

“evidence” of best practices associated with EDUCO—ranging from studies produced by the Brookings Center to reports published by the Global Partnership for Education and Save the Children. And yes, there is a familiar set of actors involved in all these processes: education consultants (many affiliated with academic institutions like the Harvard Institute for International Development, or Central American University) who work for UNESCO, World Bank, or USAID to offer technical assistance in research, programming, or education sector assessments, while inevitably displacing local education expertise. The book raises many red flags, quietly revealing the deep colonial legacies of our field and reminding us that these legacies continue to perpetuate divisions of the world into *developed* and *developing* countries, reinforce hierarchies of power and knowledge, and reinscribe Western (neoliberal) practices as global *best practices*.

Edwards is very careful not to point fingers at anyone, politely upholding the tradition of academic writing with a certain degree of objectivity, distance, and impartiality. Yet, after finishing the book, I cannot help but wonder if it may be the time for us (scholars and practitioners in the field of comparative and international education) to turn the mirror back onto ourselves and ask how much each one of us is implicated in and contributes to the colonial logic of the international development industry—a logic that continues to perpetuate global inequalities despite extensive and expensive efforts to increase education access and quality for all. The EDUCO story, which is so well documented by Edwards, is an important one, and we need more research like this. But we cannot stop there. It is our responsibility to locate *ourselves* in the multitude of international development projects and reflect on how we participate, consciously or not, in the maintenance and reproduction of the (neoliberal) status quo. As this book so clearly illustrates, we have all the necessary information at our fingertips. We even have personal experiences that powerfully echo EDUCO’s story across space and time, repeatedly. What we need is the courage and willingness to open ourselves up to deeper scrutiny and reflection in order to rethink the values and ethics that underpin our work as scholars and practitioners. From this perspective, this book is a must-read for anyone in the field of comparative and international education.

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The Design of the University: German, American, and “World Class” by Heinz-Dieter Meyer.
New York: Routledge, 2017. 254 pp. \$136.00 (cloth). ISBN 978-1138802506.

By and large, we take our universities for granted. Indeed, the oldest have outlived political regimes of all kinds. This stimulating historical and comparative study by Heinz-Dieter Meyer exemplifies the importance of in-depth experience and engagement with the cultural and structural environments in which some of the world’s greatest universities have incrementally developed over centuries and in which they have been embedded. This is crucial if we hope to understand the sources of university authority and their contributions to scientific knowledge and human flourishing. A neo-institutionalist scholar and multicultural citizen who fruitfully contributes to dia-

logues exploring core institutions in education and society on both sides of the Atlantic, Meyer is uniquely placed to grapple with the complex processes of institutional learning and design that have positioned the German and American universities among the globally most productive. He also shows how they have influenced each other via the complex yet crucial flows of inspired scholars and students carrying key ideas with them for interpretation and application back home. The contributions of key actors, but also the outcomes of choices at critical junctures, such as the failure to establish a national state-funded university in the United States, take center stage in this engaging account of how the leaders of American universities adapted the German model. This process brought together diverse concepts to design what has become the greatest university system in the world, yet one that remains nearly impossible to emulate due to the unique constellation of actors and institutional environment in which it developed.

In 18 chapters grouped into four parts, *The Design of the University: German, American, and “World Class”* takes us from Göttingen and Berlin to Boston and to the world level. As the scientific enterprise expands—as well as competition between scientists and the most crucial organizational form in which they conduct their experiments and make their arguments grows—the research university becomes ever more global. Contributing to and inviting debate, Meyer’s main argument is that the American university has succeeded based upon an institutional design—or, perhaps, a nondesign—that on multiple levels facilitates self-government and the identification of a niche within an extraordinarily large and differentiated higher education system. This is not a full-fledged historiographical treatment of a subject favored by academics (permanently searching for reputational gains) and policy makers (as they increasingly launch research funding programs and evaluation systems to foster competition). Rather than a full-fledged sociology of science, this book creatively sketches the trajectories of German and American university development, emphasizing affinities as well as crucial differences, to ultimately argue that in fact, “Humboldt’s most important ideas flourished in the American atmosphere of unrestricted institutional experimentation and vigorous self-government” (xiii).

Interrogating what he calls the “design thinking” of eminent thinkers Adam Smith and Wilhelm von Humboldt, among others, Meyer traces the challenging, complex, and contingent learning processes in the adaptation of the German research university model to the American context, eventually becoming the most differentiated and “world-class” higher education system in the world. Asking about the reasons for the American university’s success, especially in comparison to the recent institutional crisis of the German research university, albeit still extraordinarily productive, Meyer argues that this American meritocratic success story has institutional design (of self-government) at its heart. Enjoying the patronage of not one, but three major institutions—state, church, and market—the American university attained true autonomy and global pre-eminence through unparalleled wealth of patronage and an intricate system of checks and balances. In this line of argument, charting the ascendancy from humble origins of what can hardly be called a system due its extraordinary diversity, Meyer concurs with David Labaree, whose *A Perfect Mess* is a highly suitable companion piece grounded in the history of American higher education (see David F. Labaree, *A Perfect Mess: The Unlikely Ascendancy of American Higher Education* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017]). Contemporary architects of higher education policy globally, driven by the fantasy of

“world class” labels, Meyer warns, have completely underestimated the “institutional, social, and political prerequisites that excellence in research and teaching require” (4).

Meyer begins his treatise, appropriately, in Göttingen, the site of Georgia Augusta University, where many leaders of American higher education, in Meyer’s account first and foremost Boston Brahmin George Ticknor, learned by doing, ensconced in a cosmopolitan center of learning and intellectual enlightenment. The blueprint included professionalized scholarship, the unification of research and teaching in seminars and lectures, freedom to choose among academic offerings, a vast library of scientific knowledge, and academic standing based on perpetual production of cutting-edge research judged by peers (19). Instead of Adam Smith’s preferred instruments of competition, choice, and tuition dependence, Wilhelm von Humboldt’s “design revolution” proposed “three unities” whose powerful integration could surpass the utilitarian logic prevalent then and now: “teaching *and* research; scientific discovery *and* moral formation (*Bildung*); and scholarly autonomy *and* scholarly community” (40).

The book’s second part, on institutional learning, charts the institutional migration of the blueprint; the contested design options of *Gymnasium*, college, and graduate school (the latter ultimately the key to global preeminence); the lasting influence of Protestantism (here Meyer follows the arguments of Max Weber, Robert K. Merton, and Joseph Ben-David) and extraordinary educational philanthropy; the battle between those who would centralize, by establishing a national university, and those committed to local control; and finally, the contrasting answers to the eternal question of vocationalism—for example, how should business be treated, as a sibling to medicine and law or as their distant cousin? The more education-enamored, democratically inclined patrician elites of the American East Coast were, Meyer argues, radically different institution builders than German scholars, French state nobility, or even Chinese mandarins: “No other class combined their respect for, and grand vision of, the civilizing role of learning with their economic resources and the realism needed to put their plans into practice” (113).

Building on philosophical and historical elaboration, the book’s third part on achieving self-government discusses the six American moves leading to institutional innovation. At the organizational level, the German chair and institute give way to departments and discipline, the university president is no longer figurehead but chief executive, and independent boards of trustees, not government officials, have ultimate authority. The implications for individuals and organizations of these “design shifts” cannot be overstated. Anyone seeking to understand American higher education, with its phenomenal vertical and horizontal differentiation and ongoing academic drift (“a snake-like procession” as David Riesman, to whom the book is dedicated, calls it), and its self-organized autonomy—supported by many philanthropists without the limiting control of a few state bureaucrats—will find this analysis illuminating. Embedded in civil society, “vigorous self-government is the historic design contribution of the American university” (209)—and an achievement that must be guarded in an era in which university autonomy is at risk. In concluding, Meyer’s American optimistic and laudatory tone shifts back to Germanic critique and foreboding, identifying challenges and the contemporary struggles that threaten the unintentional masterpiece of institutional learning and diversity. Such justified hopes and fears must now give way to

empirical studies of the extraordinary outputs in terms of scientific production and societal capabilities and well-being brought about by the continuous process of university *Bildung*—in Germany, the United States, and around the world.

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Student Learning and Development in Chinese Higher Education: College Students' Experience in China by Yuhao Cen. New York: Routledge, 2017. 158 pp. \$44.96 (eBook). ISBN 978-1138905481.

Yuhao Cen's important book offers much-needed insight for higher education leaders and analysts based both in China and in the United States. Since 1999, researchers connected with Indiana University have coordinated the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), a project sparked by the Pew Charitable Trust's concern with finding more nuanced measures of quality than those being advertised by commercial ranking businesses. NSSE has since been administered in over 1,600 American universities aiming to discover the correlates and outcomes of student engagement. Readers of the *CER* will recognize that, from an international perspective, the NSSE project is characteristically American, rooted as it is in the pragmatist tradition that learning and growth come through interaction with the physical and social world, contrary to the assumptions of behaviorists who assume learning to be imprinted on the mind as if it were a blank slate. Indeed, the very conception of *student engagement* can be difficult to translate into some languages. Could NSSE ever be considered relevant in China?

The author of this book is a distinguished graduate of Indiana University who worked with the late Heidi Ross, and who today is a professor and a dean at Shanghai Jiaotong University. Among Yuhao Cen's accomplishments is that she borrows an American literature and evidence base and then applies it within a Chinese cultural context, where not only *engagement* but even the word for student *development* is difficult to translate, and is hardly captured by *xuexi* 学习. What is even more audacious is that Cen led a small project team to translate NSSE and adapt it to China's universities. Next, she helped administer a paper version of the questionnaire to more than 23,000 students across all regions of China in 27 institutions of different types of central or provincial government control, with different degrees of selectivity. She carefully avoids referencing institutional *quality*. In her dissertation and her book, Cen presents findings that should be considered carefully by China's planners, educators, and families.

Even this introduction risks understating Cen's achievement. She focuses on two questions that led her to supplement a sophisticated factor analysis of students' answers to NSSE-China with in-depth focus groups and interviews. The questions framing the investigation are, first: In which domains and to what extent do students report and believe they have attained learning outcomes? Second: How do students believe they learn from their various opportunities and from the context of their college experience? Her quantitative findings are impressive, and she shows that the