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The economics of policy borrowing and lending: a study of late adopters

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Abstract

The article draws on interpretive frameworks from diffusion research and social network analysis to explore one particular ‘travelling reform’—outcomes-based education—that went global. The argument is made that by virtue of studying late adopters of a travelling reform one is examining globalisation. The cases in point for late adoption are Central Asian education systems (in particular Mongolia and Kyrgyz Republic) that borrowed outcomes-based education reforms at a time when the popularity of similar reforms were already in decline in other countries, notably in New Zealand, Australia and South Africa. The emphasis of this study is on the timing of policy borrowing, and it is suggested that more attention is given to the economics of policy borrowing.

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Notes

1. OBE was discussed in the United States for a brief period in the late 1980s, but was replaced by Goals 2000 in most states, a standards-based approach to curriculum reform issued by the Federal Government in 1994. However, the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) triggered a renewed interest in outcomes-based accountability or 'new accountability', a term coined by researchers affiliated with the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (Fuhrman, [1999](#)). See Jennifer O'Day's critique of the 'outcomes-based bureaucratic model of school accountability' (O'Day, [2002](#), p. 294), which she finds re-emerging in federal legislation in general, and the NCLB Act in particular.
2. Article 47 deals with 'Assessment of Performance Agreement' and Article 49 with 'Payment of Performance Bonuses to Employees' (Parliament of Mongolia, [2002](#)).
3. The greatest delay occurred at the parliamentary level. The first draft for the Public Sector Management and Finance Law was submitted in 1997 (see Lanking, [2004](#)), but only approved in 2002. Once it was approved, the ministries were eager to adopt it, with the financial support of ADB, to their sector.

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