



Editorial

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Because the IJED focuses on assessments with clear comparative implications, we rarely publish work with a primarily domestic focus. But the manuscript titled: “Problematic, Contextual Contexts – Seeking Understanding and Spaces for Optimism,” by Claire Maxwell is an exception. Her manuscript summarizes the articles which will appear in the Special Issue on Education in Israel. This topic was chosen on the grounds that in one country the conflicts and tensions pertaining to social stratification, citizenship, religion and migration were of such magnitude that they deserve a closer focus. Claire Maxwell divides the conflicts into three categories. The first concerns tension between traditional socialist statism and the international pressures for marketization and privatization. The second concerns the increasing religionisation of Israeli society and how it affects education provision. While the traditional view of religionisation is that it is accompanied by conservative forces, Maxwell points out the significant diversity of parents who choose to educate their children in the religious sector. The third theme is a significant increase in inequality in terms of educational access and outcomes. This theme includes the issues of citizenship rights and responsibilities and the dysfunctional divergent narratives of history. Maxwell concludes with a description of the Palestinian – Jewish bilingual schools in which educational institutions, under the egis of local parental control, can rise above the pressures for dissensus.

Volume 71 also contains an article concerning teacher unions. The manuscript is titled: “From Silenced to Vocal: Teacher Unionists’ Growing Influence on Educational Development in Taiwan”. In this manuscript, Cheng-Yu Hung makes four points: (i) that unionism and professionalism are not mutually exclusive; (ii) that working conditions can contribute to the education delivered to children; (iii) that ‘micro-strategies’ can be used to increase the public’s trust; and (iv) that contrary to the traditional Confucian image, teacher activism in power politics may provide inspiration to other struggling democracies.

When is education aid effective? In the article titled: “Effectiveness of Education Aid Revisited: Country-level Inefficiencies Matter,” Elise Miningou argues that country-level inefficiencies make the difference between aid which works and aid which is largely wasted. In environments with good governance, political stability and strong national commitment to finance education, foreign education aid can be effective.

Most yearly schedules allow a significant gap in education delivery for vacations. If education were delivered on a year-round basis, would it improve outcomes? In the article titled: “The Effect of Multi-Track Year-Round Education in the Delivery of Senior High School Education in Ghana: Lessons from MT-YRE Cases,” Stephen Takyi, Richard Azerigyik and Owusu Amponsah discover that year-round schedule increases enrollment but involves high costs, and raises behavior problems due to fatigue, boredom and poor academic performance.

Many universities which offer courses in a non-local medium of

instruction import foreign teachers. Universities in Japan are an example. But how do these foreign teachers fare? How well can they be integrated into the local university communities? In the article titled: “Challenges Facing International Faculty at Japanese Universities: Main Findings from the 2017 National Survey,” Futao Huang, Tsukasa Daizen, and Yangson Kim find that the ‘closed nature’ of Japanese institutional atmosphere poses significant problems. American and British junior faculty in the Humanities seem to encounter more difficulties due to instability in employment, uncertain career prospects and ‘serious competition for survival’.

As students of STEM subjects (math, science, engineering and computer programming) males tend to dominate in terms of enrollment. But is this trend universal? In the article titled: “The Puzzling Relationship Between Development and Gender Equity: The Case of Postsecondary Education STEM and STEM-Related Fields,” Lara Perez-Felkner, John Felkner, Samantha Nix and Melissa Magalhaes find that in Cambodia the trend does not apply. Not only are enrolled women more dominant in STEM fields than men, but also women who come from outside the capital city dominate over those from the capital city. They discuss potential explanations and the implication for the gender question in other national contexts.

It is common to conclude that there is a ‘mismatch’ between what is learned in school and the demands of the labor market. But in their paper titled: “Local Governance, Education, Occupation-Education Mismatch: Heterogeneous Effects on Wages in (Vietnam) a Lower Middle Income Country,” authors Yuyen Tran, Hiep Pham, Hoa Vo, Hong Luu, and Huong Nguyen find something quite different. They discover that the degree of skill miss-match and the economic returns to education investment may depend on the quality of provincial governance. They find that former students in the lower wages occupations benefit more from provincial government quality than those earning higher wages. They conclude that making improvements in provincial governance and higher education together may reduce wage inequality.

It is often suggested that extra-curricular activities, such as sports and music, may lead to a more well rounded graduate. But do these extra-curricular activities have an impact on traditional cognitive outcomes? In their paper titled: “The Impact of Art-Education on Human Capital: An Empirical Assessment of a Youth Orchestra,” authors Pablo Egana-delSol, Dante Contreras, and Juan Pablo Valenzuela find in the case of a local municipality in Chile that participation in a youth orchestra has positive causal performance effects on both language and aptitude tests. Moreover, they find that the test results are semi-linear; that students who take the tests more than once show greater improvement if they have participated in a youth orchestra.

First conceived by Milton Friedman at the University of Chicago School seven decades ago, the principle of school choice is now known globally. But the results have never been conclusive. On what basis do

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families make the choice? What implications does school choice have on other important goals such as social cohesion? In a paper titled: "Constrained School Choice in Egypt," Caroline Krafft, Asmaa Elbadawy and Maia Sieverding outline the characteristics of school choice in Egypt. Taking the education sector from primary school through universities, they find that girls tend to attend public schools with lower cost and lower quality and that private schools tend to have higher quality and offer higher chances to enter selective courses of university study.

There are many private, non-profit organizations which assist Africans to attend universities outside their country of origin. But how

good are they? In the paper titled: "Can Scholarships Provide Equitable Access to High Quality University Education? Evidence from the MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program," Clemencia Cosentino, Jane Fortson, Sarah Humpage Liuzzi, Anthony Harris and Randall Blair conclude that the program has increased access to high quality universities by low SES students of which one third proceed to graduate school.

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