Representing Your Country: Scotland, PISA and New Spatialities of Educational Governance

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the rescaling and re-spatialization of policy and governance in education, including the constitution of a global education policy field. It deals with the changing education policy work of the OECD, particularly the influential Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). We argue that PISA has become the most successful OECD 'product' and as such has become the prototype for other OECD developments, including PISA-Based tests for schools, PISA for development, PIACC and AHELO. These developments help constitute a global education policy field and contribute to the production of a global data infrastructure in education. At the same time, they also have impacts on other spatial relations, including sub-national and local effects in schooling. For example, the PISA-based test for schools programme can be used directly by schools and sub-national systems as part of the new policy spaces in education. In this paper, we document the role of the OECD's education work in respect of these matters. We focus specifically on a video, *PISA 2012 - Representing Your Country*, produced by the Scottish Department of Education and anchored by the Scottish National Party Minister for Education. The aim of the video is to inspire the participation and strong performance of Scottish students in the 2012 PISA sample. As we will show, using a 'videological analysis', this video demonstrates how Scottish independence and nationalism involve reaching out to draw on the expertise of supranational organisations such as the OECD, while at the same time the OECD is reaching in to nations to shape policy agendas in sub-national spaces.

INTRODUCTION

In the post-Cold War era, globalization has increased the porosity of national borders, as well as leading to pressures for supranational political organizations (e.g. the European Union), new regionalisms (e.g. North American Free Trade Agreement), the break-up of some nations (e.g. Czechoslovakia) and the creation of new nations, including through pushes for political independence (e.g.

Scotland and Quebec). The nation state remains important, but now works in different ways in relation to globalization. In this paper, we analyse how the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Developments's (OECD) education work is contributing to new modes of educational governance through 're-spatializations' associated with globalization (Amin, 2002) and the reworking of nations.

While the OECD's education work initially focused on national education systems (Papadopoulos, 1994), it has expanded to include a suite of qualitative assessments of policy and, increasingly, quantitative assessments of the comparative performance of schooling systems, including at sub-national levels. Comparison has become a central mode of governance in education today (Novoa and Yariv-Mashal, 2003) and we would argue that the OECD has found its education policy niche globally in becoming a centre of expertise for the comparative measurement of performance of national schooling systems.

In terms of quantitative and comparative analyses of national school performance, the OECD publishes *Education at a Glance*, its annual statistical report on education that documents relationships between systemic inputs and outputs, as well as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which we argue has become the prototype for the development of other OECD assessments in education (e.g. PISA-based tests for schools, PISA for development, PIACC – Programme for Assessment of Adult Competences and AHELO – Assessment for Higher Education Learning Outcomes). This numbers work of the OECD in education has helped constitute a global education policy field (Lingard and Rawolle, 2011). However, as we will show, the OECD's education work is now also involved in other more topological spatial relations (Lingard and Sellar, 2013; Lingard, Sellar and Savage, 2014) that work through and across the local, national and global.

While the focus of PISA has tended to be comparative global performance of national schooling systems, from its beginning in 2000, sub-national systems have participated in PISA, for example, the provinces of Canada. This, of course, is a manifestation of there being no national department of education in Canada or national Minister, a reflection perhaps of the idiosyncratic position of the French Canadian province, Quebec, within the Canadian federation. More recently, the participation of Shanghai and Hong Kong in PISA, and the strong performance of both, have often been viewed as a reflection of the performance of the Chinese schooling overall (an example of synecdoche), but of course these are very particular systems with certain characteristics that are not reflective of China as a whole. This synecdoche is desirable for the Chinese government in Beijing, as other provinces (including Beijing) have participated, but their results have not been made public. The Chinese government is using Shanghai as an internal reference system for the reform of the schooling systems of other provinces, as well as an external representation of the strength of Chinese schooling (see Sellar and Lingard, 2013a).

From the outset of PISA, some federal nations such as Australia, Canada and Germany have oversampled for the assessment to enable sub-national comparisons. This is also the case in the UK. Scotland, which we focus on here, oversamples for PISA so that results can be disaggregated for internal policy

usage. More recently, new programmes have been developed following the PISA prototype, which are specifically targeted at schools and systems within nations. For example, PISA-based tests for schools were trialled in 2013 in schools in the US, UK and Canada and the programme will be implemented more fully in 2014. There was no national or OECD funding for the development of PISA-Based test for schools, which was supported by US philanthropic foundations and America Achieves, a US not-for-profit organisation. The Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO) is another example and one in which the sub-national focus of the programme has complicated development, because it is funded by nations, but the benefits appear to go to individual higher education institutions (see Shahjahan, 2013). While member nations generally pay for the development of OECD education programs, the OECD's education work is developing along lines that increase its relevance and usefulness at sub-national levels. And as we can see with PISA-based tests for schools, this work is being supported by new funding models and is producing new relationships with users of the OECD's policy work.

In late 2014, Scots will vote on a referendum to secede from the UK and become a separate, independent nation. We might see the vote for devolution in 1997 and the introduction of the Scottish parliament in 1999 as the first steps towards independence or alternatively a strategic move by the Westminster parliament to assuage those seeking Scottish independence. Whatever account we accept, both moves can be seen as linked to the new spatial relations of globalization. Interestingly, Paterson (2003) argues that the Scottish vote in favour of devolution reflected a Scottish rejection of the neo-liberal, competitive individualism that underpinned the Blair New Labour and earlier Thatcherite and Major political projects. Here we might see the Scots as Northern Europeans with a social-democratic temperament reflected in the contemporary politics of the Scottish National Party and the Labour Party in Scotland, but evident in support for independence and devolution respectively. McCrone (2005) also argues that social democratic values have been successfully badged as Scottish. In many ways this is as an oppositional alternative to the English other: England as negative reference society for Scotland (Lingard, 2014, p.121). Arnott and Ozga (2010) suggest Scotland in the post-devolution period has been seeking new reference societies in the Nordic countries and possibly the Baltic States.

In terms of schooling in contemporary Scotland, we must consider Scotland's Enlightenment past and how in 1696, before the Act of Union with England in 1707, the then Scottish parliament passed legislation to ensure the establishment of an elementary school in every parish of Scotland. An outcome of this legislation was that Scotland, by the end of the eighteenth century, became the first literate nation in Europe (Herman, 2001, p.23). Education has been highly valued in Scotland since that time and Paterson (2003) has argued that following the Act of Union in 1707, and in the absence of a state, Scots developed a practical sense of the public, which was 'rooted in civil society rather than the state'. McCrone (2005) similarly talks of Scotland as an 'understated nation' and observes that devolution strengthened the importance of civil society in Scotland. Regarding schooling, McCrone (2005, p.74) notes, 'people think of themselves as Scottish because of the micro-contexts of their lives reinforced by

the school system'. In the video that we analyse in this paper, which was produced by the Scottish National Party government to be viewed by students selected in the Scottish sample for PISA 2012, we also see how important schooling is to the imagined community that is Scotland, but also to the desired prosperous economic future of Scotland. Indeed, the PISA student sample is constructed as a synecdoche for Scotland and its future and located in a context that assumes Scotland is a separate nation already.

Arnott and Ozga (2010) have argued in their analysis of the education policy frames of the Scottish National Party government that these use Scottish nationalism as a resource and work across internal references and external references to the necessity of a competitive, knowledge-based economy. In this respect, they suggest this government works with a 'modernised nationalism' (p.347) that, they observe, is about persuading 'the people of Scotland' that 'they could safely aspire to independence' (p.347). As they put it: 'References *inward* discursively promote the nation to itself as social democratic, while references *outward* reinforce this version of nationalism and reduce the dangers of invoking nationalist sentiment of a more traditional, exclusionary nature' (Arnott and Ozga, 2010, p.347). In this way, they suggest that travelling global policy discourse is embedded within the nation, that is, Scotland. In our analysis of the Scottish PISA video, we demonstrate a similar discursive strategy at work.

Our focus in this paper is on the new spatializations of education policy addressed through a consideration of the OECD's education work and education policy in Scotland in the wake of the possible move towards Scottish independence. In what follows, we first outline a related set of concepts that provide a theoretical framework for understanding new spatial relations of governance in education, set against the broader phenomenon of globalization. We then provide a brief historical overview of the OECD's education work and specifically the development and expansion of PISA and related programmes over the last two decades. Next, we analyse the Scottish video, *PISA 2012 - Representing Your Country*, as an example of two things: first, that the OECD's education work is a joint project of member nations and the OECD—here we would represent the OECD as a significant node in a network of relations—and secondly, the significance of the OECD's education work in sub-national governance, as part of the new spatial relations of globalization (Amin, 2002) and new modes of educational governance (Sellar and Lingard, 2013b). We conclude with an analysis and discussion of how the OECD has found markets for its education products beyond their usage by member and non-member nations, for example, by sub-national polities or individual schools, and how this reflects and helps constitute the new spatial relations of globalization.

THEORISING NEW SPATIAL RELATIONS OF EDUCATIONAL GOVERNANCE

Theories of rescaling clearly provide one way into analyzing the relationship between Scotland as a sub-national territory and the OECD as an intergovernmental institution. For example, Brenner (2004) has written about the rescaling of geographies of power associated with globalization, which has produced new multiscalar relationships between local, national, regional,

supranational and global spaces and institutions. We might think here of autonomous zones within nations, the reworking of nations under pressures from below and above, including new regionalisms, the increasing significance of international organisations, the place of supranational political entities, and the emergence of some global policy fields (e.g. the constitution of the globe as a commensurate space of measurement through the OECD's PISA). The tendency of this scalar approach is to think in terms of new vertical and horizontal power relations between nested territories at different scales, and the changing importance of different scales as new loci of power (e.g. changed relationships between the national scale and the scale of multinational corporations). Robertson, Bonal and Dale (2006) have taken such an approach to understanding pluri-scalar educational governance in the context of globalization.

In the post-Cold War period of globalization dominated by neo-liberalism, there have been various forms of political rescaling. What we have seen is a globalization of the economy and a weakening of national borders in terms of the global flows of capital. In this context, the national scale remains important, but works in different ways. The rise and rise of human capital theory as a frame for education policies within nations—a policy agenda partly driven through intergovernmental organisations such as the OECD—has been one response. The quantity and quality of a nation's human capital has been deemed to be the most significant economic policy that a nation can focus on in the context of the knowledge economy. With the increasingly global nature of labour markets, it is not just nations that are positioned as investors in human capital through education systems, but also sub-national school systems, individual schools and indeed even individuals (Brown, Lauder and Ashton, 2011; Feher, 2009). In this context, there is a demand for measures of human capital as proxies for the quality of schooling systems and schools. Elite schools within nations become part of transnational networks preparing highly skilled future workers for global labour markets.

With the globalization of the economy and the enhanced political significance of international organisations, there is also a way in which 'ethnos' becomes an important concern of national governments and politics (Appadurai, 2006). While the human capital project has become significant to nations in the context of globalization, the project around citizenship and national identities, or ethnos in Appadurai's words, has also become important in many instances. Appadurai (1996) has argued that in the context of globalization and flows of people across national borders that the hyphen between nation and state in 'nation-state' had become somewhat attenuated and each had in effect become the project of the other. Education is important to both projects. National identity becomes a rallying point for improving educational outcomes and enhancing the nation as a site for investment by transnational corporations, while on the other hand it becomes a point of melancholic consolation in the face of restructuring of national industries, off-shoring and associated loss of jobs. We can perhaps see this phenomenon at work in contemporary Scotland and as a backdrop to the video we analyse below.

While acknowledging the usefulness of scalar theories for understanding new relations between sub- and supra-national scales in the context of globalization,

in this paper we want to draw on an alternative, topological approach. The arguments of theorists of topological spatialities, such as Amin (2002) and Allen (2011), constitute a supplementation of the rescaling thesis and its focus on the nesting of institutions at various scales. In contrast to this topographical conception of space, Amin (2002) is concerned with 'the possibility that the very ontology of place and territoriality itself is becoming altered by the rise of world-scale processes and transnational connectivity' (p.387). Taking seriously this possibility, Amin encourages the development of 'a topological sense of space and place, a sense of geographies constituted through folds, undulations, and overlaps that natural and social practices normally assume, without any *a priori* assumption of geographies of relations nested in territorial or geometric space' (p.389).

This topological sense of space and place is coupled with a conception of power as operative at a distance and not requiring proximity within or between scales. Indeed, it pushes to the limit geographical conceptions of power, as Allen and Cochrane (2010) argue: 'When scales are multiple, overlapping, tangled, interpenetrating, as well as relational, we begin to wonder whether the geographical term has been stretched beyond its ability to account for the new arrangement of state powers' (p. 1087). This leads Allen and Cochrane (2010; see also Allen, 2011) to develop a topological conception of power as *reach*, 'as more or less present through mediated and real-time connections, some direct, others more distanciated' (p. 1073). For example, new geographies of state power are characterized by action at a distance across time and space:

> Some of this interplay takes place indirectly by authorities *reaching into* the politics of regions and localities in an attempt to steer and constrain agendas; some of it operates in a more direct fashion by *drawing within close reach* those that are able to broker and influence decisions; whilst other forms of mediated interaction *reach out* beyond the region or locality to shape events within (Allen and Cochrane, 2010: 1075).

In this paper, we take up Allen and Cochrane's typology of 'powers of reach' to analyse the new spatial relations produced through Scottish participation in the OECD's PISA and its self-representation as an autonomous economy in a global field. This relational theorization of new topologies is particularly apt for understanding reciprocal operations of power involved in Scotland's project of national independence and the OECD's exercise of 'soft' power to steer policy agendas within nations and the 'soft policy convergence' that results (Rutkowski, 2007).

For example, the *Smarter Scotland* initiative, a branding of the nation as a site of investment in knowledge capital, can be seen to be representing the distinctiveness of Scotland's economy, but as positioned within and by the global. The framing of the Scottish economy as 'smart' is partially an effect of the OECD reaching into the politics of nations and regions to set particular policy agendas in relation to the knowledge economy and human capital investment. This steering is enabled by drawing national policy actors within close reach as part of the transnational epistemic communities that the OECD fosters. At the same time, we can see Scotland reaching out to the authority of the OECD, which is produced through its expertise and data, to constitute Scotland as an

independent economy and to shape regional politics in relation to the project of independence. Rather than seeing the supranational scale exerting downward pressure on sub-national scales to develop policy agendas in relation to economic globalization, we can see how the OECD reaches into the sub-national in ways that extend its reach beyond the formal relations of its intergovernmental committee structure, while Scotland reaches out to the OECD to shape domestic politics. Here we can see the Scottish nationalist project and the extension of the OECD's policy reach into sub-national spaces as continuous, similar to the surface of a Mobius strip.

THE EXPANSION OF THE OECD'S EDUCATION WORK

The OECD was established in 1961 from the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation, which was created to administer Marshall Plan funding for the post-War reconstruction of Europe, and it retains a Eurocentric focus due to this organisational legacy. During the 1970s, in the context of the collapse of the Bretton Woods system, oil shocks and stagflation, the Organisation underwent a period of change in which the Organisation's work draw increasingly on neo-classical models and emphasised the need for structural policy reform (Carroll and Kellow, 2011). During the 1990s, following the end of the Cold War, the OECD was again faced with the need to redefine itself in the context of neo-liberal globalization. More countries became eligible for membership according to the criteria of having market economies, liberal democratic government and a commitment to human rights. Where the OECD previously provided an economic policy bulwark against socialism (what some have described as an 'economic NATO'), it reinvented itself in the 1990s as a global centre for the production and publication of comparative data on the economies of member and, increasingly, non-member nations. Over the past two decades the OECD has become more of a policy actor in its own right (Henry et al., 2001) and now performs a palliative global governance function (Woodward, 2009) through its work in support of other international organisations (e.g. the Group of Twenty Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, or G20), as well as non-governmental organisations and multinational corporations.

Since the inception of the OECD, the place of its education work has become increasingly significant and influential. Initially, education did not have an independent structural location within the Organisation (Papadopolous, 1994), but was named as part of the Directorate for Social Affairs, Manpower and Education in 1975 and the renamed Directorate for Education, Employment, Labour and Social Affairs in 1991. During the late 1990s work began to develop PISA, which was first conducted in 2000. This decade also saw the publication of OECD statements on knowledge-based economies and lifelong learning, which underlined the human capital framing of education and its importance to growth and productivity. In 2002, education became a separate directorate and the influence of the PISA program grew, with the number of participants doubling by the 2012 round. Recently, the education directorate has been renamed as the Directorate for Education and Skills, reflecting a new cross-institutional focus on

the importance of human capital investment for a number of social policy areas (OECD, 2012).

Developments over the past three decades have significantly increased the influence of the Directorate for Education and Skills within the OECD, as well as the influence of the OECD's education work in national policy debates and policy making. This rise of the Organisation's education work has been linked in large part to the success of PISA, which has become a model program in terms of its impact on policy within nations and how it has enabled the Organisation to increase its engagement with significant non-member nations in Asia and South America. The development of PISA across each triennial survey, and the introduction or development of a number of other programs that, at least in part, draw on PISA as a prototype (PISA-based tests for schools, PISA for development, PIAAC, TALIS, AHELO), is leading to an expansion of the OECD's education work along multiple fronts (Sellar and Lingard, 2013c). First, the *scope* of the Organisation's educational assessments is expanding to classify and quantify more and more dimensions of human capacity as 'skills' and human capital. Second, the *scale* of its education assessments is expanding to include more nations, sub-national systems and now individual schools. Third, the *explanatory power* of the OECD's education work is being increased through the linkage of data sets (e.g. work is being done to link PISA and TALIS data in order to explain student learning outcomes in relation to teaching environment), the production of a greater quantity and breadth of data, and by increasing the accessibility and application of data through initiatives such as Education GPS, a data visualisation tool.

Across these different fronts of expansion, we can see how the OECD's education work is being made relevant to and taken up by users beyond the member nations who have traditionally funded this work. The most obvious example is the expansion of the scale of PISA through the introduction of PISA-based tests for schools, which enable individual schools and school systems (e.g. networks of charter schools) to participate directly in PISA. Interest in PISA at this sub-national level is linked to the global popularity of the program, but also to broader developments in accountability systems that create a demand for schools and systems to collect performance data. We note again that the development of PISA-based tests for schools was funded by philanthropic foundations and participation will be funded by schools and systems and administered by private providers within nations (e.g. CTB/McGraw-Hill in the US). This enables what has been called networked governance (Ball and Junemann, 2012), whereby educational governance now works across local, national and global scales and involves both public and private providers. It also enables new spatial relationships that unsettle *a priori* conceptions of the national and the global as distinct geographies.

Relatedly, PISA oversampling within nations to enable disaggregation of systemic performance, or the individual participation in PISA of sub-national systems, reflects the desire of systems to have a representation of their performance separate to their inclusion in broader units of analysis (e.g. nations). Scotland provides a clear example of this development with its oversampling to enable disaggregation of its performance from the UK results and its

representation by an observer at meetings of the PISA Governing Board. This is clearly linked to a desire of the Scottish Government to represent the performance of its schooling system separately from England and the UK, and thus to present its economy and the nation as distinct. This is a desire that is not exclusive to Scotland and one that the OECD's education work is evolving to meet.

REPRESENTING YOUR COUNTRY: PISA 2012 IN SCOTLAND

In this section, we provide what Koh (2009) has called a 'videological analysis' of a short three minute video entitled *PISA 2012 - Representing Your Country*, prepared by the Scottish Department for Education and distributed to all schools chosen as part of the 3000 student (over)sample for Scotland's participation in PISA 2012. For PISA, the UK, consisting of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, is the actual unit of analysis. Representation on the PISA Governing Board is by an English policymaker representing the entire UK. However, each of the constituent members of the UK oversamples on PISA so that data and performance can be disaggregated to the constituent member levels for comparison purposes, but also for internal policy work. We note that since devolution, schooling has been the policy responsibility of the Scottish government, but with a longer Enlightenment history pervading schooling and a strong commitment to public universities. Nations such as the United States do not oversample to enable the disaggregation of the data for sub-national systems (however, in 2012 three states—Florida, Massachusetts and Connecticut—entered the assessment individually), so that comparisons between state/local authority school performance in the US are generally not possible. This situation has been a significant factor in the US push for PISA-Based tests for schools, as we have suggested above. Canada and Australia, both federal political structures like the US, do oversample so that comparisons can be made respectively between the performance of provincial and state systems.

Our focus here is on the new spatialities produced through relations of power between Scotland and the OECD, which are suggested in our analysis of the video. First, however, we want to briefly note the earlier OECD national report on Scotland's schooling system, *Quality and equity of schooling in Scotland* (OECD, 2007) (see Lingard and Rawolle, 2009; Raffe, 2008a, b; Paterson, 2009) as a backdrop to our videological analysis. The use of the concepts of 'quality' and 'equity' in the title of the OECD report reflects the OECD representation of the comparative performance of nations on PISA and it is interesting in this respect that the Scottish government asked the OECD to 'carry out a review of the quality and equity of education outcomes in Scotland'. We see here the ways in which OECD policy discourse has become embedded in 'national' educational policy discourse. This report was commissioned by a Labour/Liberal Democratic Coalition Scottish government, but received by an incoming minority Scottish National Party government. The decline in Scottish performance on both quality and equity measures compared with previous results was noted politically and in the media. The Scottish National Minister for Education (Cabinet Secretary for Education, Fiona Hyslop) at the time commented:

…only yesterday the Programme for International Student Assessment – PISA – report was published. It showed that Scotland's reading and Maths scores have experienced one of the highest drops of all the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development countries. Scotland also has one of the biggest gaps in performance which can be identified as related to poverty and deprivation. If we are to tackle Scotland's challenges as identified in the international PISA survey and to climb back up the international tables, we must deal with poverty at its roots and tackle the impact that it can have on families. (Hyslop, 2007, col.4072)

Richard Teese, a Professor and Bourdieusian scholar at the University of Melbourne, was the *rapporteur* for the OECD report and he suggested two things in relation to equity and the administration of schooling in Scotland. First, he argued that the academic focus of Scottish curriculum in the compulsory years was possibly a factor in the inequitable outcomes from schooling, particularly in terms of participation and performance of students from poor families in the senior years. He proposed the introduction of more technical education courses earlier in schooling. Second, Teese argued that the diffuse, liberal-pluralist structures of school administration and management in Scotland might also contribute to the low equity/low quality performance of Scottish students on PISA. He argued the need for a central policy focus that also included redistributive funding to poorer communities. David Raffe, Professor of Sociology of Education at The University of Edinburgh, strongly disputed this argument in articles published in the *Scottish Educational Review* (Raffe, 2008 a, b), as did Professor Lindsay Paterson (2009), also of The University of Edinburgh. In his critique, Teese was challenging central shibboleths about Scottish schooling: the delay of selection and curriculum choice and the diffuse nature of the administration and management of schooling. In their criticisms of Teese and the OECD report, Raffe and Paterson both supported the Scottish approach and its historical provenance. This is important in relation to our argument about the place of the Scottish video we analyse and the distinctiveness of Scotland.

PISA 2012- Representing Your Country is a short three minute film aimed at students participating in the assessment. It combines a statement from the Minister for Education with footage of young Scottish athletes competing and talking about their pride in representing their country. While the independence vote has not yet been taken in Scotland, the video presents Scotland as already a separate nation and is saturated visually with the Saltire, the Scottish flag, and is anchored by the Minister, the Scottish National Party MP, Michael Russell. The video utilizes the semiotic signifier of a *Smarter Scotland*, redolent of the *Smart State* signifier used by Labor governments in Queensland, Australia (see Adie, 2008). The backdrop to the Minister is the Edinburgh landmark, the Salisbury Crags, specifically Arthur's Seat, and the relatively new science centre, *Our Dynamic Earth*, created as part of the urban renewal of this part of Edinburgh, as was the Scottish Parliament building in which the Minister is standing. These are markers of Scotland, old and new, natural and cultural. The visual saturation of the video by the Saltire provides the backdrop to the statements by young athletes about how great it is to be selected to represent their country. Blue and white – the colours of the Saltire also saturate the video. Before turning to our analysis, though, we need to say something more about our methodology.

Koh (2009) argues that, while some research attention has been paid to the 'mediatization' (Fairclough, 2000, p.3) of education policy, these approaches have tended to focus on print-media representations and effects of policy (e.g. Lingard and Rawolle, 2004; Thomson, 2004). As he notes, there have been very limited analyses of videos and such material used in actual policy processes. Martino and Rezai-Rashti's (2014) recent analysis of two OECD promotional videos (*Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education)* has drawn on Koh's approach to address this gap. This analysis shows how the use of the category of 'immigrants' in a video on Ontario, a 'poster' province in terms of PISA performance, elides the category of race (deracination) and in so doing aggregates across socio-economic differences amongst immigrants, creating simultaneous visibility and invisibility. This helps to constitute a particular (bowdlerized) reality of PISA performance.

Wiseman (2013, p.305) argues that the OECD is aware of the importance of the media in gaining legitimacy for PISA and that this is evidenced in 'the media kits, press releases and the initial announcement events that have become a staple of the PISA dissemination cycle'. We would also note that the order of release of PISA results and data plays up international league tables of performance over other, probably more useful, technical reporting and secondary analyses that do not receive comparable media coverage (Wiseman, 2013). In a research interview we conducted with a staff member responsible for media liaison at the OECD, he told us that the initial media release of PISA findings simultaneously across a number of continents was the biggest media event for the Organisation.

In his article, Koh (2009) analyses a Singaporean documentary*, Learning Journeys*, which focused on the implementation of the national policy there, *Thinking Schools, Learning Nation*. Koh develops the concept of 'visual design' to analyse the semiotics of this video. He suggests visual design 'works ideologically to constrain the semiotic meaning potential of visual texts to a *preferred reading* path, and that "design" textually contributes to a closed rather than an open, multiple or contradictory reading of the text' (Koh, 2009, p.284). Drawing on Baudrillard's (1983) concept of 'simulacrum', Koh also argues that the semiotic work of such videos helps constitute a 'hyperreality'. This appears to be the case with *PISA 2012 - Representing Your Country,* which assumes Scotland is a nation and that representing Scotland in the PISA sample is equivalent to representing Scotland in sport, an interesting elision.

Koh (2009) argues that the 'bardic function' of video combines the aural with the visual to (re)present a particular account of reality. In the Scottish video, the voice of the Minister for Education and the voice-over account of PISA evoke a sense for participating students and teachers that being chosen as part of the (random!) sample to participate in PISA is as exciting and significant as being chosen to represent one's country in sport. He says, 'You have been selected to represent Scotland'. We see here what Fairclough (2003, p.88) refers to helpfully as a 'logic of equivalence': participating in the PISA sample means representing Scotland in the same way as a young athlete chosen to represent Scotland in sport, with the parallel necessity of doing one's best for one's self and for one's country. This structuring of equivalence is evident throughout the visuals and

audio of the video. Indeed, the video avers in conclusion that 'not often do you get asked to represent your country'. This, of course, also links to the necessity of getting the appropriate sample size so that the data are useful for policy and comparative purposes inside Scotland. Students are exhorted to do their best for Scotland, as Scotland's PISA performance, if it is good, will mean more investment in the Scottish economy and thus better opportunities for all. This is a re-articulation of the human capital approach underpinning most education policy today and also the education work of the OECD (Sellar and Lingard, 2013c), what has been called a 'globalized education policy discourse' (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010). The Minister argues that good performance on PISA will mean that Scotland will be seen as a 'great place to invest for the future'. There are also clips of North Sea oil rigs and wind turbines as signifiers of the Scottish economy. In this way, the video creates a 'higher-level semantic' (Fairclough, 2003, p.91) concerning participation in the 2012 PISA sample in Scotland. The video concludes with a tangential link to a website (www.scotland.gov.uk/pisa) about PISA, which viewers of the video might watch to know more about PISA. This link, unlike the message of the video, indicates that the UK is the unit of analysis for PISA.

CONCLUSION

Scottish independence moves and the use of the *Representing Your Country* video as a motivational resource for students chosen to represent Scotland in the PISA test provide examples of new topological spatializations associated with globalization. In this respect, we can see Scotland reaching out to the OECD to help constitute a 'Scottish nation', while the video we have dealt with represents Scotland as already an independent nation. The impact of globalization has given succour to the independence move, whether this be through more devolved powers being granted to the Scottish Parliament or whether Scots vote for independence from the UK. There is an historical provenance to these moves, though. We note here the long antipathy towards England as the negative other, despite the Act of Union of 1707. We note as well the way in which historically schooling in Scotland has helped construct Scottish identity and that this identity has been framed as socially democratic and Northern European rather than Anglo in orientation.

The video analysed here is demonstrative of the ways some participants in PISA prepare students for taking the test by framing performance as a matter of national pride. This has reportedly also been the case in Shanghai and South Korea, while Mexico has used public campaigns and provided resources to students and teachers in an effort to enhance performance on the test. As the Scottish video shows, performance on PISA is taken as a surrogate signifier of future economic prosperity and the attractiveness of a nation/economy to global capital. Here we see the running together of the economic purposes for participating and being seen to perform well in the PISA test and the nationalistic motivations to do one's best for oneself and one's country.

A simple scalar analysis of the relationship between Scotland and the OECD with regard to PISA would draw attention to the operation of soft power exercised

on the 'nation' from above by the OECD. We might also see the OECD as an important node in a network of pluri-scalar power relations. While this might be the case, the topological approach we have taken in this paper broadens our analytical view to include the functioning of power as reaching into and reaching out of spaces that are constituted through the very functioning of these powers of reach (Allen and Cochrane, 2010). With the development of programmes like PISA-based tests for schools and AHELO, the OECD is increasingly reaching inside nations and constituting new 'power-topologies' (Allen, 2011), while the OECD's work with Scotland, given it remains a part of the UK, might also be thought about in this way. Allen (2011, p.284) has beautifully encapsulated the broader insight that has animated our argument here, when he writes that, 'Power relationships are not so much positioned in space or extended across it, as compose the spaces of which they are a part'.

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