



International Wednesdays



Prof. Susan L. Robertson, University of Manchester / University of Cambridge

IOs, the Making of a Global Citizen, and One World Ideologies: Benign World-Making or Instruments of Imperialism?

International Lecture Series

Wednesday, May 7th, 5 pm, Hörsaal 1
Sensengasse 3A, 1. OG

This presentation draws on geopolitical economy as a theoretical approach to explore the relationship between International Organisations, multi-scalar statecraft, education projects, and governing projects underpinned by ‘one world’ ideologies. I focus on a series of IO initiatives in education under the umbrella of the global citizen. I show how IOs operate in a global political space and that they do not stand outside of struggles over norm setting and efforts to secure hegemony. Given this, I ask: are ‘one world’ ideologies forms of imperialism, given IOs tendency to universalism in the face of situated geographies, histories and cultures? I develop my analysis through a series of explorations. First, the Council for Education in World Citizenship (CWEC) (1938), a post WWI institution formed to secure the fading British Empire, fed into forming UNESCO (1946), who advanced the idea of a world society. Second, the OECD (1962), formed out of the USA’s Cold War ideology to assert US hegemony. Third, the limits of political projects for IOs, like neoliberalism and global competences, and how this opens IOs to shortfalls in legitimacy and struggles over governing and hegemonic rule. I conclude by suggesting that as long as IO’s ideational anchor regarding the global citizen is a monocultural one, where geographies, histories and cultures are erased, they then tend toward imperialism.

Susan L. Robertson is Professor of Sociology of Education, University of Manchester, and Bye-Fellow at Wolfson College, Cambridge. Prior to this she held the Chair in Sociology at the University of Cambridge and was also Head of Faculty. Susan has published widely in the area of the political sociology of education, largely drawing from critical realism as an underpinning philosophical position. She has made major contributions to work on globalisation, state transformations, multi-scalar governance, teachers’ labour and social justice. Susan co-founded (with Roger Dale) the journal *Globalisation, Societies and Education*.

This event is organized by the Department of Education and the Doctoral School in Education of University of Vienna. It will be followed by an open reception.