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Theorizing and Documenting the Spread of Teach For All and its Impact on Global Education Reform

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Abstract: Within global education policy, the role of multilateral agencies in pushing cross-national policy borrowing is increasingly being complemented by efforts from private international networks within civil society, such as Teach For All. This introductory article summarizes the scarce extant literature on Teach For All, highlighting the contributions to this growing area of inquiry within this special issue. Especially provocative and fruitful lines of further inquiry surrounding Teach For All and similar policy networks are also highlighted and explored.
Keywords: Teach For All; Teach For America; education reform

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Conceptualizando y Documentando la Diseminación de Teach For All y Su Impacto en la Reforma Global de la Educación
Resumen: En la esfera de la política educativa global, el rol de los organismos multilaterales está siendo complementado cada vez más por el trabajo de las redes privadas internacionales dentro de la sociedad civil, como lo es Teach For All. Este artículo introductorio resume la escasa literatura existente acerca de Teach For All, resaltando las contribuciones realizadas al campo por este número especial. También se subrayan y exploran las líneas de investigación más provocativas y productivas en torno a Teach For All y redes similares.
Palabras-clave: Teach For All, Teach For America, reforma educativa

Conceitualizando e Documentando a Propagação do Teach For All e Seu Impacto Sobre a Reforma Global da Educação
Resumo: No âmbito da reforma escolar global, o papel da agências multilaterais está sendo cada vez mais complementado por redes privadas internacionais dentro da sociedade civil, como Teach For All. Este artigo introdutório resume-se a literatura escassa existente sobre Teach For All, com um focos nas contribuições desta edição especial à esta área de pesquisa. Também resume-se as linhas mais provocantes e frutíferas de pesquisa futura sobre Teach For All e redes semelhantes.
Palavras-chave: Teach For All; Teach For America; reforma escolar

In the contemporary global educational landscape, teacher education is undergoing rapid shifts, with a particular focus on preparing teachers to demonstrate international competitiveness on high-stakes achievement tests (Waldow, Takayama, & Sung, 2014) driven by various global actors and discourses. One increasingly prominent actor in this dynamic is Teach For All, an organization with the mission to combat educational inequality through the development of national-level nonprofits throughout the world. Specifically, Teach For All serves as an umbrella network that provides strategic support to social entrepreneurs that work to implement in their own countries the education reform ideals and organizational model popularized by the U.S.-based nonprofit Teach For America (TFA). Within the TFA model, nonprofits aspire to reduce educational inequality in a given country by recruiting high-achieving graduates from prominent national colleges to teach in high-needs schools for two years, on the basis of the assumption that high-performing college graduates can drastically improve their students' performance and reduce the achievement gap between rich and poor.

In the U.S.-based literature on Teach For America, the effectiveness of this model in reaching these goals has been highly contested. Several prominent evaluative studies have produced relatively positive results on student test scores at both the elementary (Decker, Mayer, & Glazerman, 2004; Raymond, Fletcher, & Luque, 2001) and secondary levels (Clark et al., 2013), though other scholars have prominently contested these results (Heilig & Jez, 2010, 2014), at times with their own rigorous evaluations that have shown students of Teach For America teachers receive lower test scores than those taught by traditionally certified teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2009; Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005).

It is precisely this contestation of the TFA model within its original national context that has made the rapid international spread of that model so fascinating. Since Teach For All's initial announcement at the 2007 Clinton Global Initiative, programs have been founded in more than 30 countries world-wide, including locations as diverse as Germany, India, Mexico, Japan, Estonia, Pakistan, Israel and Australia.

Due to the international prominence of the TFA model and brand, these satellite programs often receive significant support from national governments and prominent foundations and corporations (both domestic and international). However, due to understandable differences in national cultural and policy contexts, these programs have experienced varying levels of reach, impact, and conflict with the established stakeholders. The degree of adaptation of the model has also varied extensively in response to differing local needs and policy contexts. Through the analyses and case studies contained in this special issue of *Educational Policy Analysis Archives*, the reader is able to gain a deeper understanding of the workings of this specific type of teacher education reform, with authors utilizing contrasting theoretical frameworks and numerous methodological approaches to make sense of both Teach For All's global presence and its localized, national and regional-level impact.

Research on Teach For All and the programs residing under its umbrella is currently extremely scarce (as noted by McConney, Woods-McConney, & Price, 2012), with the exception of evaluations and critiques of Teach For America (see Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2009; Decker et al., 2004; Raymond et al., 2001), and to a lesser extent, the United Kingdom's Teach First (Hutchings, Maylor, Mendick, Menter, & Smart, 2006; Muijs, Chapman, Collins, & Armstrong, 2010). In most cases, the literature that does exist consists of large-scale quantitatively-based evaluations of the impact of particular Teach For All programs' teachers on student achievement, conducted by multilateral funding agencies like the Inter-American Development Bank (Alfonso, Santiago & Bassi, 2010) and nationally-centered bodies like the Australian Council for Educational Research (Scott, Weldon, & Dinham, 2010; Weldon, McKenzie, Kleinhenz, & Reid, 2012, 2013) and Ofsted (2008) in the UK.

While the rapid expansion of the network in part explains the relative dearth of literature on the subject, there are numerous aspects of Teach For All's spread and influence that demand further scholarly attention: namely, the considerable funding Teach For All and its partners have gathered both from public and private partners, as well as the ways in which they are influencing public debate and policy around issues of teacher recruitment, retention and certification, the role of unions, learning assessment, and school policy. The articles collected in this special issue represent an initial foray into this essential conversation.

Perhaps the most innovative contribution that can be made to the larger discussion of global education reform through analysis of Teach For All is a deeper understanding of the role of global transnational networks and organizations that are more modest in scope compared to the multilateral organizations (such as the World Bank, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], and the Inter-American Development Bank) examined in the extant literature (Philips & Ochs, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). Such organizations have exerted influence on educational policy globally primarily through setting conditions for granting aid packages to countries with struggling economies (Jones, 2004), packages which have often encouraged particularly neoliberal or market-oriented approaches to public policy (Arnove, 1983; Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002; Gwynne & Kay, 2000).

While organizations like Teach For All do not wield the same economic leverage, they have also served as mechanisms for the spread of particular models of education reform. Stephen Ball (2012) has provided one construct that could account for such influence in what he calls "Transnational Advocacy Networks," or TANs: groups of (typically private) organizations brought together primarily by their "shared values" (p. 13). With regard to the Teach For All network in particular, Friedrich (2014) has previously built on this model to describe Teach For All's extension through its national-level partners as a form of policy "micro-lending:" that is, helping relatively

small-scale social entrepreneurship efforts throughout the world use parallel methods (as done by Kiva, Grameen or other micro-lending agencies) as a means of targeting global educational needs.

In this special issue, various contributors add to this initial research on Teach For All's influence. In "Teach For All: Storytelling 'Shared Solutions' and Scaling Global Reform," Chloe Ahmann examines Teach For All's use of storytelling to communicate the logic behind its particular "brand" of leadership development: namely, that transformational leaders have particular characteristics in common, that Teach For All's partners have demonstrated the ability to identify and cultivate such leaders in the educational sector, and that such high-impact leadership development is "scalable." Through an analysis of Teach For All promotional materials and the public statements of its leaders (such as Wendy Kopp), Ahmann makes a compelling case for the role of storytelling in Teach For All's spread of its particular organizational model and theory of change.

Belen Cumsille and Ariel Fizbein bring a more targeted, regional focus to the discussion with their article "Crème de la Crème: The *Teach For All* experience and its lessons for policy-making in Latin America." As Latin American scholars themselves, the authors undertake a very practical exercise in this piece, using semi-structured interviews with staff members from various Teach For All affiliates to identify what they see as best practices in teacher education that could improve pedagogical training throughout Latin America. Their findings are contextualized within the larger Latin American literature on teacher education.

Priya Goel La Londe, T. Jameson Brewer and Christopher A. Lubienski further this special issue's critical discussion with "The Proliferation of Teach For America around the Globe: Cloning Corporate Reform Through Teach For All." In this largely theoretical essay, the authors develop their own construct to describe the support structure of Teach For All and similar organizations: namely, what they call global Intermediary Organization Networks (IONs), or the loose conglomerations of foundations, lobbyists, government officials and other actors who share a philosophical orientation towards particular educational reforms.

Finally, in "Making All Children Count: Teach For All and the Universalizing Appeal of Data," Daniel Friedrich, Mia Walter and Erica Colmenares similarly explore the discursive practices represented in the public statements of Teach For All and its affiliates, this time on social media. In particular, Friedrich, Walter and Colmenares discuss how Teach For All and its affiliates use a focus on principles of data collection and data-driven instruction, theorized here as *dataspeak*, to universalize the problems faced by Teach For All partner organizations despite their differences in cultural and social context.

As stated earlier, we hope that these essays serve as a starting point for a larger conversation on the spread of Teach For All and its affiliates and their role in influencing trends in global education reform. We await much more rigorous scholarship focused on this growing phenomenon over the coming years, and hope that the research begun here proves useful in furthering that endeavor.

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