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Education, globalization, and citizenship: reflections of Vietnamese local school teachers and overseas-educated academics

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on two research projects that include Vietnamese overseas-educated academics and local school teachers, the paper discusses these educators' reflections on citizenship, citizenship education and Vietnam's higher education reform in the context of globalization. Through the lens of Michel Foucault's knowledge/power and subjectivity, and taking on Arjun Appadurai's social imaginary, we illustrate the contested values of education and complex meanings of citizenship in a market-based economy with socialist ideologies, and their effects on educators' practices.

KEYWORDS

Knowledge; subjectivity; globalization; citizenship; Vietnamese teachers; overseas-educated academics

Introduction

Impacts of globalization on education are most notable in policy practices embracing market principles in the provision of education. The idea of 'knowledge economy' is often put forward as a rationale and assumption for delivering or undertaking education. The concept of knowledge economy presupposes human capital as the major form of capital in modern economies, where economic success of individuals, organizations, and countries are contingent on how effective people invest in themselves through education (Becker, 2002).

Underscored by human capital assumptions, education policies and practices are marked by large scale international tests such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). These tests assess students' skills and knowledge for participation in the workforce. Despite obvious country differences in culture, pedagogy, education systems, and public finance of education, these international tests are widely accepted as comparable measures of education outcomes across countries. Yet, in the absence of any evidence of correlation between students' backgrounds and test outcomes, or employment and test outcomes, they explain little about countries' progress in educational quality and equity in the global context.

The consequences of globalization at the higher education level have been even more remarkable in the pursuit of market principles. Leveraging increased participation in international trade from developing countries, the collapse of colonial and communist regimes

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around the world, and advances in global technology and communication, universities from developed 'Western' countries have engaged in tremendous efforts of internationalization of higher education such as international student recruitment, transnational education, and global partnerships with developing countries (Pham, 2019). Cross-border provision and 'sale' of education services are seen to be agents of globalization, and important contributors to the growth of the 'knowledge economy' where ideas (or degrees) are 'bought' and 'sold' (Appadurai, 1996). The reality, for developing countries, is far from homogeneity and equality. Privileged classes are most likely to access international education experiences (Ergin, 2019). Similarly, encounters of the global cultures are highly unequal, particularly when English is often the language of instruction in internationalization programs.

In addition, 'global citizenship' is often proposed by proponents of globalization as having positive impact on education. Underpinned by the idea of human capital flows in transnational corporations, global citizenship is understood as developing global competencies such as tolerance, cooperation, cultural intelligence, and cross-cultural business skills for innovation and creativity (OECD, 2016). Yet, available evidence suggests that national and local cultures remain robust in the face of potential homogenizing effects of globalization (Bagnall, 2013). According to Delanty (2001), this is because citizenship is inherently cultural. In identifying themselves in a (new) collective, people bring specific cultural values at the same time as taking on the values of the new collective. Global citizenship is then about diverse citizenship positions that accord with or diverge from the culture of their community, institution, or country. As Appadurai (2001) argues, the global world constructs new forms of subjectivities as people try to negotiate often competing values systems between international and local, and dealing with technological, cultural and political systems and relationships that counter globalization ideas – the *social imaginary*.

Given the nexus of human capital, citizenship and knowledge economy in conceptualizing and explaining globalization in education, we want to examine their mutual influences and manifestations as a possibility for future research and theory. The human capital lens of education assumes skills and knowledge as the basis of educational practices. However, it explains very little about how education actually generates or transfers knowledge and its outcomes and impacts on society. We need to know how educators and learners, in the age of globalization, see themselves and their purpose, in the context of their education system and policy objectives, and their experiences in making claims to citizenship as they take part in education. As Delanty (2001) argues, the extent to which people can equally take part in the economic or educational shift associated with the 'knowledge economy' depends on the norms, values, and practices that people engage in. It is through people's participation that 'knowledge' is normalized to affect the shift.

This paper aims to examine the influence of globalization on educational reform in Vietnam. Vietnam presents an illuminating case because it is an emerging economy, which is the result of the government's strategic policies of economic integration with the global economy and internationalization of education. Drawing on two research projects that include Vietnamese overseas-educated academics and local school teachers, the paper discusses these educators' reflections on citizenship, citizenship education and Vietnam's higher education reform in the context of globalization. Our main objective

is to understand the subjectivity of educators by interrogating their perceptions and engagement with educational reform practices in their institutions and broader social contexts. Through the lens of Foucault's knowledge/power and subjectivity theory, and taking on Appadurai's concept of the social imaginary, the paper asks to what extent has globalization shaped these Vietnamese educators' education values, and created new forms of subjectivity and citizenship?

An overview of Vietnam's educational reform policy in the next section provides some context for the paper's line of inquiry. Foucault's concepts of knowledge/power and subjectivity, and Appadurai's social imaginary are then explained, followed by illustrations of their application using two studies of Vietnamese overseas-educated academics and secondary school teachers. The final section offers some implications for researching the effects of globalization on education and citizenship in developing societies.

Overview of Vietnam's education reform policy

Vietnam's education system is highly centralized, with direct regulation and control from the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). In response to globalization and domestic demands for human resources development of national industrialization and modernization, Vietnam has engaged in multiple education reforms at both general education and post-secondary education levels.

After the *Doi Moi* (Renovation) economic reform in the late 1980s, Vietnam transformed from a centrally-planned to a market-based economy, deeply integrating into the global economy. Changes to the state-sanctioned textbooks and teacher-related policy took place as soon as *Doi Moi* began. However, it was not until the early 2000s, that major education reform policies were implemented to improve general education, schooling and higher education.

At the general education level, two major reform policies have been implemented with similar rationales and objectives. In 2001, the National Strategies for Educational Development 2001–2010 mapped out a strategic plan to transform the education system to produce a high-quality workforce to meet the competitive and fast changing conditions of Vietnam's market-based economy (Socialist Republic of Vietnam [SRV], 2001). At the same time, a strong focus was placed on political socialization and citizenship education that were supposed to totally align with the Communist Party of Vietnam's (CPV) political ideology.

In 2013, Vietnam engaged in another major education reform[1] to further national commitment to 'fundamental and comprehensive renovation in education' (CPV, 2013, p. 1). This reform resulted in the overhaul of textbooks and the creation of the first ever national curriculum since *Doi Moi* for both general and secondary education levels. As with the earlier reform, the official policy discourse, in government and Party documents and state-sanctioned curriculum, continues to express the need for education to develop a workforce to meet the needs of economic expansion and to accelerate the national modernization project. There is a commitment to international integration and the fostering of 'well-rounded' people committed to the Marxist-Leninist ideals and 'steeped [in] national cultural identity' (CPV, 2013; MOET, 2012; MOET, UNESCO, & World Bank, 2015; SRV, 2013).

Vietnam's education reforms have also been influenced by external forces. Between 2000 and 2015, the country attracted over 2 billion USD to run 26 foreign-supported

education projects (MOET, UNESCO et al., 2015). Among the multinational organizations involved in reforming education in Vietnam since *Doi Moi*, the World Bank has been a primary player since the early 1990s. The OECD has also emerged as a prestigious international consultant organization with its PISA tests first conducted in Vietnam in 2012.

Vietnam's post-secondary education has also undergone significant reform changes. In 2005, the Vietnamese government issued 'Fundamental and Comprehensive Reform of Higher Education in Vietnam 2006–2020'[2], known as the Higher Education Reform Agenda (HERA). A key part of HERA is the internationalization of higher education, which has led to a regulatory framework for foreign cooperation and investment in Vietnam's education and training. Subsequent to gaining membership with the World Trade Organization in 2007, and compliance with the General Agreement on Trade in Services, numerous Western universities could enter Vietnam to provide educational services for profit (Fry, 2009; MOET, 2013). HERA also created incentives for sending students and academics abroad, which has resulted in significant increase of Vietnamese students studying abroad in the last two decades. The number of outbound Vietnamese degree students exploded by 680%, from 8,169 in 1999 to 63,703 students in 2016 (Trines, 2017).

Indeed, in response to globalization and as a result of *Doi Moi*, Vietnam's educational strategies for human development have been increasingly informed by neoliberal orientation. Given a discernible tendency in educational discourse globally of gearing education goals toward producing a high-quality workforce for economic growth, Vietnam has also endorsed international donors and investors in linking education aid and investments to economic development (Duggan, 2001; Le, 2016; Saito et al., 2016; Tibbetts, 2007). As a result, reform at both secondary and post-secondary education levels have been arguably driven by the goals of preparing students to work in a market-based economy, leading to schools and universities projected as producers of human capital desirable for a 'knowledge economy' while attempting to create a socialist, patriotic citizenry. The idea of 'knowledge' production within Vietnam's seemingly conflicting neoliberal and socialist framing of education could be understood through Foucault's (1982) concepts of knowledge/power, and subjectivity alongside Appadurai's (1996) social imaginary. These concepts are now explained.

Foucault's knowledge/power, subjectivity and Appadurai's social imaginary

According to Foucault (1982), the modern state is a matrix of individualization or a new form of pastoral power that focuses on the development of knowledge around globalizing the population and individualization for the sake of productivity and efficiency. Foucault provides links with schooling in his description of disciplinary power as a force which makes individuals – 'the specific technique that regards individuals as objects and instruments of their exercises' (Foucault, 1977, p. 170).

Power is also exercised through social practices in institutions, such as schools, as 'dividing practices' (Foucault, 1982, p. 208). Examples of 'dividing practices' include examinations, testing, streaming and tracking, central to the formation of 'knowledge' production on an individual basis (Ball, 1990). Dividing practices stem from Foucault's notion of discipline as specific technology of power (Meadmore, 1993). This form of power becomes a 'technology of the self', where the 'subject is either divided inside

himself [*sic*] or divided from others' (Foucault, 1982, p. 208). In this way, Foucault attributes the exercise of power through production of 'knowledge' as a means of manipulating the human. 'Knowledge' is legitimated through a series of power linked to the family, education system, judicial system, medical system, labor market, and so forth. Within these systems are formations and functioning of networks of social practices – power relations – which involve mutual interrelationships of constraint and discourse (Foucault, 1982):

> The term 'power' designates relationships between partners […] of an ensemble of actions which induce others and follow from one another. (p. 786)

In the context of education in the age of globalization, undergirded by the idea of 'knowledge economy', power relations include the state (for example, ministries of education, training and workforce) and universities, university leaders and academics, ministries and schools, school leaders, teachers, students, parents, and employers, and so forth. People's application of capacities, whether in teaching tasks or other forms of labor distribution, are tied to power relations in various fields. These relations produce effects of power by virtue of people knowing and modifying the information between them in these fields. For example, a neoliberal education system orientates the curriculum, the regulations, organization of schooling or universities, that govern educators' life and practices of teaching as synonymous with job training. These practices aim to produce certain types of knowledge, skills, aptitudes, or behaviors appropriate for the 'knowledge economy'. Educators are subjected to these practices by means of a whole 'ensemble of regulated communications' (Foucault, 1982, p. 787) such as lessons, experiential learning, questions and answers, assessments that differentiate (*divide*) the 'knowledge' or 'value' of each student or teacher along the idea of 'job readiness'. They are also subjectified by series of power processes through other modes of 'dividing practices' like reward, punishment, organizational structures, and promotion in accordance with labor market imperatives. In other words, teachers and academics are 'subjects of knowledge' because they engage in 'dividing practices' that are effects of power relations embedded in the idea of 'knowledge economy'.

The implications for applying Foucault's idea of knowledge/power and subjectivity in this paper are threefold. First, knowledge always depends on the subjective constituents – the educators. A person cannot be separated from the knowledge that he/she acquires or produces, and such knowledge is only valid within the social field in which it is accumulated or deployed (Foucault, 1980). Second, the educator, as a 'subject of knowledge' is also social, thus requiring a full recognition that knowledge, when acquired or produced, is socially coordinated and at every moment is conditioned and mediated by historical and social experiences (Foucault, 1972). Third, this acknowledgement requires a reflection on the position of the educator as 'subject of knowledge', which demands his/her critique of power positions with other colleagues, leaders, and students.

In the context of globalization, we consider Foucault's 'subjectivity' alongside Appadurai's 'social imaginary'. Appadurai (1996) describes social imaginary as the 'image, the imagined, the imaginary that direct us to something critical and new in global cultural processes – the imagination as a social practice' (p. 31). Taking on his idea that the 'social imaginary is the key component of the new global order' (Appadurai, 1996, p. 31), we want to explore how market-based socialist education in Vietnam may

bring new ideas, purposes, desire or subjectivity for teachers and academics; how such imagination becomes social practices and forms of negotiation within the knowledge/power regime.

In the next sections, we illuminate Vietnamese teachers and academics' perception and engagement, as 'subjects of knowledge', with educational reform agenda in Vietnam. We are interested in these educators' understanding of their 'selves' as 'subjects of knowledge' (as educators, or political actors, or civil actors) in the obvious and not so obvious institutional structures (academic hierarchy, curriculum, pedagogical practices). We want to understand how Vietnam's educational reform emphasis on human capital development for 'knowledge economy', with strong focus on citizenship education to align with socialist political ideologies, could manifest 'dividing practices' for these educators.

Public school teachers, citizenship and citizenship education

In this study, in-depth interviews with 15 Vietnamese school teachers who taught citizenship-related subjects (History, Literature, and Civic Education) provided insights into their beliefs and experiences concerning citizenship and citizenship education. The teachers were recruited using purposeful sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994) via the second author's personal networks and social media. Half of the selected teacher participants (7 out of 15) were between the ages of 30 and 35, 3 were between 40 and 45, 2 between 20 and 30, and only 3 between 50 and 65. Five out of 15 teachers were based in big cities, whereas the rest (10) taught in the semi-rural areas of Vietnam. Most participants were females (12 out of 15), reflecting the disproportionate number of female teachers engaged with social science education subjects. Like most public school teachers in Vietnam nowadays, these teachers received socialist education and were supposed to instill the state ideology in their students. The following discussion draws on interviews with teachers of citizenship-related subjects who reflected on their perceptions of 'good citizenship' and themselves as 'good citizens', and pedagogical and ideological tensions that they experienced in education for citizenship. Teachers' reflections were originally noted in their mother tongue (Vietnamese) and then translated into English after transcribing for analysis.

Contested meanings of citizenship

The teachers' understandings of good citizenship were generally consistent with and changing alongside state rhetoric. The initial response of most of these teachers to the concept of 'good citizenship' was obeying the law, having morality, being responsible, and embracing patriotism and national identity. Among these, 'obeying the law' and 'having morality' were most frequently mentioned as markers of good citizenship. Teachers reasoned their aligned view of citizenship with the official discourse as 'We were employed by and get salaries from the state. So, we need to follow the state's policy and regulations'. Reiterating 'Civic Education book-Grade 11' (MOET, Phan, Vu, & Phi, 2015, p. 107), they tended to see themselves as public servants whose mission is to produce socialist citizens who learn to 'trust and obey the "correct" state policies and party line', 'strive to cultivate moral qualities' and improve themselves to make the

country stronger and more prosperous. Their apparent conception of the ideal citizen illustrates a subjectivity deeply informed by official discourses regarding citizenship. This process results from the highly centralized system of Vietnam's education in which most school teachers receive training via state-run curriculum and dependence on prescriptive textbooks in their teaching (Nguyen & Zeichner, 2019).

However, a detailed analysis of teachers' narratives unfolded complicated layers of meanings of citizenship. Given that 'citizen' in the Vietnamese language was commonly thought of in terms of legal aspects, the notion of 'good citizenship' emphasizes relationships with the state and other people as members of a community. 'Good citizenship' simply involves fulfilling tasks that the state and the law require, for example, 'paying taxes, voting in an election, or doing military service'. For many teachers, good citizenship means being patriotic and loyal to a country in which an individual was born or lives; that means a moral obligation to accord with state-sponsored political movements and Marxist-Leninist ideals to show gratitude to previous generations who fought for the country's independence.

On the other hand, some teachers viewed the 'good citizen' as someone who engages with community. These teachers pointed to the need to engage more actively to improve the lives of the people. Patriotism, for them, is an attribute of good citizenship that is not necessarily an allegiance to a nationalist ideal or to state socialism:

> To be a good citizen is not just simply doing what you're told to do. You live in a community and should really engage with that community. There's a lot for you to improve the lives of the people around you … You can give them a hand, ask others to assist them, or speak up for them when needed.

In this regard, citizenship is not only a status that reflects the power relations between the state and the people; rather, it is a social practice that works to establish mutual relationships with other people and a liveable community. It should encompass a commitment to the common good and a disposition for becoming global citizens. In this regard, although not many teachers who mentioned global citizenship articulated in-depth what it entailed, it is evident that the concept of citizenship in their views was broader than, not to say contradictory to, the high level of nationalism prevalent in the current official curriculum.

This realization of 'good citizen' as a participatory practice is a kind of 'dividing practices' of citizenship (Foucault, 1982) whereby teachers felt conflicted internally, and also different from other teachers who perceived good citizenship as merely dutifully obeying the law and authority. When reflecting on how they were constrained in expressing themselves within these 'dividing practices', several teachers acknowledged that such undertaking of 'good citizen' would require a significant level of courage given the repressive political landscape. They, thus, had little expectation of students to engage in this kind of citizenship.

The competing values of citizenship was further complicated by the current mainstream educational discourse of studying to become 'well-rounded (socialist) citizens', who are innovative, adaptive, and highly competent, embracing entrepreneurship directed toward the needs of the fourth industrial revolution (CPV, 2013, 2019; MOET, UNESCO et al., 2015; MOET, 2017). The interviewed teachers repeatedly mentioned qualities such as 'self-reliance', 'creativity' and 'adaptability' – sought-after skills needed in the

knowledge economy. They felt that a good citizen is one who pursues individualist goals and business enterprises:

> Students these days should learn to be self-reliant and active. Society is changing swiftly, and many manual jobs are disappearing. Education should equip them with transferable skills such as creativity and adaptability so that they will … be more confident in the competitive job market.

Although these teachers regarded students' employability as an essential part of education's mission, only a small number of them stressed the need to prepare students for wage employment. Most teachers adopted a broader view of an ideal citizen by emphasizing qualities such as critical thinking, humaneness, honesty, and democratic participation. In this way, teachers are contributing to a new reconfiguration of notions of citizenship, which simultaneously indicates areas of contestation in perceptions towards educational goals and citizenship education. In other words, teachers found themselves navigating multiple social imaginaries (Appadurai, 1996). They envisioned different versions of ideal Vietnamese citizenship and practised citizenship accordingly.

Transformation of the 'self' through citizenship for education or education for citizenship

Reflections on the challenges that the teachers of citizenship-related subjects encountered in their classes provided a window into different ways they understand their 'selves' as 'subjects of knowledge'. To those whose understandings of citizenship and values of education aligned with official education discourse, the transformation of self might begin as they came to realize the extent to which their teaching of citizenship was challenged by their students. In seeing themselves as transmitters of the official knowledge, they struggled to explain social injustices or paradoxes to students, many of which emerged as a result of *Doi Moi* and the associated abolition of socialist elements such as free schooling. These public goods under socialism were now commercialized in the era of neoliberal education reform. When unconvinced, students might challenge the kind of citizenship their teachers taught by asking difficult questions that 'forced [teachers] to rethink [their] beliefs, assumptions, and … views towards the youth'.

While students' inquiry could mark a point of departure for 'rethinking' education for citizenship, the transformation of these teachers might not occur right away or in any linear fashion. One of the reasons may be due to their ingrained beliefs about what socialist citizenship meant. These beliefs, which can be seen as part of memories of past practices, informed their current practices as 'tacit knowledge' (Foucault, 1982) that is fossilized and hard to change. As teachers recalled their own life experiences as 'good citizens' and the milestones of the country, they also recognized that their perceptions of good citizenship did change over time. *Doi Moi* of the late 1980s is one of such events that transformed the country's economy and society and constructed new subjectivities. A retired Literature teacher shared her story about her thoughts and practice of 'good citizenship' during the transition time:

> I realized that I have changed a lot. The country was so difficult then [during 1980s]. I barely thought about good citizenship but always believed that we, as young generations, did everything that the country asked us to do. 'One person is for everyone and all people are

> for one.' After graduation, I was sent to a remote mountainous area … I remembered that everyone was also poor and struggling like me, but no one complained … In the mid-1990s, when society was much more open, I started running a small private tutoring center. Actually, it was these extra classes that afforded the living costs of my whole family. We led a better life, and I was still loyal to [revolutionary] ideals and dedicated to the teaching profession, which contributed to the development of the country.

Like other teachers during this transition time of the country, this teacher was allowed to be involved in doing private businesses as the country promoted market based economic reform. Her new 'self' began to take on utilitarian aspects of citizenship while sustaining her subscription to the nationalist and socialist ideals. In this regard, the transition time resulting from *Doi Moi* was the social imaginary (Appadurai, 1996, 2001) that transformed her, and others like her, to embrace a new kind of subjectivity. However, they continued to be 'subjectified' to power effects of state-citizen relations that govern their activities and decisions (whether they are related to curriculum, pedagogies, education goals, and outcomes). In other words, they are 'subjects of knowledge' in a system that subjectifies social actors by knowledge and 'dividing practices' of citizenship and citizenship education coordinated, mediated, and manoeuvered to serve political agendas of the state. They understood that as public servants, their professional lives and decisions were controlled through means of power processes like reward, punishment, and school structure mediating between neoliberalism and nationalism (Foucault, 1982). While a small number of teachers attempted to confront problems by disrupting current power structures and ended up having backlash ramifications and punishments, most teachers indicated that they were able to stay in the teaching profession by not seeking changes through means of outright resistance:

> There are a lot of limitations and problems around. It's not simply that you speak up, change the curriculum yourself, or do whatever you like to do. The inspectors or school leaders are gonna warn you right away. You'll get persecuted and may be moved to another workplace. It happened at my school.

In fact, these teachers became profoundly aware that they were working within contradictions resulting from a growing dissonance within official discourses as well as between received state rhetoric and its practices. They found themselves struggling to balance what they believed as ideal citizenship, what was considered 'good' citizenship according to the official curriculum, and what they thought would be relevant for their students to function well in a post-socialist society. This new form of knowledge subjectivity leads them to adopt what Blum (2011) calls 'doble conciencia' (p. 18) or 'double moral' (Dawley-Carr, 2015, p. 205) to negotiate, reconcile, or mediate the conflicting values by reconceptualizing socialist citizenship and redefining the goal of education. In this sense, some of them were turning into political subjects by mobilizing social and cultural resources to subtly resist and transform the official agenda of citizenship education. Characterized by a great deal of confusion, ambivalence, and uncertainty, these teachers gradually transform themselves from passive subjects to reformers who challenge the status quo, advocating for educational changes in their own ways. Such transformation is also experienced by academics, particularly those who received education abroad and now return to work in Vietnam.

Overseas-educated academics and higher education reform

This section draws on a larger study about Vietnamese overseas-educated academics and their teaching experiences in Vietnamese universities. The study was conducted in 2013–2015, involving an online survey followed by in-depth interviews with overseas-trained academics and university leaders working in Vietnamese universities. Academics were recruited through the first author's personal networks, social media, and human resources departments of 16 large public universities in four major cities in Vietnam (Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Hue, and Danang). There were 89 (45 females, 44 males) overseas-educated academics that responded to the online survey. Of these academics, 10 (five females and five males) were selected to take part in the follow-up interviews. Seven of these interviewees were in teaching management and business, and 3 in computer science. Two interviewees were between 21 and 30 years old, 5 were between 31 and 40, and 3 were over 50 years old. All were from well-educated families with parent/s holding university qualifications.

Subsequent to the interviews, these academics nominated leaders in their universities (2 of whom were also educated overseas) to take part in the interview process. Seven university leaders (2 females and 5 males) participated in the study. These leaders held executive positions in their universities including rector, vice-director, department heads, and deans. All interviews were conducted in Vietnamese, then transcribed, and translated to English for analysis. The following discussion draws mainly on interviews with these 17 academics and university leaders to reflect on Vietnam's internationalization of higher education aspect of HERA from their positions of Vietnamese international alumni and local university leadership.

Perception and engagement in (dividing) teaching practices

In the context of HERA, the overseas-educated academics, particularly those that were younger or at the beginning of their academic careers, sought opportunities to teach knowledge and skills acquired abroad. Leveraging *Doi Moi* and Vietnam's eagerness to integrate with the global economy, they found opportunities to teach transferable skills like problem solving, critical thinking. They could also use their English language skills to work with foreign companies and multinational corporations in addition to teaching. These opportunities gave them 'reason' to justify their overseas education, not only in terms of educational relevance but also to meet their own economic goals and employment goals of their students. They embraced the economic purpose of teaching that HERA offered.

For some academics, HERA has brought about new ways of teaching in Vietnamese universities, which were similar with their teaching experiences abroad. These new ways were not thrusted upon them; rather, they have internalized a new knowledge about experiential learning derived from their overseas sojourn. As they recounted specific instances of work, they talked about the need, not just to acquire knowledge and skills but, to apply 'new thinking because of my overseas-acquired knowledge'. Yet, they also recognized the importance of maintaining the Vietnamese teaching and learning norms with a history of relations and practices (Foucault, 1972):

> Organizations follow the norm and culture of the group which is historical'. They felt a need to align themselves with other locally-trained academics in order to not 'create any uncomfortable issues for everyone.

These academics could recognize the point where rules of conduct within the university come together and register in the form of memories – memories of international and local teaching practices that even though they may not have been experienced in a direct way, have come to constitute their practices as a 'tacit' knowledge (Foucault, 1982). It seems these academics as 'subjects of knowledge' constitute themselves at the point of intersection with a set of memories that must be brought into present activities (Foucault, 1982). These activities had to be regulated but could be modified: 'At the beginning, I was very uncomfortable about that teaching difference, but later on, I became less uncomfortable because we now are familiar with each other'.

For academics that were slightly older or worked in the university longer, their accounts suggest conflicting and competing values of education. On the one hand, they desired deploying overseas-acquired knowledge and skills to become 'professionals' in their fields, and through teaching, they could enable students to become 'professionals' like them. 'Knowledge' was often associated with professional careers in transnational corporations and in relation to a Western education. At the same time, there was a constant connection with their past experiences of Vietnamese universities. They used phrases like 'the ways that universities operate' to refer to the norms of teaching practices in a public Vietnamese university, and explain their decisions to move away from teaching by taking up administrative role. Their choices were a way to differentiate themselves from their locally-trained academics and leaders. The term 'professional' was used frequently, particularly in the field of business and management education. It suggests a connection of 'knowledge' with career, which they felt the Vietnamese teaching practices did not align. Thus, they wanted to disengage from such practices; at the same time, they were trying not to forget these practices as rules of conduct in the university.

Many academics wanted to teach in international programs (programs purchased from overseas universities), in international partnership programs (joint programs with overseas universities), or in foreign-owned universities so they could use textbooks acquired during their overseas studies. Given the strict curriculum imposed by MOET, some had to translate English textbooks to Vietnamese before they could adopt them in their teaching. Besides additional time spent on teaching tasks, these academics felt their freedom to curate teaching resources was restricted, and their ability to improve the standard of teaching was compromised. Not only was there a resistance to the control of MOET, these academics felt the practices of translating English texts to Vietnamese as another mode of 'dividing practices' between them and other local-trained academics. These dividing practices were their social imaginaries where they could see opportunities to become reformers who want to modify Vietnamese university practices (Appadurai, 1996, 2001).

Transformation of the 'self' through the ambivalence of reformer or conformer

The Vietnamese overseas-educated academics' perception of 'professionalism' underscored by Western knowledge, is also a marker of their intrinsic value of improving

Vietnamese education. The stories told by academics, whether young or old, junior or senior, highlight the worth of an international education in terms of becoming independent, feeling renewed and confident in doing things that they could not do before. They talked about being 'less scared of new things' because they could reflect on their own learning and found themselves with a new knowledge. That new knowing is intertwined with sense of 'self' (Foucault, 1973): 'Before I only knew how to receive information … Now I think I can think about the issues not just the information. I have ways to deal with things that are more plural in perspectives'.

This notion of transforming the 'self' was something they also wanted to transfer to their students. Again, they acknowledged the difficulty in doing so within the Vietnamese university culture. Senior academics reflected on their struggles with hierarchical leadership. Some felt that academic management was not promoting educational quality for HERA. They thought university leaders do not always respect or appreciate overseas-acquired knowledge and skills because they did not share the same 'Western' values and understandings about making higher education work for the modern economy. For some overseas-educated academics, studying overseas put them at a disadvantage because it produced that knowledge gap between them and their leaders, which compounded with the loss of personal connections in the local universities during their time abroad.

The effects of power relations were echoed by interviewed university leaders. As with their subordinate overseas-educated academics, these leaders often romanticized Vietnam's colonial past and celebrated 'Western' knowledge in their rejection of MOET's imposition on university governance. They differentiated the values of education between serving the state ideologies and advancing the individual:

> Vietnamese people have the tradition of studying to familiarise with being a subordinate and loyal to the Royal King, like 'Quoc Tu Giam'. The purpose of examinations is to be promoted to be a member of the Kingdom, so they can promote justice or criminality according to the state ideology. Education is about controlling the civilians, rather than about a specific discipline in a scientific way.

> In accordance with the true meaning of education, education allows people to self-read, self-learn and self-think and that education will allow people to go beyond the objective of education that that institution sets.

The sense of autonomy and freedom in the above comments is associated with the leader's idea of the modern university as a creator of free will and 'self', which she saw in overseas-educated academics prior to 1975:

> South Vietnam began a world class university when there was a level of knowledge within Vietnamese people who were trained in US universities, but because they only just came back from the US, they were not able to do anything yet and the Revolution came.

Some leaders advocated internationalization as a product of Vietnamese modernity and European history. They attributed the intrinsic notion of education for development of the 'self' to Vietnamese anti-colonialists who were educated in the West, and the utilitarian value of market-based education to the impetus of HERA. One university leader criticized the rector for engaging in international partnership programs for personal economic gain. In addition, she saw the political nature of the university as serving the state. These

leaders were subjected to the power effects of their relations with the Party who had a key role in the board of the university, which led to their reconciliation with and at the same time critique of the idea of education to serve the state.

References to past memories were moments when these leaders seemed to subject themselves to the failure of HERA: 'Many times in history, we missed the opportunities'. These are words of 'subjects of knowledge' who saw themselves in the memories of past and present practices and struggles against the power effects of those practices**.** These struggles are also realization of the contemporary reality of the political system in Vietnam that manifest power in the governance structure of universities. The recognition of the political nature of universities, and of themselves as political subjects, then offer these academics and leaders future possibilities of actions. Interestingly, their ideals about the future also point to ideals of knowledge creation in the 'Western' concept of universities. For some academics and leaders, new knowledge possibilities were viewed through renovated physical campus space or lecture rooms where they tried to create a sense of autonomy instead of hierarchy in the institutions ('I implemented the practice of no lecterns in lecture rooms to signify equality of teachers and students').

The majority of academics and university leaders felt that there was a large gap between contemporary reality in Vietnamese universities and the HERA projections for the future. This gap was the social imaginaries in which they positioned themselves, and envisaged themselves either as transferors of overseas-acquired knowledge and skills, or borrowers of teaching practices of overseas universities. In their allegiance to the image of the 'reformed' university, they articulated an ambivalence between the newly found sense of intrinsic 'self' and the instrumental self for the knowledge economy. This ambivalence results from the power effects of their association with others in the university, and the 'dividing practices' that these power relations invite. They were 'subjects of knowledge' who viewed themselves as educational reformers, but also as conformers to the existing power relations. This is why, for many academics, the process of HERA through internationalization was seen as something of a transformation of the 'self' slowly over time: 'To say that I can apply all that I learnt overseas practically would be hopeful. It requires a level of "self" adjustment depending on the situation'.

This perception of a transformation might indeed be their acknowledgement of themselves as 'subjects of knowledge' whose struggles were rewarded by small changes they made along the way, even if these changes seem to accommodate the norms.

Discussion

Our two studies focus on Vietnamese social studies teachers and university academics and leaders trained abroad. These two different groups of educators worked within the same policy discourse that has increasingly absorbed the globalization rhetoric of human capital development for labor market participation. Although different in their professional tasks, perceptions and approaches to new educational conditions, the educators' reflections suggest similar ambiguities that mark educational policy and pedagogy in Vietnam's emerging postcolonial and post-socialist society. Their perceptions and engagements suggest three effects of Vietnam's education reform.

First, the perceptions of teachers and academics about their roles as educators revealed conflict in their social imaginaries regarding the following: the intrinsic value

of citizenship and the notion of the 'good citizen' doing good for the community; the instrumental value of transferring and applying knowledge to pursue individual economic betterment; and the moral value of abiding state ideologies. As 'subjects of knowledge', they appropriate their own interpretations, professional attitudes, and ideological perspectives that they deem suitable to the immediate situation and their choices of activities in the institutions whether as leaders or teachers creating curriculum or designing the teaching space.

Second, such contradictions in perceptions and choices often permeate 'dividing practices' wherein these educators see themselves to be different within the 'self', within the teacher or academic community of their institution, and as compared to state rhetoric. These 'dividing practices' occupy the cultural and professional space of multiple social imaginaries. These 'dividing practices' are not only markers of difference, but also of power.

Third, the imposition of the state on universities and school governance produce power relations that add another layer of complexity to these educators' contested values. For overseas-trained academics, the power effects of these state-institution-individual relations precipitate their struggles in appropriating 'Western' ideas of individual freedom and accommodating bureaucratic leadership and the state. They hope for westernization of universities in policy and curriculum but also in physical and spatial transformation; the latter is what they could actually bring about in small steps. For public school teachers, the transformation of the 'self' occurs when they find opportunities to improve teaching practices according to their views of a 'good citizen', which may be due to greater exposure to global ideas of citizenship, for example, through the Internet. As with overseas-trained academics, they seem to have a more liberal conception of 'good citizenship' associated with individualist goals. These teachers also encounter a political struggle of enacting the 'good citizen' in the repressive political landscape of Vietnam. The ambivalence and dilemmas that both teachers and academics encounter lead to attempts to pursue new practices; although these practices seem to offer slim chance of depoliticizing or deinstitutionalizing the political and social conditions associated with state ideologies or bureaucratic leadership that they see as limiting citizenship and educational change.

Conclusion

Our studies offer insights into education in the context of globalization as a set of uneven and asymmetrical processes that generate discontinuities and fractures ('divided practices') in its intersections with local and national settings. Although our paper highlights particular situations of Vietnamese teachers and academics at a point in time, they offer some generative thoughts about the multifaceted and myriad of ways globalization impacts education. Vietnam, as we have illustrated, is beset by complicated processes precipitated by post-socialist transformations and their multidimensional impacts on the education system, governance, and practices. The close relationships between the state and schools and universities inevitably mean issues of citizenship, citizenship education, nationalism, and economy are intertwined and often have competing agendas. These power relations and power effects are not unique to Vietnam. Thus, our application of Foucault's subjectivity, knowledge, and power, alongside Appadurai's social imaginaries

is useful to understand the subjectivity of teachers and academics as knowledge producers and transferors within the globalization processes in different country contexts.

Furthermore, our paper puts forward the notion of citizenship as a focus of research and theories of education in the context of globalization. This is because globalization is a series of connected global activities, significantly economic but also social and political. Understanding education in the age of globalization requires not only a focus on institutional and pedagogical practices, but also educators and students, and their citizenry and moral values. In this regard, it is worthwhile to gain perspectives from within a country's specificities of historical, social, and political conditions rather than ideologies of globalization steeped in neoliberal economics or associated with liberal democratic governance systems. A focus on citizenship in relation to globalization allows us to better understand what it means to *know*, what one can do with *knowledge* in accordance with how one sees oneself in society.

Notes

1. Resolution 29-NQ/TW (CPV, 2013).
2. Resolution 14/2005 NQ-CP (SRV, 2005).

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