

The Theoretical Logic of International Education Governance and the Strategic Path of China in the Context of Globalization

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Abstract: In the context of the accelerated development of globalization, international education has shifted from "transnational student mobility" to in-depth "education system governance coordination". In the face of the new challenges of the ebb of multilateralism, geopolitical risks and conflict of values, China urgently needs to establish an education governance model that is oriented to national interests and has a global consciousness in building a high-quality international education system. This paper reviews the theoretical evolution of international education governance, analyzes the strategic layout of major countries, focuses on China's current problems in international education governance, and puts forward suggestions for the path of "system coordination, cultural integration, and rule co-construction". This paper attempts to break through the previous research orientation based on technical means, and construct a theoretical framework of the international educational governance paradigm with Chinese characteristics from the perspective of educational philosophy and governance ethics.

Keywords: International Education; Education Governance; Globalization; Cultural Exchange; Strategic Path

1. Introduction

With the deepening of the globalization process, education has gradually broken through national borders, and its international connotation has become increasingly rich, from the initial cross-border flow of students and mutual recognition of academic qualifications and degrees, to a multi-dimensional collaborative process involving education system, governance system, cultural values and policy discourse. Under this trend, international education has not only become an important channel to promote knowledge flow, cultural exchanges and economic cooperation, but also gradually evolved into a core area of national soft power competition and global discourse reconstruction. Especially in the post-pandemic era, the focus on education safety, resilience and autonomy has increased significantly, and international education governance has also shown a trend of transformation from "market logic" to "governance logic".

At the same time, the global education governance landscape is facing profound adjustments.

The "standard output" governance model represented by international organizations such as the OECD, the World Bank, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is being challenged, and the cultural attributes, local characteristics, and value diversity of education are increasingly valued. The evolution of the geopolitical landscape, the interaction of civilizational systems, and the transformation of learning methods driven by new technologies have caused a rift in the traditional "Western-centric" paradigm of international education governance. In particular, the global education cooperation mechanism is fragile in the face of uncertainties and risk factors, and how to seek consensus in diversity and achieve co-construction in competition has become an important proposition of international education governance.

In this context, China, as an important participant and provider of the global education system, is also facing new challenges in its international education development strategy. In recent years, China has made remarkable progress in "studying in China", Sino-foreign cooperation in running schools, and "Belt

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and Road" educational cooperation, and has initially formed an educational exchange network with certain international influence. However, at this stage, there are still problems such as fragmentation of the governance system, insufficient coordination of institutional design, and weak international communication capacity, which not only restricts the depth and breadth of education opening to the outside world, but also affects China's ability to shape discourse and lead rules in global education governance.

The academic attention to international education mainly focuses on the technical aspects such as talent training mode, cross-cultural adaptation, and policy and system design, and few studies have discussed "governance" as the core issue. The current research paradigm often relies on empirical paths or focuses on experience summarization, ignoring the deeper governance logic and value contradiction behind international education. This research gap needs to be filled urgently through theoretical reconstruction and path innovation, especially in the context of the multipolarization of the global order and the reconstruction of multilateral mechanisms, it is of great theoretical significance and practical value to explore an international education governance path that reflects the local culture, meets the needs of the times, and has the possibility of global consensus.

From the perspective of educational philosophy, international education governance should not only be regarded as an instrumental system for the allocation of national interests, but should be understood as a complex network that carries the interaction of values, cultural identity and institutional ethics. Therefore, to construct a theoretical system of international education governance with Chinese characteristics, it is necessary to go beyond the logic of a single system imitation, and explore the educational cooperation model and governance path in line with the global public interest on the basis of respecting multiculturalism, strengthening educational sovereignty, and promoting the joint construction of rules. This is not only a strategic need for China to promote education modernization and shape international discourse, but also a responsibility to respond to global education equity and the Sustainable Development Goals.

2. A Theoretical Atlas of International Educational Governance

As an interdisciplinary topic between education

research and global governance research, the theoretical basis of international education governance mainly comes from the integration and development of educational sociology, comparative education, globalization studies and governance theory. In Western academia, the framework of "global governance" provides an institutional analysis tool for understanding international education, emphasizing cooperation mechanisms and policy coordination beyond sovereign states, while "new institutionalism" focuses on the imitation, integration and normative output of education systems, and believes that international organizations influence national education choices through ratings, evaluation criteria and policy discourse.

Rizvi and Lingard proposed the concept of the Global Education Policy Network, arguing that education policy is being placed in a transnational power field driven by economics, culture, and technology, which implies unequal distribution of resources and the reconstruction of cultural values. At the same time, Knight proposed the "multi-goal logic" of international education, including economic drive, academic exchange, cultural communication and diplomatic strategy, and its governance structure also presents the characteristics of diversification and multi-subject. On this basis, Marginson further emphasized the perspective of "global public goods", pointing out that international education should not only serve national strategies, but also respond to cross-cultural consensus and the construction of common human values.

On the whole, the theory of international education governance is changing from the "control-dependence" model to the "collaboration-co-construction" model, and from a one-way policy shift to multi-directional institutional interaction and value negotiation. This provides a theoretical basis and an opportunity for China to build an international education governance system with subjectivity and inclusiveness in the new era.

3. International Experiences in International Education Governance

In the education governance systems of different countries, there are significant differences in the roles and goals of international education, and their governance methods also show diverse path choices. Countries represented by the United States, Germany and South Korea have formed their own unique experience models in the design of education

internationalization policies and governance mechanisms, which have important reference significance for China to build a high-quality international education governance system.

3.1 The United States: The Governance Logic with Value output as the Core

As a major international education exporter, the United States has a highly market-oriented governance system, emphasizing the autonomy of higher education institutions and the close connection between education and economic development. Through the "Global University Ranking Mechanism", the policy of prioritizing STEM talents, and the layout of international academic networks, the United States has shaped an open international education strategy with "attracting global elites" as the core. To a certain extent, the governance of education in the United States relies on the alliance of non-governmental institutions and universities to achieve "soft law" synergy, strengthen the export of cultural influence, and show strong flexibility and adaptability in institutional arrangements.

3.2 Germany: Socially Responsible Oriented Public Governance

Germany is known for its "Kooperative Steuerung" (cooperative governance) under the federal structure, in which the state does not directly intervene in the international affairs of higher education institutions, but coordinates education policies, provides financial support, and strengthens academic mutual recognition through intermediary platforms such as "DAAD" (German Academic Exchange Service), so as to achieve effective coordination between the government and universities. Germany pays attention to the expansion of the function of "cultural diplomacy", emphasizes the two-way interaction between the public nature of education and cultural exchanges, and provides developing countries with an "equal cooperation" education aid model.

3.3 Republic of Korea: State-led Education Export Mechanism

South Korea has adopted the strategy of "state-led + industrial synergy" in international education governance, and has promoted the establishment of English-taught programs in colleges and universities, attracted foreign students and provided work visa facilitation through the formulation of medium- and long-term education internationalization strategies (such as the "Study Korea" plan), and formed an education internationalization model oriented to enhance national competitiveness. The experience of

South Korea shows that in the context of countries with limited resources, the structural promotion of education internationalization can be effectively achieved through the policy guidance of the government and the institutional response of universities.

Although the experiences of the three countries have their own emphasis, they all reflect the integration trend of the three-dimensional linkage of "education-diplomacy-economy" in terms of governance concepts. They all attach great importance to the synergy between the creation of institutional environment, the combination of policy tools and the output of cultural discourse, which is of enlightening significance for China to improve the systematic and strategic governance of international education.

4. The Practical Dilemma of China's International Education Governance

Although China has made some progress in the field of international education, it still faces many practical difficulties in the construction and practice of its international education governance system, which are mainly manifested in the fragmentation of the policy system, the one-way nature of cultural communication, the uneven quality of education, and the lack of international discourse.

First, China's international education policy system is fragmented. Although in recent years, the government has gradually issued a series of relevant documents on study abroad education, Sino-foreign cooperation in running schools, and policies for international students in China, but there is a lack of a systematic and coherent long-term plan, which has led to a fault line and difficulty in coordination in the implementation of policies. Governments at all levels, education departments and universities work in silos when formulating and implementing international education policies, and it is difficult to form effective policy synergies. For example, some universities have set their own admissions standards and management systems to attract international students, while the central government's overall plans often fail to fully align with local and university operations, resulting in wasted resources and inefficient policy implementation.

Secondly, there is a certain one-way nature in the dissemination of international education and culture in China. Although China has vigorously promoted "cultural going out" in recent years, such as

disseminating Chinese culture through projects such as Confucius Institutes, it is often limited to a one-way export model and lacks real cultural exchange and interaction. The fundamental goal of international education should be to promote understanding and respect between different cultures, not simply to export cultures. Strategies that place too much emphasis on the export of "soft power" may create a negative impression of cultural hegemony in the international community and limit the diversity and inclusiveness of educational cooperation and cultural dialogue.

In addition, China's quality assurance and evaluation system for international education is not yet perfect. Although some universities and educational programs have reached international standards, there is still a gap in the stability of education quality and international recognition. Most of China's international education programs use English as the main language, and there is a lack of cross-cultural and multicultural educational design, which limits the participation and adaptability of students from different countries and regions. In addition, some Chinese-foreign cooperatively-run schools have problems such as imperfect management system and unreasonable curriculum system, which affects the learning experience and education quality of international students.

Finally, China's voice in global education governance is still weak. Despite China's growing importance in the global education system, its dominance over global education standards, assessment systems, and policy issues remains limited. When China participates in global education decision-making, it is mostly limited by the existing international education system and norms, and it is difficult for China to fully express and defend its position in international education governance.

5. A Strategic Path to Build an International Education Governance System with Chinese Characteristics

In the context of the reform of the global education governance system, China is facing both opportunities and challenges in building an international education governance system. In order to modernize education and enhance its international discourse, China needs to build an international education governance model with Chinese characteristics from a strategic perspective. This model should focus on coordinating domestic and foreign educational resources, strengthening the diversity and

integration of cultural identity, and promoting the modernization and institutional innovation of the international education governance system.

First of all, to build an international education governance system with Chinese characteristics, it is necessary to strengthen institutional integration and collaborative innovation. At present, China's policy system in international education governance is still fragmented, and there is a lack of long-term mechanism and systematic design. To this end, the government should strengthen the overall planning of international education, formulate an international education development strategy in line with national conditions, and enhance policy consistency and implementation through cross-departmental and cross-regional coordination mechanisms. The Ministry of Education can integrate the educational resources of various localities and colleges and universities by organizing a national education cooperation platform to form a joint force; At the same time, we should strengthen cooperation among international organizations, jointly participate in the formulation and evaluation of global education governance rules, and promote the formation of an international education governance framework with Chinese characteristics.

Second, cultural inclusion should be at the core of international education governance with Chinese characteristics. In the process of promoting international education, China should not only pay attention to the quantity and breadth of education exports, but also pay attention to the depth and interaction of cultural exports. In this regard, it is particularly important to emphasize the concept of "cultural co-construction". China should strengthen educational and cultural exchanges with other countries, and promote understanding and mutual learning among different cultures through innovative educational programs and cultural experience activities. Through two-way interactive cultural exchanges, it can not only enhance the global influence of Chinese culture, but also enhance the international competitiveness of China's education system. In addition, China should strengthen its inclusiveness and adaptability to foreign cultures, respect the educational and cultural characteristics of other countries, and achieve win-win results in cooperation.

Third, the internationalization and standardization of education quality is the key to improving China's international education governance capacity. China needs to strengthen the integration of the education quality assurance system with the international

education system, and promote the unification of quality certification and evaluation standards for international education programs. In particular, China should formulate stricter quality standards and establish a sound quality supervision and evaluation mechanism for the "Study in China" program and Sino-foreign cooperation in running schools. This will not only help to enhance the international reputation of Chinese education, but also enhance the learning experience and satisfaction of international students. Through close cooperation with international education organizations, we will promote the global standardization of the education quality assurance system and enhance the global competitiveness of Chinese education.

Finally, China should actively participate in the rule-building and discourse struggle for global education governance. China should make full use of its economic and cultural advantages in global education governance to promote a fairer, more open and more inclusive international education environment. In particular, driven by the concept of "global education public goods", China should actively advocate the sharing of global educational resources and mutual benefit of cooperation, and promote the reform and innovation of global education cooperation mechanisms. Through platforms such as the Belt and Road Initiative, China can deepen educational cooperation with developing countries, establish a more equal international education cooperation system, and promote the development of a more diversified and cooperative global education governance mechanism.

6. Conclusion

In the context of globalization, international education governance is not only an important task for education development, but also a key area for countries to enhance their soft power and promote cultural exchanges and international cooperation. In the process of promoting international education, China faces many practical difficulties, but at the same time, it also has unique development opportunities. To build an international education governance system with Chinese characteristics, it is necessary not only to strengthen coordination and integration in institutional innovation, but also to achieve a higher level of internationalization in cultural exchanges and education quality.

Looking ahead, China is expected to play a more important role in global education governance. In the

era of increasingly fierce competition in global education, China not only needs to achieve breakthroughs in the allocation of educational resources, quality improvement and talent training, but also enhances the international discourse power and the influence of global education governance through multicultural exchanges and cooperation. By deepening education cooperation with other countries and promoting co-construction and sharing, China will be able to contribute more wisdom and strength to the sustainable development of global education.

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