Western University

Scholarship@Western

Education Publications

Education Faculty

Fall 2020

What are we Saving? Tracing Governing Knowledge and Truth Discourse in Global COVID-19 Policy Papers

Lynette Shultz
University of Alberta

Melody Viczko
Western University, mviczko@uwo.ca

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/edupub

Part of the International and Comparative Education Commons

What are we Saving? Tracing Governing Knowledge and Truth Discourse in Global COVID-19 Policy Papers

Draft, pre-print version of article under review.

Abstract As the world went into a swift lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, sending individuals to their homes and shutting businesses and institutions, the closing of schools posed big problems. The majority of the world's children were out of school leading to the largest period of school closures in history. We saw educators turning towards responses, not aimed at collegial and community-engaged strategies for education in an emergency but to online learning cast as education/business as usual. This study explores the logic driving this global response through the policy papers released by three key global education actors: 1) the OECD and its paper *A Framework to Guide Education Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020*; 2) UNESCO's *Global Education Coalition #LearningNeverStops*; and 3) the World Bank's *Guidance Note on Education System's Response to COVID-19;* and *Guidance Note: Remote Learning and Covid 19.* We draw on Bacchi's post-structural policy analysis to make visible the key concepts and binaries used within policy texts and to understand the **technologies of saving** that were invoked in each policy response, locating the education programs, activities and actors within knowledge practices in educational reform. This article explores the World Bank, OECD, and UNESCO responses using an analysis of knowledge harmonization and difference among these institutions as well as their location as key norm setters and governing actors in the field of education.

Introduction
In March 2020, schools were closed around the world as nations and communities moved swiftly to control the spread of the COVID-19 virus that had quickly become a global pandemic. The rapid and extensive movement of the virus across borders meant policies were made and remade just as fast as news spread of the imminent danger of massive loss of life. Schools and higher education institutions were immediately closed, along with other places where large groups of people would meet and interact. The impact has been unprecedented in its scope. While the world has grown used to schooling being abruptly halted in environmental disasters, wars, political upheavals, and other localized disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic changed the relations and activities of the world's education systems. The majority of children were out of school leading to the largest period of school closures in history. We saw educators turning towards responses that cast online learning as education/business as usual. We became concerned as we saw a unifying trend that did not include collegial and community engaged strategies for education in an emergency. This study explores the logic driving this global response through the policy papers released by three key global education actors: 1) the OECD and its paper *A Framework to Guide Education Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020* (hereafter called the OECD Framework); 2) UNESCO's *Global Education Coalition #LearningNeverStops*; and 3) the World Bank's *Guidance Note on Education System's*

Response to COVID-19 (hereafter called WB Education System Response) and *Guidance Note: Remote Learning and Covid 19* (hereafter called WB Remote Learning Guide). These international organizations (IOs), all major players in the global governance of education, responded quickly to school closures. This article explores these responses using an analysis of knowledge harmonization and difference among these institutions as well as their location as key norm setters and governing actors in the field of education. These IOs have dedicated decades of work to secure this position as they broadcast their importance in finding *global solutions to global problems*. They have mostly been well funded and in the case of UNESCO, given increased visibility by other IOs. UNESCO enjoys a renewed prestige among educators and governance bodies. In this, the IOs are known to present solutions to "save" education. We are interested in this paper at how the broadcasting of these solutions by IOs renders invisible local notions of what education should be around the world, by the technologies of comparison, standardization and formalization of schooling offered through the IOs' solutions. Grek (2020) speaks to the moral urgency communicated by these global actors: "Financial investment in collaborations is increasing and so is hope: *If only we had known, we could have acted*" (p. 309). They are in the business of saving education. But what exactly are they saving?

We note in our study the uniformity of turning toward private sector technology providers as the key legitimate response to school closures. A network of IOs and non-government actors, as well as edu-business and edtech providers across networks of responses, have shown there has been a remarkable global consensus on digitally mediated distance education (Williamson, 2020), ensuring the pandemic problems of education lead to economic gains. Yet, these speedy responses from IOs lacked any reference to knowledge created and promoted through the frameworks of, for example, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) that provide holistic readings of ongoing emergencies and policy knowledge that speaks to creating strengthened and resilient communities. Such glaring omissions in the COVID-19 pandemic responses of issues related to sustainability, climate crises and human rights are alarming, given the previous efforts aimed at mobilizing policy knowledge and particular digital data at solving these global crises. In examining the policy responses from these three IOs to address the pandemic crisis, we ask: What technologies of saving are communicated through their responses to COVID-19 and directions to educators? In what ways does the interplay of their responses provide a governing influence on education in the global emergency caused by COVID-19?

The Power of Policy Knowledge
The logics in which IOs have exerted influence in distributing policy knowledge into local educational governing practices has been a concern across different research agendas. In drawing attention to the dominance of quantification in IO involvement, Grek (2020) invokes a concern for Science and Technology Studies (STS) analyses of controversies in public debates, whereby "expert knowledge would clash with public, lay knowledge" (p. 313). For example, in the context of examining the unfolding of the OECD's first literacy study in the early 1990s, the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), Grek argues that this format allowed the IO to develop its capacities for comparative testing regimes, as it instigated the persuasive power of the OECD in education policy comparisons, while also increasing revenues for the agencies administering the survey (Grek, 2020). But more importantly, she finds, IALS "created a circle

of like-minded expert communities, who found in these studies a platform for promoting the problematisation of specific issues, their institutionalisation through their exchanges and the setting up of the study, as well as their legitimation, in the form of advice to failing countries, once the results were published" (p. 317). These relations work to set the boundaries of the field of education; what is considered legitimate in governance, curriculum, pedagogy, and overall goals of education (See also Ball 2012; Robertson 2012; Bonal & Rambla 2003). Others have identified the normative and cognitive influences of the OECD, as well. In a review of the OECD, Woodward (2009) describes two dominant models of governance by which the OECD is able to enact its power in global governance. First, cognitive governance is a distinctive mode of influence of the OECD, in that shared ideological positions across its membership ensure cohesiveness and commitment. Additionally, through normative governance, by changing the epistemological values through comparative systems, for example, the OECD has been able to achieve its most influential role in education policy. In a time in which networked governance increases the role of actors outside formal government spaces, the OECD has "strengthened its hand as a centre of technical expertise, data collection and data analysis, at a time when data have become central to the new governance at both global and national level" (Sellar and Lingard 2013).

Yet in this system of governance, Grek (2020) called for an interrogation that goes beyond considering IOs influence as solitary actors, suggesting more attention needs to be given to the interplay between IOs. Additionally, IOs have been recognized as playing "a significant role in the global flow of new ideas and institutional imperatives for higher education" (Shahjahan 2012, p. 216). IOs represent more than their individual contributions to policy, but, as Shahjahan points out, they are "complex hubs of policy communities" (p. 216). They mediate the assemblages of nation states and global organization in relation to domestic and foreign policies. How IOs operate logics of knowledge control in the rapid responses to COVID-19 requires we recognize their influence not through legislative means, but through the soft forms of power that influence normative and cognitive governance, the types of *social power* that control local governance responses, at the state and more local levels. Importantly, the tracing of subjugation of alternative knowledges is key to understanding the knowledge/power dynamic to produce dominant totalizing knowledges (what Foucault called "global knowledges" [1980], those that "survive and rise above the others" (Madigan 1992), compared to local knowledges as alternative knowledges that "are silenced through their disqualification" (p. 269). Foucault's (1980) concept of local knowledge as one that is invoked in particular cultural relevance but simultaneously denied legitimacy to be more fully performed was useful in considering the global totalizing dominance of the transnational ideals over local knowledges of education practice.

Among the critique of IO influence of governance is a concern for the operationalization of power across institutions, requiring a sound conceptualization of what that means. Fricker (2007) proposed more attention should be devoted to the ways in which power functions through an examination of *epistemic injustices*, whereby the wrongs perpetuated are viewed through a concept of *social power*, recognizing that power is more than a protest concept. Rather, power operates as "a practically, socially situated capacity to control others' actions,

where this capacity may be exercised (actively or passively) by particular social agents, or alternatively, it may operate purely structurally" (p. 13). Elaborating on Foucault's notions of distributed power, she argues for that in questioning "wherever power is at work, we should be ready to ask who or what is controlling whom, and why" (p. 14).

Policy Study Approach: Governing Knowledge

Carol Bacchi's "What's the problem represented to be?" (WPR) approach to post-structural policy analysis is a critical approach aimed at interrogating how governing takes place (Bacchi and Goodwin 2019). The analysis emphasizes making policy visible, re-examining how policy and its "things" are "constituted, or brought into being" (p. 4). This Foucault-influenced post-structural perspective is concerned with the rules and regulations that order our lives, with attention "directed to the heterogenous practices, in particular the knowledge practices, that produce hierarchical and egalitarian forms of rule" (p. 3). The knowledges that undergird policies are called into question in order to understand their constructed and contingent nature and to make visible the effects of such knowledge practices in how governing takes place, including the effects on subjects, objects, places and even the kinds of problems that emerge as important for policy makers. Inherent in this approach, then, is an understanding of policy that encapsulates more than conventional legislated institutions and spaces, but also to include broader societal movements across "numerous sites, agencies and 'ways of knowing' that interrelate in important ways to shape social rules" (p. 5). Consequently, drawing on Foucauldian notions of governmentality, government is considered to be any form of activity that "aims to shape, guide or affect the conduct of people" (p. 5) and policy refers to "how order is maintained through politics, understood as the heterogeneous strategic relations that shape lives and worlds" (p. 6). The three organizations in this analysis represent policy actors already embedded in the global governance and standardization of education through means such as testing programs (eg. OECD's PISA, PIAAC and TALIS), economic reforms (World Bank, Education for All) and development policies (e.g. Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals).

Bacchi's WPR is guided by a series of questions that enable analysis of how problems are constituted through policies. The approach involves working backwards from the solutions presented in policies, with texts being "levers to open up reflection on the forms of governing, and associated effece, instituting through a particular way of constituting a 'problem'" (Bacchi and Goodwin 2019, p. 18). In this way, the emphasis is on the solutions presented in policies as "the effects of policy proposals and the representations they necessarily contain" (Bacchi 1999, p. 13). In our analysis, we drew on a series of these questions, each of which is articulated below, linking to analysis that was carried out. Policy here is viewed as the responses from each of these three organizations as they aim to provide order and shape to the ways in which education actors engage in COVID-19 reforms but also the means by which these engagements create effects in institutions, including how education itself is constituted through the technologies of engagement. The focus is not on the intentions of particular responses but rather on how these actors govern through their articulated responses to constitute knowledge practices that guide what is valued in addressing issues arising from pandemic influences. The focus of our analysis was on the shift to remote and online learning amongst pandemic responses. Our use of WPR provides a look into the complexity of IOs and local schools systems where policy harmonization

is not seen as a direct linear process but one of "assemblages of apparatuses, processes and practices that make governing happen" (Clarke and Ozga 2011, in Grek 2020, p. 313).

Initially, we examined the first two WPR questions: *what the problem is represented to be* in each response from the trifecta of global institutions, as a means for exploring *which assumptions underlie these problem representations* within policy responses from the OECD, World Bank and UNESCO. Here we looked at the policy position documents with a view to understand the kind of approach being advocated for and how that constitutes the problem of COVID-19 in this case. Drawing attention to the key concepts and binaries used within policy texts helps to appreciate the **technologies of saving** that were invoked in each policy response, locating the education programs, activities and actors within knowledge practices in educational reform. Technologies in this sense draws on Foucauldian notions of governmentality "that comprise the means by which governing becomes practicable" (Bacchi 2020, p. 90). Additionally, in relation to these problem representations, we examined *what are the discursive, subjectification and lived effects of these problem representations on educational spaces*. As Bacchi succinctly states, "people don't create policies; policies create people" (p. x) and their experiences and objects of education, too.

In the discussion section, we considered a final set of WPR questions: *what is left unproblematic or silenced* in these representations, noting *what might be conceptualized differently*. The shape given to problems is made visible here by noting how other knowledges are subjugated and relegated to the margins of the reality in which policies are practiced. This Foucauldian influence in Bacchi's WPR aims at demonstrating how knowledge practices are valued while others remain invisible, and bringing forth the possibilities for how we might "think otherwise" (p. 22) into practice.

World Bank's COVID-19 Pandemic Response
Adhering to neoliberal rationales, the World Bank education policy regime has over the past decades produced a market model of education provision that harmonized schooling in much of the world. Through the governance technologies of loans and structural adjustment agreements, World Bank, along with collaborative IOs, led a global education transformation beginning in 1990, "*Education for All*', that aimed to bring education to "every citizen in every society". Here the World Bank led a particular knowledge mobilization that promoted market and business framing of educational problems (see Mundy, 2007; Shahjahan, 2012). Other international organizations followed with their own contribution to a harmonization of this message. Data produced and disseminated spoke of a critical urgency in formalizing and standardizing education around the world. Employing various technologies linking education, skilled and nimble human capital, and the urgency of *saving economies*, the World Bank produced waves of knowledge dissemination, disciplining ministries of education into reforming national and local education systems and the provision of schooling.

Over these decades, the World Bank has become very embedded in country-level ministries of education, with representation in some cases, while, in others, providing a powerful backstory and policy knowledge legitimizing role. The World Bank response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus in this study, shows how the key concept of *learning poverty* is stated as the problem

to which globally located solutions can provide support for locally located problems through the World Bank Framework for action. The World Bank's *Guidance Note on Education System's Response to COVID-19;* and *Guidance Note: Remote Learning and Covid 19* are technical directives to guide ministries of education towards a prompt recovery in order to avoid what they describe as a "learning crisis leading to higher levels of *learning poverty*" (World Bank 2020a, p. 1, italics added). The logic of these guides is that by missing out on schooling, students not only experience a loss of economic capital, they *become* a loss of economic capital. Students are viewed as human capital subjects for the national and global economic system and, therefore, an immediate return to a formal education system is the only way to ensure the future of the global economy. For example, the extension of learning poverty into global economic effects is stated: "Extended interrupted education that disengages students from the learning process has the potential cost of reversing gains in learning results" (World Bank 2020b, p. 1). The world here is not described as dealing with *education in an emergency* with its wide impacts on individuals, communities, and nations but *an emergency in the education* of human capital.

Such one-dimensional marketizing responses from the World Bank are not unexpected. It is, after all, a bank, and acts on behalf of the global financial system and its wealthy advisors. However, given the World Bank's already established relationship with indebted nations as the source of education policy knowledge expertise, these two *Guidance Notes* carry an expectation of implementation. They are *a plan to follow* in getting schooling *back to normal,* of saving education and the future of the economy. The two documents act in unison with a definition of the problem and the recommended response, online schooling, intertwined in both.

The key solution presented in the World Bank policies to achieve equity is to add more technology, achievable through partnerships with private actors so that education moves from the realm of public capital to become an object for private actor gain. "[P]olicymakers should consult outside stakeholders (e.g. ICST ministries, broadcast regulators/ companies, EdTech startups), ensuring the rapid development and scale-up of the designated remote learning modality" (p. 1). In the World Bank response, the risks to the health of the market are the problem and, so, the only solution that makes sense is market-based: the market saves the market. In this problematization, the Guidance Notes are clear directives for ministries of education. The offer of World Bank implementation assistance makes even more clear the parameters for what counts as legitimate policy knowledge in developing country-level responses.

The concept of equity is co-opted in the two World Bank COVID-19 guides to describe children's lack of access.

> This is at the core of the World Bank's approach in responding to COVID-19, which aims to ensure all children and youth have access to a quality education. To achieve this end, education systems must confront issues of inequity front and centre. (World Bank 2020b, p. 1)

Here, the notion of equity is more closely aligned with a corporate idea of equity as the ownership of an asset. A student educated in the formal global education system is an asset by

becoming an asset through this training. That is, the student subject is a continual economic actor, homo economics is the only rational subject position for students (see Brown 2015). This is in contrast to a more holistic idea of equity that includes social, economic, political, and environmental justice such as that emerging from the policies of the Sustainable Development Goals or the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People. In the Guidance Notes, equity exists to ensure access to market principles in which educational practices cannot be separated. If previous World Bank policy aimed at ensuring neoliberal policy regimes prevailed, with educational reform to save nation state economies, then the Guidance Notes in the pandemic ensure the World Bank "business as usual" prevails.

OECD's COVID-19 Pandemic Response
Being positioned as a global education problem-solver, "a key governing logic of our age" (Bacchi 2020, p. 84), the OECD response to the pandemic is formulated as a checklist for reform. Schleicher, OECD's Director of the Directorate of Education Skills, and Fernando Reimers, of the Global Education Innovation Initiative at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, launched the OECD policy paper "*Framework to Guide Education Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020*" and distributed it online to governments and public, private, and non-profit education stakeholders. Data to inform the Framework were collected from a survey structured as a "rapid assessment" of education needs among 98 countries. Additionally, the Framework integrates analysis of the most recent PISA data to inform "a checklist to guide the development of an education strategy during the Pandemic" (OECD 2020, p. 4).

Bacchi's (2020) study showed how OECD has played a key role in producing a dominating technocratic problem-solving model of education while, at the same time, producing "passive and divided subjects" (p. 98) without agency, rather than citizens actively engaged in education decisions and program development. Our analysis showcases that the solutions offered by the OECD articulate a similar technocratic solution, what Tania Li (2007) indicates is a process of rendering technical problems within policy. That is, the technical approach of a checklist for change frames policy problems and solutions geared towards technical fixes that limit attention to the root causes in which education is currently situated. The Framework, as a series of items in a checklist of actionable strategies, aims at providing maneuvers to be used by "national, state or local education authorities or by leaders of education networks" (OECD 2020, p. 4). The solution of a checklist suggests a technical set of knowledges that fit within the rationalized, knowable problem of education during the pandemic. The Framework is based on survey data that gathered information about responses to COVID-19, collected between March 18 and 27, 2020, sent to networks of "educators and influencers, those in the networks of the OECD and of the Global Education Innovation Initiative at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, with assistance from colleagues in several education organizations" (p. 4). The survey focused on educational responses during the crises of the pandemic, as captured during a short period between March 18 and 27, 2020.

In our analysis, we considered how the Framework represented the problem of education during the pandemic. The key concept of autonomy was used in the Framework as a major means by which to articulate a tenuous relationship between the collaborative yet independent learner, a set of divided practices involved in education for both students and teachers. As a checklist, the

recommendations suggest that students should be guided to develop the independence of self-directed learning where direct learning is not possible. Teachers were cast between the binary of the collaborative professional and the autonomous individual, a necessary positioning in the shift to making online and other modalities of delivery possible. The "silver lining" of the educational response to COVID-19 offered in the report is the capacity to develop students' learning autonomy and teacher professional autonomy, while at the same time bolstering public-private partnerships. The divided autonomous subject here, then, is one that navigates personal learning within private resource platforms.

Partnership was another key concept invoked in the Framework, but in almost all instances in which the term is used, relationships between education and the private sector are made visible through the explicit language, constituting the problem as one of needing private resources to solve the crises of the pandemic. This is a form of dividing practice, in which the division between private and public actors renders the public ones less useful, if not nearly invisible, in the conditions of pandemic. For example, in identifying the means of educational delivery, the recommendation is to "explore partnerships with the private sector and the community in securing the resources to provide those devices and connectivity" (p. 4). Online learning continues as a focus, noting, "the period of distancing is an opportunity to provide online learning opportunities for job skill development. Governments should explore partnerships with the private sector to extend the availability of those opportunities through online or similar modalities during the exigency" (p. 9). Even where community actors are mentioned, they sit with assemblages of partnerships involving private actors, such as noting that where online education is not feasible, "partnerships with community organizations and the private sector" (p. 5) to explore alternate means of delivery are encouraged.

Finally, PISA data in this Framework, as supporting knowledges for engaging private sector edutech business, emerge as a set of standardized yet perpetual truths, rendered visible by a governing by numbers (Grek 2009). The persistent need to validate the comparative data collected through the PISA sets up comparator criteria for measuring what works in education. Yet, in the Framework, we see a secondary set of survey data on which the checklist items are based, collected with expedient measures to capture the global responses of the pandemic. Thus, the immediacy of the pandemic crisis is tampered with the "long-held" truths of PISA, about the incapabilities of education systems to handle educational technology and for the teaching profession to deliver the education needed in this crisis. The governing by numbers of PISA and other survey data represents the problem as rational, technical and, consequently, relieved through a rationalized checklist for action.

UNESCO's COVID-19 Pandemic Response
UNESCO's response to the global pandemic school closure emerged as somewhat unique, a two-pronged approach. Unlike the World Bank and OECD with their pandemic policy papers, UNESCO communicated their response to the global COVID-19 pandemic schools closure in a webpage, launching the *Global Education Coalition* (UNESCO 2020a) and the hashtag #LearningNeverStops. While UNESCO has played a role in decades of curriculum development designed for local teachers and students providing a quite diverse range of ideas and supporting knowledge holders from around the world, the new coalition was targeted very specifically at a

unified and urgent move to online education provision. The coalition aimed to support online learning with "equitable solutions and access" (UNESCO 2020a) and enabling coordinated, networked responses. In the coalition and #LearningNeverStops launch, UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay, described the current time of crises as a "radically new age of learning" (Azoulay 2020, 0.16 min) where "schooling on our planet has gone virtual" (0.17min). She continued with a call for "innovation, partnership, and solidarity" (0. 35min) to address the urgency and ending her message with the idea that what we were witnessing was the transformation of education and that the work done now to save schooling is the knowledge we need for the future of education (1:28 min).

The hashtag #LearningNeverStops travelled through the UNESCO network spreading the message and the call for saving schooling through online provision. This crowdsourcing for answers to the implementation of online schooling enrols people across sectors bringing them to hear from the newly formed coalition made up of members of "the UN family, civil society, IT partners, and media companies" (Azoulay 2020, 0: 56). Included in the list are influential large international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) along with some of the world's key regional development banks, including the World Bank. The information technology and media companies are some of the world's largest corporations, including Microsoft, Google, Facebook, Weidong, Coursera, Zoom, Moodle, Huawei, and IBM to name a few. To possible members, UNESCO offers the following invitation:

> Interested organizations should clearly specify what free support, tools or services they can offer countries that might help them extend educational opportunities during periods of school closure. Emphasis is placed on 'free'. The coalition seeks to broker solutions with country needs and, in the current emergency context, all solutions listed on the coalition platform should be available free of charge. (UNESCO 2020a)

At the time of this study, the corporate partners were included in a list and linked as providing solutions (UNESCO 2020b). There is no indication of other partnerships or negotiations made as a result of this list and a search of such agreements is beyond the scope of this study. However, despite a caveat published on the website describing participation by corporate entities as "free of charge", given the massive interest in a quick move to online learning, a lucrative market for online education, now boosted by the global agencies, was opening before them. Such relationships are the foundation of most public-private partnerships and they are intended to lead to economic gain through the relationship (see Robertson 2012).

In UNESCO's coalition building for the task of "designing and deploying solutions" (Azoulay 2020, 1:08), it is key to look at how this approach works to position education as an object of mobility as it moves out into the UNESCO's global network. The objectification of education through a hashtag renders education as mobile, networked and diffused, across a coalition of actors and into the extensive reach of social media. If the future of schooling was indeed online, the private sector actors were ready to see that to fruition. In addition to individual corporation benefits, the private sector as a whole is positioned on the UNESCO website as being on standby, ready to provide what was needed for worldwide education. Edu-business is positioned as the ultimate saving subject, ready to deliver an objectified online education. These private actors are

featured alongside large civil society organizations and development banks, blurring the public- and private-sector distinction to send a clear message to policymakers and educational workers, affirming a shifting policy and institutional context toward global private sector friendly schools, curriculums, and policies.

Within the Global Education Coalition platform, UNESCO also hosts detailed stories of individual schools and experiences of education in the pandemic from many parts of the world, alongside short videos of corporate and INGO executives' statements of what they bring to the task. A collection of "good stories", including some cautionary tales, is hosted on the website. As students and their learning become increasingly described as static objects in need of saving, the two-pronged approach reveals its workings. UNESCO brings powerful global information technology and virtual education actors into the centre of their policy network. Yet, teachers, students, local school trustees are excluded. Instead, a space is created where non-central actors can share stories from the field, already defined by the IOs pandemic response. It is a kind of truth telling space for sharing 'best practice' in education in the pandemic. While the impact of the private actors in the coalition is not revealed, stories of success are gathered from teachers and students through the extension of the coalition via hashtag and already established connections.

Fricker's (2008) ideas of epistemic injustice are helpful to understand these stories. Again, regardless of their intentions, which we can assume to be good and generous in their sharing, our focus here is on how education is governed through knowledge practice. While collection and publication of good stories are a nod toward, if not commitment to, epistemic trust (see Fricker, 2008), it is reasonable to see local community and teacher knowledge as rendered invisible beyond stories of compliance in what Fricker (2008) describes as hermeneutical inequality - "the lived experience of being unfairly disadvantaged in rendering one's social experience intelligible, to others and even to oneself" (p. 70). Throughout the website, discourses of online school delivery move between technology provision and individual student learning without concern or engagement with the teachers' professional knowledge of content or pedagogy. Discourses of online delivery privilege knowledges of technology provision in partnerships, rather than professional knowledges within teachers' practices. Missing also are the voices from informal and non-formal educators working for integration within communities and issues. The erasure of the social components of education fits snugly within the last decades of IO knowledge economy focused, standardized education discourse.

In many ways, the duality of the two-pronged approach reflects the distinction of UNESCO's position as an IO from that of the solely economic focused World Bank and OECD. UNESCO's occupies a divided position within the multilateral world of education policy influence: as a gathering place for local knowledge and actors through their national offices and programming while at the same time, acting in the reverse as a global education policy actor influencing national and local education provision in harmony with other IOs. With these global actors actively promoting simultaneous increasing investments in education and fluid involvement of private sector actors in public concerns (Gorur 2019), the divided position of UNESCO requires a creative contortionism to continue as a protective voice for democracy, the rights of children and champions of holistic approaches to education that are linked to urgent planetary issues,

and at the same time welcome private sector actors who would benefit greatly from marketizing schooling putting at risk the achievement of the social and environmental goals of education. As Lubienski (2016) points out, the privatization agenda is not straightforward, with the main goal of global education policy actors not necessarily targeting the privatization of all schools but rather ensuring that education policy supports ongoing market solutions through the normalization of market solutions as accepted national and institutional education policy knowledge. In this divided response, the UNESCO representation of the problem of providing education in the pandemic reflects the duality of its position, what Mignolo (2011) described as the basic paradoxical problem of Western modernity. The "shine" or benefit of modernity's progress hides its shadow, that of a dependence on sustained human poverty and the destruction of nature to feed its growth through the pathways established through centuries of global European colonialism.

What is Missing in these Representations?
The focus of our concern in this article is not to compare individual responses from the IOs, but rather to consider the interplay of influence (Grek 2020). The WPR analysis we have invoked here directs attention to strategic relations as "societal relations and practices rather than intentional manipulation" (Bacchi and Goodwin 2016, p. 112). That is, the interplay of influence that has our attention in this analysis is not one of intentional strategic decision-making, although that might exist, but rather we are concerned to examine how the problem of education has come to be tentatively and contingently constructed within the mass of responses. The point of such politics, as Bacchi and Goodwin outline, is to draw on Foucault's notions of emancipation, whereby we aim at opening up the possibilities to minimize dominating perspectives of problems, "creating the possibility of thinking otherwise" (p. 108). Accordingly, we want to give attention to two further aspects in thinking holistically about the interplay of responses: the urgency of problems that come to the fore and what is left out in such representations.

First, we turn to the urgency of the problem representations that emerge. As the world went into a swift lockdown, sending individuals to their homes and shutting businesses and institutions, the closing of schools posed big problems practically speaking. While many people lamented the loss of childcare as they set up worksites at home, others took a longer view and wondered what impact this closure would have on children's learning trajectories. Yet, in our analysis, the interplay of responses across the three IOs demonstrates the network of harmonized education systems, including policies and school sites, that was visible in the closures. The World Bank, OECD, and UNESCO, key global education actors, hold the gaze of policymakers around the world concerned with educational reform. The influence of their responses has to be located within the subject position they have performed within educational policy spaces.

These actors are situated in privileged stature with policy influence, particularly in the development of human capital linked to nation state economic policies and agendas over the previous 30 years. OECD began comparative data on education performance dating back to 1960s (Grek 2020), including the establishment of the *International Indicators of Educational Systems* (INES), followed by a partnership between UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) and the OECD to publish *Education at a Glance* in 1992 that provided comparative data across its

membership countries. The launch and uptake of OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) has enabled a position of power for the OECD, as a tool of governance by comparison on a grand scale (Gorur 2020; Martens 2007). Within a period of twenty years between 1980 to 2000, decreasing North-South flows of government aid to education led to a power shift from UNESCO to the World Bank (Mundy 2007). The World Bank involvement in education has long been aimed at integration and coordination of education policies at the national level, coordination across governance levels and subjectifying the government as enabler by "creat[ing] choices, provid[ing] information and incentives, facilitate[ing] cooperation and provision" (World Bank 2003, p. 59). Enabling the provision of private sector delivery in education has been a key policy strategy of the World Bank (Jakobi 2007), making way for marketization and privatization advancement in education policy, supporting the efficiency and effectiveness of nongovernmental actors in providing education (World Bank 1999).

The trifecta of IO involvement in pandemic responses is varied: a network virtual coalition objectified and mobilized by hashtag; a checklist of items of technical response; and a framework for action to mitigate learning poverty. Yet, among the dispersed responses was a shared immediate urgent call for online education to save education, that the problem representation created the urgency for remote and online learning systematic responses that operate here as technologies of saving. Without schools, there would be no education, they said. Children without schools were risks to their own and the world's future. The power of this knowledge to discursively render children as objects in their communities, assets to be managed against checklists, guidelines and hashtags, is concerning. Being saved by technology provided by Google, Microsoft, Zoom, and other giant global corporations overshadows the role that families and communities play in the education of children.

Second, we also want to draw attention to what is missing in this problem representation. What alternatives might be present in local contexts for children to learn? Such a dynamic closure of schools might well have provided children new insights into their communities and the work of family members, extended in the many ways they are in different communities and cultures. The disqualification of informal and non-formal education in such an emergency disqualifies children and youth from seeing themselves within the community and as co-creators of an emergency response. Here, we are not arguing for children being cast aside and not protected but, rather, that as members of families and communities impacted by the emergency, they might be better protected by calls for local support built on ideas of sustainability, of restoration, and of self-sufficiency, all core ideals already embedded in discourses around the Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (see, for example, Borrows et al. 2019, and McCoy et al 2016). The sole vision for education in online deliveries necessarily privileges the discourses of online education as saving technologies, but when we consider the dangers for private sector creep into education, the concern here is for what is made invisible in "saviour" discourses. What stories of learning and partnership are not told, if not captured by the checklist, the hashtag and the framework?

We offer that these subjugated discourses (read knowledges) will become more fully known as the policy responses continue to emerge and produce effects in educational communities. While

we are skeptical that the impact of these societal relations that emerge through enhanced partnerships with edu-business and private actors can lead to more fully realizing democratic practices in education whereby those affected by educational policy have the most say in what comes to be realized, our analysis aims here to help make visible where other opportunities might exist. How might we steer away from the dominance of privatized systems that create urgency for profit in education towards problematizing the lack of local engagements and the need for sustainability? Online and technology-led education may have been deemed necessary through the policy responses, but its dominance as we move away from the urgency of the pandemic is one worth watching. We know the social conditions in which this response "made sense", but what conditions must be maintained and privileged, through our choice of partnership, that will make the continued saving of education through technology as sensical and necessary? This study suggests that policymakers, including community-based and national actors, must be invited into the discussion to envision other possibilities, knowing that emancipation in policy responses is possible.

Conclusion

The initial review of IO involvement that we offer here in this brief analysis is limited by time, by rapidly changing network spaces and by uncertainty about the boundaries of the crisis. Fricker's (2007) admonition about the necessity for attention to injustice is a key aspect for how we might advance educational policy responses amid the crises of the pandemic. Returning to her concern for examining power by asking who or what is controlling whom and why, a glaring silence is the role of education in supporting democracy, particularly in conditions of crisis. The notion of social power is not ignorant to the kinds of ways in which the three responses covered in this analysis engage both structural force and individual agency for education actors. Yet, testimonial injustice occurs when a speaker is deemed irrelevant and not credible, because of the bias of the hearer. What forms of education could emerge if IOs centred democracy, sustainability, human rights, children's capacity as knowledge holders as key to crises responses? When the testimonies of saving are centred on privatized, corporate edu-business aimed at online education delivery, there are significant risks for the epistemological erasure of other crises we find ourselves in current times.

 References

Azoulay, A. (2020). Global Education Coalition Launch Message.
    https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/globalcoalition. Accessed May 21,
    2020.
Bacchi, C. (2020). Problem-solving as a governing knowledge: "Skills"- testing in PISA and
    PIAAC. *Open Journal of Political Science, 10*, 82-105.
    https://doi.org/10.4236/ojps.2020.101007
Bacchi, C., & Goodwin, S. (2016). *Poststructural policy analysis: A guide to practice.* New York:
    Palgrave Macmillan.
Ball, S. (2012). *Global Education Inc: New Policy Networks and the Neoliberal Imaginary.*
    London: Routledge.

Bonal, X., Rambla, X., (2003). Captured by the totally pedagogised society: Teachers and teaching in the knowledge economy. *Globalization, Societies, and Education*, 1, 2, 169-184

Borrows, J., Chartrand, L., Fitzgerald, O., & Schwartz, R. (Eds). (2019). *Braiding legal orders: Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.* Waterloo, CAN: Centre for International Governance Innovation.

Brown, W. (2015). *Undoing the demos: Neoliberalism's stealth revolution.* Boston: Zone.

Foucault, M., (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and writings.* New York: Pantheon.

Fricker, M. (2007). *Epistemic injustice: Power and the ethics of knowing.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Grek, S. (2020) Interdependency in transnational education governance. In G. Fan & T. Popkewitz (Eds), *Handbook of education policy studies* (pp. 209-238). Singapore: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8347-2_14

Grek, S. (2009). Governing by numbers: The PISA 'effect' in Europe. *Journal of Education Policy, 24*(1), 23-37. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680930802412669

Gorur, R. (2020). Embracing numbers? *International Studies in Sociology of Education, 29*(1-2), 187-197. https://doi.org/10.1080/09620214.2020.1720518

Jakobi, A. P. (2007). (2007). Converging agenda in educational policy: Lifelong learning in the World Bank and International Labour Organization. In K. Martens, A. Rusconi, & K. Leuze (Eds.), *New arenas of education governance: The impact of international organizations and markets on educational policymaking* (pp. 95-113). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Li, T. (2007). *The will to improve.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Lubienski, C. (2016). Sector distinctions and the privatization of education policymaking. *Theory and Research in Education, 14*(2), 193-212. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1477878516635332

Madigan, S. P. (1992). The application of Michel Foucault's philosophy in the problem of externalizing discourse of Michael White. *Journal of Family Therapy, 14*(3), 265-279. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1046/j..1992.00458.x

Martens, K. (2007). How to become an influential actor: The 'comparative turn' in OECD education policy. In K. Martens, A. Rusconi, & K. Leuze (Eds.), *New arenas of education governance: The impact of international organizations and markets on educational policymaking* (pp. 40-56). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

McCoy, K., Tuck, E., & Mckenzie, M. (2016). *Land education: Rethinking pedagogies of place from Indigenous, postcolonial, and decolonizing perspectives.* London/New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Mignolo, W. (2011). *The darker side of Western modernity: Global futures, decolonial options.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Mundy, K. (2007). Education multilateralism: Origins and indications for global governance. In K. Martens, A. Rusconi, & K. Leuze (Eds.), *New arenas of education governance: The impact of international organizations and markets on educational policymaking* (pp. 19 - 39). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

OECD. (2020). A framework to guide education response to the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. Accessed on June 1, 2020 from https://globaled.gse.harvard.edu/files/geii/files/framework_guide_v2.pdf

Robertson, S. (2012). Placing teachers in global governance agendas. *Comparative Education Review,* 56, 4, 584-605 DOI10.1086/667414

Sellar, S., Lingard, B., (2013). The OECD and the expansion of PISA: New global modes of governance in education. *British Educational Research Journal,* 40, 6, 917-936 https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3120

Shahjahan, R. (2012). The roles of international organizations (IOs) in globalizing higher education policy. In J. Smart & M. Paulsen (Eds), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (pp. 369-407). Dordrecht: Springer.

UNESCO. (2020a). Global Education Coalition. https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/globalcoalition

UNESCO. (2020b). Distance learning solutions. Global Education Coalition. https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/solutions

Williamson, B. (2020, April 1). New pandemic edtech powers. [Blog post.] Retrieved from https://codeactsineducation.wordpress.com/2020/04/01/new-pandemic-edtech-power-networks

World Bank (2020a, March 25). Guidance note on Education systems' response to COVID 19. Retrieved 15 May 2020 from http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/531681585957264427/pdf/Guidance-Note-on-Remote-Learning-and-COVID-19.pdf

Word Bank (2020b, April 7). Guidance Note: Remote Learning & COVID -19. Retrieved 15 May 2020 from https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/edutech/brief/edtech-covid-19