Regionalization and Policy Mobilities in Comparative Perspective: Composing Educational Assemblages in Quasi-Federal Polities

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Abstract: We employ a policy assemblage, mobilities, and mutations framework to analyze the geographies that constitute and reflect educational policy circulation at the regional or supranational level in trans-regional regimes and/or quasi-federal polities such as the European Union (EU) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Recognizing that policies are mobile in a fragmentary fashion as they are re/dis/assembled in specific ways, places, and purposes, we move beyond methodological nationalism and pay attention to the make-up of policies as they are in motion and the places they affect. In other words, using the trans-regional and/or quasi-federal level, we juxtapose the tensions between policy as fixed, territorial, or place-specific

against the dynamic, regional, and relational policy elements. Methodologically, we use a comparative federalist lens to trace and examine the distillation, translation, and mobilization of education policy across and between quasi-federal polities. In this sense, epistemologically, we further explicate the manner in which such policy instruments move across the various interconnected units and sites composing these federal-type entities, while (re)territorializing and deterritorializing what we construe as complex educational assemblages. We show that contra to the extant literature, in Europe/EU and the Caribbean/CARICOM, movement, and mobility involves the connectivity between policymaking sites, and policies arrive at their destination in the same form as they appeared elsewhere, allowing for forms of discursive isomorphism.
Keywords: regionalization; trans-regional regimes; quasi-federal polities; complex educational assemblages; Caribbean Community; European Union

Regionalización y movilidades de políticas en perspectiva comparada: Composición de ensambles educativos en políticas cuasi-federales

Resumen: Empleamos un marco de ensamblajes, movilidades y mutaciones de políticas para analizar las geografías que constituyen y reflejan la circulación de políticas educativas a nivel regional o supranacional en regímenes transregionales y/o políticas cuasi-federales como la Unión Europea (UE) y la Comunidad del Caribe (CARICOM). Al reconocer que las políticas son móviles de manera fragmentaria a medida que se re/des/ensamblan en formas, lugares y propósitos específicos, vamos más allá del nacionalismo metodológico y prestamos atención a la composición de las políticas a medida que están en movimiento y los lugares en los que se encuentran. afectar. En otras palabras, utilizando el nivel transregional y/o cuasi-federal, yuxtaponemos las tensiones entre la política fija, territorial o específica del lugar frente a los elementos de la política dinámica, regional y relacional. Metodológicamente, utilizamos una lente federalista comparativa para rastrear y examinar la destilación, traducción y movilización de la política educativa a través y entre estados cuasi-federales. En este sentido, epistemológicamente, explicamos aún más la forma en que tales instrumentos de política se mueven a través de las diversas unidades y sitios interconectados que componen estas entidades de tipo federal, al tiempo que (re)territorializan y desterritorializan lo que construimos como ensamblajes educativos complejos. Mostramos que contra la literatura existente, en Europa/UE y el Caribe/CARICOM, el movimiento y la movilidad implican la conectividad entre los sitios de formulación de políticas, y las políticas llegan a su destino en la misma forma en que aparecieron en otros lugares, lo que permite formas de isomorfismo discursivo.
Palabras-clave: regionalización; esquemas interregionales; políticas cuasi-federales; ensamblajes educativos complejos; Comunidad del Caribe; Unión Europea

Regionalização e mobilidades políticas em perspectiva comparada: Compondo assemblages educativos em políticas quase federais

Resumo: Empregamos um quadro de agenciamentos, mobilidades e mutações de políticas para analisar as geografias que constituem e refletem a circulação da política educacional no nível regional ou supranacional em regimes transregionais e/ou políticas quase federais como a União Europeia (UE) e a Comunidade do Caribe (CARICOM). Reconhecendo que as políticas são móveis de maneira fragmentária, pois são re/des/montadas em formas, lugares e propósitos específicos, vamos além do nacionalismo metodológico e prestamos atenção à composição das políticas conforme elas estão em movimento e os lugares onde estão. afetar. Em outras palavras, usando o nível transregional e/ou quase federal, justapomos as tensões entre a política como fixa, territorial ou específica do lugar contra os elementos políticos dinâmicos, regionais e

relacionais. Metodologicamente, usamos uma lente federalista comparativa para traçar e examinar a destilação, a tradução e a mobilização da política educacional entre as políticas quase federais. Nesse sentido, epistemologicamente, explicamos ainda a maneira como tais instrumentos de política transitam pelas diversas unidades e localidades interligadas que compõem esses entes de tipo federal, ao mesmo tempo em que (re)territorializam e desterritorializam o que entendemos como complexos agenciamentos educativos. Mostramos que, contra a literatura existente, na Europa/UE e no Caribe/CARICOM, o movimento e a mobilidade envolvem a conectividade entre os locais de formulação de políticas, e as políticas chegam ao seu destino da mesma forma que apareceram em outros lugares, permitindo formas de isomorfismo discursivo.
Palavras-chave: regionalização; regimes transregionais; políticas quase federais; assembleias educativas complexas; Comunidade do Caribe; União Europeia

Regionalization and Policy Mobilities in Comparative Perspective: Composing Educational Assemblages in Quasi-Federal Polities

This article employs a policy assemblage, mobilities, and mutation framing to analyze the geographies that constitute and reflect educational policies' circulation at the trans-regional level and/or within quasi-federal polities by "trans-regional regimes" (jules, 2014). Trans-regional level means the state or condition of transcending specific national boundaries, authority, or interests. As such, this paper's empirical focus is comparing existing quasi-federal polities, the European Union (EU) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), from a comparative regionalist and comparative federalist perspective. While jules (2012) has argued that CARICOM should be viewed as a trans-regional regime given its composition based on intergovernmentalism and neo-functionalism, in this paper, we suggest that CARICOM's composition is also similar to a quasi-federal polity and as such, we use trans-regional regime and quasi-federal interchangeably. For the purpose of this examination, we define a quasi-federal polity, which operates on the trans-regional level, as a multilevel governance architecture sharing core features of a federal system, such as a division of governing jurisdictions between supranational and national levels but acting more as network-like flat hierarchical structures than on the vertical hierarchies inherent to classical federal systems. Savage (2018) notes that "rapidly evolving transnational flows of policy ideas, practices, actors, and organisations pose new and difficult questions for how we understand power, knowledge, and influence, as well as the making and doing of policies" (p. 309). This argument reflects the spatiotemporal dynamics of the "actors, practices, and representations that affect the (re)production, adoption and travel of policies, and the best practice models" (Temenos & McCann, 2013, p. 345). As such, we use an assemblage approach to policy analysis at the trans-regional level. We view policy as an assemblage composed of technopolitical circuits—the interplay of technology and politics—of discourse, texts, practices, actors, institutions, bureaucracies, and networks. We recognize that making an assemblage is often haphazard and disjunctive; however, we argue that this process allows for policy mobilities. Recognizing that policies are mobile in a fragmentary fashion as they are (re)assembled in specific ways, places, and purposes, we move beyond methodological nationalism and pay attention to the make-up of policies as they are in motion and the places they affect. In other words, in focusing on the trans-regional and/or quasi-federal level, we juxtapose the tensions between policy as fixed, territorial, or place-specific against the dynamic, regional, and relational policy elements. Thus, we use the regional histories, existing forms, and sociopolitical structures to analyze the conditioning contexts that shape educational mobilities and contribute to the

(re)production of educational policy or what Ball (2016) describes as an "emphasize [on] the interdependency of actors and the movement of ideas in the framing of problems and policy directions and *conceptions"* (p. 550*,* emphasis in original).

In focusing on "why" policies move around at the trans-regional and/or quasi-federal level in education and from the trans-regional level to the national level, we draw attention to the multiplicity of processes and outcomes involved since "tracing the travels of policies allow us to disrupt common conceptualizations of states as territorially, politically, and socially bounded entities" (Temenos & McCann, 2013, p. 347). With the move from government to governance—where networked forms of *governance* are replacing traditional hierarchical modes of *government*—we recognize the trans-regional and/or quasi-federal level's role in shaping the geographies of knowledge circulation as the nation-state is no longer the primary agent in the production of policies. Following Prince (2017) and focusing on "the context of context" (Brenner et al., 2010), we use assemblage theory to "help us to grasp various practices associated with policymaking, such as learning, without the baggage of assuming policymakers are at heart rational actors scanning the policy horizon for best-fit policy ideas" (Prince, 2017, p. 377). Thus, our focus is on how policy is constructed from "parts of elsewhere" (McCann, 2011) based on circulating discourses and materials. Therefore, we are interested in showing how assemblage informs policy research and how policy regimes travel and regionalize. We aim to show how policy objects are transferred from the regional to the national level and how they are then (re)constituted in different places. We focus on how trans-regional/quasi-federal polities spatialize as assemblages during translation and invention. As such, we draw attention to how the policy objects being transferred are specified, demarcated, and made universal in both places. We argue that by interrogating trans-regional and/or quasi-federal assemblages, we can discern the actual regional, or the regional in the space of assemblage.

In what follows, we discuss the relationship between policy mobility and assemblage thinking regarding educational regionalization. Next, we use comparative regionalism and comparative federalism as analytical tools to locate and analyze the transformation and deployment of education policy across and between quasi-federal polities and argue that CARICOM and the EU represent trans-regional and/or quasi-federal arrangements that can be viewed as assemblages. This is followed by a genealogy of the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). We use an assemblage lens to explain and retell how policy traveling occurs within and between these assemblages. We conclude by bringing together assemblage thinking with comparative federalism literature and discussing the implication of re/dis/assembling for educational policy at the trans-regional and/or quasi-federal level. In essence, in focusing on the trans-regional and/or quasi-federal level, we show how power and politics influence the evolution of educational policymaking.

Quasi-Federal Polities as Assemblages

The literature on policy mobility speaks to the growing concern about the effectiveness of globalization (and the retreat to regionalism) and the diffusion of programs and paradigms. In looking at policy movement and mobility within complex educational assemblages (*agencement* in French), we seek to (re)frame quasi-federal polities as a set of "relational constructs, comprised of heterogeneous and emergent component parts that are arranged together towards certain strategic ends, in particular spaces and times" (Savage, 2020, p. 2). We conceive of complex educational assemblages as "polymorphic and multiscalar arrangements of educational polities, systems, and mechanisms, bound together by symbiotic and synergistic relationships, driven by shared purposes, mutual interests, and common responsibilities" (Salajan & jules, 2021, p. 150). Consequently, here we consider the CARICOM and the EU, quasi-federal polities, as a representation of complex

educational assemblages. In this way, an assemblage approach focuses on the "processes of *arrangement* and power relations" and sees policy not as a "coherent thing or as definable as the sum of its constitutive components" but instead "stresses that what is most important is understanding the nature of interactions between components and the capacities such components exhibit when arranged in different ways" (Savage, 2020, p. 4). Thus, assemblage thinking in policy has been positioned as a "generative tool" to address the limitation of policy transfer, borrowing, and diffusion and as a "corrective" mechanism for the "rational–technical, institutionalist and state-centric accounts of policy and governance processes" (Savage, 2020, p. 2). Because our focus is on how policies move, mutate, and manifest in trans-regional and/or quasi-federal spaces and times, we emphasize "processes of *policy assemblage*" (Savage, 2020, emphasis in original), bringing together what McCann and Ward (2012) call a "policy assemblage, mobilities and mutation" approach that concentrates on "translation" to capture the processes that policies undergo as they are re/dis/assembled in new contexts. In our case, we are interested in how mobile policies are translated at trans-regional and/or quasi-federal levels based on exogenous and endogenous pressures. We see that similar policies are being adopted and implemented regionally due to the circulation of global policies. In fact, as Prince (2017) reminds us, the policy mobility literature

> emphasises the active construction of networks and pipelines of policy knowledge across space, linking distant places and creating the conditions for certain kinds of policies to move between them, while revealing the ways that these travelling policies mutate as they move and territorialise in different places. (p. 335)

In this regard, we must remember that the "central tenet" of a policy mobility approach holds that "policies are not generated abstractly in 'deterritorialized' networks of experts, rather, they emerge in and through concrete 'local' situations that constitute wider networks" (Baker et al., 2016, p. 463). As such, one way to follow policy is by "studying through" policy sites to trace and reveal "wider processes of social, economic and political transformation" (Peck & Theodore 2015, p. 33). When these processes are coupled with an assemblage perspective, we can move beyond what Prince (2017) calls the "local-global binary" or "dyads" (McCann & Ward, 2015, p. 830) that constrain our thinking. Therefore, an assemblage perspective stems from a focus on both its human and nonhuman materiality in that objects like the nation-state are viewed as "real" and not as social constructs. In other words, the nation-state "is an effect of the patchwork of materials, including particular people, certain institutions, specific areas of land, and so on, stitched and held together through various practices of assemblage" (Prince, 2017, p. 336). In moving beyond the local-global binary, assemblage thinking "demands an empirical focus on how these spatial forms and processes themselves are assembled, are held in place, and work in different ways to open up or close down possibilities" (Anderson et al., 2012, p. 172). From an assemblage perspective, which does not have a fixed idea of space (discussed below),[1] nothing is constant, and disruption and reformation of the assemblage can occur at any given time. Rather than pitting the local against the global, assemblage thinking focuses on understanding how the local and global are produced in the assemblage (Collier & Ong, 2005). We can thus think of assemblages in the policy mobility literate as "made up of 'parts of elsewhere' [and] territorialised into a particular urban space" (as cited in Prince, 2017, p. 377).

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[1] In assemblage thinking, the idea of space is not defined; therefore, deterritorialization/reterritorialization are seen as fluid processes. Assemblage thinking views space as topological in that "what counts is not metric distance but how closely connected entities in a network are" and therefore, "space, from this perspective, becomes folded or crumpled, almost like a handkerchief, whose ends, if laid out flat on a table, are far from each other but end up close together when scrunched" (Müller, 2015, p. 35).

We are interested in how the nation-state stretches beyond its territorial boundaries through the economic regionalization process. While the nation-state is composed of a particular territory, its trans-regional and/or quasi-federal assemblage, evidenced by circulating policies and related knowledge, has a more complex geography. In this way, we can see trans-regional and/or quasi-federal policies as stemming from policy learning and being re/dis/assembled out of various objects—policy instruments, documents, declarations, and communiques—and "are constructed, used, adapted, rejected and reworked – assembled – in place as part of the 'mutation' of travelling policy" (Prince, 2017, p. 377). How policy components are brought together in the assemblage makes "some things and events possible and others improbable" (Rabinow, 2014, p. 206). Thus, an assemblage perspective allows us to view policy circulations as not being contained by boundaries. However, policies with histories and geographies produce, or at least reproduce, when enacted outside of implicit boundaries. Policy mobility exists since the world is differentiated into different policy territories, leading to territorialization and deterritorialization. If we view policy territories are being positioned within "power-laden policy landscapes" and have "varying degrees of cultural and political proximity and power" (Geddie, 2015, p. 237), then "to understand how policy mobility is implicated in the assemblage of territories, we need to, in a sense, look backward from the moment of transfer to consider how different policy territories were produced as spaces between which policy could be mobilized" (Prince, 2017, p. 338).

Based on our empirical analysis, we argue that while some policies may look national in terms of their scope and territorialization, when these policies are traced, one sees that they are, in fact, composed of a diverse number of component parts informed by trans-regional and/or quasi-federal policy flows, ideas, and practices, which manifest in place-specific ways. Therefore, while trans-regional and/or quasi-federal flows influence national policies, ideas, practices, and forms, it depends on local opportunity conditions. In the assemblage literature, such processes are viewed as relations of interiority, where component parts are related to each other, and relations of exteriority, where one component may be detached from the assemblage and placed into another assemblage. It is this ability of the policy assemblage to "bring together entities in the world into a proximity in which they establish relations between and among themselves while remaining external to each other and thereby retaining their original properties" (Rabinow, 2014, p. 206); that is our focus. Policy literature often fails to reject the assumption that because something worked well in one place when it is borrowed, lent, or diffused in another place; there is no guarantee that its components, once reconstituted, will give the same results in a new environment. In other words, policies undergo forms of mutation, translation, and re/dis/assemblage as they are adopted and adapted once they move between different policy contexts. As such, a policy assemblage, which draws attention to how heterogeneous formations hold together "without actually ceasing to be heterogeneous" (Allen, 2011, p. 154), is not the mere existence of components but the strategic arrangement of components to engender a governing apparatus. Or in the words of Li (2007), a policy assemblage is "hard work required to draw heterogeneous elements together, forge connections between them and sustain these connections in the face of tension" (p. 264). In this way, the movement of different parts or the "ontology of movement" (Nail, 2015) of "multiple component parts brought together into coherent and strategically oriented technologies of governance" is fundamental to the functioning of the processes of re/dis/assembly as well as the "the many ways that policies are subject to forms of disruption and change (disassembled or reassembled)" (Savage, 2020, p. 8). Thus, we turn our attention to how policy comes together (assembled) and is dismantled (disassembled) into new forms. This recognizes that policies are not static and that some components of the policy assemblage work to transform it or as McCann and Ward (2012) note, "an assemblage is always *in the process* of coming together . . . just as it is always also potentially pulling apart" (p. 328, emphasis in original).

Another concept important to the policy mobilities literature that is important to us here is the topological approach that stresses the importance of relations across space instead of seeing space as fixed coordinates (Prince, 2017). From a mobility perspective, policies are always becoming in that they are subjected to forms of disruption, challenge, and interpretations. Moreover, it is unpredictable when a policy is enacted, taking various forms. And all policies, even those that seem all-encompassing, eventually become undone, or as Savage and Lewis (2018) suggest, even those policies that "might give an illusion of stability, a wider view ultimately reveals constant motion and new beginnings" (p. 124). Such approaches focus on issues of agency, power, and politics and the closeness of connections between component parts, given that attention is placed on *how* component parts are positioned rather than on *where* they are positioned. Again, this view means that the trans-regional level with various component elements should be understood as just one part of the policy assemblage. Here, the trans-regional regime is one player in the power game, whose role is to direct power within the assemblage. As Savage (2020) reminds us

> [during] policy production, . . . while the machinery of the state might be uniquely placed to assemble policy, acting authoritatively when doing so, policies are formed through interactions with components located both within and beyond the state, and potential for both forging and resisting certain policy designs is distributed throughout all components implicated in the policy process. (p. 12)

Given that power determines the nature of the policy production process, an assemblage perspective allows us to destabilize established categories and focuses on how categories are re/dis/assembled through specific practices (Sassen, 2014). Following Savage (2020), we begin not by "assuming from the outset that nations or states (or even national policies) are pre-existing things to be studied," but instead, we "begin by questioning how it is that these categories have come to be assembled in different ways in different spaces and times, and with what effects" (p. 12). In other words, national policies are seen not as being part of a fixed category or "*priori* coordinates" but "instead as something informed by *relations* between heterogeneous parts'" (Savage & Lewis, 2018, p. 137, emphasis in original) as they often cut across and go beyond the national policyscape. Therefore, national policies are best understood by studying the components that constitute them as they are conditional and subject to new lines of flight or new becomings. Thus, an assemblage perspective allows us to call attention to trans-regional processes (acts of arrangement and gathering) and their capacities to exercise agency in creating and enacting policies that affect the national level. In this way, the emphasis is placed on the "problematization" of policy, or what Li (2000) explains as "how problems come to be defined as problems in relation to particular schemes of thought, diagnoses of deficiency and promises of improvement" (p. 264) as well as how "certain kinds of problems and solutions become thinkable whereas others are submerged" (p. 386). Below, we show how specific contexts provided the right window of opportunities for certain trans-regional ideas and practices to become mobile. Here we reveal how policy assemblages are produced and maintained at the trans-regional level and how they are subjected to forms of disruption and change. We also recognize and agree with Temenos and McCann (2013) that policies just do not "move around in some abstract sense," and it is "people [that] move them around for particular purposes" (p. 344). Within this vein, we now turn toward discussing assemblage as an analytical tool.

Assemblage as an Analytical Tool

Methodologically, we draw primarily on comparative regionalism (Börzel, 2011; Söderbaum, 2015) and, secondarily, on comparative federalism (Burgess, 2006; Menon & Schain, 2006; Palermo & Kössler, 2017) to trace and examine the distillation, translation, and mobilization of education

policy across and between quasi-federal or network polities (Roumell Erichsen & Salajan, 2014). From an assemblage perspective, we view these paradigms as complementing each other in the study of trans-regional and/or quasi-federal arrangements, in that both have been characterized as exhibiting a degree of fluidity without a fixed meaning or definition. Nonetheless, we can adopt here Kelemen's (2003) minimalist definition of federalism as "an institutional arrangement in which (a) public authority is divided between state governments and a central government, (b) each level of government has some issues on which it makes final decisions, and (c) a high federal court adjudicates disputes concerning federalism." (p. 185). Viewed from a Deleuzoguattarian perspective, Kelemen's (2003) framing of "arrangement" appears essential in fusing federal-type structures with the rhizomatic nature of assemblages. Our argument in this regard is further buttressed by Burgess's (2006, p. 3) contention he uses from a comparative federalism lens that trans-regional/quasi-federal arrangements are "relative, contingent and circumstantial," features we maintain are congruent with the way in which assemblages manifest themselves.

Viewing trans-regional and/or quasi-federal arrangements as complementary, compatible, and, to some extent, overlapping constructions is aided by the observation that they are both vehicles for the integration and consolidation of constituent territorial units and their constitutional frameworks, governing institutions, and administrative apparatuses, whether in the context of distinct nation-states or broader trans-regional arrangements. Hameiri (2013) echoes this perspective, noting "that though states and regions are not identical phenomena, both are manifestations of struggles over the territorial, institutional, and functional scope of political rule" (p. 314), and thus they are comparable because they have the same aims. For instance, the EU has been examined in the context of comparative regionalism and comparative federalism studies. In this sense, it has been compared to other trans-regional entities—such as the African Union, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), CARICOM, Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR; Southern Common Market), and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)—for which it is frequently held as a model of regional integration (Hameiri, 2013; Söderbaum, 2015). It has also been contrasted with federal states, most often with the United States or Canada (Börzel, 2011; Bravo, 2005; Sbragia, 2006), but also with federal states within its own composition, such as Germany or Belgium.

For our purposes here, the contingent nature of both trans-regional and quasi-federal arrangements lends itself to applying an analytical layer conferred by principles of assemblage theory or thinking formulated by Deleuze and Guattari (1987/2005), as demonstrated by the growing literature on policy assemblages in general (Savage, 2020) and in education specifically (Gorur, 2011; Thompson et al., 2021). Assemblage thinking allows us to scrutinize the avenues by which policy actors—whether at individual or institutional levels in the networked polities under discussion here—mobilize motivations, resources, and intentions to articulate educational policy that transcends the mere generation of synergies among disparate territorial-administrative units. It provides the analytical tools to delve into the reasons for and modalities in which relational bonds are constituted among them for common purposes. The use of "arrangement" may hardly be considered a semantic coincidence in this discussion as, in deciphering Deleuzoguattarian parlance, Buchanan (2015, 2021) cogently argues that arrangement is a more accurate translation for assemblage than its mainstream English definition of a mere collection of things. It follows then, that, from an assemblage thinking perspective, trans-regional or quasi-federal constructions can be construed as "working arrangements" operating on the tetravalent dimensions of an assemblage composed of two types of relationships: between content and expression, and between territorialization and deterritorialization, all driven by the desire of the policy assemblage, and the actors within it, to forge, maintain and develop the multiplicity of connections inherent in its creation (Thompson et al., 2021). As such, trans-regional and/or quasi-federal arrangements can be

viewed as assemblages because of their "dimensions of a multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature as [they expand their] connections" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/2005, p. 8, as cited in Thompson et al., 2021). Therefore, the premise of this examination is how educational policies move within and, particularly, between trans-regional or quasi-regional polities and to what extent they exert morphing effects through their aggregation, translation, interaction, and flow through these arrangements. It is particularly important here to explore the modalities in which the coordinated and uncoordinated policy movements among regional or quasi-regional apparatuses produce similar or dissimilar arrangements.

Consequently, for the comparative dimension of our examination, we use CARICOM and the EU as representations of trans-regional and quasi-federal network polities in which education policy diffusion and mobility occur at multiple and overlapping governing sites. In this sense, epistemologically, we further explicate how such policy instruments move across the various interconnected units and sites composing these entities that (re)territorialize and deterritorialize what we construe as "complex educational assemblages" (Salajan & jules, 2021). The choice of CARICOM and EU is fitting for the purpose of this investigation, as both polities exhibit elements of governance distributed in different degrees at intergovernmental and supranational levels. In fact, in setting out to examine the success of CARICOM in its integration efforts, Bravo (2005) uses the EU as "a comparator for CARICOM's implementation of its stated integration purpose and its institutional structure," noting that "a comparison of the CARICOM and European Union treaties reveals that CARICOM drafters have been inspired by (and on occasion rejected) salient features of the European Union structure" (p. 156). Hence, it may be argued that policy mobility is baked into the very architecture of one polity, the CARICOM, as its framers adopted, adapted, and translated components of the integration model offered by the EU, to territorialize both in the abstract and practice, a similar political/policy assemblage represented by its European counterpart. Given Bravo's (2005) pointed questioning of CARICOM's ability to emulate the success of the EU in its integration efforts, it is relevant here to proceed with a similar examination of educational policy movements between these two polities and the extent to which they have (re)territorialized or deterritorialized this policy realm within and across these two complex policy assemblages.

As such, we are using the illustration of the CVQ and the ECTS to show that policymaking and policy traveling occurs between these assemblages and to examine how policies travel from the national level to the regional level and then back to the national level or what has been called "cooperative educational transfer" (jules, 2015). Consequently, in the Caribbean/CARICOM and Europe/EU, movement and mobility involve the connectivity between policymaking sites, and policies may arrive at their destination in the same form as they appeared elsewhere, allowing for forms of discursive isomorphism. In other words, policy networks in the Caribbean/CARICOM and Europe/EU are multidirectional "with their core agendas playing out differently in the various social, political, technological and economic contexts where they travel, undergo translation and settle" (Williamson et al., 2019, p. 707). Therefore, this matters because the levels of isomorphism seen at the trans-regional level may be self-induced and not a result of global forces.

Regionalization and Policy Mobilities

Using policy mobility in the context of the assemblage literature, we now examine the CVQ and the ECTS as exponents of the two complex educational assemblages under scrutiny here. As such,

> contrary to the overemphasis in the literature on policies as forms of order and planning, an assemblage perspective highlights how policy assemblages need also to enact effective forms of disorder, even chaos. The materialization of any ordering

proposed by such assemblages always goes hand in hand with the erasure, even the violent destruction, of other/s. (Ureta, 2015, p. 13)

Following Savage (2018), and with the aid of Caribbean/CARICOM and Europe/EU complex educational assemblages, which have been formed through the melding of an array of heterogeneous elements, we are interested in understanding the "materialist, relational and bottom-up orientations" of policy, including the "meanings individuals make about policy, the networks through which policy influence flows, the technical processes through which policies are put together, plus many other policy aspects" (p. 310).

The Caribbean Vocational Qualifications

Economic integration in the Caribbean dates to the failed West Indian Federation from 1958 to 1962. Its contemporary replacement, CARICOM, was established in 1973. The Grand Anse Declaration[2] (CARICOM, 1989) laid the foundation for a quasi-federal polity through open regionalism and the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME).[3] The process of open regionalism in education had four distinctive phases that would pave the way for the CVQ becoming an educational assemblage: (i) the creation of a regional educational policy in 1993; (ii) the restructuring of educational organs of CARICOM;[4] (iii) the development of regional targets specified in the Creative and Productive Citizens for the Twenty-First Century (CARICOM, 1997a) and Human Resource Development (HRD) in the Context of the CSME (CARICOM, 1997b) to develop human capital regionally; and (iv) the opening up of national educational markets to international markets. The movement for open regionalization (the liberalization of trade to implement the CSME) in education towards a mature form of regionalization based on an integrated development agenda lies at the heart of the CARICOM/Caribbean complex educational assemblage project composed of the CVQ. In this way, the educational assemblage under open regionalism was territorialized by liberalizing national educational systems through regional coordination in the form of a regional education policy—the Future of Education in the Region—which "created the post-bureaucratic state premised upon the privatization of state enterprises, which, in turn, led to mass reforms in the regional public sector that eventually trickled down to education" (jules, 2014, p. 16). In assemblage terms, here we see the operationalization of relations of interiority and exteriority.

After the process of open regionalism did not deliver the promises of open trade, Caribbean governments focused on economic integration's functional areas (education, transportation, health, and security) akin to efforts in this realm in some federal-type systems, such as the United States, the EU, etc. Moreover, the CVQ is part of the "functional projects"[5] (jules, 2017) of economic integration, which has emerged in an era that was responding to national contestations—ranging

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[2] The Grand Anse Declaration (CARICOM, 1989), the core instrument of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (CARICOM, 2001), calls for the deepening of regional governance mechanisms (through regulatory mechanisms that move integration beyond the Caribbean Common Market [CCM] as designated in the Original Treaty of Chaguaramas and towards a Single Market and Economy [SME] as identified in the Revised Treaty).

[3] The single market came into effect in 2006.

[4] This commenced with the movement from the Standing Committee of Ministers Responsible for Education (SCME) to a multi-sectoral approach under sectoral activities coordinated at the regional level through the Council of Human and Social Development (COHSOD).

[5] Functional projects are part of the "non-economic areas of regionalism (the political project), as governance is being restructured at the regional level, are part and parcel of 'multi-partner governance arrangements' (Arun & Lemos, 2007) that are rooted in the polygonal and multidimensional processes of regionalism" (as cited in jules, 2017, p. 10).

from the fallout of Structural Adjustment Programs and ensuing loan conditionalities, unemployment, and underemployment—and regional challenges such as HIV/AIDS, youth development, drugs, crime, and violence. As a complex educational assemblage, the CVQ represents "polygonal and multidimensional processes of regionalism" that are driven by "the rise of multi-scalar and metagovernance as the shift continues from government to governance" (jules, 2017, pp. 9–10) in education. An assemblage constantly creates new connections among states, meanings, power relations, organizational structures, and social circumstances, which amounts to "an essentially heterogeneous reality" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/2005, p. 7). As Caribbean leaders sought to instrumentalize mature regionalism through functional projects like the CVQ, (re)territorializing and deterritorializing began to occur to facilitate aspects of the CSME. As such, with the move to mature regionalization, educational (re)territorializing has involved an amalgamation of vertical (CARICOM-led) and horizontal (member state-led) coordination and collaboration, evocative to a certain extent of federal-type arrangements, that has engendered education regionalism which has become defined by

> (i) institutional arrangements premised upon coordination and interdependence; (ii) an ideational framework grounded on the informal processes of unfettered mobility; (iii) an integrationist instrument substantiated in the advancement of national development; and (iv) governance organs suffused in shared experiences. (jules, 2017, p. 10)

Through (re)territorializing, these mechanisms have allowed for the creation of the Caribbean Educational Policy Space (CEPS). This constructive-destructive dyad gives rise to the notions of *(re)territorialization* and *deterritorialization* occurring on lines of segmentarity and lines of flight characterizing an assemblage. Such a multi-scalar articulation of place, space, and scale has been constructed because of the modalities of policies that seek to enhance the CSME.

So why and how did the CEPS emerge as an assemblage and (re)territorialize? To answer this question, we must trace the roots and evolution of the CVQ as an educational assemblage composed of other assemblages and has been reversed or reworked by a variety of social actors or groups into limitless permutations of representations. The CSME calls for unfettered labor mobility and recognition of qualifications, and it is premised upon the movement of services, capital, labor, goods, and the right to establishment.[6] The CVQs comprise component parts and came of age as an educational assemblage that responded to the need for regional labor mobility, as exemplified in the Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) qualifications. With the internationalization of higher education came the greater mobility of skilled persons seeking employment, and National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs)[7] (see Table 1) were established in member states to facilitate labor market mobility. The CVQ assemblage began in 2002 when the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) called for the establishment of autonomous National Accreditation Bodies (NABs)[8] to engender the objectives of the CSME. In collaboration with NABs, the

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[6] The ability of any Caribbean national who is a member of one of the 12 CSME states to set up a business.
[7] A Qualifications Framework is an instrument used to classify qualifications according to criteria for various stages of learning outcomes
[8] NABs are responsible for postsecondary education quality assurance and training by local and foreign suppliers, recognizing qualifications, and developing a unified credit system. They are composed of National Accreditation Focal Points (NAFPs).

CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ)[9] was founded in 2002 as a regional center for fostering efficiency and competitive production of goods and services by facilitating standardization and quality verification. The Caribbean Association of National Training Agencies (CANTA), created in 2003,[10] asked COHSOD XI (2004) to place CVQs under the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (RCMTVET). In 2007, HEART Trust/NTA launched the CVQ, a competency-based education and training (CBET), to facilitate the movement of specific categories of workers (artisans, nurses, teachers, university graduates, sportspersons, musicians, managers, technical and supervisory staff, and media workers). Holders of a CVQ can move without restrictions across the CSME. The initial CVQ used a five-tiered system of CBET standards relevant to employment:

> CVQ Level 1: directly supervised/entry-level worker
> CVQ Level 2: supervised skilled worker
> CVQ Level 3: independent or autonomous skilled worker
> CVQ Level 4: specialised or supervisory worker
> CVQ Level 5: managerial and/or professional worker. (CANTA, 2005, p. 5)

Under this 5-tier system, the CVQ determined the structure of the regional occupational standards and mechanisms that National Training Agencies (NTAs) were expected to use. This meant that at the national level, CBET was used to certify vocational qualifications (VQs) based on prior work experience (however attained).

However, COHSOD XXIV (2013) approved the establishment of a 10-tier Caribbean Qualification Framework (CQF), see Table 1, which (re)territorialized the educational assemblage with a mechanism for individuals and institutions to benchmark the qualifications attained under the CVQ's 5-tier CBET standards. The CQF[11] is informed by the vision of the Ideal Caribbean Person[12] and guided by Articles 35.1-2 and 46 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (CARICOM, 2001), and it is expected to establish the appropriate legislative, administrative, and procedural arrangements for the free movement of labor and recognition of diplomas, certificates, and other evidence of qualification. It functions as a "translation device" (CARICOM, 2012) that equalizes comparability

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[9] Members are Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

[10] CANTA was created through a memorandum of agreement between the TVET Council of Barbados, the TVET Council Trinidad and Tobago, and the Jamaican Human Employment and Resource Training (HEART Trust/NTA). HEART Trust was created in 1982 in Jamaica through an Act of Parliament (the HEART Act) that was later expanded to include a wide range of training functions, including providing training and employment assistance.

[11] The CQFs are envisioned as a multi-leveled framework focused on skills and competencies interlinked to different institutional programs and certifications from high school to university. For workers and learners wishing to move across the CSME, this framework acts as a reference point for verifying expectations of achievements and abilities correlated to qualifications indicating outcomes at each level and is seen as a guide to help member states translate educational outcomes. In essence, CQFs are a learning outcome taxonomy of what graduates are supposed to understand, know, and be competent doing as a result of learning.

[12] The Ideal Caribbean Person 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 conversant respect for the cultural heritage; exhibits multiple literacies, independent and critical thinking to the application of science and technology to problem solving; and embraces differences and similarities between females and males to function within the CSME (CARICOM, 1997a).

and/or equivalence of qualifications across various national education and training systems, similar to educational coordination mechanisms in other federal-type arrangements. So, while the CVQ as an educational assemblage was composed of NABs, National Standards Bodies (NSBs), National Training Agencies (NATs), National Accreditation Focal Points (NAFPs), CANTA, HEART Trust, and CBETs, the new CQF educational assemblage was (re)territorialized at the trans-regional level, and NTAs are expected to recognize and execute the new system. In creating this new education assemblage, Caribbean leaders drew inspiration from the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF), and the Pacific Qualifications Framework (PQF). Ultimately, the CQF was linked to International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards. CARICOM (2012) notes that "CQF facilitates the benchmarking of CARICOM qualifications against international standards in particular, European, Scottish, British and Australian frameworks" (p. 2), clearly emulating educational policy approaches in federal and quasi-federal systems.

Table 1

New Caribbean Qualification Framework (CQF) and the Equivalent Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ)

LEVELS	NEW CQF	EQUIVALENT CVQ
LEVEL 10	Doctoral Degree	
LEVEL 9	Master's Degree	
LEVEL 8	Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma	
LEVEL 7	Bachelor's Degrees	
LEVEL 6	Associate Diploma/Higher Diploma (Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination [CAPE] Diploma)	*CVQ Level 5:* managerial and/or professional worker
LEVEL 5	Diploma (Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination [CAPE] Certificate)	*CVQ Level 4:* specialized or supervisory worker
LEVEL 4	Advanced Certificate (Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate [CSEC] Grades 1–3)	*CVQ Level 3:* independent or autonomous skilled worker
LEVEL 3	Certificate III	*CVQ Level 2:* supervised skilled worker
LEVEL 2	Certificate II Caribbean Primary Exit Assessment (CPEA)	*CVQ Level 1:* directly supervised/entry-level worker
LEVEL 1	Certificate I	

It must be borne in mind that in viewing CARICOM as a quasi-federalist system, the (re)territorialization and deterritorialization of the educational assemblages associated with CQF and CVQ, which emerged under mature regionalism, is linked to the 2030 HRD Strategy, which aims to facilitate the development of all people in the region. In this context, HRD "*is being conceived as all education and training from early childhood to tertiary education and the workplace offered to citizens and all other people of the CARICOM Region*" (CARICOM, 2016, p. 1, emphasis in original), and it aims to advance human capital development through the development of the Ideal Caribbean Person (CARICOM, 1997a). As a component of CARICOM's quasi-federal polity, the CQF, which has 10 principles (access, articulation, co-operation, emphasis, flexibility, integration, non-duplication, progress, quality, and success), is "organized through a single unified and coordinated governance model for effectiveness and efficiency in education and training" and seen as a "Seamless System is an open framework which rationalizes, articulates, harmonizes and develops three priority sectors (basic

education, lifelong learning, and tertiary education) within the HRD system" (CARICOM, 2016, p. 1). In this way, the CQF is viewed as providing an enabling environment that

1. Establish a continuum of learning outcomes for education and training at all levels.
2. Create and support opportunities for engaging in lifelong learning.
3. Facilitate the recognition of informal and non-formal learning.
4. Improve access and clearly define progression routes to all levels of education and training.
5. Facilitate comparison of qualifications between countries in the region.
6. Promote intra-regional mobility of labour and students in the furtherance of the objectives of the CSME.
7. Enhance transparency of national qualifications systems aligned to the regional framework.
8. Create greater potential for international recognition of national qualifications aligned to the regional framework.
9. Support a better match between the needs of the labour market and education and training providers.
10. Improve quality, portability and articulation of national and regional qualifications. (CARICOM, 2016, p. 11)

Each member state, which is part of the CARICOM quasi-federal polity, is expected to develop NQFs focused on establishing national standards and awarding qualifications at different levels. NQFs are expected to be aligned with CQFs and overseen by NABs. While these assemblages were a product of mature regionalism, they have now been transformed into functioning as a mechanism for the seamless development of HRD. The CQF, therefore, is an educational assemblage that "encompasses all levels of education from basic to advanced and includes TVET and work-based or experiential learning" (CARICOM, 2016, p. 10), and the vision informs the learning outcomes of the Ideal Caribbean Person. Above, we have shown how the mobilities and mutation of educational policies at the trans-regional and/or quasi-federal level were forged into a complex educational assemblage; we now look at these phenomena in another quasi-federal polity, namely the EU.

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

In Europe, the emergence of a detectable educational assemblage is initially characterized by timid steps taken toward territorializing the educational terrain at the continental level. Thus, the beginnings of educational integration or regionalization can be traced to the formation of the European Coal and Steel Community, which made modest provisions for vocational training and the education of dependents of functionaries employed by the newly created European polity (Moschonas, 1998). However, education and culture, in general, were considered the responsibility of each member state, notwithstanding their recognition as important tools for advancing diplomacy (Corbett, 2005; European Union, 2008a). Despite broad political ambitions in forging a common approach to the steering of a heterogeneous patchwork of higher education apparatuses, during the first 2 or 3 decades of European integration, no concrete policy consensus ensued, arguably as the political assemblage itself, as a quasi-federal polity, was still in its early evolutionary stages (Sbragia, 2006). Although the desideratum of an educational assemblage at the European level was not abandoned, it would have to wait until the political assemblage would be sufficiently mature and integrated to allow for the coalescence of individual educational "containers," in the form of national educational systems, into an eventual mutually rewarding arrangement. A breakthrough in this regard required individual states to transcend highly contested political and cultural rivalries stemming from the fiercely protective role they assumed for education in their realms (Maassen &

Musselin, 2009), and acknowledge the reciprocal benefits they would derive from leveraging the common values that bound them together.

The turning point in the eventual coagulation of a European complex educational assemblage was represented by the Sorbonne Declaration of 1998, which gave the impetus for regionalization and integration in higher education. This was a political declaration of common objectives articulated by the leaders of four EU member states (France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom) to forge closer educational cooperation and exchange by "harmonizing the structure of higher education" (Neave & Maassen, 2007, p. 135) of the signatory countries. The process gathered further momentum with the signing of the Bologna Declaration in 1999 by ministers of education from 29 European countries, including all EU member states, EU candidate countries, and European Free Trade Agreement members. This set in motion a "convergence of higher education systems in Europe" (Perez-Encinas, 2018, p. 108) known as the Bologna Process, with three core objectives: (i) the comparability and compatibility of degrees; (ii) three cycles of studies, at undergraduate and graduate levels (i.e., Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral); iii) the ECTS for courses students complete at receiving institutions during periods of study abroad. These policy tools acted as territorializing agents of the growing educational assemblage, giving rise to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), which, in time, acquired an unanticipated "external dimension" (Zgaga, 2006). That is, the growing influence of this policy movement translated into a spontaneous potential to territorialize higher education in other regions of the world (Klemenčič, 2019), either as extensions of the expanding European assemblage via direct transfers of policy expertise or as adaptive replications of this assemblage via emulation by recipient regions. Namely, adopting or emulating such processes of convergence has been contemplated by emerging educational assemblages in other trans-regional or quasi-federal polities, such as the CARICOM and MERCOSUR (Barlete, 2020) or the African Union (Babarinde, 1998).

Notably, in referring to the emerging educational assemblage as a "Europe of Knowledge," the framers of the Bologna Process considered it necessary and desirable to instill in generations of learners a common understanding of European ideals "as an indispensable component to consolidate and enrich the European citizenship" and as a vehicle by which European citizens could acquire the competences necessary to "face the challenges of the new millennium, together with an awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural space" (EHEA, 1999, para. 2). To help further territorialize the intricate arrangement of multilayered institutional structures inherent to the Bologna Process, in 1989 its policy stewards formally incorporated ECTS into Erasmus, the EU's flagship student mobility program (European Union, 2015). This move was meant to facilitate the transfer and recognition of credits and qualifications students earned at participating institutions abroad into the degree programs at their home institutions, regardless of the mode of curriculum delivery (e.g., classroom-based, work-based, distance learning), students' academic status (full-time or part-time), or learning contexts (formal, non-formal, or informal) (European Union, 2015). With its gradual expansion and formalization across the EHEA, mainly through the codification of its qualifications and degree compatibilization and recognition requirements into national systems of higher education, the ECTS has acted as a powerful instrument for the gradual territorialization of the EU's overarching ambition to create a space for the mobility of highly qualified individuals in its pursuit of a flexible labor market responsive to pressures and competition in the global economy. As such, we argue that in this process, an intricate network of policy scripts, bureaucratic apparatuses, communication channels, data storage, processing mechanisms, and evaluation protocols was merged to accommodate the multiplicity of relations, connections, and pathways created throughout its vast space among a growing number of institutional partners and the individual actors who inhabit, work in, benefit from and sustain it. From a policy movement perspective, it can be argued that the policy actors' intentionality brought

together these multiple components. Yet from an assemblage thinking perspective, it can be stated that the prospect of and the latent desideratum for closer ties within the political assemblage acted to a large extent as the territorializing force that stratified and materialized the educational assemblage.

The desire to forge a relational educational space connecting heterogeneous systems of education, each with its own cultural, social, and institutional peculiarities, is evocative of the emergent nature of assemblage, contingent on the mutual desires and functional compatibilities that form among these components, an intrinsic feature of what we have described as a complex educational assemblage (Salajan & jules, 2021). In this realm, we argue that in trans-regional and/or quasi-federal systems, policies move and mutate across lines of segmentarity (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/2005) to create symbiotic relationships among the units joining the arrangement (i.e., higher education institutions across participating member states). However, the forces that (re)territorialize this sui generis arrangement, driven by the desire to forge stronger alliances, generate ensuing codification processes in the form of policy discourse and instruments aimed at reinforcing its architecture or, in Deleuzoguattarian conception, the problem of stratification related to the gap in the assemblage's perceived functionality (in this case, the EHEA or Bologna Process) and its latent potential. In that regard, within trans-regional and/or quasi-federal systems such as the EU, to strengthen the complex educational assemblage, the policy movers, inspired by the success of ECTS (Grosges & Barchiesi, 2007), enacted additional policy instruments further to codify transferability, recognition, and compatibility discourses, thus aiming to turn higher education into the vehicle to blend qualifications at all levels into the broader assemblage. Consequently, the EQF was established to provide the assemblage with a mechanism for individuals and institutions to benchmark the qualifications attained on a "common reference framework serving as a translation device between different qualification systems" (European Union, 2008b, p. 2), all in the context of promoting "both lifelong learning and equal opportunities in the knowledge-based society, as well as the further integration of the European labour market, while respecting the rich diversity of national education systems" (European Union, 2008b, p. 3). The ECTS and EQF have thus become interlocked mechanisms (Brøgger, 2019) that operate via the governance logic of a trans-regional or quasi-federal arrangement premised on the close coordination between and the network-like distribution of policy instruments through its vertical (EU-level) and horizontal (member state-level) hierarchies, similar to what occurred in CARICOM. Learning outcomes accomplished via the credits acquired are categorized in an incremental taxonomy in the EQF. (Table 2 illustrates the qualification levels on which accumulated credits in distinct cognitive areas would be assessed.)

Table 2

Descriptors Defining Levels in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

LEVEL	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	COMPETENCE
LEVEL 8	Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields	The most advanced and specialized skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice	Demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity, and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research

LEVEL	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	COMPETENCE
LEVEL 7	Highly specialized knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research; critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields	Specialized problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields	Manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches; take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams
LEVEL 6	Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles	Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialized field of work or study	Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts; take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups
LEVEL 5	Comprehensive, specialized, factual, and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	Exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change; review and develop performance of self and others
LEVEL 4	Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	Exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable but are subject to change; supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities
LEVEL 3	Knowledge of facts, principles, processes, and general concepts, in a field of work or study	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials, and information	Take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study; adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems
LEVEL 2	Basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study	Basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools	Work or study under supervision with some autonomy
LEVEL 1	Basic general knowledge	Basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	Work or study under direct supervision in a structured context

Another example of a policy instrument for moving policy intent and discourse throughout and, therefore, fortifying the assemblage is represented by an ECTS spin-off, namely the European Credit System for Vocational Education Training (ECVET) created to "facilitate trans-national mobility and the recognition of learning outcomes in VET and borderless lifelong learning," while "enhancing the compatibility and complementarity of ECVET and ECTS used in the higher education sector, in collaboration with VET and higher education experts and users at European and national levels" (European Union, 2009, p. 13). It is no coincidence that the synergy between ECVET and ECTS is explicitly stated, since the latter served as the conceptual and the functional template for the former, as the ECTS represented a model to be emulated in the context regulating vocational training qualifications and tying them to the broader higher education arena as part of the growing complex educational assemblage. Thus, it can be surmised that policy discourse and instruments acquired a path and life of their own once set in motion, moving through the assemblage to buttress it and generate new policy scripts to be adopted, distilled, and translated both within and outside its realm.

Concluding Remarks

In an era where concepts such as the "'state', 'nation', and 'bureaucracy'" appear to be too "government-centric and reductionist" and "'policy cycle', 'policy transfer', and 'policy implementation' appear too rigid and linear," we have opted instead to "describe and analyse policy in a world marked by complexity, non-linearity, and emergence" (Savage, 2018, p. 310). The picture that emerges from this examination of the CARICOM and the EU as instances of trans-regional and/or quasi-federal arrangements we termed complex educational assemblages is convergence and divergence in behaviors directing policy movement and translation among them. These are exemplars of assemblages drawing upon each other as they are re/dis/assembled. Through the (re)territorialization and codification of policy discourse, both polities are subjected to the connectivity and relational pathways inherent to the assemblages they engender. To a certain extent, the policy-shaping process is directed by the desires of policymakers to create harmonious and symbiotic spaces for educational transactions, while to another extent, the contingency and complexity of actions and interactions entering the assemblages act as generative forces embedded in the arrangement itself that cause both polities to continue their expansion that demand the creation of increasingly complex policy mechanisms to sustain them.

In categorizing the CARICOM and the EU as trans-regional and/or quasi-federal arrangements and using an assemblage perspective, we have shown how human and nonhuman systems are composed of multi-faceted interactions between component parts intermingling to yield traits or characteristics that are of relevance to the thinking about educational reforms. In other words, by rejecting the traditional binaries (e.g., local vs. global) and methodological nationalism in the social sciences, we have used assemblage theory to capture the complexity of educational policymaking at the trans-regional or quasi-federal levels. This complexity is characterized by the territorialization of educational assemblages in federal- or trans-regional-type polities in two concomitant ways. First, through the intentionality of policy actors in the creation of policy instruments and mechanisms, driven by their ambitions and volition to establish common approaches to education. Second, through the unintentionality deriving from the contingent nature of and the inherent desire in the assemblage that confers its elasticity, flexibility, and expandability as the constituent elements continue to interact symbiotically with one another in mutually sustainable alliances to reinforce the arrangement beyond transient policy intents.

In turn, there appears to be substantial momentum in shaping one assemblage by the other through policy ideation and responses between the two assemblages. For instance, as noted above,

the CARICOM has been molded to a certain degree by the policy and institutional architecture emerging in the EU, but its particular nature of connections, relations, and multiplicity has prompted its constituent units to avoid emulating the stronger binding ties at the supranational level agreed upon in the EU. Instead, it has maintained a largely intergovernmental arrangement that provides it with more flexibility than the EU in setting up agreements in education and prevents deeper integration in this realm. In this regard, the two regional arrangements collide and coincide or intersect in terms of policy movement and translation. However, the policy scripts producing these complex educational assemblages are extrapolated to the global level, denoting these policy architectures' constant reshaping and movement to influence other regional or quasi-federal arrangements.

Juxtaposing assemblage thinking with comparative federalism and/or comparative regionalism in examining the integration of educational apparatuses at the trans-regional/quasi-federal level eschews the narrow analytical confines of rationalism or constructivism often used to explain national policy and political actors' behavior in setting up integration processes. From an assemblage thinking perspective, the integration of trans-regional/quasi-federal educational spaces minimizes the transactional dynamics analyzed in comparative federalism or regionalism studies. Instead, it embraces a holistic approach to understanding educational integration desiderata as processes transcending any policy actors' choices, embodied by alliances that coalesce, expand, shrink, mutate, or transform, facilitating policy movements but not necessarily being entirely constrained by them. Through their power to (re)territorialize and deterritorialize ever-changing, volatile, and contingent connective patterns, complex educational assemblages serve more as policy actants themselves than passive policy recipients in informing our understanding of educational integration in quasi-federal and/or trans-regional polities.

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