Introduction

Global Ideas, Policy Variation, and the Governance of Secondary Education in Latin America

Since the 1980s, Latin American education policy has been influenced by policy proposals advocating for the delegation of education decision-making authority; the introduction of private actors through market-oriented mechanisms; the provision of curriculum autonomy to subnational units, communities, and schools; and the implementation of large-scale standardized assessments to improve school performance. These proposals signal a shift from previous recommendations that advocated for the state's responsibility in educational planning, delivery, and definition of learning contents. These changes also run parallel with enrollment expansion in secondary schools and significant growth in the educational systems.

These dynamics prompted diverse sequences of events and policy outcomes across Latin American countries. In 1979, the authoritarian regime of Augusto Pinochet (1973–1990) in Chile initiated school transfers from central government to municipalities as well as the implementation of a voucher system that made public and private schools compete for students to receive funding. Large-scale standardized exams were later implemented in 1988, but curriculum decisions were never decentralized. After the transition to democracy in 1990, successive center-left governments retained and further consolidated the governance model inherited from the authoritarian regime. These governments delegated more responsibility to nonstate actors by allowing private schools to charge extra fees beyond vouchers (shared payment) and by refining the system of performance-based incentives and sanctions to schools

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and teachers. It was not until 2015 that the Socialist government of Michelle Bachelet (2014–2018) reversed various market-oriented policy instruments, including student selection by schools and shared payments. Nevertheless, the governance model kept the main features of the system implemented in the late 1970s that arguably fueled educational inequality and segregation.

At the same time, the Argentinean military regime (1976–1983) transferred the fiscal responsibility for primary schools to provinces in 1978 without delegating secondary schools or learning contents. Only after the transition to democracy did the Peronist government of Carlos Menem (1989–1999) decentralize curriculum and fiscal responsibility for secondary schools. This government also implemented standardized exams in 1993, although their use as an accountability tool was quickly dismissed. More recently—due to the unpopularity of Menem's reforms—the Peronist government of Nestor Kirchner (2003–2007) partially recentralized fiscal responsibilities and curriculum decisions in 2005, and the subsequent government of Cristina Fernández (2007–2015) also continued to reject test-based accountability. Even though power changed to a right-wing party in 2015, the right-wing government of Mauricio Macri (2019) was not able to implement significant changes in the governance of secondary education. Thus, while secondary schools were decentralized, the federal government regained significant authority, and schools never achieved substantial autonomy.

In the mid-1970s, Colombia was still trying to advance a centralization process for a poorly coordinated education system. Funding and provision responsibilities were dispersed among municipal, department (similar to state or province), and national levels, and curriculum decisions for secondary schools were nobody's land. Without consolidating this centralization, the Liberal government of Cesar Gaviria (1990–1994) undertook the transfer of national schools to departments and large municipalities, and it increased curriculum autonomy of these units and schools in 1993. Yet, the government failed to implement a voucher system and test-based accountability while it was forced to increase government education expenditure. Unsatisfactory education results pushed a new reform in 2001 under the Conservative government of Andres Pastrana (1998–2002). This reform finally transferred the administration of schools to municipalities, although funding responsibilities remained centralized. Decisions in 2001 also recentralized curriculum choices through national standards and expanded large-scale assessments, although they were not

used to award incentives or sanctions for school performance. While these reforms increased state control on secondary schools, the central government's educational investments decreased.

These sequences of reforms in Chile, Argentina, and Colombia raise several baffling questions: Why did these three countries—with comparable levels of development and under the influence of similar globally disseminated policy ideas—pursue different education governance reforms? Why did the Chilean authoritarian regime follow global recommendations more closely, compared to the Argentinean dictatorship? Why did Colombia manage to initiate these reforms during democracy? Why did democratic and ideologically different governments in Chile and Argentina retain and continue reforms inherited from dictatorships? Why did Colombia implement reforms that did not respond to problems rooted in the country's educational system? More generally, what do these reforms tell us about the influence of global forces on education policy decisions?

This book answers these questions by specifying the mechanisms through which domestic dynamics shape the (non)acceptance and reinterpretation of globally diffused education policy ideas. Scholars have provided multiple understandings of mechanism in the social sciences without reaching a consensus (Bengtsson & Hertting, 2014; Falleti & Lynch, 2009; Mahoney, 2001). While settling this debate goes beyond the scope of this book, two tensions inform the work presented here. The first tension refers to whether mechanisms can be defined as chains of intervening variables (G. King et al., 1994) or as a causal pathway in which relations between entities and their activities produce specific outcomes (Beach, 2016; Gerring, 2008; Hedström, 2010). Unraveling chains of intervening variables identifies factors that covariate with other factors and are therefore assumed to prevent or facilitate an outcome. For instance, cultural legacies of a strong state role in education may prevent the adoption of or modify substantially global market-oriented ideas. Nevertheless, this identification does not tell us sufficiently about the process through which factors lead to particular effects; for example, how legacies of a strong state shape the influence of foreign prescriptions. For that, we need to look not only at the characteristics of cultural legacies but also at the activities that these legacies trigger in actors modifying global ideas. More generally, in order to identify the mechanisms that reinterpret global ideas, we need to focus on the causal pathway through the identification of entities (e.g., actors, organizations, structures) that

engage in activities and produce changes in the adoption of foreign recommendations (Beach, 2016).

The second tension relates to the discussion about whether mechanisms found in a single or small set of cases are portable and can explain other cases (Falleti & Lynch, 2009). Some consider mechanisms as deterministic, producing the same outcome whenever they are present (Bengtsson & Hertting, 2014; Mahoney, 2001). Yet, continuing with our example, not all countries with a strong state tradition in education significantly modify or reject ideas of education markets (e.g., Chile, Sweden). More convincingly, other scholars rather regard mechanisms as probabilistic, which means that their presence increases the chances of an effect to happen but that the actual outcome may vary due to its interaction with the context or other mechanisms (Danermark, 2012; Elster, 1998; Hedström, 2010). Thus, mechanism-based explanations need to "define both the mechanism at work and the context in which it operates" (Falleti & Lynch, 2009, p. 1151) in order to pinpoint the conditions under which a mechanism is more likely to produce a particular outcome.

Building on these assumptions, I argue that the reinterpretation of a global idea occurs when groups of multiple domestic actors (e.g., political parties, teacher unions, bureaucrats, social movements) engage in supporting or opposing the adoption of the foreign recommendation. Their support or opposition depends on whether the global idea favors their interests and matches their beliefs about how the governance of education should look. The result of this conflict depends not only on what group is more influential but also on the context created by the encounter between global ideas and existing domestic governance arrangements. When these two are compatible, supporters of global ideas have more leverage to facilitate the adoption and emulation of external recommendations. Incompatibility between these entities fuels domestic conflict and gives greater chances to opponents to reinterpret or even reject a global idea. The theoretical framework presented in chapter 1 further unpacks this argument, explains the different outcomes that the modification of global ideas can have under different circumstances, and ultimately illuminates the question of why and how comparable countries under the influence of similar global policy ideas adopt different secondary education governance models. The book, therefore, complements and qualifies theories of education policy globalization by

combining institutionalist perspectives from comparative politics and organizational theories.

Education Governance in Latin America

Although there is no consensus about the meaning of governance, different definitions attempt to describe the growing complexity of societal coordination that shifts away from the hierarchical regulation of the state and increasingly involves other non-state actors (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Windzio et al., 2005). This book builds on Rosenau's definition of governance as the combination of formal and informal steering mechanisms to make demands, frame goals, issue directives, pursue policies, and generate compliance (2004, p. 31). Thus, the notion of governance entails at least four aspects: (1) who has the power to make decisions, (2) over what matters these decision-makers have authority, (3) how other actors participate in these decisions, and (4) how an account of these matters is rendered. This definition raises several questions in the field of education, such as who the new actors involved in steering education are, what the politics involved in these new ways of coordination are, and, more broadly, who controls different education matters and how (Jakobi et al., 2009).

This book is particularly concerned with the changes in the governance of provision, curriculum, and evaluation in secondary education. The governance of education provision has two dimensions. The first dimension refers to what actors are authorized to deliver education; for example, the central state through national schools, subnational units through provincial or municipal schools, nongovernment actors through community schools, or private actors through private establishments (McGinn & Welsh, 1999). The second dimension refers to the degree to which families can select their children's school. The level of school choice can be limited by state exams or geographic location, determined by schools selecting students, or opened to parental decisions (Herbst, 2006).

Curricular governance also has two dimensions. First, it refers to those who are entitled to decide the contents and desired learning outcomes of secondary education, whether that is the central government, subnational units, schools, local communities, or private actors (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Second, the governance of the secondary school

curriculum also refers to the orientation of its learning goals, which include comprehensive curricula, tracks with content and learning goals differentiated by student ability, or layers differentiated by various types of specialization (academic, vocational, scientific, artistic, etc.) (Benavot, 1983; Kamens, 1996; Kerckhoff, 2001).

Finally, evaluation governance refers to those who control the mechanisms by which students are examined, whether that is teachers, subnational units, or the central government. It also refers to who is accountable for assessment results. In secondary education, student evaluation can have consequences exclusively for students, such as granting a degree or university admission (Eckstein & Noah, 1993). Alternatively, evaluation may also be used to assess the implementation of the curriculum and reforms (Kamens & McNeely, 2010) or as a tool of test-based accountability by the use of government-led incentives, sanctions, or through parental school choice (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Verger et al., 2019).

Simultaneous changes in the areas of provision, curriculum, and evaluation produce complex transformations of the governance of secondary education. Scholarship on education policy suggests that educational systems are shifting away from a tight-loose bureaucratic arrangement toward a loose-tight post-bureaucratic form of governance (Baker & LeTendre, 2005; Maroy, 2009; H.-D. Meyer & Rowan, 2006b). The tight-loose bureaucratic arrangement includes, for the tight aspect, tracking or selective recruitment of students in public schools and a centralized curriculum that ensures the adequate training of human capital and future ruling elite (Astiz & Wiseman, 2005; Bruter et al., 2004; J. W. Meyer & Rowan, 1978). The loose part involves delegating student evaluation to teachers believing they would follow the established curriculum and the bureaucratic rules of the system (J. W. Meyer & Rowan, 1978; Scott et al., 1994). By contrast, the loose aspect of the loose-tight post-bureaucratic arrangement refers to the devolution of education delivery and curriculum decisions to subnational units, schools, communities, or private actors. It also includes the expansion of secondary education enrollment and provision of school choice for families (Astiz & Wiseman, 2005; Windzio et al., 2005). For the tight part, this arrangement involves centralizing student assessments through standardized tests and establishing incentives and sanctions for performance (Astiz & Wiseman, 2005; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Verger et al., 2019). Provision, curriculum, and evaluation are also empirically relevant, as their transformation in previous decades has modified the role of the different stakeholders in

Latin American education systems and has generated varied impacts on education quality and inequality.

The distribution of authority over provision, curriculum, and evaluation can be conceptualized as a continuum. On one end, we have a strong control of the state over schools; at the other end, authority is dispersed through smaller subnational units, communities, and private parties. This idea of continuum can be associated with the concept of decentralization or the distribution of authority between central government and subordinate, semiautonomous, or nongovernmental institutions (Jakobi et al., 2009; Pollitt, 2007; Rondinelli, 1981). Decentralization involves different degrees of transfer of authority and responsibility: (1) deconcentration is the shift of administrative functions and workload to subordinates at the local level without transferring authority; (2) delegation is the transfer of responsibility and some decision-making power to subnational units but within the boundaries established at the central level; (3) devolution involves the transfer of authority to autonomous local units or nongovernmental actors without the direct control of the central level; and (4) privatization implies responsibility and decision-making transferred to private actors, often regulated by a market rationale (Ball & Youdell, 2009; Rees, 2010; Robertson et al., 2012; Rondinelli & Nellis, 1986).

According to the continuum between centralization and decentralization, the areas of provision, curriculum, and evaluation adopt different arrangements that constitute distinctive governance models. To categorize these models, I build a classification based on the existing education governance literature. This classification identifies four typical combinations of governance arrangements that a country may adopt: bureaucratic model of governance or "teaching state" (Almond, 1991; J.W. Meyer & Rowan, 1978; Narodowski & Andrada, 2004; Newland, 1994), the semi-decentralized bureaucratic model or quasi-state monopoly[1] (Narodowski, 2008), the dualist model (Diaz-Rios, 2019; Narodowski & Nores, 2002), and the quasi-market model (Maroy, 2009; Walford, 1996; Whitty, 1997). Each of these combinations is associated with coordination problems addressed by distinctive institutionalized forms and capacities for collective action that define actors' interests and payoff schemes (Ostrom, 2015; Windzio et al., 2005). Yet, these combinations are ideal-types that in reality can be hybridized, as this book and many other studies show (Jakobi et al., 2009; Maroy, 2009, 2012; Windzio et al., 2005). Therefore, this classification presented in Table I.1 serves only heuristic purposes.

Table I.1. Policy Alternatives in Education Governance

Model / "Main Role of State"	Education Provision	Curriculum	Student Assessment
Teaching state / state monopoly	*Centralized* by selectively recruiting students for elite national schools.	*Centralized* through national curriculum.	*Delegated* to teachers.
Quasi-state monopoly / evaluator state	*Deconcentrated* to subnational levels with some school choice for families within the public system.	*Delegated* to local levels within the boundaries of centralized curricular standards.	*Partially delegated* to teachers but also *centralized* through standardized tests to define policy and programs.
Dualist system	*Privatized* for a segment of the demand. *Delegated* to local levels for those who attend public schools.	*Devolved* to the private sector. *Delegated* to local levels within a curricular framework.	*Centralized* to inform families in private schools and to define policy and programs in public schools.
Quasi-market of education	*Privatized* through full school choice.	*Devolved* to schools at least partially.	*Centralized* to inform parents and encourage competition.

Authors' elaboration based on Almond, 1991; Diaz-Rios, 2019; Maroy, 2009; J.W. Meyer & Rowan, 1978; Narodowski, 2008; Narodowski & Andrada, 2004; Narodowski & Nores, 2002; Newland, 1994; Walford, 1996; Whitty, 1997.

By the mid-twentieth century, secondary education in Latin America was highly selective. Since enrollment was low and secondary schools were not numerous, central coordination and management were not substantially problematic. Nevertheless, by the mid- to late twentieth century, secondary education enrollment rose significantly (Figure I.1), and therefore a centralized coordination of an increased number of schools, teachers, and staff became difficult. Problems of coordination run parallel to discussions about the negative effects of centralized curricula that neglected the needs and expectations of local communities and minorities.
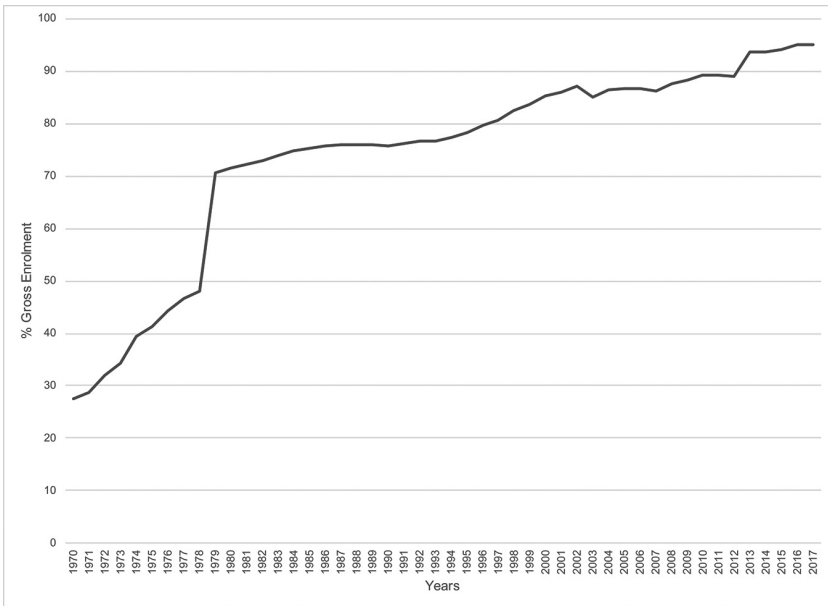
Figure I.1. Gross Enrollment Ratio in Latin America and the Caribbean, Secondary Education. Author's elaboration based on the World Bank, Education Statistics. Gross enrollment ratio, secondary, both sexes. Retrieved from https://databank.worldbank.org/source/education-statistics-^-all-indicators.

In this context, Latin American governments initiated a series of reforms. By the early twentieth century, only a handful of countries in the region had developed strong "teaching state" or bureaucratic governance models. Some of these countries (e.g., Argentina, Mexico) adopted characteristics of a quasi-state monopoly of education, including administrative deconcentration of education provision, delegation of some curriculum decisions, and increased although still limited room for school choice (e.g., between Catholic and public schools). A few others, and Chile in particular, embraced a quasi-market model of governance. Other countries that resembled a quasi-state monopoly of education increased the participation of nonstate and subnational actors, and some incorporated elements of a quasi-market model, such as school or community autonomy to hire and fire staff, competitive funding, test-based accountability, and so on (e.g., Peru, Brazil). Some remaining countries in the region that originally developed dualist models—in which public schooling grew in a slower pace and frequently targeted only poor students (e.g., Colombia,

El Salvador, Ecuador)—adopted characteristics of a quasi-market model by encouraging the expansion of the private sector, allowing more autonomy on curriculum, and implementing different forms of accountability.

The combinations and sequences of reforms undertaken by Latin American countries addressed certain coordination difficulties; however, they also created new policy problems and political struggles. The growth of private schools nurtured new constituents and sometimes exacerbated problems of educational segregation and inequality (Diaz-Rios, 2019). The oscillation between a centralized curriculum (centralized definition of curriculum contents), curricular autonomy (devolution of authority for teachers or communities to develop either parts of curriculum autonomously or the entire curriculum under very general national guidelines), and curriculum standardization (centralized definition of learning expectations) dispersed responsibility and prevented a consistent development of capacity for curriculum decisions in different governance levels (Gvirtz, 2002). Implementing standardized exams did not always translate into quality improvement but instead often increased teachers' political opposition, especially when used as an accountability mechanism. In chapters 2, 3, and 4, I analyze the consequences of these sequences of reforms.

Current Explanations of Changes in Education Governance

The mechanisms theorized and tested in this book build on a rich body of literature that explores the globalization of education policy. Some existing explanations have specified the mechanisms through which policy ideas are diffused, including world society theory and political economy approaches. Some others have described how these ideas change as they are adopted in different contexts, such as cultural political economy, policy-borrowing, and anthropological accounts. These descriptions provide detailed narratives of reinterpretation of global ideas in particular contexts but do not fully conceptualize the mechanisms that lead to diverse reinterpretations. Although this book acknowledges the uniqueness of each case, its comparative analysis of Chile, Argentina, and Colombia identifies patterns across cases that unpack these mechanisms and contribute to a better understanding of why and how the adoption of global ideas varies across different countries.

World Society Theory

As one of the leading approaches for the globalization of education policy, world society theory stems from the observation that education systems across societies present strikingly similar practices and arrangements due to external forces that push them to such isomorphism (H.-D. Meyer & Rowan, 2006b; J. W. Meyer & Rowan, 1977). This scholarship describes global ideas or global norms as part of a global culture that determine the appropriate behavior of actors, shape and legitimate identities, and constrain their practices (Drori et al., 2006; Finnemore, 1996; Kamens & McNeely, 2010; McNeely, 1995; J. W. Meyer, 2000). Put differently, these global ideas shape the ways in which decision-makers understand and solve education policy problems. This approach contests functionalist arguments by suggesting that global ideas are adopted not because they have been proved to work, but because of the perception of their legitimacy and appropriateness, thus transforming them into globalized myths that teach what has to be done (Kamens & McNeely, 2010; J. W. Meyer & Hannan, 1979; Ramírez, 2012). Such legitimacy is the driver of policy convergence.

Global norms travel through mimetic processes or through normative pressures. Mimesis describes a mechanism through which countries in uncertain circumstances imitate external models (e.g., mass schooling or national assessment systems) that international actors have framed and disseminated as the most appropriate solutions to specific policy problems (Beckert, 2010; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Finnemore, 1993, 1996; McNeely, 1995). My evidence suggests that international organizations such as the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations' Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL), the World Bank (WB), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Organization of American States (OAS), and some US universities were all engaged in diffusing educational policy ideas, including educational planning, decentralization, school choice, standardized assessments, test-based accountability, school autonomy, and so on. However, the interviews I conducted also demonstrate that elites do not take these recommendations for granted and instead transform them to avoid political costs of unpopular changes or to justify specific policy decisions that favor their interests (personal communications #1, #3, #50, and #58). Therefore, mimesis has not

produced the theorized policy convergence. For instance, standardized exams are widely institutionalized in Chile and Colombia but not in Argentina, and curricular autonomy is adopted in Colombia but restrained in Chile and Argentina. The mechanism of mimesis only tells us part of the story, but it exaggerates the taken-for-granted nature attributed to global norms that depict domestic actors as unable to contest them or to think outside the template the norms provide (Campbell, 2004).

Normative pressures refer to processes of socialization through professional training, networks, and communities that favor the adoption of similar policies based on shared professional standards or norms (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Djelic, 2004; Owen-Smith & Powell, 2008; Ramírez, 2012). In fact, Chile developed robust and highly influential communities trained under educational planning ideas in the 1960s, as well as networks that argued for market-oriented education policies in the 1980s and 1990s. Actors of these networks often received foreign training and helped spread such socialization in domestic universities (Gauri, 1998; Picazo, 2013). Although smaller and less influential, similar networks emerged in Argentina and Colombia as well. Yet, evidence I collected posits that conflicting vested interests tied to existing domestic arrangements contest and transform foreign recommendations, alongside the size and position of these networks that account for different interpretations of global policy ideas. This factor is often neglected by world-society analyses.

World society theory suggests that education systems do not simply emulate global ideas but rather decouple the norm from the actual practice (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2008; J. W. Meyer, 2010; J. W. Meyer & Rowan, 1991). Put differently, education systems abide by global norms on a superficial level and adopt new structures without necessarily implementing the related practices. The acknowledgment of decoupling suggests that domestic actors can act pragmatically toward global ideas, identify the possibility of nonconformity, and act somewhat strategically. This notion contradicts—or at least relaxes—the original argument of a global culture that is taken for granted and calls for improved specification of the conditions and mechanisms through which domestic policymakers engage in conformity or decoupling (Silova, 2009; Steiner-Khamsi, 2012).

Political Economy

Political economy approaches also acknowledge the existence of global policy ideas; however, rather than analyzing them as part of a global

culture, the literature perceives and examines them as power-related dynamics. Traditional political economy scholarship emphasizes hard power, exercised through material means such as coercion, as a globalization force. Powerful international actors impose certain policies on other countries through incentives and sanctions, such as conditional loans, foreign aid, or technical assistance (Dobbin et al., 2007; Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Griffiths & Arnove, 2015; Samoff, 2007). During the 1980s and 1990s, Latin American countries struggled with harsh economic crises, which left them with little choice but to implement education reforms, such as privatization and decentralization, in exchange for loans and financial and technical assistance of the WB and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Arnove et al., 1996). Likewise, the WB, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) offer incentives for developing countries to implement standardized exams (Chmielewski et al., 2017, p. 19; Smith, 2014; Wiseman, 2010, p. 17). Nevertheless, governments often fail to implement the conditions required by external actors or ask for loans and conditions to further enforce their own agendas and interests (Dion, 2008). My findings show, for instance, that Argentina quickly dismantled the test-based accountability tools implemented in 1993 despite the financial and technical support of the WB (personal communications #58, #71, and #80). Likewise, in the 1990s, Chile requested a WB loan that the country did not need—only to guarantee the implementation of policy changes preferred by domestic policy elites (personal communications #50 and #52). Thus, the mere existence of loans or assistance is a weak test for coercion (Dion, 2008). Further evidence needs to verify that policymakers were actually forced to implement policies that they would not have adopted otherwise.

A more recent approach integrates an ideational perspective to the conventional, materially driven political economic analysis (Robertson & Dale, 2015; Verger et al, 2019). This strand conceives education policy as the product of the interaction between global and national civilizational projects (e.g., capitalism, national identity), the position of each society in global economic relations, and power struggles between different actors (Robertson & Dale, 2015). Beyond coercion, this scholarship shows how international agents build their power through the production and dissemination of meaning that establishes certain policy solutions as more adequate than others (Dale, 2000; Robertson, 2005; Verger, 2014). While this scholarship and world society theory coincide to some extent in the

idea of globalized cultural projects, the cultural political economy approach further highlights the role of the local level by specifying mechanisms of domestic transformation of these projects; namely, variation, selection, and retention. Punctuated moments of crisis (e.g., economic, political, or humanitarian crises, social discontent with education, etc.) trigger a process of variation in which local actors look for alternative ways to govern education. This search makes room for international actors to disseminate policy solutions using hard (coercion) and soft (ideational legitimacy) power technologies (Verger et al., 2016). Nevertheless, local actors do not just emulate global policy ideas but also select solutions according to the domestic capacity and the evidence supporting policy recommendations. Yet, these scholars suggest that the process of selecting solutions is not rational or neutral but rather semiotic, as different governments select sources of evidence according to their ideological affinity (Verger et al., 2016; Verger, Fontdevila, et al., 2017). Finally, the retention of such solution is presented as a more contentious and materially oriented process depending on the conflict and negotiation with potential opponents of government proposals, such as teacher unions, political parties, and other interest groups. This conflict is shaped by formal institutions that define the influence of opponents, including government systems, electoral rules, veto players, president-assemblies distribution of power, and others (Takayama, 2012). Consequently, some solutions may be substantially transformed or may not be retained at all (Verger et al., 2016). Once chosen, the adopted solutions become resistant to change as they nurture new constituents invested in their continuity (Takayama, 2012, 2013). This cultural political economic approach has significantly advanced the explanation of variation amid convergence by integrating diffusion of global ideas with the specification of local reinterpretation mechanisms. However, my findings illuminate some aspects unexplained by the variation, selection, and retention mechanisms. Although cultural political economy aims at giving equal status to semiosis and social and material structures, it ultimately gives predominance to ideational processes while using material and extra-semiotic elements as constraining or mediating variables (Staricco, 2017). For instance, the role of material interests and how they interact with the selection of policy solutions is almost displaced by a semiotic analysis of how actors define and choose evidence. Although material-based conflict and institutional constraints are further acknowledged in the retention mechanism, their role seems to be an accessory to explain changes in the initial government's selection. Moreover, the retention mechanism does not fully explain how the

material and semiotic strategies of supporters and opponents interact with institutions. Thus, we cannot know if actors' strategies can overcome unfavorable institutional arrangements or if institutional arrangements define the strategies and the result of the conflict. To complement these gaps, the mechanism specified in this book show how material interests can equally influence both the selection and retention of solutions in ways that are not always consistent or do not always give predominance to semiotic processes. The book also specifies the strategies supporters and opponents of educational reforms use to advocate for their preferences and the conditions under which they can be successful.

The Role of Local Context: Policy-Borrowing and Anthropological Accounts

Like cultural political economy, policy-borrowing and anthropological scholarship examine the role of domestic actors in the globalization of education policy. Yet, these approaches focus specifically on cultural processes. These scholars conceive globalization as a domestically induced process in which foreign references or global policy ideas are transformed and reinterpreted through local sense-making (Anderson-Levitt, 2003b; Schriewer, 2003; Steiner-Khamsi, 2014). Policy-borrowing literature identify different stages in which global ideas are reinterpreted. Although there is no consensus on the number and nature of these different stages, these scholars suggest that borrowing starts with selecting external references to follow (also called *cross-national attraction* by Phillips & Ochs, 2003; *externalization* by Schriewer, 2003; *reception* by Steiner-Khamsi, 2014; *lesson-drawing* by Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000, and Jules, 2012, among others). Three processes interact in the externalization stage. First, countries experience a crisis or protracted conflict that affects their education system; for instance, public discontent with education outcomes (quality, inequality, efficiency, etc.), poor results of management (distribution of responsibilities, salaries and labor conditions, etc.), or evidence that is interpreted as a country's educational deficit or decline (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012). Second, governments look for foreign references and strategically select those that are in line with their particular agenda (Silova, 2009; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004, 2012). Yet, third, these governments choose from a limited range of options that correspond to external sources of authority, including countries that have been portrayed as global education leaders, best practices disseminated by international organizations, and overall external references that confirm the fear of falling behind on a process

of modernization or global-market competition (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014). Externalization then resembles the variation and selection mechanisms of cultural political economy. Both strands of literature accept diffusion and some of the characteristics of mimesis while simultaneously challenging the taken-for-granted nature attributed to global ideas by world society theory. Instead, policy-borrowing and cultural political economy indicate the agency of domestic agents in the process of selection.

A second stage of borrowing refers to the translation of global ideas.[2] During the translation stage, domestic actors make sense of imported models in a variety of ways that are shaped by contextual factors, such as cultural background, prevailing meanings attributed to education, economic conditions, vested interests, and political struggles (Anderson-Levitt, 2003b; Schriewer, 2003; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). Both anthropological perspectives and policy-borrowing studies provide detailed descriptions of processes of translation, reinterpretation, and divergence (Bartlett, 2003; Jungck & Kajornsin, 2003; Rambla, 2014; Silova, 2009; Spreen, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2013). These descriptions challenge assumptions about global culture, isomorphism, and policy convergence by showing a complementary story of local variability and resistance (Anderson-Levitt, 2003b).

Nevertheless, these narratives—often based on single case studies—have not paid sufficient attention to commonalities and differences across cases (Schwinn, 2012), thus rendering the mechanisms behind translation as insufficiently theorized. Questions about the role context plays in the reinterpretation of global ideas are only addressed by descriptions that tell us what happened without fully shedding light on why things happened the way they did. Studies also approach these questions by identifying various intervening factors (prevailing interests, preexisting discourses, cultural legacies, etc.) without explaining how these factors trigger different processes across cases. Overall, studies describe *glocalization* processes (Anderson-Levitt, 2003b) and sometimes conceptualize particular types of *translation*, including *hybridization*, which refers to the mixture of domestic practices and global ideas in a single policy or program (Maroy, 2009); addition or *juxtaposition* of global ideas and domestic institutions, which may eventually produce a gradual change of both but not their displacement (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012); *reinforcement* of domestic institutions using global ideas to enhance the legitimacy of an existing policy (Silova, 2005; Steiner-Khamsi et al., 2006); and *inspiration*, which refers to the process of drawing lessons from knowledge organizations (international organizations, think tanks, etc.) or from other countries (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2013). Nevertheless, these

studies do not explain the circumstances under which the translation of global ideas lead to any of these outcomes. While each case might be fairly unique, we can still identify patterns that drive us toward a more consistent conceptual understanding of the relationship between global dissemination of policy ideas and context-specific reinterpretations of them (Schriewer, 2012). This book's primary aim is to find these patterns and advance such conceptual understandings.

The Argument of the Book

World society scholarship on education reforms in Latin America has shown that global policy ideas have been disseminated through mimetic and normative pressures (Astiz, 2006; Astiz & Wiseman, 2005; Levy, 2006; Resnik, 2006). Political economic studies have demonstrated the role of coercion, globally structured policy agenda, and semiotic processes on both education policy convergence and variation (Arnove et al., 2012; Balarin, 2014; Robertson & Dale, 2015; Verger et al., 2016). Policy-borrowing and anthropological studies have uncovered significant policy variation across countries under global pressures (Bartlett, 2003; Beech, 2006, 2011; Jules, 2012; Verger, Moschetti, et al., 2017). Rather than competing, these theoretical approaches can complement each other and provide us with a better understanding of the global interdependence of the social world and the context-specific reinterpretation of global ideas (Anderson-Levitt, 2003a; Astiz, 2006; Edwards, 2012; Schriewer, 2012; Silova, 2013).

Nevertheless, the combination of these approaches still leaves us with gray boxes when it comes to mechanisms of translation. Demonstrating that cultural legacies or domestic prevailing interests reinterpret global policy ideas in education is not the same as explaining how these legacies and interests shape such translations, or why reinterpretations more closely resemble global ideas at times while, on other occasions, they deviate from global trends. Though cultural political economy proposes a more complete explanation of translation, their theorized mechanisms still do not fully account for cases in which globally inspired reforms succeed or fail to be passed despite (un)favorable institutional odds. Thus, this book builds on these bodies of literature and qualifies the conceptualization of the mechanisms that explain the domestic variation of education governance. I acknowledge the normative, mimetic, and coercive influence of global policy ideas on Latin American countries while also agreeing with political economic approaches that conceive domestic path dependence

and semiotic processes as forces that differentially enact global ideas across countries (Maroy et al., 2017; Maurer, 2012; Takayama, 2012; Verger et al., 2016). Following the institutional literature of comparative politics, I use the concept of policy legacies described as path-dependent processes through which—once a particular policy has been chosen—it generates increasing returns for the actors who sustain it (Ellermann, 2015; Pierson, 2000a; Pribble, 2013). In turn, once institutionalized, chosen policies become norms that are perceived as morally appropriate and are therefore used by actors to make sense of and negotiate the complexity of the world (Ellermann, 2015; Hall, 2010; Mahoney, 2000; Weir & Skocpol, 1985). In addition, policy legacies do not solely help the reproduction of previous arrangements but also generate negative consequences nurturing coalitions of losers or opponents to existing policies (Falleti, 2010; Mahoney & Thelen, 2010; Pierson, 2004). These coalitions of losers have alternative perceptions of their existing arrangements that can potentially open opportunities for policy change favorable to global ideas. Thus, policy legacies create a material and semiotic context that can facilitate or constrain the selection and adoption of a global idea.

Furthermore, I explain how opponents and supporters engage in activities that enhance their organizational capacity, influence decision-making, and mobilize power resources. The effectiveness of these activities defines the degree to which enacted policies resemble foreign prescriptions. The classification of different types of translation of global ideas developed in chapter 1 identify four degrees: conformity, compromise, avoidance, and defiance (Oliver, 1991; Pache & Santos, 2010). This classification organizes outcomes suggested by policy-borrowing scholarship (e.g., hybridization, reinforcement, juxtaposition) and explains the causal logics that link global governance ideas, domestic context, and different policy enactments.

Research Design, Methods, and Case Selection

To explain cross-national variation of education governance and uncover the mechanisms that produce it, my study combines two methodological approaches: comparative historical analysis and process-tracing. Comparative historical analysis is a method that permits a systematic comparison of long-term processes to explain large-scale outcomes, paying particular attention to the timing, sequence, and duration of events (Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003). The constitution of mass state-sponsored educational systems and posterior changes toward post-bureaucratic forms of

managing the school system is a perfect example of this sort of process as it has unfolded over a long period, is a substantial part of the evolution of the modern world, signals the "crisis of the welfare state," and reflects dynamics of globalization (H.-D. Meyer & Rowan, 2006a; J. W. Meyer, 1977; Wiseman & Baker, 2006). My historical analysis uses three axes of comparison: longitudinal, cross-country, and across policy areas. My longitudinal comparison undertakes a careful assessment of the incidence of policy legacies and domestic coalitions as well as the institutionalization of global ideas across three periods of ideas on education governance: educational planning (1950s–1970s), state retrenchment (1970–1990s), and Education for All plus results-based accountability (2000s–2010s).

Along with comparing translation across time, this book also examines three countries: Chile, Argentina, and Colombia. These nations experienced the influence of similar global recommendations during the three periods analyzed in this study, along with convergent enrollment rates in secondary education (Figure I.2), and yet they developed different governance arrangements. On the one hand, Chile and Argentina had
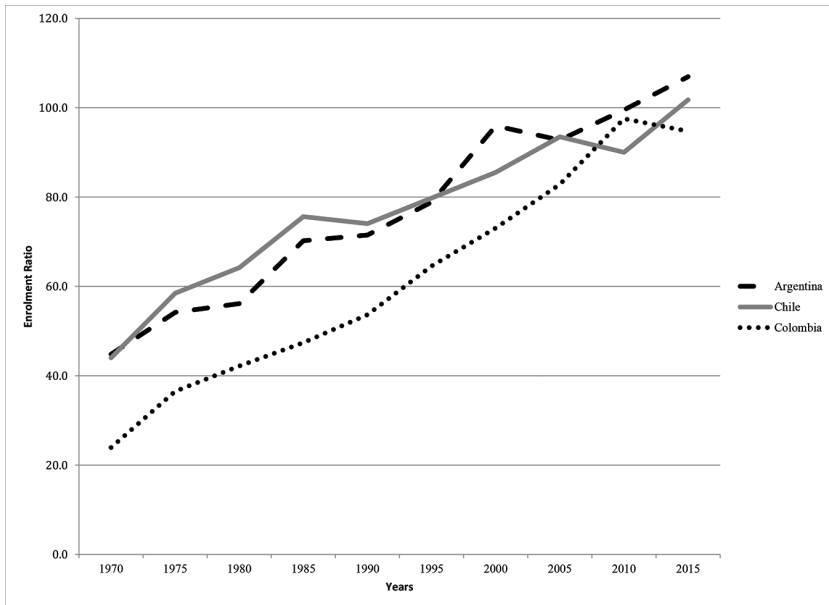

Figure I.2. Gross Enrollment Ratio in Secondary Education in Argentina, Chile, and Colombia. Author's elaboration based on Hanson, 1986; PIIE, 1984; Rivas, 2010; the World Bank, Education Statistics. https://databank.worldbank.org/source/education-statistics-^-all-indicators.

very similar starting points regarding education, including comparable state-managed secondary education models committed to train political and economic elites to sustain the nation-state project (Serrano et al., 2012; Tiramonti, 2003) and participation of the private sector (Figure I.3). Reforms in these two countries also occurred simultaneously with similar noneducation processes, such as authoritarian regimes prone to state-retrenchment ideas during the 1970s and 1980s, economic crises in the 1980s, and similar levels of development. Nevertheless, translation of global ideas in these countries went through very different pathways that led Chile to become a quasi-market of education (with a strong privatization of education provision and a clear centralization of curriculum and evaluation) and led Argentina to a quasi-state monopoly (with provision and some curriculum authority delegated to provinces while retaining the devolution of evaluation to teachers). Therefore, the comparison between these two countries facilitates the identification of causal processes through which cases with relatively similar contexts may end up with different outcomes (Locke & Thelen, 1995; Ragin, 1989).
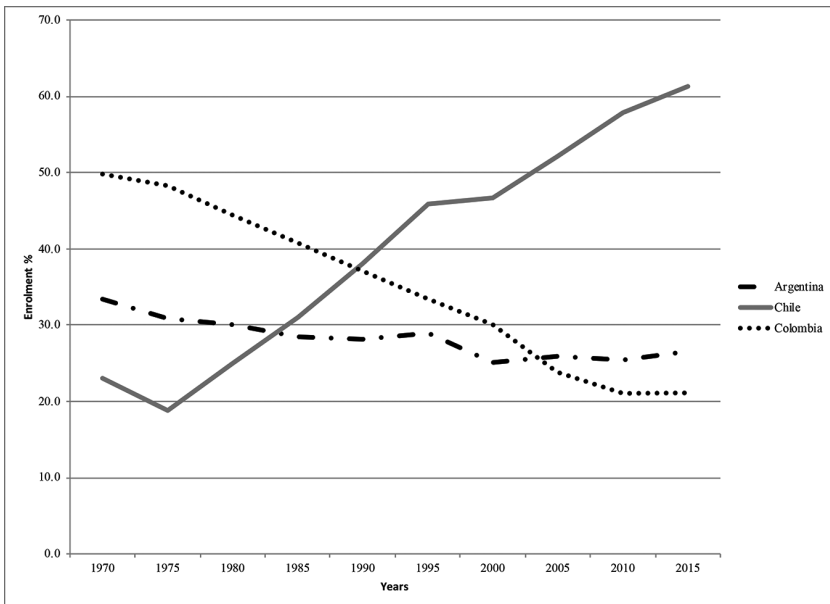

Figure I.3. Percentage of Enrollment in Private Schools out of Total Enrollment in Argentina, Chile, and Colombia, Secondary Education. Author's elaboration based on Hanson, 1986; PIIE, 1984; Rivas, 2010; the World Bank, Education Statistics. https://databank.worldbank.org/source/education-statistics-^-all-indicators.