

New Perspectives for Learning - Briefing Paper 35

Education Governance and Social Integration and Exclusion

Context of the Research

Recently, changes have taken place in the way education is governed in Europe. There has been a movement away from governing by rules and directives to governing by goals and results, which has often been in combination with the deregulation and decentralisation of decision-making.

This project has studied the implications of such a transformation in relation to different contexts of educational traditions and to the societal consequences in terms of social inclusion and exclusion. It has explored the implications of these transitions in education governance during the 1990s in Australia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the UK (England and Scotland).

The project has aimed to explore the rules that organise policy, so that these rules may be reviewed and alternative possibilities explored.

Key Conclusions

It was identified that educational policy can be changed by strategies involving the management; legislation and the way resources are allocated. The studies showed that such measures were carried out in perceived social contexts of instability and uncertainty in order to create consensus and harmony and to improve economical competitiveness. This presumed harmony and consensus made critical discussions of policy and the search for alternatives less likely in the public spaces of education. Arguments for educational restructuring had a fatalistic emphasis where no alternative options were present. The following conclusions were reached: -

1. The way, in which educational policy is steered, has moved away from traditional centralised control policies to more decentralised policies in which local government has more control over how resources are allocated.
2. Resource steering has involved the transfer of fiscal management to local districts, with changes in the workplace, curriculum and professional relations, contract management, new self-evaluation procedures and laws to modernise the education system. This has also involved addressing the problems of social exclusion.

3. National laws have introduced more explicit programmes for character, moral and civic education to address perceived needs of cultural dislocation and disintegration.
4. Centralisation and decentralisation of educational governance co-exist. At one end there are tighter assessment strategies in teaching, increased attention to quality assurance through measurement of children's and teacher performance, and other accountability measures. At the other end of the spectrum are school 'educational zones,' - just one example of recent policies to decentralize – by developing partnerships between the school, community, the State and business.
5. There are also new governing strategies for the professional development of teachers as well as giving them more professional autonomy through greater involvement of them and local school administrators in school and community decision-making related to the decentralization processes of schools.
6. There is an increase in bureaucracy and administration to monitor the school through increased differentiation in management and the involvement of local and national politicians.
7. The professionalisation strategies have increased work demands on teachers and school administrators and control of their time has increased. But, this has reduced teachers' capacity to work with individual students, as additional resources have not been made available.
8. However, quality assurance through assessment and evaluation is increasingly being determined centrally, thus increasing teachers' participation while reducing teachers' autonomy.
9. However, there appears to be a shift away from teachers addressing social issues to a pedagogical focus on the individual knowledge and attitudes of pupils.
10. Categories that classify individuals and groups by socio-economic status and poverty – thus relating to inclusion in schools appear to have remained the same since the 1960s. But the categories relating to differentiation, marginalisation and exclusion have shifted to include ethnicity, gender and race, including more detailed categories about family and delinquency in order to identify and target educational programmes, such as single parent families and teen-age pregnancy.
11. The cause and effect relationship of both ways of classifying exclusion are being correlated with characteristics of deviance. For example, the problem of marginalisation and exclusion is related to the social problems of lack of discipline in the community, unemployment, and dysfunctional families (single parent, teen-age pregnancy) and educational attainment. Therefore excluded

groups are becoming defined through new social categories of deviance that make it less likely for these populations to ever become 'of the average.'

12. These external categories of deviance are then transferred into the school as internal ways of categorising students and it is then assumed that the role of the school is to re-socialise the child and family that are perceived to be deviant and lacking educational success.
13. Categories for statistical analysis are created in a way that helps decisions on how problems are acted upon by relating them to the causes of the problem. However the formulation of the categories, have often been influenced by whatever is the "social policy thinking" at the time.
14. Statistical categories 'make-up kinds of people' as individuals are transformed into calculable and governable groups. The 'kinds of people' targeted have typically been drawn from theories of deviancy, with the groups and individuals designated by social planning for rescue or redemption in the name of progress.
15. Thus, the characteristics of deviant students need to be placed against those that define the 'good' student. That student is one who is flexible, has problem-solving skills, collaborates and perpetually involved in a self-monitoring and active 'lifelong learning.' The quality of child is one that embodies an entrepreneurial logic.
16. It is also recognized that the 'targeted' populations also use the categories to gain greater resource allocation.

Key Recommendations

The following recommendations were made: -

1. There is a need to reconsider the significance and underlying categories and distinctions that are used to order and classify who is included and who is excluded in policy and research about policy. The systems of reason are governing mechanisms that not be taken-for-granted as the principles that order the 'problem-solving' of policy and actors are not neutral but constructive and productive of educational practice.
2. There is a need to re-examine what has been generally accepted about social policy as it might be obscuring rather than clarifying the issues that need to be considered. This requires not giving up questions of justice and equity but how the rectification of social problems defines the normal and the deviant.
3. There is a need for more careful consideration of policies relating to decentralisation with those relating to centralisation.
4. While notions of market, individualization, and more efficient local management of educational systems seem to have certain orthodoxy in reforms, policy makers

This Briefing Paper has been prepared by pjb Associates with funding from the EC DG for Research

should consider the downside of such reform, such as how new patterns of segregation and exclusion are produced.

Further Information

Full title of project - "Education Governance and Social Integration and Exclusion in Europe" May 2001

[Full report](#), [Partner details](#) [Website](#)

Contact Person

Prof. Sverker Lindblad
Uppsala University
Department of Education
PO BOX 2109
Uppsala
SE-750-02
Sweden

Tel: +46 18 4710000

Fax: +46 18 4711651

Email: sverker.lindblad@ped.uu.se

Visit <http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/index.htm> for more information about other Briefing Papers on "New Perspectives for Learning" or contact pjb Associates pjb@pjb.co.uk Tel +44 1353 667973