

A quantitative approach to the right to education

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Propositions belonging to the dissertation

A quantitative approach to the right to education

Concept, measurement, and effects

By: Bart Kleine Deters

Date of Defence: 28 June 2021 at 4 PM

1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. (*Art. 1 Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948*)
2. The right to education should be characterised as an "empowerment" right. (*Coomans (2004) Exploring the normative content of the right to education as a human right: Recent approaches*)
3. The paradox of measurement means that it is easier to measure what is already recognized as measurable, while what has not been measured is much harder to translate into numbers or make commensurable with other things. (*Merry and Wood (2015) Quantification and the Paradox of Measurement*)
4. The knowledge produced from measuring human rights is always partial. Measurement requires navigating between at least three different trade-offs; between flexibility and comparability, between simplicity and accuracy, and between what is measured and what ought to be measured. There is an opportunity cost for each of those choices. (*Chapter 1*)
5. Almost all countries in the database *prima facie* violate the right to education, by not fulfilling their minimum core obligations. Since these are considered to be the absolute minimum floor of rights-protection, one can legitimately ask whether a right to education effectively exists at all in these countries. (*Chapter 3*)
6. The impact of improving the *legal* right to education is modest. It is only positively and significantly related to primary enrolment and completion rates in two situations: after a substantial delay of at least seven years, or in countries with a weak rule of law or a low education budget. (*Chapter 4*)
7. The UN treaty body system appears to be ineffective in prompting positive change. Ratifying the ICESCR did not lead to a trend break in the legal protection of the right, serious engagement with the CESCR, CRC, and CEDAW Committees had no influence on education outcomes, and almost all states fail to fulfil their immediately realisable obligations under the minimum core obligations. (*Chapter 5*)
8. Quantification takes away large parts of what makes human rights valuable and effective. It is therefore not surprising that the measurement that we end up with (and put in the policy arena to compete with other ideas and interventions) is not particularly effective at the macro level. (*Chapter 5*)
9. Remember that all models are wrong; the practical question is how wrong do they have to be to not be useful. (*Box and Draper (1978) Empirical Model Building and Response Surfaces*)
10. Als ik één ding heb ontdekt in m'n leven dan is het wel dit: als je heel diep over iets nadenkt, dan kom je altijd uit op iets wat niet klopt. Probeer maar eens, klopt altijd. [If you think about something long enough, you will eventually find uncertainties, that's for certain.] (*Herman Finkers (1995) Geen spatader veranderd*).
11. It turns out life isn't a puzzle that can be solved one time and it's done. You wake up every day, and you try to solve it again. (*Chidi Anagonye, The Good Place, Season 04 Episode 09*)

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