

The educational aims of the OECD in its TALIS insight and lesson reports: Exploring societal orientations

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the societal orientations (individualist vs. collectivist) of educational aims, in constructions of teacher professionalism framed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) insight and lesson reports. The critical discourse analysis of OECD TALIS documents suggests that the OECD discourse on teacher professionalism attested to a dual orientation: individualist and anti-collectivist. Our results contribute to the theoretical understanding of the educational aims of the OECD, which lead the global discourse in education, and of the cultural orientation that is part of its conceptualization of new professional teaching. The article discusses the implications of its findings.

Keywords: International Assessment; OECD; Aims of Education; TALIS; Teacher Quality; Professionalism

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1. Introduction

In recent years, as part of a broader process of globalization, the national discourse on educational policy has been greatly influenced by the global discourse (Mundy, Green, Lingard, & Verger, 2016). In this process, social interactions extending beyond national borders have become highly influential for societies and individuals (Knight, 2004; Spring, 2014). In addition to their economic implications, globalization processes have uncoupled social and cultural activities from national territories, leading to the crisis of the nation-state model and to a significant weakening of national policymaking (Ben-Peretz, 2009). The literature has identified a range of direct and indirect effects of globalization on national education systems. Among these are a lowering of the status of teachers as authoritative sources of knowledge, an increase in ethnic and cultural diversification of student bodies, and greater isomorphism resulting from pressures of international comparisons (Stromquist & Monkman, 2014).

Critical scholars regard the globalized discourse in education as a key element in structuring and directing societies. Globalized discourse is said to promote a certain version of the "liberal and individualized conception of a worthy citizen" (Walker, 2009, p. 348), which is closely intertwined with the market and economic interests of developed countries (Feniger, Livneh, & Yogevev, 2012). With the global education policy discourse becoming an established fact, the guiding role of international agencies and their assessment of national education policies have become more prominent, as more and more countries choose to pay to participate in international testing and assessment initiatives such as the Program for International Student

Assessment (PISA).¹ Although international comparison between education systems in various countries has existed since the mid-20th century (Rutkowski, von Davier, & Rutkowski, 2013), the phenomenon rapidly changed focus in the early 2000s in response to the emergence of global governance modes of education (Youdell & McGimpsey, 2015).

International agencies offer educational policy recommendations and matching assessment tools that influence local policy in various countries worldwide. Among these agencies, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) stands out as the most influential source of teaching policy ideas and philosophies (Sorensen & Robertson, 2017). The organization has established indicators for what it views as ideal teaching methods, and has created a framework for their assessment (the Teaching and Learning International Survey, TALIS). The assessment is more than merely a technical translation of professional principles; it involves zooming in on *individual* "teacher beliefs, attitudes and practices" (OECD, 2009, p. 120), and it represents a series of value-related choices.

The new organizing concept in the discourse of international agencies operating in the field of education is "professionalism." For example, in the case of teacher professionalism, this label captures agreed technical aspects having to do with improving educational productivity, in a manner seemingly unrelated to epistemological or ideological preferences (Sorensen & Robertson, 2017). Such functional presentation of professional conceptualizations by international agencies often serves them to achieve epistemic and normative governance in the global arena (Sellar & Lingard, 2013; Rutkowski, 2007). In the present article, we examine the

¹ Many of the joiners are non-member countries. For example, since 2009, the share of non-member countries participating in PISA has been greater than that of OECD member countries.

OECD concept of teacher professionalism through the lens of educational aims (i.e., cultural orientations of individualism versus collectivism). We seek to answer the following question: What is the educational aim emerging from the OECD TALIS texts concerning teacher professionalism?

In the first section of the article, we provide the theoretical background of the rise of a global discourse on education policy, and describe the key part that the OECD plays in it. Next, we discuss educational aims as a theoretical lens for exploring the OECD conceptualization of the ideal teacher. In the second section, we outline our methodology: a critical discourse analysis of the OECD TALIS insight and lesson reports. The third section presents the findings and discusses them.

2. The OECD and the reframing of teachers' professionalism

The OECD emerged in 1961 from the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC), which was founded by the US in 1948. Both were important outgrowths of the Bretton Woods agreement. The OECD differs in important ways from other institutions, such as the World Bank, which also grew out of Bretton Woods. Whereas the World Bank is particularly influential in shaping a reform agenda for developing countries facing debt crises (Sellar & Lingard, 2014), the OECD is a highly influential actor in global educational discourse in developed countries and countries with advancing economies (Robertson, 2012, 2016; Sellar & Lingard, 2013; Sorensen & Robertson, 2017). The OECD plays a critical role in the development of educational policies in fields such as lifelong learning, higher education, and K-12 education (Feniger et al., 2012; Holtmaat, 2011; Walker, 2009). Although the OECD does not have formal authority to make policy, it operates as a think tank that sets the tone of educational discourse and defines policy directions that

greatly influence member countries (Walker, 2009). It achieved this position in a short time following the end of the Cold War, in the 1990s, a period in which the organization redefined its purpose (Sellar & Lingard, 2013). Although membership and participation in OECD assessments are voluntary, the OECD has been proactive in expanding its reach by receiving new members, signing collaboration agreements with non-members, and investing heavily in "marketing" its expertise and the applicability of its knowledge (Carroll & Kellow, 2011; Sorensen & Robertson, 2017).

Since the early 2000s, teacher quality and professionalism have become highly debated issues in global arenas (Connell, 2009). Following the success of its PISA program, in 2002 the OECD began to focus its attention on issues pertaining to teacher effectiveness, development, and retention. Its publication of *Teachers Matter*, in 2005, was one of the first harbingers of the importance the "teacher quality" topic would acquire in the globalized educational discourse in developed countries. One main goal of the OECD has been to develop indicators for teachers and teaching that would enhance global policymaking in education. Multi-country analyses make it possible to compare between countries dealing with the same difficulties, enabling countries to learn about different policy perspectives and their influences on the learning environment (OECD, 2009, 2014). This endeavor has led to the development of the TALIS survey, which collects data from teachers and principals about their views on topics such as student learning, teaching practices and beliefs, professional development, appraisal and reward systems, working conditions, and school leadership (OECD, 2009). TALIS is the largest international survey of teachers and principals (da Silva Lopes, Albergaria-Almeida, & Martinho, 2015), and it offers more extensive coverage of teachers' professional learning than any other

international survey (Akiba, 2015). The first wave of TALIS data, collected in 2008 in 24 countries, surveyed lower secondary teachers. The second wave was collected in 2013, in 34 countries. In some countries, both primary and upper secondary teachers were surveyed (da Silva Lopes et al., 2015). According to Andreas Schleicher, the Director of the Education and Skills Directorate at the OECD, who is considered instrumental in shaping PISA and promoting the standing of global education testing and evaluation, the objective of TALIS is to provide robust and valid international indicators and suggestions to help countries analyze and develop policies that promote the conditions for “high quality” teaching and learning (Schleicher, 2015). Scholars have pointed out that in the process, the idea of teacher professionalism has been reframed (Robertson, 2016; Sorensen & Robertson, 2017).

As a result, in the 21st century the OECD has managed to increase its influence in shaping the aspects of teacher professionalism and teachers' education (Mooney Simmie, Moles, & O'Grady, 2016). The OECD influence has trickled down from the global arena to the realm of national policymaking (Sellar & Lingard, 2014). Scholars have suggested that through its “soft” power, the OECD has become a shaper of education policy programs worldwide (Sellar & Lingard, 2014; Mooney Simmie et al., 2016). Effectively owned by members who “cannot easily criticize the data or analyses” (Carroll & Kellow, 2011, p. 5), the OECD exerts its soft power mainly through assessments, international reports, policy guidelines, and conferences (Sorensen & Robertson, 2017; Robertson, 2012). These types of activity are consistent with the epistemic and normative control governance modes that Woodward (2009) has identified in the work of the OECD. Through its actions, the OECD deliberately seeks to boost its epistemic and normative influence, for example, seeking to quickly expand in various public policy domains to enhance its political

sway (Carroll & Kellow, 2011). The OECD has also sought to achieve and maintain epistemological dominance that enables it to influence educational policymaking in national and global arenas (Lingard & Sellar 2013; Sellar & Lingard, 2013, 2014). Actions intended to affect and define teacher quality strengthen its hold on what Bernstein (1990, 2000) termed the “field of symbolic control” of pedagogy (i.e., the discursive codes that shape teachers' work), and shift the focal point of power from national and subnational actors to international ones (Robertson, 2012).

The neoliberal agenda for education, and the institutions that promote it, are endorsing a new intellectual structure of education, in which teachers across the globe are recast in the role of technicians who must follow universal bulleted lists of instructions (Connell, 2009). Robertson and colleagues (Sorensen & Robertson, 2017; Robertson, 2012) deplored the fact that despite the use of familiar terms such as “teacher professionalism” and “teacher learning,” teachers remain absent from the policy debate, increasingly dominated by decision makers and global actors. According to these critics, the OECD plays a key part in framing the role of teachers and their work in ways that are considered “ideal” for all countries. The OECD has a strong interest in tightening the links between TALIS and PISA, and both projects seem to have a clear preference for constructivist pedagogy, which is also reflected in the choices of TALIS indices and items (Sorensen & Robertson, 2017). This is only one aspect of the bias in the work of the OECD, and of how denationalization is manifest in the new teacher professionalism discourse promoted by the organization. Scholars suggest that education is a process of forming a society. Therefore, any change in defining the concept of “teacher professionalism” requires a thoughtful consideration of educational aims, because ideal teaching is closely intertwined with societal educational aims (Connell, 2009; Lamm, 1986).

3. Societal models, aims of education and teaching

Some scholars argue that efforts of international agencies, such the OECD, promote specific policies and structures, ignoring cultural aspects (Feniger & Lefstein, 2014). Others situated these policies and structures in the context of a broader societal-cultural campaign. For example, Rubinson and Browne (1994) argued that convergence promoted by global efforts pushes societies into "a global cultural model of the nation-state and citizenship" (p. 592). "Cultural models are sets of assumptions that are widely (though not universally) shared by a group of people, existing both in individual minds and in public artifacts, institutions, and practices" (Snibbe & Markus, 2005, p. 704). The individualism-collectivism dichotomy is among the most researched socio-cultural aspects (Hamamura, 2012).

Individualist and collectivist societies are said to be differentiated by four characteristics (Triandis, 1995): definition of the self (i.e., personal and independent vs. collective interdependent; (b) priority of goals (i.e., personal over in-group or *vice versa*); (c) nature of relationships (i.e., exchange vs. communal); and (d) the type of factors shaping social behaviors (i.e., attitudes vs. norms). Individualism stresses personal goals, uniqueness, and personal control, whereas collectivism stresses groups as key units that bind and obligate individuals (Cohen & Hill, 2007). As a result of these differences in individualist and collectivist societies, differences arise in educational aims and in teaching (Hamamura, 2012).

The aims of education reflect an agreement on educational practices and serve as a societal mechanism of coordination that can explain the behavior of educated persons within the society in which they grew up (Lamm, 1986). Higginbotham (1976) argued that educational aims focus on "attitudes, skills and insights which have to do with a person's overall capacity to function as a human being" (p. 41),

specifically on the nature and balance of the relationship between one's autonomy on one hand, and one's role as a member of society on the other. The exploration of desired traits in children often focuses on the balance between two elements (Acevedo, Ellison, & Yilmaz, 2015; Kohn, 1969; Miller & Swanson, 1958): intellectual heteronomy (i.e., collectivist orientation, manifested, for example, in acquiescence to authority), and intellectual autonomy (i.e., individualist orientation, manifested, for example, in independent thinking).

The literature contains detailed discussions of educational aims and their implications for pedagogy and teaching (e.g., Harpaz, 2008, 2015; Lamm, 1976, 1986; McMillan, 2010). The various models may be clustered around two central societal orientations of educational aims: the collective (emphasizing the value of society and culture) and the individualist (emphasizing the value of individual agency and choice). The collective orientation of educational aims stresses social assimilation and demands that education focus on developing knowledge, skills, and the compliance necessary to fit into the existing social and economic structure. It often demands that education focus on the cross-generational transfer of preferred values and practices. This is promoted by a teaching style in which demonstration and practice are central and in which teachers serve as role models and inspire identification with themselves, with historical or fictional figures, and with ideas (Harpaz, 2008). In collectivist societies, education must therefore shape the subjective will of children to freely relinquish their personal autonomy and expression, as they place higher value on the needs of the collective than on their own, to enable them to become productive and integrated in society as adults (Acevedo et al., 2015). By contrast, the individualist orientation of educational aims stresses the concept of a distinct self, and focuses on cultivating autonomous and independent individuals. This

is promoted by teaching styles in which teachers provide learners with a range of free choices and independence, and assist them in their personal growth and in the self-development of an authentic personality (Harpaz, 2008).

The two societal orientations of educational aims also aspire to shape different moral reasoning. According to Husted and Allen (2008), in collectivist societies morality is associated with the supremacy of communal values and of the collective, and as a result: (a) nonconformity to group norms is less tolerated; (b) morality is identified with preserving the solidarity and the image of the in-group; and (c) equality is favored when dealing with in-group members, and equity is favored when dealing with out-groups members. Collectivist cultures promote relationship-based moral reasoning, whereas individualist cultures promote justice-based moral reasoning (Husted & Allen, 2008). In light of this difference, it is not surprising that McBride, Xiang, Wittenburg, and Shen (2002), in a comparison of American and Chinese pre-service teachers, found that self-confidence in critical thinking is higher among Americans. In sum, the collectivist orientation of educational aims is linked with intellectual heteronomy, whereas the individualist orientation of educational aims is linked with intellectual autonomy (Table 1).

Table 1. Societal orientations of aims of education.

	Collectivist orientation	Individualist orientation
Values and practices	Obedience Conformity Heritage Social ideals Collective rituals	Autonomy Independence Authenticity
Basis of learning	Imitation Inspiration and identification	Choice
Moral reasoning	Relationship-based (group care)	Justice-based (critical thinking)
Type of teaching	Instilling teaching Design teaching	Development teaching

Although to date the literature has not addressed the societal orientation of educational aims, the general cultural underpinning of global efforts in education has been discussed. For example, reflecting on the nature of the cultural orientation behind the global discourse in education, Hartley (2003) argued that it resonates highly with cultural norms of modernity such as rationality, individualism, equality, and progress. Carney (2008) also suggested that the global educational discourse is individualist in essence because it stresses the value of ideas such as ownership, empowerment, choice, efficiency, and competition. Any academic dialogue that addresses effective pedagogy or quality of teaching is therefore by definition a debate on societal orientation of educational aims (Murphy, 2008).

4. Method

We analyzed the following OECD documents that sought to provide readers with "insights" and "lessons" on teachers and teaching, derived from the TALIS 2013 survey: "New insights from TALIS 2013. Teaching and learning in primary and upper secondary education," "Supporting teacher professionalism: Insights from TALIS 2013," and "Teaching excellence through professional learning and policy reform: Lessons from around the world."

The approach we adopted for analysis of the texts was critical discourse analysis (Janks, 1997; Titscher, Meyer, Wodak, & Vetter, 2000), through which we sought to reveal the ideology behind the professional philosophy of the authors, and by extension, of the organization. Critical discourse analysis is based on inductive reasoning that "pulls apart" texts (Janks, 1997). We paid particular attention to the underlying assumptions, to specific word choices, and to rhetorical features (Titscher et al., 2000).

5. CDA: Societal orientations of educational aims in the TALIS insight and lesson reports of the OECD

Following TALIS data collection and analyses, the OECD publishes insight and lesson reports. These documents, which vary in length between 100 and 300 pages, are separate from the reports on TALIS results. Their audience is said to be "countries" that want "to see more clearly where imbalances might lie" (OECD, 2014, p. 3). The documents can also "help teachers, schools, and policy makers learn from these practices" (OECD, 2014, p. 3). Below we analyze key features in the discourse of the documents concerning teachers' professionalism, including the genre of the documents and the rhetorical devices being used. Focus on these elements sheds light on some of the epistemological and philosophical assumptions in the conceptualization of teacher professionalism presented in the texts.

Genre is a term used to define a set of conventions, characteristics, and social settings that guide the manner in which a text is written and used (Hyland, 2002). The OECD TALIS insight and lesson reports belong to a unique mix of academic policy and advice-giving genres. Advice-giving texts traditionally share several features (Kawashima, 2005; Talbot, 2005): (a) they set up a certain developmental social relation between the source and the audience; (b) they construct an audience that is in a continuous state of lacking, needing, and desiring change; (c) the organizational structure of the texts frequently includes simplified, universal, ideal recipes, usually delivered as bulleted points; and (d) displays of preferences or suggestions serve to construct the writer as an authority on the issues. This genre of texts serves the OECD to manage authoritative mentoring relationships with readers across the world, subtly constructing the audience as lacking and needy, and thereby cultivating dependence on the organization for expertise in the area of teachers' professionalism. The lexical

and syntactic characteristics of the texts include mainly complex and compound sentences, and the grammatical disposition is mostly indicative, stating facts or observations. In this way, the documents adopt a technical and authoritative tone.

Van Dijk (1993) suggested that one key purpose of critical discourse analysis is to shed light on the social representations created by social actors. The analysis of the OECD TALIS documents brought to light certain representations of professional teachers and of their relations to collectivist entities (society and culture). In general, two philosophical approaches emerge from the OECD discourse with regard to new teaching and educational aims: (a) a dualistic approach that on one hand naturalizes and on the other neutralizes differences between countries with respect to educational aims, and (b) an approach that justifies anti-collectivist teaching and naturalizes it.

The dualistic approach can be identified in selections in which writers attempt to naturalize differences between the educational aims of countries. The OECD discourse advocating a new teacher professionalism avoids explicit modernistic judgment of other cultures involving classification into superior and inferior. The following excerpts exemplify these efforts:

A model that was highly successful in one context may not be as successful in another, as it is layered over the traditional and cultural frameworks that govern the relationship between the teacher, the state and the society at large (OECD, 2016, p. 30).

Varied approaches to professionalism may reflect cultural and historical differences, or differences in national and local policy priorities (OECD, 2016, p. 28; Schleicher, 2016, p. 36).

The documents acknowledge that different versions of teacher professionalism can coexist:

Cultural and historical differences between countries may lead some countries to a preference for one teacher professionalism domain (knowledge, autonomy, peer networks) [...] over another (OECD, 2016, p. 97).

At the same time, the writers also attempt to neutralize differences between the educational aims of countries. This attempt emerged mainly in generalizations while framing future challenges for teachers, regardless of differences in local and cultural contexts. The following excerpts exemplify this rhetoric:

Society now expects teachers to deal effectively with students of different backgrounds and mother tongues, to be sensitive to culture and gender issues, to promote tolerance and social cohesion (Schleicher, 2016, p. 17).

Schools need to prepare students for a world in which they will work and live among people of diverse cultural origins who hold different ideas, perspectives and values; a world where trust will have to bridge those differences; and a world in which their lives will be affected by issues that transcend national boundaries (Schleicher, 2016, p. 16)

The above excerpts illustrate the rhetorical sleight of hand in the TALIS documents of the OECD, where they present a seemingly "pragmatic" vision. Such presentation of a political agenda as pragmatic and common-sense is consistent with classic conservatism (Chitty, 1995; Lawton, 1994). Other salient features of the

narrative in these texts are their high levels of decontextuality (i.e., dismissal of material conditions and of contrasting empirical evidence) and their invariance (i.e., reliance on universal claims that transcend times, places, or situations) (Lejano & Dodge, 2017). Such decontextual and invariant narration ignores the evidence that globalization is highly involved in economic, social, and political exclusion mechanisms (Bhalla & Lapeyre, 2016). The dualistic style in the documents, which both naturalizes and neutralizes differences between countries, may surprise those who expect ideological efforts to embrace a closed "echo chamber" dynamic (Sartori, 1969); but evidence suggests that ideological texts often display a rather sophisticated style. For example, in a study of the narrative properties of climate skepticism in the USA, Lejano and Dodge (2017) found that texts used selective intertextuality, citing parts of other texts or ideas that do not align or that contrast with the main ideological narrative to further support or legitimize their claim.

Beside this dualistic approach that focuses on differences between the educational aims of countries, the texts also evince an approach that justifies and naturalizes anti-collectivist teaching, including a focus on the separation between communal and civic identity, the negative effect of communalism on politics and on the national historical narrative, and so on (Vajpeyi, 2002). To circumvent a possible charge of espousing an anti-collectivist ideology, the anti-collectivist labels are framed not at the national but rather at the classroom level. Luke (1995) suggested that in discourse, the construction of "truths" about the social world serves to regulate concepts in the mind of the population at large. The lexical items used in OECD documents reveal an implicit ideological content. Culture is repeatedly mentioned, but it is almost always linked with functional teaching challenges that arise within the classroom walls. For example, "teachers are expected to work with multicultural

classes" (Schleicher, 2016, p. 10). The use of the word "multicultural" is not a neutral lexical choice. Gould (1995) argued that "as soon as the model [of multiculturalism] moves beyond this basic descriptive level and suggests a prescriptive dimension, especially one that implies a transformation of professional and societal roles, the lines become sharply drawn on prospective strategies" (p. 199). The OECD lexical strategy charges the idea of culture with a liberal Western notion of a "rainbow" civilization that is not in alignment with traditional collectivist societies (Gould, 1995). Western ideas are often integrated in the capitalist economic agenda in education (Hartley, 2003). The product of this integration, however, is the subjection of progressive ideas to the economic agenda. In this regard, the TALIS discourse of the OECD can be viewed as the latest manifestation of an old phenomenon. For example, discussing the Australian competence-based teacher reforms in the 1990s, Ryan (1998) argued that progressive ideas are becoming detached from their traditional anti-industrial source and are mobilized to serve economic agenda.

Street (1993) proposed to explore the use of culture in discourse not as a static concept but as a verb and a grammatical metaphor. This focus follows the logic of Thornton's (1988) suggestion to focus on "what culture does" and not on "what culture is." Therefore, attention should be aimed at how and which definitions are formulated, and for what reasons (Street, 1993). The reframing of shared societal aspects in the OECD TALIS texts inside the micro-arena of the classroom serves the reification and naturalization of multiculturalism. In this subtle definition of culture power relations are hidden behind the promotion of social change as part of collectivist culture. Thus, the technical professional presentation masks the shifting of the balance of the individualist-collectivist scale, positioning persons, as members of society, toward the individualist end. Thus, the technical professional presentation

masks the tilting of the individualist-collectivist scale, which shifts persons, as members of society, toward the individualist end. Such favoritism in the OECD TALIS texts toward the individualist orientation can be noted at different levels of expectations from teachers, which include (Schleicher, 2016, pp. 16-17) the individual student level, the classroom level, the school level, and the levels of parents and of the wider community. The expectations of the societal collectivist level are clearly missing from this framing of professionalism. In sum, by defining new teacher professionalism as universal and not rooted in a given culture or society, the OECD can present some teaching practices as unprofessional and encourage societies to abandon their commitment to collectivist educational aims.

Adopting educational aims as a lens makes it possible to reflect on how different notions of educational aims are framed in the global discourse on teacher professionalization. The findings of the critical discourse analysis indicate that according to the OECD ideal, teaching is divorced from local and national contexts. Cultural orientation is reduced to an issue of functional heterogeneity within classroom walls, and society as a stakeholder is absent from the conceptualization. The power of these texts is derived from their being an ideological manifesto that paints a "picture of the world both as it is and as it should be, and, in doing so, organizes the tremendous complexity of the world into something fairly simple and understandable" (Sargent, 2009, p. 2).

The present analysis indicates that the OECD TALIS discourse of educational aims is aligned with a particular form of conservatism. In recent decades, conservatism has been transformed from a "reluctant collectivist" ideology into an "anti-collectivist" one. At the national level, this metamorphosis has been documented since the early 1980s (Chitty, 1995; Reynolds, 1991). The ideological change in

conservative thinking has led to a policy rhetoric that advocates freedom, choice, individual rights, and the weakening of the collectives (both formal institutions such as local education authorities and informal ones such as cultural communities) (Reynolds, 1991). Scholars have long suggested that anti-collectivist conservative efforts are necessary to dismantle the welfare state model (Reynolds, 1991) and promote global nation-state and citizenship (Rubinson & Browne, 1994), which better serves the economic agenda.

The present study makes two key contributions. First, it demonstrates that the OECD TALIS, which represents the new professionalism, is not aligned with the traditional collectivist educational goals. TALIS appears to promote a particular form of individualization: a cosmopolitan identity, detached from collective obligations to local society and culture (Edwards & Usher, 2007; Yemini, Bar-Nissan, & Shavit, 2014). This type of internationalized education, oriented toward intercultural and international values, is said to fit well into the new globalized economy and social order (Yemini & Fulop, 2015).

Second, the study offers new understanding of why certain national contexts have emerged as more disordered than others in the current globalized educational field. The literature suggests that in more collectivist countries changes in teacher quality and teaching have a “messy” dynamic that involves exchanges between teachers, community, local policymakers, teachers' training institutes, and the normative effects of supranational institutions such as the OECD (Mooney Simmie et al., 2016). The present findings may provide one explanation of why imported changes in teachers' professionalism are less likely to align neatly with the existing concept of professionalism in collectivist societies.

6. Conclusion

The influence of international agencies on national education has already been explored (e.g., Sellar & Lingard, 2013; Walker, 2009), but the present study differs from previous ones in that it emphasizes the educational aims behind the teachers' professionalization discourse. The current exploration of the OECD TALIS constructions of teacher professionalism found them to be de-contextualized and de-nationalized, and in particular, to be based on individualist as well as anti-collectivist orientations. The work of the OECD in relation to PISA assumes an isomorphism between the structure and functioning of schooling systems worldwide; the TALIS construction of teacher professionalism also appears to reflect such isomorphism. The educational goals emerging in the current professionalization discourse of the OECD TALIS initiative demonstrate yet again that the umbrella of professionalism conceals multiple preferences and biases that are not universally agreed-upon, such as specific societal orientations of educational aims.

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