-national information intermediaries, and private sector involvement in the design and funding of education further correspond to trends of economisation and centralisation within European education (Antunes 2016; Martínez-Izquierdo and Sánchez 2022). By contrast, the ILO foregrounds precarity and the degradation of work. Apprenticeships are positioned as a means of labour market reform, helping to generate greater possibilities for 'decent work' and building robust systems of institutional protections that shield young people and education from the exploitative tendencies of employers, thus contributing to a broader project of 'fair globalisation' (Hughes and Haworth 2011; Maul 2019). Finally, the OECD focuses on apprenticeships as an educational tool for economic development. While an emphasis on institutional embeddedness and social inclusion aligns with the organisation's analytical expansion beyond human capital orthodoxy (Robertson 2005; Valiente 2014), the primary framing of exclusion as an issue of economic inefficiency belies a fundamental interest in apprenticeships as an educational route to an economic goal (Valiente 2014). Thus, discourses on apprenticeship contribute to evidence from the literature that institutional specificities persevere to produce meaningful divergence in IOs' education policy work.

In further evidence of inter-institutional variation, the WB and UNESCO appear to struggle to reconcile apprenticeships with their broader positions and are less active in their promotion. UNESCO's distinct institutional focus on the humanistic and emancipatory aspects of education

(Elfert 2017; Vaccari and Gardinier 2019) and TVET (Tikly 2013) and the sustainable development agenda are weakly articulated in the case of apprenticeships, instead relying on many of the same economic arguments used by other IOs. This begs the question of whether UNESCO sees apprenticeships as well-aligned with its frameworks of lifelong learning, the capabilities approach, and sustainable development. Regardless, apprenticeships do continue to be promoted in UNESCO documents as an important means of smoothing school-to-work transitions, if suitably regulated (UNESCO 2021).

Conversely, the WB appears ambivalent about the extensive governance structures and state intervention connected to apprenticeships. Compared with other IOs, the WB affords minimal attention to these institutional requirements, preferring to emphasise skills system 'optimisation' and light-touch regulation. This supports research evidence of the Bank's distinctive adherence to neoliberal principles (Klees, Samoff, and Stromquist 2012; Klees et al. 2019) and comparative disinterest in a rights-based or social inclusion perspective on education (Menashy 2013; Ngcwangu 2015). This poor alignment with dominant arguments in favour of apprenticeships might explain the Bank's substantially sparser engagement with the policy in publications – however, it should be noted that a current of discussion about apprenticeships is present in WB working papers (which are excluded from this synthesis), indicating that the policy has more of a place in internal thinking (even if as an object of critique) than officially-endorsed documents suggest. Furthermore, lower levels of engagement observed from the WB and UNESCO may result from excluding informal apprenticeships from the review, which are being pursued in many low- and middle-income countries where the work of these organisations is concentrated.

Overall, despite important axes of variation, there is evidence of significant and sustained efforts to define, promote, and fund apprenticeship programmes in a variety of global contexts. All IOs under study give the policy some meaningful level of attention and are re-iterating a core set of shared discourses about apprenticeships' functioning and effects. Very often, IOs are doing this in collaboration with each other (e.g., ILO09; OECD05, 09, 10; WB03). As such, the concept of a 'global apprenticeship agenda' appears a useful way of characterising this systematic interest. However, the term 'agenda' is not intended to suggest uniformity or coherence to these collected discourses. Indeed, the way in which a largely similar package of apprenticeship policy is made malleable to IOs' divergent discourses and priorities is notable. Apprenticeships thus act as a somewhat polysemic policy object that can be discursively bent to serve the interests and identities of different IOs.

Reflecting on what contribution these findings make to theoretical debates about global education policy processes, the lack of evidence demonstrating that apprenticeships produce purported outcomes undermines any suggestion that their popularity has emerged from a purely rationalist process of policy selection. Their heavily institutionalised form and extensive reliance on state governance and intervention does not offer much support to a theory of convergence around neoliberal principles and techniques. The use of German-speaking European apprenticeship systems as reference models supports the contention of World Culture Theory that Western 'modernity' represents a touchstone for policy development across all contexts. World Culture Theory does not, however, fully account for the divergent visions of development that each IO articulates through its apprenticeship discourses. The concept of the global knowledge economy and the necessity of maintaining competitiveness within economic globalisation are important discursive foundations shared by all of the IOs. Indeed, material and structural pressures, such as the Global Financial Crisis and youth unemployment, feature in IO publications as some of the most prominent and consistent drivers for looking to apprenticeships. Nonetheless, an International Political Economy perspective does not provide much conceptual depth to understanding why IOs engage with apprenticeship to varying degrees and in pursuit of varying ends.

A more fine-grained understanding of IOs' ideational work – one informed by a constructivist sensibility and thus attentive to the effects of organisational particularities on such activity (Verger and Fontdevila Forthcoming) – therefore appears better positioned to capture

the tension and nuance found within the 'global apprenticeship agenda'. A shared global political economy and postcolonial context are no doubt influential in shaping the perceived necessity and suitability of apprenticeships as a globally mobile policy solution. However, the identities, priorities, mandates, memberships, and cultures of institutions and their constituent actors also exert an influence. The findings of this study suggest firstly, a need to better understand IOs' idea-generation processes, accounting for particularities in their policy scripts and the internal diversity of seemingly unitary global agendas, and secondly, a need to further explore how IOs relate to and affect each other, acknowledging the environmental embeddedness of their distinct and collective policy activity. Only through lenses of this kind is it possible to detect important variations within a superficially convergent policy phenomena such as the 'global apprenticeship agenda'.

Concluding remarks

Three final implications emerge from this study. Firstly, despite the demonstrated diversity of ideas and theories about apprenticeships deployed by IOs, critical perspectives are scarce. Inequality is primarily conceived in terms of economic exclusion, and thus labour market integration becomes the main axis of intervention. Processes of social reproduction and discrimination within apprenticeship systems (Chadderton and Wischmann 2014; Haasler and Gottschall 2015; Protsch and Solga 2016) remain largely unaddressed and gaining access to an apprenticeship is often an implied end to marginalisation.

This connects to a second implication, namely that apprenticeships are presented as a panacea to structural problems, while avoiding structural critique. One policy, which is in reality neither large scale nor widespread (UNESCO 2021), is charged with an impossible list of expectations to satisfy. In the process, the problems of youth unemployment and exclusion are attributed to poorly aligned systems of skill supply and demand and the 'inadequate' skill profiles of young people, transforming a set of structural, societal issues into a question of technical tinkering and individualised responsibility (Valiente, Capsada-Munsech, and Peter G de Otero 2020).

Both implications point to the need for a robust strand of critical research that addresses the 'global apprenticeship agenda'. Indeed, while this article makes an important contribution to understanding the 'architecture of arguments' (Niemann and Martens 2021, 6) within global education policy, a more fine-grained theoretical view of IOs' ideational work compels further exploration, looking beyond discursive outputs to examine intra-institutional variation and contestation through 'insider' empirical studies, and looking beyond the global level to consider the multi-scalar implications and iterations of IOs' interest in apprenticeship policy.

Notes

1. See Martínez-Izquierdo and Sánchez (2022) for a notable exception discussing the European Union (EU).
2. UNESCO, World Bank, OECD, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), ILO, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (Niemann and Martens 2021, 172).
3. It should be noted that large numbers of documents produced by UNESCO and the World Bank were excluded from this synthesis for not meeting authorship requirements. Both organisations have produced many working/discussion papers on the topic of apprenticeships, indicating an active interest in the policy idea.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Clara Fontdevila and Oscar Valiente for their careful and insightful feedback on earlier versions of this article.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This work was supported by Economic and Social Research Council: [Grant Number ES/P000681/1].

ORCID

Ellen Vanderhoven http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7373-1275

References

Adams, Arvil V. 2008. *Skills Development in the Informal Sector of Sub-Saharan Africa*. Washington, DC, USA: World Bank.

Aggarwal, Ashwani. 2020. *ILO Toolkit for Quality Apprenticeships, Volume 2: Guide for Practitioners*. Geneva, Switzerland: ILO.

Ananiadou, Katerina. 2013. *Revisiting Global Trends in TVET: Reflections on Theory and Practice, UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training*. Bonn, Germany: UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

Anderson-Levitt, Kathryn M. 2012. "Complicating the Concept of Culture." *Comparative Education* 48 (4): 441–454. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2011.634285.

Antunes, Fátima. 2016. "Economising Education: From the Silent Revolution to Rethinking Education. A New Moment of Europeanisation of Education?" *European Educational Research Journal* 15 (4): 410–427. https://doi.org/10.1177/1474904116641696.

Axmann, Michael, and Christine Hofmann. 2013a. *Apprenticeship Systems – What Do We Know?* Geneva, Switzerland: ILO.

Axmann, Michael, and Christine Hofmann. 2013b. *Overcoming the Work Inexperience Gap Through Quality Apprenticeships – The ILO's Contribution*. Geneva, Switzerland: ILO.

Bajgar, Matej, and Chiara Criscuolo. 2016. *OECD Evaluation Framework for Modern Apprenticeships in Scotland*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing.

Ball, Stephen J, Carolina Junemann, and Diego Santori. 2017. *Edu. net: Globalisation and Education Policy Mobility*. London, UK: Routledge.

Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. 2006. "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology." *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3 (2): 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa.

Busemeyer, Marius R, and Janis Vossiek. 2016. "Global Convergence or Path Dependency? Skill Formation Regimes in the Globalized Economy." In *The Handbook of Global Education Policy*, edited by Karen Mundy, Andy Green, Bob Lingard, and Antoni Verger, 145–161. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons.

Carroll, Peter, and Aynsley Kellow. 2021. *The OECD: A Decade of Transformation 2011-2021, The OECD from 2011 to 2021*. Berlin, Germany: De Gruyter.

Cedefop. 2014a. *Developing Apprenticeships: Briefing Note*. Thessaloniki, Greece: Cedefop.

Cedefop. 2014b. Skillset and Match (Cedefop's Magazine Promoting Learning for Work) – September 2014 Issue 2. https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/9090.

Cedefop. 2015. *Stronger VET for Better Lives: Cedefop's Monitoring Report on Vocational Education and Training Policies 2010–14*. Thessaloniki, Greece: Cedefop.

Cedefop. 2018a. *Apprenticeship Schemes in European Countries: A Cross-Nation Overview*. Thessaloniki, Greece: Cedefop.

Cedefop. 2018b. *Briefing Note - What Future for Vocational Education and Training in Europe?* Thessaloniki, Greece: Cedefop.

Cedefop. 2020a. "Enhancing European Cooperation in VET: Outcomes of the Riga Cycle." In *Progress in Common Priorities for 2015-20: Final Report*. Thessaloniki, Greece: Cedefop.

Cedefop. 2020b. Skillset and Match (Cedefop's Magazine Promoting Learning at Work) - January 2020 Issue 18. https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/9142_en.pdf.

Cedefop and ETF. 2018. *European Cooperation in VET: One Process, Many Stops - Developments in Vocational Education and Training Policy 2015–17*. Thessaloniki, Greece: Cedefop.

Cedefop and ETF. 2020. *The Importance of Being Vocational: Challenges and Opportunities for VET in the Next Decade*. Thessaloniki, Greece: Cedefop.

Chadderton, Charlotte, and Anke Wischmann. 2014. "Racialised Norms in Apprenticeship Systems in England and Germany." *Journal of Vocational Education & Training* 66 (3): 330–347. https://doi.org/10.1080/13636820.2014.917693.

Dale, Roger. 2000. "Globalization and Education: Demonstrating a "Common World Educational Culture" or Locating a "Globally Structured Educational Agenda"?" *Educational Theory* 50 (4): 427. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-5446.2000.00427.x.

Dale, Roger. 2009. "Contexts, Constraints and Resources in the Development of European Education Space and European Education Policy." In *Globalisation and Europeanisation in Education*, edited by Roger Dale, and Susan Robertson, 23–43. Oxford, UK: Symposium Books.

Edwards, Jr, D. Brent, and Mauro Moschetti. 2021. "The Sociology of Policy Change Within International Organisations: Beyond Coercive and Normative Perspectives – Towards Circuits of Power." *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 19 (1): 55–69. https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2020.1806043.

Elfert, Maren. 2017. *UNESCO's Utopia of Lifelong Learning: An Intellectual History*. London, UK: Routledge.

European Commission. 2002. *Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, and the European Commission, Convened in Copenhagen on 29 and 30 November 2002, on Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training*. Brussels, Belgium: European Comission.

European Commission. 2010. *The Bruges Communiqué from the European Ministers for Vocational Education and Training, the European Social Partners and the European Commission on Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training for the Period 2011–2020 (7 December 2010)*. Brussels, Belgium: European Commission.

European Commission. 2012. *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Moving Youth Into Employment*. Brussels, Belgium: European Commission.

European Commission. 2015. *High-Performance Apprenticeships and Work-Based Learning: 20 Guiding Principles*. Brussels, Belgium: European Commission.

European Commission, European Social Partners, and Council of the European Union. 2013. *European Alliance for Apprenticeships: Declaration of the European Social Partners, the European Commission and the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union*. Brussels, Belgium: European Commission.

Fargion, Valeria, and Marco Mayer. 2015. "The European Union as a Global Social Policy Actor - Discourse and Policy Practice." In *Actors and Agency in Global Social Governance*, edited by Alexandra Kaasch, and Kerstin Martens, 105–129. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Fereday, Jennifer, and Eimear Muir-Cochrane. 2006. "Demonstrating Rigor Using Thematic Analysis: A Hybrid Approach of Inductive and Deductive Coding and Theme Development." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 5 (1): 80–92. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690600500107.

Fergusson, Ross. 2021. "International Organizations' Involvement in Youth Unemployment as a Global Policy Field, and the Global Financial Crisis." In *International Organizations in Global Social Governance*, edited by Kerstin Martens, Dennis Niemann, and Alexandra Kaasch, 31–56. Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature.

Fergusson, Ross, and Nicola Yeates. 2014. "International Governmental Organisations and Global Youth Unemployment: The Normative and Ideational Foundations of Policy Discourses." *Policy & Politics* 42 (3): 439–458. https://doi.org/10.1332/030557312X655648.

Fontdevila, Clara, and Antoni Verger. 2020. "Walking the Washington Talk? An Analysis of the World Bank's Policy-Practice Disjuncture in Education." In *Shaping Policy Agendas*, edited by David Dolowitz, Magdaléna Hadjiisky, and Romuald Normand, 162–183. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Forsberg, Sara. 2019. "Setting a Global Agenda of Education: Cooperation and Tension Within the Global Education Policy Field." *Geoforum; Journal of Physical, Human, and Regional Geosciences* 100: 32–40. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2019.01.019.

Galguera, Miriam Preckler. 2018. "TVET at UNESCO." In *Globalization, Mass Education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training: The Influence of UNESCO in Botswana and Namibia*, edited by Miriam Preckler Galguera, 67–73. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Grollmann, Philipp. 2018. "Varieties of "Duality": Work-Based Learning and Vocational Education in International Comparative Research." In *Integration of Vocational Education and Training Experiences: Purposes, Practices and Principles*, edited by Sarojni Choy, Gun-Britt Wärvik, and Viveca Lindberg, 63–82. Singapore: Springer.

Haasler, Simone R., and Karin Gottschall. 2015. "Still a Perfect Model? The Gender Impact of Vocational Training in Germany." *Journal of Vocational Education & Training* 67 (1): 78–92. https://doi.org/10.1080/13636820.2014.922118.

Hollander, Astrid, and Naing Yee Mar. 2009. "Towards Achieving TVET for All: The Role of the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training." In *International Handbook of Education for the Changing World of Work: Bridging Academic and Vocational Learning*, edited by Rupert Maclean, and David N. Wilson, 41–57. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Hughes, Steve, and Nigel Haworth. 2011. "Articles." *Relations Industrielles* 66 (1): 34–53. https://doi.org/10.7202/1005104ar.

ILO. 2008. *ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization*. Geneva, Switzerland: ILO.
ILO. 2011. *Upgrading Informal Apprenticeship Systems: Skills for Employment Policy Brief*. Geneva, Switzerland: ILO.
ILO. 2012. *Key Elements of Quality Apprenticeships*. Geneva, Switzerland: ILO.
ILO. 2017. *ILO Toolkit for Quality Apprenticeships, Volume 1: Guide for Policy Makers*. Geneva, Switzerland: ILO.
ILO. 2018. *Making Apprenticeships and Workplace Learning Inclusive of Persons with Disabilities*. Geneva, Switzerland: ILO.
ILO. 2019a. *Measuring the Costs and Benefits of Apprenticeship Training*. Geneva, Switzerland: ILO.
ILO. 2019b. *Quality Apprenticeships: Addressing Skills Mismatch and Youth Unemployment*. Geneva, Switzerland: ILO.
ILO. 2020. *Preventing Exclusion from the Labour Market: Tackling the COVID-19 Youth Employment Crisis*. Geneva, Switzerland: ILO.
ILO and OECD. 2014. *Promoting Better Labour Market Outcomes for Youth: Report on Youth Employment and Apprenticeships Prepared for the G20 Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting Melbourne, Australia*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing.
ILO, O. E. C. D. 2017. *Engaging Employers in Apprenticeship Opportunities: Making it Happen Locally*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing.
Jakobi, Anja P. 2009. "Global Education Policy in the Making: International Organisations and Lifelong Learning." *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 7 (4): 473–487. https://doi.org/10.1080/14767720903412275.
Jeon, Shinyoung. 2019. "Unlocking the Potential of Migrants Through Vocational Education and Training: Cross-Country Analysis." In *OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing.
Klees, Steven J, Joel Samoff, and Nelly P Stromquist. 2012. *The World Bank and Education: Critiques and Alternatives*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
Klees, Steven J, Nelly P Stromquist, Joel Samoff, and Salim Vally. 2019. "The 2018 World Development Report on Education: A Critical Analysis." *Development and Change* 50 (2): 603–620. https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12483.
Langille, Brian. 2011. "Labour Law's Theory of Justice." In *The Idea of Labour Law*, edited by Guy Davidov, and Brian Langille, 101–119. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
Lingard, Bob, and Sam Sellar. 2013. "Globalization, Edu-Business and Network Governance: The Policy Sociology of Stephen J. Ball and Rethinking Education Policy Analysis." *London Review of Education* 11 (3): 265–280. https://doi.org/10.1080/14748460.2013.840986.
Lingard, Bob, and Sam Sellar. 2016. "The Changing Organizational and Global Significance of the OECD's Education Work." In *The Handbook of Global Education Policy*, edited by Karen Mundy, Andy Green, Bob Lingard, and Antoni Verger, 357–373. Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell.
Mackenzie, Mhairi, Ellie Conway, Annette Hastings, Moira Munro, and Catherine O'Donnell. 2013. "Is 'Candidacy' a Useful Concept for Understanding Journeys Through Public Services? A Critical Interpretive Literature Synthesis." *Social Policy & Administration* 47 (7): 806–825. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9515.2012.00864.x.
Marope, P. T. M., B. Chakroun, and K. P. Holmes. 2015. *Unleashing the Potential: Transforming Technical and Vocational Education and Training*. Paris, France: UNESCO Publishing.
Martínez-Izquierdo, Luis, and Mónica Torres Sánchez. 2022. "Dual Vocational Education and Training Systems' Governance Model and Policy Transfer: The Role of the European Union in its Diffusion." *Social Sciences* 11 (9): 403. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11090403.
Maul, Daniel. 2019. *The International Labour Organization: 100 Years of Global Social Policy*. Berlin, Germany: De Gruyter.
Menashy, Francine. 2013. "Interrogating an Omission: The Absence of a Rights-Based Approach to Education in World Bank Policy Discourse." *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 34 (5): 749–764. https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2013.728368.
Meyer, John W, John Boli, George M Thomas, and Francisco O Ramirez. 1997. "World Society and the Nation-State." *American Journal of Sociology* 103 (1): 144–181. https://doi.org/10.1086/231174.
Molz, A. 2015. *Delivering TVET Through Quality Apprenticeships: Report of the UNESCO-UNEVOC Virtual Conference*. Bonn, Germany: UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training.
Moutsios, Stavros. 2009. "International Organisations and Transnational Education Policy." *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 39 (4): 469–481. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057920802156500.
Ngcwangu, Siphelo. 2015. "The Ideological Underpinnings of World Bank TVET Policy: Implications of the Influence of Human Capital Theory on South African TVET Policy." *Education as Change* 19 (3): 24–45. https://doi.org/10.1080/16823206.2015.1085620.
Niemann, Dennis, and Kerstin Martens. 2021. "Global Discourses, Regional Framings and Individual Showcasing: Analyzing the World of Education IOs." In *International Organizations in Global Social Governance*, edited by Kerstin Martens, Dennis Niemann, and Alexandra Kaasch, 163–186. Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature.
Niemann, Dennis, Kerstin Martens, and Alexandra Kaasch. 2021. "The Architecture of Arguments in Global Social Governance: Examining Populations and Discourses of International Organizations in Social Policies." In

International Organizations in Global Social Governance, edited by Kerstin Martens, Dennis Niemann, and Alexandra Kaasch, 3–28. Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature.
Novelli, Mario, Sean Higgins, Mehmet Ugur, and Oscar Valiente. 2014. *The Political Economy of Education Systems in Conflict-Affected Contexts: A Rigorous Literature Review*. London, UK: Department for International Development.
OECD. 2010. *Learning for Jobs, OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing.
OECD. 2012. *OECD Note on 'Quality Apprenticeships' for the G20 Task Force on Employment*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing.
OECD. 2014. "Background Paper Prepared by the OECD." In *Paper Prepared for the G20-OECD-EC Conference on Quality Apprenticeships for Giving Youth a Better Start in the Labour Market*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing.
OECD. 2015. *OECD Skills Outlook 2015: Youth, Skills and Employability*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing.
OECD. 2016. *Job Creation and Local Economic Development 2016*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing.
OECD. 2018. "Seven Questions About Apprenticeships: Answers from International Experience." In *OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing.
OECD and ILO. 2011. *Giving Youth a Better Start: A Policy Note for the G20 Meeting of Labour and Employment Ministers - Paris, 26–27 September 2011*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing.
Poschen, Peter. 2009. "Decent Work for All: From ILO Initiative to a Global Goal." In *International Handbook of Education for the Changing World of Work*, edited by Rupert Maclean, and David N. Wilson, 111–128. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
Prøitz, Tine Sophie. 2015. "Learning Outcomes as a Key Concept in Policy Documents Throughout Policy Changes." *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* 59 (3): 275–296. https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2014.904418.
Protsch, Paula, and Heike Solga. 2016. "The Social Stratification of the German VET System." *Journal of Education and Work* 29 (6): 637–661. https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080.2015.1024643.
Ramirez, Francisco O, John W Meyer, and Julia Lerch. 2016. "World Society and the Globalization of Educational Policy." In *The Handbook of Global Education Policy*, edited by Karen Mundy, Andy Green, Bob Lingard, and Antoni Verger, 43–63. Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell.
Robertson, Susan L. 2005. "Re-Imagining and Rescripting the Future of Education: Global Knowledge Economy Discourses and the Challenge to Education Systems." *Comparative Education* 41 (2): 151–170. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050060500150922.
Robertson, Susan L. 2010. "The EU, 'Regulatory State Regionalism' and New Modes of Higher Education Governance." *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 8 (1): 23–37. https://doi.org/10.1080/14767720903574033.
Robertson, Susan, Mario Novelli, Roger Dale, Leon Tikly, Hillary Dachi, and Ndibelema Alphonce. 2007. *Globalisation, Education and Development: Ideas, Actors and Dynamics*. London: Department for International Development.
Ryan, Paul, Karin Wagner, Silvia Teuber, and Uschi Backes-Gellner. 2010. "Trainee Pay in Britain, Germany and Switzerland: Markets and Institutions." In *SKOPE Research Paper No. 96*. Cardiff, UK: SKOPE.
Sanchez, Puerta, Maria Laura, David A Robalino, Victoria Strokova, Nick Lord, and Mathilde Marie Anne Perinet. 2015. *Skills and Jobs: Lessons Learned and Options for Collaboration*. Washington, DC, USA: World Bank.
Snyder, Hannah. 2019. "Literature Review as a Research Methodology: An Overview and Guidelines." *Journal of Business Research* 104: 333–339. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039.
Spiel, Christiane, Simon Schwartzman, Marius Busemeyer, Nico Cloete, Gili Drori, Lorenz Lassnigg, Barbara Schober, Michele Schweisfurth, and Suman Verma. 2018. "The Contribution of Education to Social Progress." In *Rethinking Society for the 21st Century: Report of the International Panel for Social Progress, Edited by International Panel on Social Progress (IPSP)*, 753–778. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Steedman, Hilary. 2012. *Overview of Apprenticeship Systems and Issues: ILO Contribution to the G20 Task Force on Employment*. Geneva, Switzerland: ILO.
Stone, Diane. 2012. "Transfer and Translation of Policy." *Policy Studies* 33 (6): 483–499. https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2012.695933.
Subrahmanyam, Gita. 2013. *Tackling Youth Unemployment Through TVET: Report of the UNESCO-UNEVOC Online Conference, 25 June to 9 July 2013. Bonn, Germany*: UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training.
Tikly, Leon. 2013. "Reconceptualizing TVET and Development: A Human Capability and Social Justice Approach." In *Revisiting Global Trends in TVET: Reflections on Theory and Practice*, 1–39. Bonn, Germany: UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training.
Tur Porres, Gisselle, Danny Wildemeersch, and Maarten Simons. 2014. "Reflections on the Emancipatory Potential of Vocational Education and Training Practices: Freire and Rancière in Dialogue." *Studies in Continuing Education* 36 (3): 275–289. https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2014.904783.
UIS and UNESCO-UNEVOC. 2006. *Participation in Formal TVET Programmes Worldwide: An Initial Statistical Study*. Bonn, Germany: UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

UN. 2015. *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. New York, NY, USA: UN Division for Sustainable Development Goals.
UNESCO. 2012. *Youth and Skills: Education for All Global Monitoring Report*. Paris, France: UNESCO.
UNESCO. 2016. *Recommendation Concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), 2015*. Paris, France: UNESCO.
UNESCO. 2021. *Global Education Monitoring Report 2021/2: Non-State Actors in Education: Who Chooses? Who Loses?* Paris, France: UNESCO Publishing.
UNESCO-UNEVOC. 2010. International Conference: Reorienting TVET Policy Towards Education for Sustainable Development – Final Report. Bonn, Germany: UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training.
Vaccari, Victoria, and Meg P. Gardinier. 2019. "Toward One World or Many? A Comparative Analysis of OECD and UNESCO Global Education Policy Documents." *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning* 11 (1): 68–86. https://doi.org/10.18546/IJDEGL.11.1.05.
Valiente, Oscar. 2014. "The OECD Skills Strategy and the Education Agenda for Development." *International Journal of Educational Development* 39: 40–48. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2014.08.008.
Valiente, Oscar, Queralt Capsada-Munsech, and Jan Peter G de Otero. 2020. "Educationalisation of Youth Unemployment Through Lifelong Learning Policies in Europe." *European Educational Research Journal* 19 (6): 525–543. https://doi.org/10.1177/1474904120908751.
Verger, Antoni, and Clara Fontdevila. Forthcoming. "Ongoing Directions in Global Studies in Education Policy: Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed." In *Handbook of Education Policy Research*, edited by Lora Cohen-Vogel, Janelle Scott, and Peter Youngs. American Educational Research Association.
Verger, Antoni, Lluís Parcerisa, and Clara Fontdevila. 2019. "The Growth and Spread of Large-Scale Assessments and Test-Based Accountabilities: A Political Sociology of Global Education Reforms." *Educational Review* 71 (1): 5–30. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2019.1522045.
Weyland, Kurt. 2005. "Theories of Policy Diffusion Lessons from Latin American Pension Reform." *World Politics* 57 (2): 262–295. https://doi.org/10.1353/wp.2005.0019.
Wilkins, Andrew, Jordi Collet-Sabé, Brad Gobby, and Judith Hangartner. 2019. "Translations of New Public Management: A Decentred Approach to School Governance in Four OECD Countries." *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 17 (2): 147–160. https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2019.1588102.
World Bank. 2012. *World Development Report 2013: Jobs*. Washington, DC, USA: World Bank.
World Bank. 2017. *Poland Catching-Up Regions: Strengthening the Implementation of Work-Based Learning*. Washington, DC, USA: World Bank.
World Bank. 2018. *World Development Report 2018: Learning to Realize Education's Promise*. Washington, DC, USA: World Bank.