Educational and International Development: Which Sociology to Bring into the Field?
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by

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One of the important things of which social scientists are well aware, is the fact that the rise, maintenance and fall of scientific paradigms are not unrelated to power. The history of social sciences is full of examples, and the field of education for development is no exception. What I am proposing today, is to develop a sociology of education of the field of education for international development or, if preferred, a sociology of the curriculum of a field of study that has been prolific in the last fifty years. This exercise is in some ways an ironic exercise, because it aims to carry out a sociological analysis of a field of study mainly characterised by the absence of sociology, or at least, by the absence of a critical sociology.

Indeed, there is nothing new in saying that the field of education for development has been dominated by a certain perspective of economics of education, and more precisely, by neoclassical economics and the human capital theory. Fifty years after its formulation, there is no doubt that the human capital theory, in its "hard" version based on the proper functioning of markets and the rationality of agents as utility maximisers, has succeeded as the dominant paradigm in the field of educational policy. And, as will be discussed later, it has had the ability to cope and survive in times of crisis.

The absence of a critical sociology in the field of education for development is actually the result of exclusion. First, because it is the outcome of an organic dysfunction between a science that, with few exceptions, tries to reveal power relations and mechanisms of social control, and, second, because it is the result of a dominant idea of development that has been essentially linear and based on market equilibrium.

The consequence of this absence has turned into a fundamental reduction in the conceptualisation and interpretation of human behaviour, and particularly, into a simplistic understanding of the factors determining human actions, motivations, and ultimately, the ability of individuals to act not only as
utility maximisers. This is a serious absence, because as we know, paradigms guide policy decisions and policy-making, and these policies have real consequences for real people. Of course, policy-makers can make mistakes when planning and programming. However, the non-alteration of these decisions based on immobilism and on the power to exclude other alternatives, presents an ethical problem. I think that the efforts to maintain the dominant paradigm in the field of education for development are not actually the outcome of ignorance, but rather, the result of a voluntary exclusion of specific objectives of social justice.

Nevertheless, in the absence of a critical sociology of education for development studies there is also responsibility for sociology itself and specifically for the sociology of education as a discipline. In this case, ideological positions and excessive academicism have led to forms of self-complacency. These have led to critiques of educational systems and of the social forces that control them, without developing scientifically grounded alternatives for educational development. Reproduction and correspondence theories have an undoubted theoretical value, but they have never developed a theory of educational change, thus closing the door to the possibility of even using the concept of educational development. The scarce presence of sociological theory and research in the field of development studies is also a result of this self-exclusion, or, the result of not developing a science aimed at changing the living conditions of people.

This self-exclusion has made room almost entirely for a particular sociological approach that fits well with the paradigm of neoclassical economics, which is of course the functionalist sociology of education. The dominance of functionalism in the first world sociology of education has been even stronger in developing countries. Based on the positivistic understanding of social institutions, functionalist sociology – either consciously or unconsciously – has been servile to neoclassical economics through the production of an empirical research to reflect the virtues of education systems and the labour market, and especially the links between the two. Interestingly enough, the two paradigms have complemented each other despite their different conceptions of human behaviour. While neoclassical economics believes that rational choice (and choice is actually the only aspect of human behaviour in which it is interested) is the guiding principle of free human behaviour, functionalism is based on the social norms and values that individuals must follow in order to avoid anomie and to guarantee social order. Clearly, positivism and social order are stronger forces than divergent epistemological conceptions of structure and agency.

In any case, in this presentation I do not want to claim the classics, nor do I wish to claim for a specific science from an endogamic perspective. Basically, I
propose a consideration of the relevance of a particular perspective, a specific view on education and development. In line with Peter Berger (1966), what I want to state is the value of a sociological look at social phenomena, that is, the value of “looking behind the scenes” and the value of uncovering those assumptions of what guides human behaviour. The sociological perspective is a view of what is not said, a view about what is hidden, and therefore it is also a view of what it might be but is not. My aim is therefore to challenge the narrow assumptions of actors’ behaviour, which cannot only be guided by the notion of instrumentality. I believe that this sociological approach may serve to question assumptions on the behaviour of educational demand, on how actors respond to incentive systems and, ultimately, on how the foreseen impact of specific policies and programmes may be different to what is expected.

To develop this exercise of claiming for a sociological perspective, the first reflections will identify the main limitations of using the human capital theory as the central theory for policy-making in educational development. In its “hard” version, the human capital theory has strong macroeconomic and microeconomic assumptions that are regularly included within dominant models of educational policy. Secondly, I will explore how a specific sociological perspective can be useful for both exploring factors that prevent educational development, and at the same time, producing a type of knowledge that can provide alternative forms of educational policy-making.

**Macro and micro limitations of the human capital theory**

The success of the human capital theory cannot be understood without referring to the political and economic context of post-war Europe. In fact, and somewhat unexpectedly after witnessing the evolution of the theory, the human capital theory came about in times of a Keynesian view of development, focusing on the benevolent intervention of the State. After World War II, there was an urgent need for national reconstruction in developed economies, but even more so in those developing countries that had become politically independent. In these contexts, the human capital theory appeared as a fundamental tool to promote development. The concept of education as investment and not as consumption, and the strengths of a theory demonstrating the relationship between education, productivity and income, became powerful driving forces to guide decision-making in education policy. Interestingly, the pressing need for States to intervene in the economy opened the door to a theory that offers a complete scientific rationalisation for this intervention. The confluenc-
ce of these two phenomena, a demand for scientifically supported information for decision-making and the appearance of a theory that could respond to it, explain, as Mark Blaug said, why no education Minister could even dream of making a decision without having an economist on his advisory team (Blaug, 1985).

The rise of Keynesianism and the subsequent need for economic planning justify that, in its very beginnings, the human capital theory focused on *Manpower Planning Forecast* (MPF) as a method to identify investment priorities. Assessing the needs of the labour force for economic growth was a consistent logic in western countries, but even more so in developing countries. In a context of hegemonic theories of modernisation and the need to support newly independent countries, the calculation of the needs of the workforce for each economic sector became a crucial tool for development. The MPF was actually the methodology used by the World Bank to give the first loans in education in 1968. Among other things, MPF led to giving priority to vocational education, a priority that was parallel to the carelessness of developing educational policies addressing poverty reduction and social inequalities.

The failure of most systems of MPF is documented by Heyneman (2003) in his evaluation of the programmes promoted by the World Bank at this stage. Incorrect planning, or even the business interests of American firms, explains why most programmes did not reach the expected results. But the MPF also failed because it assumed that educational demand would always react to the signs of the labour market. Thus, it was assumed, for example, that more training in agriculture should compensate for the lack of skilled technicians in this area. And it was also assumed that the social demand for education would respond to this new supply because the labour market would provide job opportunities in this sector. The absence of a sociological or anthropological approach became evident in this planning, especially when the demand for education was concentrated in those studies that could ensure access to civil servant jobs to ensure a stable salary and the possible survival of the extended family. The work of Williamson (1979) illustrates these imbalances, even providing an example of the high competition to pass a driving exam for a public administration that had already run out of cars.

So, the statist logic that accompanied the human capital theory in its early days as a planning tool led to an economic-centred approach to development, while other social sciences were excluded from the scene. Predictions made without considering the different social structures, and the specific institutional and cultural characteristics of the population led to strategies that were often inefficient to foster educational and economic development.
However, the marriage between human capital theory and Keynesianism soon came to an end. In this divorce, there is no doubt that Keynesianism suffered the most. In the seventies, the end of the post-war boom and the economic crisis opened the door to monetarism and new classical economics. The State, up to then considered to be a fundamental economic actor for macroeconomic equilibrium, fiscal and monetary policy, came to be considered as a source of inefficiency and a disruption to the market equilibrium. This change, as noted by Ben Fine (2009), not only affected the emergence of a new macroeconomic theory, but also included a new conception of microeconomics, according to which the State was not even the corrector of market and institutional imperfections. One of the salient features of neoclassical economics is its ability to conceptualise all non-economic dimensions of social life as markets. Thus, education and health can also be considered to be markets, which are regulated by supply and demand, with the only difference being that they do not necessarily operate through price, but through other means.

There are two particularly significant reductive effects of this new microeconomics. The first is the restriction of human behaviour to utility functions and the pursuit of individual self-interest. Under conditions of perfect markets, this means that rational decision-making is guided solely by instrumentalism. The second is the capacity that new economic imperialism has on what Ben Fine (2001) considers to be the colonisation of other social sciences, which is more evident today than ever. Despite its obvious theoretical and empirical weaknesses, the new economic imperialism has a strong influence on other social sciences, which make use of methodological individualism and rational action theory as key analytical frameworks of agents’ behaviour. This extraordinary sociological reductionism eliminates concepts such as power, conflict or structures and replaces them with market imperfections.

This new context explains the rapid relocation of the human capital theory, which moved from going hand in hand with Keynesianism to becoming the best example of applying the principles of neoclassical economics in a "non-economic" area such as education. The consequences of this change will be crucial for the new rationale of educational investment and the new policy priorities in developing countries. In the context of an economic science increasingly based on microeconomic modelling and empiricism supported by sophisticated quantitative techniques, the human capital theory abandons the MPF method and introduces new calculation techniques of educational investment based on the signs of the market. The best illustration of this step is the calculation of rates of return on educational investment and its automatic translation into investment priorities.
It is precisely in its neoclassical version in which the theory of human capital reinforces its hegemony. In fact, during the seventies, critiques of the human capital theory from institutionalism (Thurow, 1979) or credentialism (Arrow, 1973; Collins, 1979), questioned particularly the macroeconomic side of the theory. That is, they challenged the alleged effects of educational expansion on economic growth (questioning the productivity gains resulting from education or the functioning of the labour market and the demand of employment). However, these critiques do not focus on their microeconomic principles, based on methodological individualism and agents’ rational action in making decisions.

In developing countries, the dominance of this hard version of the human capital theory greatly influenced educational investment priorities and policy agendas. The rates of return on educational investment became the new dogma from which States should prioritise public investment in education (hence for example, the changing priorities from vocational education to basic education). But above all, it is assumed that rates of return are also the signal that people will follow when making their investment decisions in education. It is taken for granted that the actors perform with instrumental rationality, and the human capital theory provides methods and models to guide and interpret this rationality.

Therefore, the human capital theory incorporates two key absences as a framework for policy-making: at the macro level, it ignores the functioning of the institutions (both education and the labour market); at the micro level, it ignores alternative determinants of human action other than instrumental rationality.

In developing countries, the volume of policy decisions resulting from this framework was huge. It also became the only method used by the World Bank to establish investment priorities in education. During the years of structural adjustment, and under the leadership of the World Bank, education policies focused on what Stephen Heyneman called "the short education policy menu" (Heyneman, 2003). Investment priorities in basic education, the prominent role of the private sector in secondary and higher education, decentralisation or cost-recovery policies (even including fees in basic education) are undoubtedly the best examples of this limited menu. Poor countries had little room for autonomy in implementing external imposed agendas. Generally speaking, these policies had devastating social effects, including, in some cases, drawbacks in access to primary schooling, as in sub-Saharan Africa (Reimers, 1994).

The blunder of such policies is another example of the above-mentioned absences. Today, their failure is explained by both institutional and market imperfections. This explanation clearly exonerates policymakers from respon-
sibility: the policies are good, but institutional deficiencies, corruption and agents’ misinformation are the reasons behind their poor results. The potential failure of these policies is not therefore in the hands of the policy-makers, but in the hands of those who are responsible for implementing them. Taking this into consideration it is not uncommon, therefore, that one of the most significant developments of economic imperialism under the Post Washington Consensus is the colonisation of what is called ‘governance’ (if possible without government). Within this view of economics there is no discussion about which are the best policies, or about which optimal institutional conditions need to be added to the model in order to ensure its proper implementation (regardless of the power relations or cultural roots of these institutions). The use and perversion of the concept of social capital, for example, is perhaps the best example of how to include a non-economic concept into microeconomic models. A concept originally coined in sociology, especially from the work of Bourdieu, is appropriated to refer to positive social relations to improve institutional governance (Fine, 2001).

The co-optation of the concept of social capital is a good example, I think, of the capacity of neoclassical economics and neoliberalism as the associated ideology to manage its crises of hegemony and to maintain the dominant paradigm within the field of education for development. Paradoxically, these forms of paradigm maintenance, far from eroding it, have reinforced the colonisation character of economics over other social sciences. The complexity of social relations and the functioning of the institutions are reduced by the invasion of econometric models that make predictions about human behaviour that rarely occur. This capacity of neoclassical economics to transform itself by invading other social sciences has been referred by Ben Fine (2009) as the era of Zombieeconomics. In his words:

This is because [neoclassical economics] is both alive and dead at the same time. It is alive in the sense not only of aggressively and crudely, if not savagely, occupying its own territory and subject matter to the exclusion and absorption of competing paradigms but also through its increasing appetite for the flesh of other disciplines that both it infects and converts to its own nature with only limited traces remaining of what has been destroyed. By the same token, it is intellectually dead, having nothing new to offer other than parasitic extension of its principles to new applications. (Fine, 2009, 888).

The expression “all things being equal” becomes probably the most repeated formula in the comparative analysis of educational systems, or in the use of
methodologies to evaluate educational policies, as my colleague Toni Verger and I have shown in the analysis of the last World Bank education strategy (Verger & Bonal, 2012). “All things being equal” assumes that the effect of a given variable on a dependent variable is “scientifically true” if other variables that could interfere with the behaviour of the dependent variable do not change. But we know that in social sciences things are never equal. However, this “all things being equal” technique is applied today in developing countries to evaluate the effects of the introduction of quasi-market reforms in education (for example, to evaluate the impact of voucher systems or the promotion of low cost private schools), as it is also applied to simulations on educational resource allocation mechanisms. The methodological bias of this “all things being equal” technique is related both to the assumptions that equations incorporate and to the exclusion of factors that are not included in the model because they are not quantifiable or because they are simply not considered. The obsession with what Bourdieu called ‘scientism’ (Bourdieu, 1973) characterises the current alienation of social sciences to economic methods. "If you want to be taken seriously, just do as economists do", is what can be read behind the use of sophisticated techniques as the only method of study.

**Which sociology? What for?**

Sociology has been largely along these trends when applied to the studies on education and development. But as mentioned in the introduction, sociology has also been captivated by the tenets of reproduction and correspondence theories. In the post-war period, the rise of the development paradigm of modernisation and the predominance of structural functionalist sociology encouraged the emergence of a sociology that was similar to the Parsonian social psychology (Ball, 1981). Thus, economic modernisation had to be accompanied by the resocialisation of the indigenous "modern man", with the values necessary to become a productive and efficient worker. The work of Inkeles and Smith (1974), *Becoming Modern*, is one of the best applications of this approach, with a clear emphasis on personality traits as a prerequisite for economic growth. At the other ideological extreme, *Education as Cultural Imperialism* by Martin Carnoy (1974) is perhaps the best example of a sociological translation of the theory of dependence in education. Carnoy argues that education systems on the periphery are simple products of colonisation. The alliance between bourgeois elites from the centre and the periphery explain, according to Carnoy, the domestication of the working class and peasantry on the values of the capitalist metropolis.
Over thirty years later it is easy to recognise the reductionist and old-fashioned character of both approaches. Since then, the contemporary sociological theory has advanced significantly. It has mainly advanced from an epistemological, rather than an ontological, point of view. That is, sociological theory has particularly produced new approaches to interpret the dialectics between subject and object or the dynamics between structure and agency, while the ontological positions of consensus and conflict inherent in social formations have mainly remained intact, although are often reinterpreted according to historical changes. What I am interested in here is not in highlighting the richness of the contributions of interactionism, phenomenology, analytical Marxism or constructivism, but to note their limited ability to penetrate, as useful theoretical frameworks, the field of studies of education and development. In fact, beyond the degree of visibility of different theoretical approaches, only the theory of rational action seems to have been able to be recognised as a theory relevant to policy-making, something that should not be surprising considering the dominance of neoclassical economics. This process has not only excluded a certain type of sociology, but it has made room for a sociological approach that, in order to be recognised in the areas of academic and political power, perverts the very essence of the basic principles that justify its existence as a science. Context, institutions, power and culture are simply excluded from the scene. Methodological individualism ends up claiming for a de-contextualised universalism that is only possible by excluding those principles, and therefore, by eliminating sociology.

One of the most powerful reactions of the social sciences to this reductionism has been the defence of approaches that can be located at the other epistemological extreme. Indeed, the emergence of the so-called post-isms is a limitless celebration of context, cultural relativism and particularism as opposed to universalism. Despite the multiple variants of post-structuralism, postmodernism and post-colonialism, what these approaches have in common is the rejection of any form of regularity and universality of social phenomena.

While the role of actors in all types of post-isms becomes predominant and is not exclusively targeted by instrumentalism, the focus on specificity practically nullifies the possibility of producing a science that provides tools for social or political change. In the field of development studies this is particularly dramatic. Analytical tools that use these theories, and especially narrative analyses (of actors or institutions), are an interesting sociological exercise because they are able to de-construct new forms of domination, and because they stress the importance of cultural references in the dispositions and multiple rationalities of actors. However, the deliberate choice of "relying solely on the context," cannot produce a relevant science to guide policy development that goes
beyond an analysis of the context in question. Every form of power is specific, and any alternative is necessarily context-dependent and culturally unique. An example is provided by the work of Woolman, who, after comparing the change in curriculum of four African countries concluded:

A fully-indigenous reorganisation of education is essential; new nations should develop programs and institutions that work for their particular cultural and national needs (Woolman, 2001: 43).

Given this bias in sociological studies of education for development, I think there is room for an approach that, without cancelling out the importance of the subject and its specificity, must not be exclusively dedicated to celebrating particularism. In other words, a scientific approach capable of providing a specific analytical look, and capable of inferring regularities in the reproduction of social phenomena, without reducing them to the principles of the theory of rational action. I also believe that globalisation clearly demonstrates both the need for and the possibility of such an approach.

I believe that if as social scientists we recognise the existence of processes of economic, political and cultural globalisation, sociological analysis cannot be exclusively based on the context. Globalisation implies the recognition of forces that operate beyond the nation-state (without necessarily involving the retreat of the state), which affect the structural conditions of the countries (significantly in developing countries) and the public and social policies that they may develop.

To develop this, I think two essential conditions are needed. First, we need a theory about how globalisation affects the policies and structures of education systems and which are, as Roger Dale (1999) states, the main mechanisms through which this leverage is exerted. Secondly, we need to consider that these processes do not necessarily have the same effects in different countries and contexts. In other words, globalisation is different from convergence. Therefore, what we must do is study those factors involved in a particular recontextualisation of global forces in particular sites. This recontextualisation process operates both at the level of a particular configuration of social and economic conditions and at the level of a specific agenda-setting and policy impacts.

This approach differs from both the instrumental rationality of actors and the particularity of post-isms. In addition, it responds to one of the main challenges of contemporary sociological theory, which is the empirical analysis of the dialectic between subject and object, between structure and agency. The actions of the agents are not reducible to instrumental rationality – the agents have dispositions (Bourdieu) or motivations (Giddens) – neither are indepen-
dent of the structural conditions in which they are immersed (established largely by the forces of globalisation).

In recent years, two major theoretical approaches seem to have responded to these challenges in the field of sociological studies on the relationship between globalisation and education. On the one hand, sociological institutionalism applied to education by John Meyer, Francisco Ramirez and other scholars under the so-called “Stanford School”. For over thirty years, these authors have worked around the theory of the isomorphism of educational systems worldwide. Oversimplifying their theses, what these authors defend is that the development of education systems, the categories of curriculum and even the State itself can be explained by models of universal cultural values and institutional development. Their main finding is the surprising isomorphism of education systems, which is independent of the political, economic or cultural conditions of the nation-states. It is this triumph of a particular system of western values of rationality applied to specific state institutions, and a certain conception of the modern individual, that makes the development of educational institutions standardised and universal (Ramirez & Ventresca, 1992).

The contrast to this approach comes directly from the work of Roger Dale in his critique of the Stanford School (Dale, 2000), and from those authors who understand globalisation to be the main causal force of many of the educational changes we witness today. According to them, globalisation needs to be understood, first and foremost, as political and economic power relations in which a range of scales of governance interact to shape particular policy agendas. Here, in particular, I include the work of Susan Robertson, Bob Jessop, Martin Carnoy and, again, Roger Dale, who have views of globalisation as a political and economic transformational process that changes the nature and scope of State intervention by different mechanisms. Education policies cannot therefore be the product of isomorphism, but the result of the interaction between forces operating at supranational, national and local scales (Dale and Robertson, 2002).

Comparing these approaches in depth is beyond the scope of this presentation. But for the purpose at hand, I would like to particularly emphasise the difference between the conceptions of agency implicit in both theories. Both theories go beyond the dualisation already observed between rational action theories and context-based post-isms. One fundamental difference however, is that the Stanford School approach practically renders agency invalid. In fact, the research methodology used by Stanford scholars is based on the empirical observation of the probabilities of certain social phenomena taking place (in this case, curriculum categories or historical periods of development of public education systems). These probabilities are based on independent variables
that reflect the degree of development and modernisation of institutions, and especially the State. But all we can determine through this theory are the external factors that explain when the institutions of a country acquire the global system of Western values and become modern.

This so-called World Society Theory carries an implicit linear and non-dialectical view of education and development. In the last instance, the only difference from neoclassical economics lies in the variables that ultimately explain development. Thus, the development of markets is replaced by the development and integration of the institutions of nation-states within the Western cultural system of values. Culture replaces the economy.

The political economy approach emphasises globalisation as a driving force behind the current transformations of educational systems, but far from excluding agency, it is included as a fundamental mediation between supranational mechanisms and their effects on policy formation, implementation and impact. The dialectic between structure and agency is present within the study of educational policies, the variability of which cannot be due to external imposition or simply the fruit of local contexts.

The political economy approach is not exclusively sociological but allows the integration of different disciplines into a theoretical framework that tends not to reduce the social to market or institutional imperfections. It includes ways of conceptualising power and the way in which specific actors and institutions exercise it in a context of structural changes resulting from the evolution of global capitalism.

The use of this approach in the field of education and development has the advantage of making room for sociological analysis. Returning to the idea of Peter Berger’s sociology as a perspective, this theory can unmask the forces and relations of power implicit in the production and reproduction of policies. The diagnoses that can be made from this perspective are inevitably critical. But, unlike the theories of reproduction, its critical approach does not block the possibilities of educational change. Change is possible because alternatives to mainstream policies can be explored, and this is mainly possible by uncovering those factors that so often prevent mainstream policies from achieving their promised and expected results.

In my own work in the field of education and development I try to use this sociological perspective (Bonal, 2004, 2007, Bonal et al. 2010, Verger & Bonal 2012). I have done so in collaboration with colleagues with whom I share the goal of producing a science that does not remain exclusively in the diagnosis, but is capable of generating useful and transferable knowledge for actors and institutions, moving towards what has been named “public sociology”. I have used this approach in the analysis of international organisations, the study of
the relationship between education and poverty and, more recently, in the analysis of the educational agendas of privatisation and its assumed benefits for the most disadvantaged. This is not an easy task, since it always requires firstly de-constructing the ‘taken for granted’ set of assumptions embedded in the dominant paradigm (an exercise that is never required from those working from ‘mainstream’ positions).

In each of the objects studied there is therefore an initial exercise of empirically showing the false assumptions underlying most analyses. The study of the relationship between education and poverty reduction serves as a good example with which to conclude this presentation and to show the possibilities of the proposed approach. First, this is an area where economic imperialism has become especially visible in shaping specific educational policies for poverty reduction. Implicit to these policies are assumptions about the rationality of the poor in educational decision-making. Thus, human capital theory suggests that as long as educational investment produces positive rates of return, enhancing the education of the poorest groups will have a significant mid-term impact on reducing poverty rates. These arguments have been maintained despite the fact that changes in the educational level of the population in less developed countries were much higher than the changes in poverty rates. The macro and micro constraints mentioned above are sharply manifested in this case. At the macro level, the effects of globalisation on educational expansion are not explored, nor are the devaluation of credentials analysed or the strategies used by the middle classes to differentiate themselves from other social groups who have more access to higher educational levels. At a micro level, actors’ rationality is supposed to follow a rational calculation of costs and benefits of educational investment. The hypotheses underlying these decisions are difficult to find in the ‘real’ world: the lack of opportunity costs for primary education, the inelasticity of the educational demand of the poor or perfect information about the quality of schools. These shortcomings are essential to understand the limitations of this approach as a basis for establishing a successful global agenda of education policy for fighting poverty.

On the other hand, the dominant approach in this field of study ignores completely how social actors and institutions recontextualise these policies. In the work I have carried out with my colleagues Aina Tarabini and Florencia Kliczkowski we have stressed the key role of contextual factors to reflect how the same conditional cash transfers policies have different impacts depending on the specific policy design and on the living conditions of the beneficiaries. The concept of educability serves to illustrate how socialization, family relationships, the peer group and, ultimately, the daily life of the child give rise to
different forms of policy appropriation and to the emergence of multiple rationalities of educational investment.

Bringing this type of sociology to the study of the relationship between education and poverty helps to overcome the limitations of the human capital theory. The recursive relationship between structure and agency in this approach is what ultimately allows us to argue that any educational policy for poverty reduction can only be effective if it first takes into account the effects that poverty has on education. This is a conclusion that ultimately fulfils the sociological principle that Peter Berger reminds us of: the need to turn the tables to show what is not explained. I think that this is the sociology that needs to be brought into the field of education for development. And it is the type of sociology that I aim to develop with my colleagues at the IS Academie Education and Development.

Acknowledgements

I will now proceed to the final part of this presentation, the vote of thanks to those who have made this day possible. Firstly, I would like to thank the Executive Board of the University of Amsterdam, the Dean of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences and the Board of the Foundation for Education, Research and Policy in International Development.

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Finally, I would like to dedicate this lecture to two people. Firstly, to our dear colleague and friend Stephen Stoer, who left us six years ago. His wisdom and political commitment are an example of the possibilities of a critical sociology applied to education and development. I had the privilege to enjoy his intellectual depth, his sense of humour and especially his friendship. And secondly, this lecture is dedicated to my dear Marta, my partner and companion and the mother of our beloved Maria and Lluc. I owe so much to her, and to her this lecture is especially dedicated.

Ik heb gezegd.
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