

# Re/dis/assembling “Educational Imaginaries” through Regionalism – The Construction of the Caribbean Education Policy Space

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*This paper uses a Cultural Political Economy (CPE) framework to apply CPE’s concept of the “economic imaginary” to the educational policy landscape. We consider the Caribbean Community’s (CARICOM) regional education policy space and the focus on Human Resource Development to examine how what we call “educational imaginaries” develop and evolve as a product of intersecting interests, power hierarchies, discourses, and material realities. This paper draws from education policy documents developed by formal regional governance bodies within CARICOM between 1993 and 2021. Using CPE’s four selectivities (discursive, structural, agential, and technological) to examine the construction of the CARICOM educational imaginary, this paper ultimately demonstrates how CARICOM responds to global hierarchies as a regional entity.*

Cultural Political Economy (CPE) has emerged in the last decade as a means of pinpointing the economic systems and factors that are a result of specific interactions of what Jessop and Sum (2013) refer to as the “cultural turn”<sup>1</sup> to traditional political economy. CPE combines semiosis (sense- and meaning-making), which involves “the social production of inter-subjective meaning” with political economy, and it does not view “culture (i.e., semiosis) as a distinct sphere of society separate from economics and politics” (Jessop & Sum, 2010, p. 445). As such, CPE engages with the “cultural turn” in its critique of dominant cultural and social institutions by looking to cultural space’s historical, economic, and societal developments to identify how social systems are created

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<sup>1</sup> The cultural turn is less about adding culture to rationalist political economy – which holds modernists believe in singular and universal ‘truths’ – and more about challenging positivist epistemologies of social science research. Thus, the cultural turn “disrupted entrenched ways of thinking about familiar objects of social research by emphasizing the causal and socially constitutive role of cultural process and system of signification” (Steinmetz, 1999, p. 2). In this way, it is a movement away from the materiality of political economy and about an orientation towards cultural variables such as gender, identity, and discourse.

at the intersection of these strands. In other words, in a “new period of certain economic (re)organization,” it aims to “decipher the workings of specific economic configurations” (Biebuyck & Meltzer, 2010, p. 1), which are a set of multiplicities or a “series of relations of relation instituted over time through different organizations of time – space” (Thrift, 2005, p. 1). These developments aim to capture discursive and material practices as they are interpreted through the construction of meaning by looking at the cultural practices that intersect with economic factors to create a unique temporal space. This space is termed an “economic imaginary” by Jessop (2004), who states that “an imaginary<sup>2</sup> is a semiotic<sup>3</sup> ensemble (without tightly defined boundaries) that frames individual subjects’ lived experience of an inordinately complex world and/or guides collective calculation about that world” (p. 163). Imaginaries are constructed socially and can thus also exist as social imaginaries that have material impacts. As Jessop and Sum (2010) reminds us, economic imaginaries “exist at many sites and scales, can be articulated in many different social fields, and can be linked to many other types of imaginary and social practice” (p. 449). This paper seeks to move beyond the economic imaginaries proposed by Jessop (2004) and consider what we term ‘educational imaginaries,’ created from the material and discursive ensembles that construct ‘educational policy spaces,’ such as funding and placement initiatives.

Using the evolution of the Caribbean Community’s (CARICOM)<sup>4</sup> educational policy space as an example, this paper outlines our conception of an ‘educational imaginary’ as a complex ensemble of historical developments, global and regional economic factors, and targeted initiatives that construct a definitive educational space. In this conception, we argue that educational imaginaries are discursively constituted by a set of educational elements and practices that define and delineate a stable educational space, give it structure, and shape the educational experiences and social relations within that space. We suggest that educational imaginaries emerge as economic, political, and cultural forces seek to (re)define specific subsets of educational activities as themes, sites, and governance stakes. We also consider how educational imaginaries may be used as tools of regionalization (an economic process) through the approaches, schemes, and visions that are oriented to these imagined educational systems. The main forces involved with such efforts are trans-regional regimes, such as CARICOM, who seek to establish new instrumentalities of structural and organizational forms by manipulating the boundaries, geometries, and temporalities of the nation state transforming them into objects of observation, calculation, and governance.

This paper uses Jessop and Sum’s (2013) conceptions of the four selectivities – structural selectivity, agential selectivity, discursive selectivity, and technological selectivity – of social relations, which create and constitute educational imaginaries as a scaffolding to examine the political project of regionalism and the ensuing economic process of regionalization in the Caribbean and their impact upon education. It will then delve into the historical developments of the Caribbean institutions that led to its creation and the current educational apparatuses supporting and extending it. In what follows, it discusses CPE as an approach to studying regionalization. Next, it examines educational imaginaries and their ascension in the Caribbean. Methodologically we use summative

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<sup>2</sup> For Jessop (2004) an imaginary is represented by its ability to constitute and reproduce discursive and material practices.

<sup>3</sup> Yet Jessop (2004) always distinguishes the semiotic from the structural and their relationship is always dialectical.

<sup>4</sup> CARICOM’s current members are Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

content analysis to demonstrate how the four modes of selectivity create and perpetuate the “Caribbean Educational Policy Space (CEPS)” (Jules, 2015a). The paper concludes by examining how these modes of selectivity may effect changes to that space in the future.

### **CPE as an Approach to the study of Regionalization**

First and foremost, CARICOM is grounded upon advancing economic integration amongst its members. Education is central to the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME)<sup>5</sup> – of which the Caribbean Single Market (CSM) came into force in 2006 – and it is premised upon the movement of goods, labor, capital, services, and the right to establishment.<sup>6</sup> CARICOM’s Human Resource Development (HRD) 2030 Strategy (CARICOM, 2017) promotes mobility among CARICOM member states. Therefore, exploring how CARICOM selects and promotes particular discourses is essential to understanding how education strategies manifest in regional economic projects. By examining the Caribbean educational imaginary using a CPE approach to domination and hegemony, this paper grapples with large-scale regional projects such as the CSME and considers how those projects embrace, resist, and indigenize neoliberal forces. The four selectivity mechanisms (discussed below) also allow us to situate CARICOM and the Caribbean educational imaginary in its regional *and* global context. This contextualization facilitates a reading of how neoliberal forces impact regional education imaginaries.

CPE draws upon the works of Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci, and Michel Foucault to consider why and how particular social solutions are selected to maintain the dominance of a hegemonic order. A CPE approach, which combines structural and discursive analysis, begins with the argument that social actors cannot grasp the world fully; only some of many possible ensembles of discourses and practices can be interpreted. To make sense of and function in the world, actors engage in the process of “complexity reduction” and “sense- and meaning-making” that shape and are shaped by existing and emerging material and discursive circumstances (Jessop & Sum, 2013). These ensembles, networks, or semiotic orders are composed of “genres,<sup>7</sup> discourses,<sup>8</sup> and styles<sup>9</sup> and as such, constitutes the semiotic movement of a network of social practices in a given social field, institutional order, or wider social formation” (Jessop, 2004, p. 166) and are referred to in CPE as ‘imaginaries.’ Imaginaries are “discursively constituted and materially reproduced on many sites and scales” (Jessop & Sum, 2013, p. 174). In a CPE approach, the material (sometimes referred to in CPE as “extra-semiotic”) can be understood as the structural aspects such as funding, resources, and organizational practices. In contrast, the discursive (or “semiotic”) refers to cultural elements such as language, text, and even visual imagery. In the context of this paper, we discuss CARICOM in terms of its function as an educational imaginary with particular practices, orders, and institutions. Examining the CARICOM educational imaginary in the context of the CSM allows us to consider how social, political, and economic circumstances shape education.

To understand CARICOM as an educational imaginary, a CPE approach explores how particular ensembles of practices, institutions, and meanings evolve and their response to crisis. As Sum (2013) notes, “discursive-material interactions become more visible during crisis conjunctures when sedimented social relations are re-politicized” (pp. 545-546). Within a CPE framework, complexity reduction and meaning-making shape and are

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<sup>5</sup> However, the Bahamas and Haiti are not members of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

<sup>6</sup> The ability of any Caribbean national to set up a business in any Caribbean Single Market country.

<sup>7</sup> Ways of acting and interacting.

<sup>8</sup> Social practices from the material work from particular positions.

<sup>9</sup> Ways of being and semiotic identities.

shaped by material and discursive features understood through three evolutionary imaginary mechanisms – variation, selection, and retention – and/or institutional and spatio-temporal fixes (Jessop, 2009; Jessop & Sum, 2013). Variation refers to the idea that actors can understand and interpret realities differently in an “inordinately complex world” (Jessop & Sum, 2013). Variation ensures that orders, ensembles, or imaginaries are incompletely realized, meaning that they are never able to correspond directly to external or inevitable reality. Because imaginaries are incompletely realized, they include contradictions and opportunities for crisis that leave them vulnerable to resistance (Jessop, 2009; Jessop & Sum, 2013). Variation among discourse and practice emerges as actors respond to challenges and paradoxes (Jessop, 2009; Jessop & Sum, 2013). Selection occurs as particular narratives or discourses are privileged above others (Jessop, 2009; Jessop & Sum, 2013). This evolutionary mechanism explores how discursive and material forces inform the varied discourses and practices that shape imaginaries and sense-making processes. Notably, selection in CPE is not a natural process; instead, it is the result of dominant cultural and structural mechanisms. Retention describes the process by which certain selected discourses or practices become embedded, habitualized, or routinized (Jessop, 2009; Jessop & Sum, 2013). Orders retained across a wide range of sites increase the likelihood of “effective institutionalization and integration into patterns of structured coherence” (Jessop, 2009, p. 9). In focusing on these three evolutionary mechanisms, our multidimensional analysis of the case below relies on “documentary analysis of changing imaginaries, governmental technologies, and the difference that specific agents can make” (Jessop & Sum, 2017, p. 9).

This paper focuses on selection to understand how the CEPS functions to privilege specific narratives that promote a neoliberal conception of citizenship; in this example, CARICOM’s HRD 2030 Strategy (CARICOM, 2017) calls for the development of ideal Caribbean citizens (CARICOM, 1997). The vision of the Ideal Caribbean Citizen aims for a citizenry that: is regionally-minded who respects human life as the foundation on which all of the other desired values must rest; is psychologically secure; values differences based on gender, ethnicity, religion and other forms of diversity as sources of strength and richness; is environmentally astute; is responsible and accountable to family and community; has a strong work ethic; is ingenious and entrepreneurial; has a conversant respect for cultural heritage; exhibits multiple literacies by displaying independent and critical thinking to the application of science and technology; and embraces differences and similarities between females and males. Based on this, we use the four types of selection found in CPE, corresponding to the cultural and structural mechanisms by which certain discourses are privileged: discursive, structural, agential, and technological (Jessop & Sum, 2013). First, discursive selectivity explores the narratives and language that inform imaginaries’ construction, rules, and actors (Jessop & Sum, 2013). In other words, discursive selectivity explores “what can be enunciated, who is authorized to enunciate, and how enunciations enter intertextual, interdiscursive, and contextual fields” (Jessop & Sum, 2013, p. 215). That is, in the face of complexity, discourse becomes rooted in sense- and meaning-making. As such, the focus is on how actors frame imaginaries (with the aid of genres, styles, and discourses), and in the case of CARICOM, this is done through its HRD 2030 Strategy.

Important to consider alongside discursive selectivity is structural selectivity that centers around the “structurally inscribed” materiality of meaning-making processes (Jessop & Sum, 2013, 204). Jessop and Sum (2013) describe structural selectivity as “the asymmetrical configuration of constraints and opportunities on social forces as they pursue particular projects” (p. 214). In other words, structural selectivity is engaged with the ways that existing material systems, institutions, orders, and organizations have mechanisms that

both limit or enable certain discourses or practices. Therefore, this is grounded in social forms and favors specific agents, interests, identities, temporal-spatial horizons, approaches, and strategies.

Agential selectivity (where agency can be collective or individual) grapples with the ability of social actors to observe structural forces strategically, develop identities, and act (or not act) accordingly, “ultimately, agential selectivity depends on the difference that specific actors (or social forces) make in particular conjunctures and/or in transforming conjunctures” (Jessop & Sum, 2013, p. 204). An analysis engaged with agential selectivity considers how identity, material interests, and capacity for action intersect for different social actors. This selectivity also considers agents’ abilities in exploiting discursive, structural, and technological selectivities.

Technological selectivity is rooted in Foucault’s analysis (focused on power relations in society) of disciplinary mechanisms and governance, whereby power dynamics and social relations are organized in an effort to maintain and reproduce the existing social order (Jessop & Sum, 2013). “Technologies” in CPE can include governance mechanisms such as rules, oversight, regulation, and standards that seek to align the actions and understandings of social agents and bodies. Analyzing technological selectivity is crucial because differences in who can use technologies such as rules and standards, and the material impacts of these technologies play a role in constructing dominant social orders. In other words, technologies deployed by dominant social orders limit opportunities for choice, alternatives, and the possibility for different formations, resulting in the tendency to reform existing orders rather than transforming them (Jessop & Sum, 2013).

Together, these four selectivities of social relations are necessary to understand how CPE engages with ideas of domination and hegemonic orders in that “these modes of selectivity condense particular dispositives and strategic logics that help to secure hegemonies and dominations” (Jessop & Sum, 2013, p. 230). In other words, understanding how certain discourses or practices are privileged by selection mechanisms offers insights into how educational imaginaries, which are multi-spatial and multi-temporal, function. Within this framework, hegemonic systems are shaped by actors engaging with discourse and material structures that shape social orders. Importantly, these selectivities serve to privilege incompletely realized narratives, leaving them open to critique and resistance. Examining how these four selectivities inform imaginaries reveals how resistance, struggle, and domination play out in existing social orders.

### **Historical development of educational imaginaries within the Caribbean**

CPE engages with the institutional turn to observe how a hegemonic order within the CEPS emerges. Institutionalism is central to the application of CPE as

institutions involve complexes of social practices that are: (1) regularly repeated; (2) linked to defined roles and social relations; (3) associated with particular forms of discourse, symbolic media or modes of communication; (4) sanctioned and maintained by social norms; and (5) have major significance for social order. (Jessop & Sum, 2013, p. 34)

To look at the process of retention, selection, and variation is to look at the institutions that facilitate these processes, including their historical development. The approach taken here is a thematic one, which Jessop and Sum (2013) argue “takes institutions seriously by

problematizing their existence – but then argues that they can be fully explained within the neoclassical paradigm. This is the strategy of endogenization” (p. 40). The Ideal Caribbean Citizen initiative that has emerged within CARICOM’s educational space is the product of the sedimentation of discourse within CARICOM, beginning with the normalization of ideological pluralism. Ideological pluralism occurred in the 1980s when Jamaica, Guyana, and Grenada undertook various forms of socialism in contradiction to the rest of the region that had capitalist economies.

Educational imaginaries arise when otherwise disparate entities find a nexus event; when other states create economic or military alliances, that can be referred to as ideological pluralism. Ideological pluralism refers to fragmented states with differing economies that are held together by a uniting ideology. Essentially, ideologies that would otherwise be incongruent and incompatible find a sort of ‘middle ground,’ or what can be referred to as loose coupling, in one particular area that can unite them. This need not be a formal alliance, such as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), but refers instead to “the sharing of ideas between contemporaneous ideologies” such as how “there are no great differences in ideologies of the Right, Centre and Left, for instance, in respect of the emergence of industrial society, the ways in which it operates and its structural characteristics” (Seliger, 1977, p. 167).

In the Caribbean, many of the otherwise incompatible states found a uniting force in socialism during the 1970s due to decolonization (Jules, 2013). The Organization of American States (OAS) recognized, in 1979, the Caribbean as a “Zone of Peace” in order to support the “principles of ideological pluralism and peaceful coexistence, which are essential to the peace, stability, and development of that region” (Grant, 1984, p. 174). With much of the infrastructure and education services at a subpar level, a move towards socialism provided common ground to the member states of CARICOM; while socialism itself did not stay, the stage was set for a unified regional approach to education. The Ideal Caribbean Citizen initiative is a conflagration of multiple state interests, at the nexus point of wanting to enter the global economy as a regional force, despite cultural differences within the states of CARICOM themselves. Using this lens as an entry point to observing the Ideal Caribbean Citizen allows us to avoid broad assumptions, as “pluralism can be justified deontically [sic] and/or pragmatically in many ways, but it is grounded ontologically in the complexity of the world, which entails that it cannot be fully understood and explained from any one entry- point” (Jessop & Sum, 2013, p. 7). Seeing initiatives in a region such as this should be viewed as one factor within a region and not a defining factor of the educational space itself, as “ideological pluralism signif[ies] the varying developmental ideologies of member states” (Jules, 2013, p. 258).

Another idea integral to an educational imaginary is the emergence of metagovernance. Jessop (1997) describes governance as “the complex art of steering multiple agencies, institutions and systems that are both operationally autonomous from one another and structurally coupled through various forms of reciprocal interdependence” (p.111). Essentially, while we refer to systems of direct control as governance, a system that functions to direct these other systems without being in control is ‘metagovernance.’ An example of metagovernance would be the UN’s 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which provide benchmarks for countries to reach without directly dictating *how* those goals are met. The UN cannot compel member states to meet the targets of the SDGs, but it can use soft power methods to influence member states to meet the goals. In an educational imaginary, we look at commonalities of the states who have a vested interest in that space and at commonalities of external forces that could be influencing those actors. Not only is metagovernance a core tenet of CPE, but “metagovernance is

particularly applicable to CARICOM since it respects the principles of sovereignty (which speaks to its intergovernmentalist nature) and ‘collibration’ (which includes modes of cooperation and is a feature of its neofunctionalism character)” (Jules, 2016, p. 4).

The educational imaginary examined for this article, the CEPS, currently utilizes a particular instrument – the Ideal Caribbean Citizen – to avoid ideological pluralism. The Ideal Caribbean Citizen, which emerged in the post-ideological pluralist period, is a set of benchmarks created by CARICOM that emphasizes neoliberal ideals within member countries. While not a precise list of standards and benchmarks akin to a curricular model, the benchmarks of the Ideal Caribbean Citizen emphasize skills tailored to a global economy as inspired by the UN’s 2030 Sustainable Development agenda. It essentially balances global needs with regional ideals in that the “Ideal Caribbean Citizen[s] are seen as those who are globally minded but focus on contributing economically to the region’s interests first and foremost” (Jules & Arnold, 2021, p. 6). This helps establish a hegemonic order wherein CPE is created.

### **History of CARICOM’s educational imaginaries**

Institutionalism in the Caribbean involves looking at the nexus of several different educational and economic structures within the region, beginning with CARICOM. The dating of the CEPS educational imaginary can be traced back to CARICOM’s CSME, which was established at the 1989 Grande Anse Conference in Grenada, which sought to replace the preexisting Caribbean Community and Common Market (CCCM). The resultant Grande Anse Declaration “create[ed] the necessary institutions to facilitate the pillars of regionalization” (Jules, 2015a, p. 310). In other words, ideological pluralism drove the movement towards a wider form of economic integration – one not just based on economic cooperation but cultural, political, and societal levels – to create a common educational policy space at the regional level, which is akin to Jessop’s idea of ‘imaginaries.’ We use ‘educational imaginaries’ to refer to the shared educational policy space created by CARICOM, the Caribbean Educational Policy Space (CEPS). Within this space, CARICOM “facilitates the exchange of policy ideas and acts as a multi-level governance institution by addressing issues that have come from the inability of national governments to control global, regional, and transnational policy processes” (Jules, 2015a, p. 310) to engender the Ideal Caribbean Citizen. One of the biggest concerns of the entities within this space is addressing educational stratification among socioeconomic classes. Even to this day, within CARICOM countries, there is an “educational hierarchy between private and public educational spaces, mainly due to the status of the missionary and private schooling in the colonies...this created a stratified system left over from the dominant white hegemonic structures that colonised the region” (Jules & Arnold, 2021, p. 3). This space uses measuring tools to address this through the Free Movement of Skilled Persons Act (FMSPA) aimed at achieving the goals of the CSME.

The FMSPA ensures that graduates meet the basic requirements set out by the act to move and work between member countries without additional visa requirements. The FMSPA categorizes “skilled CARICOM nationals” into categories such as artisans, nurses, teachers, university graduates, sportspersons, musicians, managers, technical and supervisory staff, and media workers and their dependents and theoretically levels the competitive playing field of the job market across the region. The FMSPA is an outgrowth of the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC). Under the Treaty of Chaguaramas of 1973, CXC is designated as an institution of CARICOM aimed to establish a uniform examination and certification authority across member states. It monitors the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Caribbean Vocational Qualification

(CVQ) certificates and is responsible for integrating SDG 4 (education) into CARICOM’s education system. These certificates allow the FMPSA to operate; skilled workers qualify under one of the categories after tracking a career path dictated by the CXC.

The Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) is a certificate earned by students and recognized throughout the region. It places qualified students into one of five categories, or “levels” (NTA, 2021):

Level 1	Directly Supervised / Entry –Level Worker
Level 2	Supervised Skilled Worker
Level 3	Independent or Autonomous Skilled Worker
Level 4	Specialized or Supervisory Worker
Level 5	Managerial and /or Professional Worker

The CVQ is a recognized and portable qualification in CARICOM and “has parallel standing with academic qualifications at same level” and ensures “the development of the Ideal Caribbean Worker” (NTA, 2021, n.d.). Candidates are assessed at the secondary level for competence in the CXC’s selected skill area. The CVQ represents “the coordination of technical and vocational education and training qualifications across the region” and is how “CARICOM as a regime has sought to use principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures to streamline its functional educational projects” (Jules, 2019, p. 7). Workers with a CVQ are recognized as skilled in their area in all CARICOM countries. Thus, they are now participating in a larger CARICOM educational imaginary, a ‘regime’ wherein CARICOM has control over the labor market of member countries. This is exercised through the more extensive TVET apparatus adopted in 1990 to promote vocational training as the Caribbean region entered a single-market economy. National TVET institutions administer the CVQ in their specialized areas, with students qualifying to attend such institutes before reaching secondary school. In the Caribbean, “TVET is becoming an important component of the regional development project” (p. 5) and has created a larger educational space where the “focus [is] on creating efficient operations of common services and activities for the benefit of the people; accelerating the promotion of greater understanding among the people; advancing social, cultural, and technological development” (Jules, 2015b, p. 5). In the language of semiotics, TVET is part of the construction that creates the educational space that CARICOM operates within.

Part of CEPS’s educational imaginary is also created from the international level through initiatives such as the SDGs and the previous World Bank’s Education for All (EFA) fund. As previously mentioned, the EFA is an international initiative to improve literacy and access to education in poorer countries and incorporate international goals into the regional framework established by CARICOM. Along with the UN’s SDGs-specifically SDG 4, which focuses on education-EFA, transfers international policies to the regional imaginary:

With the opening up of new policy venues such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), educational transfer in the Caribbean, be it voluntary or imposed, is not only about the transferal of global best practices but also represents the transnational movement of policies and social learning (Jules & Arnold, 2021, p. 2).

### **Methodological Terrain**

This study conducted a summative content analysis (Saldana, 2016) across nine policy documents concerning Human Resource Development in CARICOM. These policy



documents were selected to understand better how educational imaginaries are constructed and function in the CARICOM regional space. This approach draws from Ball (1990), who argues that texts can be understood as both constructed by and constructive of discourse. Additionally, this paper seeks to understand how CARICOM educational imaginaries develop over time. Six texts used in this study date from before HRD education was formally introduced into CARICOM's strategic plan, and three texts date from the introduction of HRD education and subsequent years (Table 1).

**Table 1**  
*Policy documents used in this study, year of publication, and publishing body*

Document Title	Publication Year	Publishing Body
CARICOM Human Resource Development 2030 Strategy	2017	CARICOM
Creative and Productive Citizens for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century (CPC)	1997	CARICOM
Education and Training Policy and Strategy	2017	Caribbean Development Bank
Eye on the Future: Investing in Youth Now	2010	CARICOM
Future of Education in the Caribbean	1993	CARICOM
Strategic Plan for Caribbean Community (SPCC)	2014	CARICOM
Strategic Plan for the Caribbean Community 2015-2019: Repositioning CARICOM	2016	CARICOM
Youth Agenda, Sustainable Development	2003	United Nations
Youth Development Action Plan	2012	CARICOM

Given that CARICOM's CSME was established in 1989, we included official policy documents regarding education and HRD after this date. We examined a corpus of documents from between 1993-2021, when HRD was formally introduced. We then gathered documents from various sources beginning from the formal introduction of HRD in 1993 through 2021. Documents were collected from CARICOM's virtual archive on its website as well as through policy mentions in the existing literature on CARICOM's educational strategies. The texts ultimately included in this study represent policy strategies for HRD from key policy actors and governance bodies identified across existing literature about the region and by CARICOM itself.

The four themes used in this study, structural selectivity, discursive selectivity, agential selectivity, and technological selectivity, were pre-selected from CPE as a valuable method of understanding how educational imaginaries function at various scales. By pre-selecting themes from our theoretical framework, researchers could track the mechanisms by which educational imaginaries take shape closely. The first theme, structural

selectivity, was applied to this case by researchers to mean the social, political, and economic contexts that these policy documents responded to. Discursive selectivity was understood to mean how documents positioned the roles, responsibilities, and functions of governing bodies, people, and strategies. In other words, discursive selectivity explores how these documents select and present narratives about CARICOM. Agential selectivity was applied across these codes to track nodal actors identified in the documents and discussions of their roles or capacities. These codes referred to the influence and positioning of governance bodies, agencies, and key stakeholders. The final theme, technological selectivity, indicated the mechanisms, tools, and strategies by which selected discourse around education were implemented and reinforced. This theme refers to specific practices, routines, and tools that are recommended or used in policy documents to shape educational practice.

The nine texts were coded by three of the authors of this study using a set of codes developed collaboratively. One researcher coded documents that preceded HRD policy, and two researchers coded policies that came after. We began our analysis by open coding all documents and generating an initial set of codes that represented vital themes, concepts, actors, and implementation strategies found in the documents and corresponded to our four pre-selected themes. We then collectively examined the prevalence of concepts generated by open coding across the documents to search for patterns, gaps, and outlying codes. Next, we developed a set of codes that we agreed corresponded to the central ideas in each document and organized them into our four thematic categories depending on how each concept functioned in the document. Table 2 provides a breakdown of how codes were organized under each theme. All three researchers agreed upon definitions for the codes, and codes were developed based on language gathered directly from the texts and through researcher interpretation. Documents were then re-coded using the refined set of codes.

**Table 2**  
*Theme and code organization*

Theme	Code	Code Definition
STRUCTURAL	Global Economy 1	Effects of globalization create a need to strengthen integration efforts, need to address the economy within the region to compete with the global economy
DISCURSIVE	Global Economy 2	References to the need for CSME and CARICOM to produce skilled and competitive workers to compete in the global economy, it is the responsibility of education to produce such workers
	Regional Economy	Addressing the “grave social and economic

		problem throughout the Region" (CPC, p. 27)
	Labor Market	Direct or indirect references to labor markets, workforce preparation, labor demand, 21st century skills
	Culture	Culture as facilitating regional integration and cohesion, promoting "Caribbeanness" and a sense of regional identity
	Ideal Caribbean Citizen	References to citizenship, any of the ICC traits, good Caribbean citizen or person
AGENTIAL	CARICOM	Interventions, influence, policies, or bodies facilitated by CARICOM/CARICOM branches; references to CARICOM capacity and governance
	CSME	References to strengthening the Caribbean's capacity to respond to challenges in the global economy, commitment to Caribbean identity – a commitment to CSME/regional economy
	World Bank	References to studies/statistics produced by World Bank, citing World Bank studies as proof of Caribbean's past education/economic failures
	Regional Development Banks	Interventions, influence, policies, or bodies facilitated by Regional Banks; references to Bank capacity and governance
	Youth as Future Leaders	The Ideal Caribbean Youth (like ICC), discussion of the vital role of youth in the integration of the Region, references to Youth participation being essential and "catalyzing" development potential

	Western Capitalism	Warnings of cultural influence from North American and other “more developed” societies, as a threat to the development of Caribbean cultural identity, need for citizens to evaluate outside sources critically
TECHNOLOGICAL	Monitoring & Evaluation	Drawn from the specific language used in HRD doc, references to systems or interventions that support monitoring or evaluation such as oversight bodies, testing, and feedback
	Media	References to the dissemination of policy, policy goals, programs designed to make the Region aware of the relationship between culture and development
	Standards & Accountability	References to World Bank studies and the need to improve scores, references to regional studies/statistics, the desire to be seen as globally competitive in education, teacher training
	Curriculum Reform	Students concerned about outdated curriculum, the need to increase youth awareness of their role in the regional system, need to create curriculum that will produce competitive workers
	Extra-national governance bodies	World Bank, UNESCO, NGOs, private investment/donors overseeing, funding, or used as a benchmark for policy implementation

CARICOM comprises many different national contexts that may interpret and implement regional strategies in varied ways. Because our study is limited to examining official, regional policy documents, it fails to capture the actual implementation of these strategies at a national and local level. Further research is necessary to gather data on how the

CARICOM educational imaginary functions in practice. Additionally, exploring how these policies are received and experienced by individual educators, students, and school administrators is crucial in understanding local interpretations, understandings, and resistance in shaping imaginaries. However, these questions are beyond the scope of this paper, which seeks to explore how CARICOM governance bodies construct, position, and mechanize educational imaginaries.

### **Findings and Discussion**

This discussion will apply a CPE approach to selected CARICOM policy documents from 1993 to the present. The first section addresses 1993-2014, and the second discusses 2014-present. Using the four modes of selectivity, this section illustrates how the educational imaginary is formed and reconstituted over time in CEPS. While for the purposes of this paper, the modes can be thought of as progressing linearly, moving from structural to discursive, then to agential and technological, it is essential to note that imaginaries and the ideas that constitute them develop relatively freely within this framework, deconstructing and reconstructing bits and pieces of themselves as they move.

#### **1993-2014**

##### *Structural*

Across the documents analyzed, structural selectivity can be seen in numerous references to the global or knowledge-based economy. Citing the nature of globalization and the global economy as a significant driving force, many documents take an early first step towards creating the educational imaginary. Phrases referencing global pressure permeate the documents, starting with the Future of Education Policy (FEC). For example, the policy artifacts use phrases like “if Caribbean culture is to hold its own in a world that will become increasingly competitive...” (CARICOM, 1993, p. 21) and “if the Caribbean Community wishes to avoid global marginalization...” (CARICOM, 1993, p. 44). This language situates CARICOM within a broader global hierarchy shaped by economic competition and positions education systems as critical to driving regional economic development.

Structural selection of the global economy continues into the Creative and Productive Citizens for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century ([CPC], CARICOM, 1997), which established the idea of the Ideal Caribbean Citizen. One of the foundational ideas expressed is the need to build “a capacity to respond to fundamental global changes,” requiring the region to develop methods of dealing with “this complex set of challenges” (CARICOM, 1997, p. 7). This theme remains in several youth policy documents as well. For example, CARICOM (2003) notes that “changes in world trade and economics... increased pressure to compete in all productive sectors” and the “unprecedented challenges of globalisation” pressed the region to “achieve sustainable development” in order to remain active on the global stage (p. 2). Additionally, *Eye on the Future* (CARICOM, 2010) discusses “challenges posed by globalization and trade liberation” and thus immediately establishes the underlying force necessitating the corresponding policy discussion and proposed changes. The Strategic Plan for the Caribbean Community ([SPCC] CARICOM, 2014) follows suit only a few years later, discussing in its introduction the global and regional context of the region at the time, and elaborating that because it existed in a “highly volatile and uncertain global environment” (pp. 4-5), the repositioning of the CARICOM economies (and educational imaginary) faced significant challenges. Every document analyzed between 1993-2014 was founded on the notion that the global knowledge-based economy necessitated policy change in the Caribbean. Moreover, the notion of the ‘ideal type’ of Caribbean citizen that is needed to function in a knowledge-based economy is the backbone of the imaginary.

This notion can be seen as the primary structural selection constituting the educational imaginary. As the next section explains, this underlies the imaginary progression in every document by serving as the basis for the three other modes of selectivity, starting with discursive.

*Discursive*

The global economy pervades the discursive mode of selectivity as well, coming up in many places as references to CARICOM's ability to produce skilled workers and citizens capable of competing on the global stage. It is at this point in the four modes of selectivity that education is first explicitly named, with *Eye on the Future* (CARICOM, 2010) claiming that developing a morally stable and productive workforce is "the responsibility of the education and other social systems in the Region" (p. 33). In *CPC* (CARICOM, 1997), the need is stated more explicitly "education is the major mechanism to bring about the necessary transformation in Caribbean Society" (p. 21). The regional economy is also discursively selected in multiple documents, which stress the need to strengthen CSME through education and refer to the "grave social and economic problem throughout the Region" (CARICOM, 1997, p. 27). Another example can be found in the *Youth Agenda* (CARICOM, 2003), expressing the need for "active participation of the Region's population and the Diaspora in regional integration efforts" (p. 2).

The labor market emerges as another theme in discursive selectivity. Closely linked with the global and regional economy, the labor market is discussed at length in every document, emphasizing preparing a skilled workforce and developing 21st-century citizens. For example, the *FEC* (CARICOM, 1993) explains a "need for the development of an entrepreneurial culture as an important strategy for both job creation and economic advancement" (p. 49). Another salient example is found in the later *Eye on the Future* (CARICOM, 2010), which states that a successful single market economy in the Caribbean "requires a highly skilled, knowledge-based workforce that is morally stable, healthy, productive, creative and competitive" (p. 33).

The final discursively selected theme is culture, specifically the pressing need for a cohesive and unifying culture that brings the region's people together. Culture was immediately flagged as essential to the Caribbean policy space in the *FEC* document (CARICOM, 1993), which declared that education should be able to provide citizens with "a healthy concept of self and cultural rootedness which engenders a commitment to the region" (p. 16). The *Eye on the Future Report* (CARICOM, 2010) displayed the continuation of culture as a critical discursive theme. This document more explicitly stated the relevance of culture to the constitution of the educational imaginary, noting that "culture is also the foundation and an effective tool in regional integration, as it is central to the promotion of a sense of regional identity" and urging young people to continue identifying with Caribbean religion, art, and music (CARICOM, 2010, p. 79). It continues that "if culture shapes many of the practices now deemed to be dysfunctional, it holds the promise of being the source of generating solutions" (CARICOM, 2010, 88).

*Agential*

Numerous agents are operating within CEPS, all of which play a role in constituting the educational imaginary. These include CARICOM, the CSME, the World Bank, the Regional Development Banks, Youth, and Western Capitalism. All are mentioned in various capacities in each of the policy documents analyzed, but this section will discuss only Youth and Western Capitalism, as they are unique from later documents. The Caribbean Youth were recognized early as important agents operating within the policy space. In its section concerning primary education, the *FEC* (CARICOM, 1993) states that

“shaping the minds of our youth” (p. 12) lays the foundation for development. Later in the document, educating the youth on Caribbean culture is “seen as a critical component of the curriculum with the potential to enable our young people to carve a niche in the world economic and cultural scene,” with the additional goal that “[s]chool should also enable students recognise the possibilities of exploiting our culture for economic development” (CARICOM, 1993, pp. 27-28). The Youth Agenda (CARICOM, 2003) recognizes that “youth involvement in the process of seeking solutions is increasingly considered vital” and that youth are “catalysts of the development potential of the Caribbean” (p. 3). Eye on the Future (CARICOM, 2010) makes a clear point that many well-known artists and intellectuals from the region “were in fact youth when they peaked in terms of their contribution” (p. 80). Later, the document speaks of the extraordinary spirit of the region and that “we forget to our peril that it is our youth primarily that embody this spirit” (CARICOM, 2010, p. 88).

Western Capitalism is also seen as an agent in CEPS; however, it is often discussed cautiously and with a warning. Media studies during secondary education are emphasized as important to the culture of the region so it can “sustain itself and resist uncritical absorption of electronically transmitted material from other cultures” (CARICOM, 1993, p. 15), and to enable people “to evaluate the messages critically from the foreign media” (CARICOM, 1993, p. 17). The document later recognizes that previously, technology had been seen as a “deliberate attempt ... to subvert the Region’s culture by submerging it in and overwhelming it with Hollywood images” but that now (in 1993) “what was being perceived as a regional phenomenon was in fact a nascent global phenomenon” (CARICOM, 1993, p. 44). Eye on the Future (CARICOM, 2010) then recognizes that many leaders warn of the “threat to Caribbean cultural identity posed by cultural influences from North America and other more developed societies” and the fear that morals and values of Caribbean heritage are “being eroded by cultural homogenisation” (p. 82). Western ideals are seen as detracting from Caribbean culture because Youth struggle to “withstand the materialism and individualism embedded in the culture beamed in, especially from the North” (CARICOM, 2010, p. 82). However, the document then goes on to explain that since the “threat from external cultural forces” will not go away “as long as the United States remains the world power that it is,” the region must remain open to these influences and use them to develop new cultural forms that make the Caribbean unique (CARICOM, 2010, p. 82). Such broad statements reflect the region’s expectations to borrow Western educational reforms.

#### *Technological*

The final mode of selectivity found within the policy documents is technological. Through this mode, the mechanical aspects of governance come to fruition and can be thought of as a controlling output of the process of constituting the educational imaginary. The themes that have been technically selected include media, standards and accountability, and curriculum reform. Because this paper focuses explicitly on policy documents, the implementation of these themes is not discussed. However, by examining case studies, further research could concretely demonstrate how various actors use technological themes to constitute the educational imaginary in CEPS. Beginning with the Future of Education document (CARICOM, 1993), media is invoked as the essential method to “disseminate programmes designed to sensitise the Community” (p. 29) about the importance of culture in developing a cohesive region. The document later discusses educating parents about children with special needs and states that “the media can be used effectively to change the attitudes of parents and the society in general towards the handicapped” (CARICOM, 1993, 31). Jumping forward to 2014, media continues to pervade policy documents as an essential mechanism to the educational imaginary. SPCC

(CARICOM, 2014) advocates for "undertaking a comprehensive public education, public information, public relations, and advocacy programme" (p. 31) to strengthen the CARICOM identity and spirit of the Community.

Standards and accountability emerge as a measuring stick for the educational imaginary's success in the global economy. World Bank statistics are often cited in earlier documents, and teacher training is explicitly mentioned as an essential mechanism to ensure educational and economic success. FEC (CARICOM, 1993) cites the need to "develop regional programmes for the training of teachers" (p. 10) in order to develop children who are independent thinkers and to strengthen all levels of education. CPC (CARICOM, 1997) continues this theme of technical selectivity, stating, "perhaps the most crucial challenge facing the education and training system is the inability to attract and retain appropriately qualified staff" (p. 31).

In a similar vein, the curriculum is perhaps the most salient example of a technically selected theme serving to constitute the educational imaginary. Through curriculum reform, the region expresses in nearly every policy document the potential to more appropriately and effectively educate its citizens to compete and participate in both the regional and global economy. For example, FEC (CARICOM, 1993) right away recognizes that "teachers need the guidance of a curriculum which is integrated and centered around the experiences of the children [and] relevant to their culture" (p. 9) in order to do their jobs as educators effectively. The document also contains an entire section devoted to such curriculum reform, which names several sections in particular need of reform, including culture, language learning, and technology (CARICOM, 1993). CPC (CARICOM, 1997) emphasizes, in particular, the need for "teaching how to learn" in order to "shift from education seen as schooling to one of life-long learning" (p. 30). SPCC (CARICOM, 2014) demonstrates a continuation of this technical selectivity, stating that specific focus should be placed on certain areas within the curriculum, such as "innovation and creativity," "teacher preparation," and "greater emphasis on science, technology, engineering and mathematics" (p. 5) in order to meet skills requirements of the labor market.

### **2014-Present**

#### *Structural*

In analyzing structural selectivity in policy documents from 2014-present, the emphasis is most clearly focused on the global knowledge-based economy and the integration and involvement of the region into the broader context. The CARICOM Human Resource Development 2030 Strategy (CARICOM, 2017) is crucial. This document references the global economy and the goal of regional economic integration. A goal of HRD is to "ensure that our Community can fully respond to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)" (CARICOM, 2017, xiv). In striving to meet the global goals set by UNESCO, the global economy is given priority. Further, HRD explicitly aims to "take on the challenges of globalization" (CARICOM, 2017, xii). In the Education and Training Policy and Strategy document produced by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), emphasis on the global economy is presented alongside broader development goals at the international level. "Apart from the Caribbean-specific MDGs, other regional and global developments were considered" (CDB, 2017, p. v). Through these documents from 2014-present, the global economy constitutes the core defining feature of structural selectivity shaping the educational imaginary. This influences and sets the stage for the other selectivities to emerge.



### *Discursive*

In the discursive mode of selectivity, the global economy emerged as another key theme throughout the documents. The documents look to education to create workers for the global economy. HRD calls to “embrace global competitiveness” (CARICOM, 2017, xvii). A key trend throughout the CDB document encompasses the “effectiveness of education and training to create systems that are responsible to national, regional and global labour markets” (CDB, 2017, p. viii). A second discursively selected theme is the regional economy. This theme focuses on the economic and social issues present. “The Caribbean has been underperforming even when measured against other parts of the developing world, including other small island developing states (SIDS)” (CARICOM, 2017, p. 14). The goal to avoid repeating past mistakes was reiterated throughout the documents. Additionally, a desire to “increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness in the delivery of similar or common services across the Region” (CDB, 2017, p. 2) shows the hope to create more efficient educational systems.

The labor market emerged as another discursive selectivity. The HRD discusses the “twelve 21st century competencies and skills for the Caribbean citizen” along with the “top ten skills needed by 2020” (CARICOM, 2017, pp. 23-24). Further, the push for education to prepare people for the labor markets was present, “enhanced efficiency, relevance and effectiveness of education and training to create systems which are responsive to national, regional and global labour markets” (CDB, 2017, viii). Another discursive selectivity is culture, which is defined here as promoting a regional identity. The “seamless” integration of the HRD into people’s lives and the broader “ecosystem” (CARICOM, 2017, pp. 7-9) articulates the desire for the HRD Strategy to encompass multiple levels and aspects of individuals’ lives towards reaching regional goals. Finally, the Ideal Caribbean Citizen is the last discursive selectivity analyzed. This references good Caribbean citizenship according to the vision of the Ideal Caribbean Citizen. Part of the definition of the document’s goals is for better citizenship. Further, the HRD seeks to prepare people for active citizenship, developing regional identity, and preparing for governance participation (CARICOM, 2017). The goals of the CDB are aimed at contributing to the Ideal Caribbean Citizen.

### *Agential*

The agents that function within the Caribbean policy space include CARICOM, CSME, Commonwealth Secretariat, the EU, the IMF, UN agencies, the World Bank, and Regional Development Banks.<sup>10</sup> While there are additional agents at play in the policy space, the scope of this paper analyzes only major policy actors formally engaged in governance. CARICOM creates the HRD; thus, it clearly outlines its ability for governance and its presence in the policy landscape. CDB (2017) analyzes past policy documents and critical events that contribute to the current educational imaginary, citing influential strategies, initiatives, and interventions. CSME references strengthening the Caribbean’s capacity to respond to challenges in the global economy and commitment to the regional economy. The Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (CARICOM, 2001) is critical in developing skilled workers and their movement throughout the region. As such, “CDB positioned itself to respond more efficiently and effectively to the development challenges faced by BMCs” (CDB, 2017,10) Throughout the documents, references to studies and information produced by the World Bank are incorporated. Further citing World Bank studies as proof of the Caribbean’s past educational and economic failures plays a role in evidence-based practices and future implements. The HRD reports on spending in education produced

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<sup>10</sup>This is not an extensive list of actors, because of the scope of this paper concerns major policy actors and therefore grassroots organizations and middle level civil society actors are not included.

by the World Bank and is identified as a partner in development (CARICOM, 2017). CDB notes the World Bank’s role in co-financing the OECS TVET Project (CDB, 2017).

### *Technological*

The themes within technological selectivities are monitoring and evaluation, media, standards and accountability, and curriculum reform. Monitoring and evaluation are seen through the systems and interventions that support monitoring or evaluation, such as oversight bodies, testing, feedback. For example, UNESCO uses technological selectivities such as online data collection tools and online resource banks to assist schools in achieving SDG 4. There are a series of protocols for monitoring and evaluating within the HRD document. Project, strategy, and performance evaluations will occur in 2024 and 2029 (CARICOM, 2017). A goal of the CDB strategy is to support the assessment, access, equity, and participation of education (CDB, 2017, p. vi). Further, strategies for intervention and a review process are embedded in this document (CDB, 2017). Media serves as another theme of technological selectivity and refers to disseminating policy, policy goals, and programs. In the HRD, there are five modules for implementation and schedules for progressing towards goals where communication and interaction are identified as a principle to success (CARICOM, 2017).

Standards and accountability track the progress of the educational imaginary in the global economy. HRD articulates “standardized skills certification and accreditation” (CARICOM, 2017, p. 26), which are necessary for the movement of skilled workers throughout the region. CDB works to create a culture of accountability in policy governance (CDB, 2017, p. 20). Another technological selectivity is curriculum reform, which seeks to promote the methods of instruction and content that prepare students for life beyond school. HRD describes the need for “learner centered design of curricula” (CARICOM, 2017, p. 3) “effective teaching” (CARICOM, 2017, p. 8), “multiple pathways for students to be exposed to and help prepare students for different career paths” (CARICOM, 2017, p. 42). In this way, the curriculum provides routes for student success. CDB (2017) articulates the need for “high standards which are clearly understood and agreed by all stakeholders, including students and parents; a culture of accountability and transparency; and reliable data on the performance of the education system” (p. 20).

Lastly, extra-national governance bodies contribute to the make-up of technological selectivities. These include organizations such as the World Bank, UNESCO, NGOs, and other private investment/donors overseeing, funding, or used as a benchmark for policy implementation. The HRD considers policies from a variety of global education players and partnerships such as Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth of Learning (COL), the EU, Global Affairs Canada (GAC– formerly DFATD/ CIDA), UNICEF, UNESCO, USAID (CARICOM, 2017). The key themes that emerged within each of the four selectivities work in various ways to constitute and reinforce the educational imaginary of the CARICOM educational policy space.

### **Conclusion**

The CPE approach presented above examined ‘how’ and when educational imaginaries are constructed and investigated, ‘who’ is involved in their development, and ‘what’ issues emerge. The existing small (and micro) states literature focuses on how trans-regional bodies (like CARICOM) are seeking to navigate the particular economic vulnerabilities typically associated with small states that arise out of colonial histories/continued Western hegemony (e.g., reliance on a single export or tourism and are increasingly precarious with climate change etc.). As such, our findings reveal that

CARICOM's educational imaginary is informed and shaped by neoliberal processes and logics emphasizing economic competition and increasing input from supra-national bodies such as UNESCO and the World Bank. At the same time, our findings indicate the increasing presence of regional entities in CEPS as time goes on and a recognition of the tensions that arise at the intersection of global pressures and local contexts. CEPS is structurally responsive to the global economy and deploys capacity for economic competition as a benchmark of success. CARICOM discursively aligns its educational goals with its economic ones by focusing on labor market needs and positions education as the Ideal Caribbean Citizen's arena. CEPS educational policy is shaped by a mix of supra-national and regional agents that are increasingly involved in education governance. CARICOM uses neoliberal technological mechanisms such as standards, accountability, and evaluation to institutionalize its regional agenda. This analysis reveals that CARICOM selects one particular interpretation of regional needs that shapes and is shaped by an interplay of global and local considerations.

Educational imaginaries are being continuously deconstructed and reconstituted through variation, selection, and retention. By analyzing selection, and the four modes of selectivity (structural, discursive, agential, and technological), one can trace the formation and perpetuation of an educational imaginary within a specific policy space. CARICOM provides a salient example of such a process; the development of the Ideal Caribbean Citizen and Human Resource Development initiatives since 1993 demonstrates the various ways in which ideas are prioritized, selected, and promoted by powerful actors in order to create an educational imaginary. Through the lens of CPE, CARICOM demonstrates how regional governing bodies position education as central to economic goals in light of a competitive and global knowledge-based economy, made up of often vulnerable state and regional entities. Because this paper exclusively examined policy documents, its findings remain chiefly theoretical. However, we suggest that by analyzing the educational imaginary in concrete, real-world terms such as case studies of student learning outcomes, further research could better illuminate the nuances of CPE and educational imaginaries.

### **Land Acknowledgment Statement**

The Loyola University Chicago community acknowledges its location on the ancestral homelands of the Council of the Three Fires (the Ojibwa, Ottawa, and Potawatomi tribes) and a place of trade with other tribes, including the Ho-Chunk, Miami, Menominee, Sauk, and Meskwaki. We recognize that descendants of these and other North American tribes continue to live and work on this land with us. We recognize the tragic legacy of colonization, genocide, and oppression that still impacts Native American lives today. As a Jesuit university, we affirm our commitment to issues of social responsibility and justice. We further recognize our responsibility to understand, teach, and respect the past and present realities of local Native Americans and their continued connection to this land.

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**Author's note:** I have begun to lowercase my name as a way to decolonize myself and my importance as an actant. I want to draw attention to my work and not to my name. I realized this is an oxymoron in that lowercasing the name draws attention to it, but I did not get to choose my

*name, especially my surname, and it comes with colonial trapping and baggage, which I must shed as I have to use this name. I view my name as being embedded with power and the exercise of European dominance, which attacks, defiles, and alters my ancestors’ names to suppress and erase their identity. Therefore, I see naming rituals as a violent process of identity and colonialism that are embedded in my slavery ancestry.*

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