

ABSTRACTS

Justice through Education: Marketisation and Equity in Embedded Contexts

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1A) Culture, power & agency

Entrepreneurial and equal agency

- Sari Mononen-Batista Costa, University of Helsinki & Elina Ikävälko, University of Helsinki

Prevention of exclusion, equality and the demands of working life have been the key issues in the late discussion on education policy. To achieve these goals, such approaches as entrepreneur education and equality work have been introduced.

Entrepreneur education has been said to obviate the aim of the gender equality, because it, starting from the preschool, helps the children to recognize his/her own strengths and weaknesses, and harnesses the potentiality of the person, revealing the entrepreneurial and change-orientated subject hidden by the societal background. Equality work in education, on its behalf, aims to foster the equality-knowhow of the students through educating young people aware of their rights and capable of demanding those rights in the future working life. In common for these approaches are the measures that focus on the individual, create the right kind of a “mind-set” that promotes the societal change, and the economic rationalization of the actions.

Alongside the sublime objectives of the above described political discourse that is expected to promote activation, emancipation, inclusion and equality, “the same old stuff” happens, now renamed as entrepreneurialism and equality: teaching and upbringing led and controlled by the teacher/educator according to plans and goals known in advance.

By the concept of agency, deriving from the theorizations of power of Michel Foucault, we discuss the possibilities of the students that are conditioned by the entrepreneurial and equality discourses to challenge/ resist/ joke around their own “activation” and “inclusion”. The data (interviews, ethnographic observations and political documents) is from our ongoing PhD researches on entrepreneur education and equality work in education.

The aim of this paper is to explore different approaches of the concept of agency as part of our methodological considerations.

Immigrant mothers building their agency in a socializing mother-and-child activity group

- Minna Intke-Hernandez, University of Helsinki / Institute of Behavioural Sciences

The focus of my ethnographic study is a mother-and-child activity group aimed at immigrant stay-at-home mothers. The goal of the activity group is for the mothers to learn the Finnish language and culture. The group is intended to strengthen parenthood skills and help mothers in supporting the growth of their children in the Finnish society, to increase their sense of belonging and to support the citizenisation process of both the mothers and their children.

I study what agency means for these mothers, what kind of agency do the group's activities build and what kind of subject positions are possible to be taken. The agency is the capacity of an individual to make and realize decisions and act in the world and it is built in social relations, so the concept includes the question of power and justice (Gordon 2005; Virkki 2003).

I examine the activities of this educational group from a critical pedagogy perspective (Freire, 1970; Shor, 1987). Of interest in my study is how the mothers talk about this group and the activities and their impact in their everyday lives, and to compare their ways of thinking with the instructors' views and my observations and field notes.

In this study I am using participant observations, semi-structured interviews and photography as data collection methods. I took photos during the group's activities, thus the looking photos and talking about them with group's mothers is one way to remember and reconstruct situations. Photographing is an innovative way to communicate when interviewer and interviewees don't have a strong-based common language. With the help of the photos interviewees can remember situations without needing to use descriptive and complex language and they can communicate using gesticulation and the words they have. The data was collected September 2012-May 2013. Besides the photos and field notes, the data consists of 9 interviews.

In expected outcomes turn out three types of agency: 1) active agency; 2) active agency that converts into passive receiving; 3) minimal and tolering agency.

The groups mothers show themselves as active agents when they interact without instructors and they are sharing their previous knowledge and experiences of being mother and wife. They reflect on and compare their previous knowledge with their knowledge about Finnish culture.

However, when the instructors interact with the mothers, the instructors often are the knowledgeable ones exemplifying the deficit perspective of the program and the mothers take a passive receiver's position.

The moral orders of time in upper secondary vocational education

- Sirkku Ranta, University of Eastern-Finland

This presentation is an analysis of the moral orders of the chefs training in Upper secondary Vocational Education. This phenomenon of order occurs both in the pedagogy and in the practices of control. These I attach to the thinking of Basil Bernstein and Barbara Adams. Instead of language, my perspective of analysis is time.

Bernstein's fundamental claim was that our relation to society is structured in the embedded orders of the upbringing. For investigating these orders in practice he (1971) suggested deconstructing the contexts, or aspects, of the pedagogy. The idea was to define the ordering relations of power by classifying what is controlled, by whom and how the control becomes legitimized. Adams, on the other hand, conceptualized time as in time relations. Her concept of relations suggests that the meanings given to time are formed in being part of it. My suggestion is that the awareness of contextual meanings and expressive forms of relations creates the order also for the in time relations of the education.

Analysis is based on an empirical PhD study data of official pedagogic documents, study materials and three periods of classroom observation over three years of education. In observations, time was present both in the order and objects of pedagogy, in tools organizing it and in ways the in time relations were controlled. As Bernstein suggested, temporal practices were categorized into one or more of the four contexts of order, pedagogy, devices or relations. The most dominant of the contexts, and the morality of its practices, is interpreted as structuring the in time relations of the vocational education of the chefs.

In this data, time becomes conceptualized as a frame for controlling the context. The control, however, is not objected to the student's ability to conceptualize time, but to the orders of the production in given time. Both time and tempo are submitted to the competence in the production.

This preoccupation of production is displayed already in the means and demands addressed for the vocational education and training. For students the demands become legitimized within the product-controlling practices. The problem with the production-orientation is, that the practices seem to object not only vocational over occupational competence, but also the morality of control over self-disciplining morality.

Vocational education and training in Finland - the shadow of excellence

-Sara Frontini, Åbo Akademi / Faculty of Education & Camilla Björk-Åman, Åbo Akademi / Faculty of Education

Since the Lisbon declaration in 2000, Vocational Education and Training (VET) acquires a fundamental role of transforming Europe into the leading knowledge-economy. Thanks to the Copenhagen Process, as a part of the Lisbon Strategy, VET becomes a powerful force for different reasons and target groups. It thus represents a key component to reach European goals based on both excellence and inclusion. Since the end of 1990s, Finland has introduced transformations in its VET system which emphasizes the excellence perspective. The concept of excellence emerges both in VET policy and in many interpretative repertoires used by VET teachers. On the other hand, the reality VET teachers experience in the classroom does not always reproduce the discourse of excellence, but including thoughts are often dismissed without reflection.

The present paper has a twofold aim. The first one is to investigate the possible consequences of a significant emphasis on excellence to the detriment of inclusion. The second one is to re-conceptualize the concept of excellence in relation to VET. In line with the paper's objects, the research questions are: a) can a strong focus on excellence create new forms of exclusion? b) can the notion of excellence set aside its more neoliberal influences?

The contribution, through a discourse approach, attempts to problematize the discourse of excellence in both VET policy and VET teachers speeches. VET policy are investigated through the approach drawn on Carol Lee Bacchi (1999; 2009) "What's the problem?" approach (WPR); while teachers' dialogues are analyzed through an approach drawn on discursive psychology described by Potter (1996) and Potter and Wetherell (1992) in combination with an analysis influenced by Foucault's formulations of subject, government and power.

The results reveal how an emphasis on excellence can also cause negative and unexpected outcomes and how a more inclusive discourse in VET has to be strengthened at all levels – in policy documents, at the level of school management and in the classroom. In the teachers' dialogues both an emphasis on excellence as well as an emphasis on inclusion is identified. A major problem, however, is when one perspective is allowed to exclude the other. This way of thinking is against the spirit of the policy documents and the thought of equality in education.

1B) Quality assurance & equity in an era of marketization

Justice through school inspection? Educational equity in Swedish schools

- Sara Carlbaum, Umeå University / Department of Political Science

This paper explores representations of high expectations for justice and equality in educational outcomes in the neo-liberal educational regime of individualisation, marketization and increased central state control. At the centre of the paper is a study of national school inspection reports and how they construct educational success or failure in relation to teachers' high/low expectations and socio-political and school-market context and conditions. The paper focuses on constructions of accountability in terms of 'the politics of blame' (Thrupp 1998) and the role of social class, gender and race given school achievement in a Swedish educational system that for decades have emphasised universal welfare, justice and equality. However, the marketization of Swedish education since the 1990s, with school choice, competition and independent schools, seems to have pushed back issues of justice and equality. In this light, increased state control through national school inspection can be seen as part of an audit explosion (Power 1997) where inspection is made the solution to several 'problems' in education, for instance, to allocate blame for the perceived school 'crisis' of decreasing results and equality. By drawing on the literature of marketization and the wider audit society, the paper explores equality and justice in embedded contexts.

A diverse case selection (Gerring 2007) of five municipalities has been made based on inspections in 2011/2012; geography; and municipal size in order to make sure some independent schools were included. From the five selected municipals, regular inspection reports of secondary municipal schools and secondary independent schools that provides year nine, have been analysed. This has resulted in inspection reports from a total of 127 schools, including 33 independent schools plus five municipal reports. In close readings of the texts focus has been placed on how different schools are represented, in what ways, if any, socio-political and school-market context and conditions is attended to and how different subjects are positioned in relation to articulations of justice, equality and achievement.

In the paper, I argue that by marginalising and not discussing issues of socio-political context or the impact that competition has on schools, accountability and blame remains individualised, downgrading ideas equality and justice. Although, the representations and constructions of gender, social class and race are criticized in articulations of low expectations, the effort not to blame pupils, tend to ignore the structural aspects and resilience of racist and sexist discourse when individual teachers are meant to just raise their expectations. While educational gaps and equality in terms of gender are often discussed, differences in relation to social class are silenced. Social class seems to be racialized as the only legitimate argument for 'failure' is positioning the pupil group as 'newly arrived immigrants'. This serves to legitimize and uphold the neo-liberal educational order of individualised blame, difference, hierarchy and competition.

Quality and equity: global and local influences on teacher education policy in the UK and Ireland

- Moira Hulme, University of Glasgow & Robert Hulme, University of Chester

From 2000 teacher education has assumed greater significance in global education policy (OECD 2005, 2011; World Bank 2011). Cross-national competitive comparison of student performance (PISA, PIRLS, TIMSS) has focused attention on teacher performance and equity within national systems (OECD, 2012, 2013; Asia Society, 2013). Strategies to improve education outcomes are increasingly focused on improving teachers' learning, leading to national reviews of teacher education. Global policy entrepreneurs have promoted convergence around four 'context-indifferent' (Lingard and Sellar, 2013) themes: the quality of entrants, career-long teacher learning, school leadership and data use. However, 'travelling policy' is re-contextualised within local sites of influence (Alexiadou and Jones, 2001; Seddon and Levin, 2013). Possibilities for convergence or creative adaptation are influenced by institutional structures, welfare regimes, the guiding principles of education, and range and power of domestic veto players (Martens et al., 2010). Drawing on the Bernsteinian concepts of 'translation' and 'symbolic control' this paper asks how are the globally mobile ideas of 'quality' and 'equity' understood in the field of teacher education in the Anglo-Celtic Isles? How are teachers and teacher development positioned in debates on quality-equity? How does this positioning restrict or enable equity-driven educational practices?

The paper offers a thematic analysis of key documents focused on teacher education and teachers' work produced by international organisations from 2000. The review explicates ideas that have gained traction in the UK and the Republic of Ireland as evidenced in reports of commissioned reviews of teacher education (Donaldson 2011, DfE 2010/11, Tabberer 2013, DENI 2013, Sahlberg et al. 2012), their associated documents, and policies produced by government departments and national agencies. The analysis is supported by the text analysis software, WordSmith Tools (Scott, 2010). It is acknowledged that teacher education policy intersects with changes to school governance, curriculum and assessment, teachers' pay and conditions, the position of professional preparation within higher education, and the wider social policy field.

Limitations: Unlike work life studies analysis of official sources does not permit insight into the lived experiences of teachers and teacher educators (see Seddon et al. 2012, Goodson, 2007).

The drive for 'world class teaching' to improve national standing in international performance tables is supported by two 'linked ecologies' (Abbott, 2005) that work to increase accountability. The first addresses standards by focusing on 'what teachers should know and be able to do' and the effectiveness of teacher education programmes. The second draws on improvement science to promote pedagogical 'best practice' through trialling interventions associated with pupil gains e.g. the 'Test and Learn' programme (NCfTL, 2013). Collectively these moves erode the pedagogic authority of the teacher when informed by 'business capital' or 'technical' views of teaching (Hargreaves, 2013; Robertson, 2012). Where guiding principles and veto players are mobilised in the pedagogic re-contextualising field travelling ideas may be configured differently. Where deliberation on equity is focused on 'narrowing the (attainment) gap', teacher-centric policy initiatives work to obscure injustices that are beyond the control of the school workforce.

Teachers or Technique? Teaching and learning in municipal school policy documents

- Ingólfur Ásgeir Jóhannesson, University of Iceland & University of Akureyri

In addition to be responsible for the pre-school system (socalled playschools – leikskólar, age level 1–6), the first formal school level in Iceland, the municipalities took over the financial responsibilities of Icelandic compulsory schools (grunnskólar – age level 6-16) in 1996. As the curricular responsibilities still were those of the ministry of education, the municipalities have ever since been struggling with what is actually their role in influencing the curricular aspects. The municipalities composed various documents that included educational policy, such as general statement on education and policies on sustainability education or multicultural education (Author, 2007). None of these documents were mandatory exercises until in the 2008 education legislation which stipulated that each municipality should compose a general school policy document about the municipality's emphases in the pre- and compulsory schools.

In my first readings of them – then casual but not as a research exercise – I had recognized a variety of discursive themes that I could relate to technological approaches to education as well as to looking at education as service to consumers in a market society. Further, they tended to explain teaching in terms of an input-output model. This sparked my interest in delve into this as a research topic.

The website of the Association of Icelandic Municipalities contains several documents. I selected six documents, released in 2008–2010, for a detailed analysis. One pair of brief documents contains a general school policy of the Association (ten pages). Another pair contains advisory documents for the particular municipalities about how to prepare school policy documents (69 pages). A single document contains a future perspective to education, developed in cooperation with the professional organizations of teachers and principals in compulsory schools (45 pages). The last document I selected contains directions for municipalities about school evaluation procedures in compulsory schools (ten pages).

I used a historical discourse analysis approach (e.g., Author 2010) to pull out the discursive themes and the legitimating principles in these documents. I asked: How do the documents view the role of the teachers? And how do these documents view teaching and learning?

The discourse of the documents is characterized by little being said about the role and professionalism of teachers in general and almost nothing about the pre-school teachers. The documents portray the role of compulsory school teachers as more or less limited to teaching and assessment, and it does not appear in the documents that teachers are expected to have any particular role in school evaluation or in influencing the educational policies of the municipalities. The documents focus on improvement of teaching, so that students will learn more. Further, they seem to view teaching and learning as straight-forward and uncomplicated processes, which will produce good results, only given that the best teaching methods are chosen. This seems to be a highly technical or mechanical view of how schools function and in particular how teachers work. The implications of this view towards education will be further discussed.

To publish or not? The use of school performance indicators in the Nordic countries

- Tommi Wallenius, University of Helsinki / IBS

Quality assurance and evaluation (QAE) has become a central governance mechanism in the Nordic countries to estimate the quality of the compulsory schooling. The national variations in the QAE practices such as the extent of the school inspection system or the evaluation methods are however wide. One problematic question related to QAE practices is whether to publish school-specific performance data or not. For example in Sweden and Denmark school-specific performance results have been published on the websites of the educational officials. In Finland only salient findings are being published so that no single schools can be identified.

This presentation aims to capture the variant justifications behind the opposite publishing policies on school performance data in the Nordic region. Can we detect some common features behind those who publish the data and those who oppose it? To what values are the policy justifications connected? And finally, how do these opposite policies relate to the changing educational goals and values of the Nordic region. This presentation is part of my comparative PhD project "Ranking Schools and Children or Not?"

The aim is first to construct a typology between the Nordic countries (maybe other European countries as well) based on their QAE policy practices, based mainly on previous literature and additionally with interview data from an previous FabQ research project. This presentation must be taken as an outline for an upcoming interview collection in 2014.

The justifications behind the opposite policies are full of contradictions. Most interestingly, both policies are presented as a very rational, conscious and confident outcome, despite that the justifications seem to be based mainly on strong hypotheses or assumptions. Clear evidence on the consequences of the opposite policies is hard to show.

1C) School choice & social change

School choice policies and urban spatial segregation in the city of Turku

- Anna-Kaisa Berisha, University of Turku / Department of Education

The internal social structures as well as school choice policies of a city define how pupils are divided between schools (Seppänen 2006). One of the most current points of view in the research field of education sociology and politics is regional and social geography. In Finland, the research on urban segregation, including educational segregation, to date has focused on the capital region of Helsinki (Bernelius 2013). Although there is some new research investigating the spatial segregation in Turku (Rasinkangas 2013), no studies so far have focused on the educational aspects of it. This study aims to explore how the socio economic segregation of the city of Turku is reflected on the school choice policies and, furthermore, what is the connection between that phenomenon and the learning outcomes of comprehensive education. The research questions are: 1. What is the relationship between family's location, socio economic status and attitudes towards school choice and education in general in Turku? 2. How are the differences between residential areas and school choices in a connection with the formation of the pool of pupils? 3. How do the pools of pupils differ and how are those differences connected to learning outcomes?

The data consist of four parts: postal survey, pupil registry, statistics of the city and other documents. The postal survey (n=442, answer rate 35 %) was conducted in the spring of 2012 in Turku. It was aimed at the parents of 6th grade pupils who were entering secondary school. The pupil registry data (n=1440) equals the age group of the survey and it was collected in the summer of 2013, after the pupils had completed the 7th grade. The statistics include information about the demographic factors of the city and the documents deal mainly with the schools and education policies of the city. Both statistical and GIS (geographical information systems) methods are used. GIS methods have not been used to their fullest in the field of education (Lubienski & Dougherty 2009), although they offer an excellent approach to school choice research (Taylor 2007).

This presentation will showcase my research plan for my doctoral thesis and the early findings of this research. According to a previous study, school choices play a major role in Turku (Seppänen, Rinne & Sairanen 2012), and therefore further research is well required. The current state of school choice policies and spatial segregation are of high interest at the moment in the Nordic countries. This research produces new information of these matters with innovative use of methods.

Relevance of the school context for students' level of worry about the future

- Jenni Tikkanen, University of Turku / Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning and Education

Educational opportunities and educational participation have expanded. The increasing educational level of the population has caused an inflation of the value of educational degrees as well as strengthened the link between educational qualifications and occupational positions. Transition from education to work has become more difficult and the risk of unemployment has increased. Adolescent planning their future trajectories are faced not only with multiple choices but also a number of risks and uncertainties. For many young people, there is a contradiction between the rhetoric about good education leading to secure and attractive careers and the perceived reality in their social surrounding with the actual destinations of older peers, who are often unemployed or have had to settle for low-status jobs.

Even though the Finnish education system is often portrayed as having only comparatively small differences between schools, increased competition, brought on mostly by the introduction of free school choice policy, is deflating the education system's chances for providing equal basic education. The aim of this study is to examine whether the socio-demographic profile of the school attended (disadvantaged/affluent) causes differences in the level of worry or concern lower secondary school students have about their future.

The survey data (N = 628) was collected from Finnish ninth graders in three large cities (Helsinki, Turku and Tampere) in 2010. The sample was stratified according to school context and the level of socio-economic disadvantage within the school and its catchment area. Together with more basic statistical methods, structural equation modelling is applied in the analysis. In order to answer to the research question at hand, measure models are created with confirmatory factor analysis, and both observed and latent variables are used in a structural model, which is utilised as a basis for the comparison between students of disadvantaged and affluent lower secondary schools.

The results of this study are expected to show one potential aspect of the polarisation development of the school contexts, in which Finnish ninth grade students in their final year of compulsory education make plans about their future educational and occupational trajectories. The results will be discussed with relation to educational equality in the Nordic countries.

Recognising and controlling the social cost of parental school choice

- Janne Varjo, University of Helsinki & Mira Kalalahti, University of Helsinki

Education policy is evidently in a state of change across industrialised countries. The fragmentation of modernity has manifested in a local government reforms, privatisation and agencification, whilst the core executive's capacity to steer has eroded. In toto, a wide variety of endeavours to move away from the firm idea of state-funded, state-controlled and state-provided compulsory education have emerged.

Along that trajectory the Finnish compulsory education system shifted during the 1990s from one of the most centralised to one of the most decentralised. Consequently, segregation between municipalities, residential areas and families has emerged also in Finland, and the variation between schools, measured by PISA scores, has recently increased.

Our aim is to elaborate the Finnish local spaces for school choice, and the ways in which the negative outcomes of school choice and overall diversification are governed, by contrasting three distinctive local contexts. By analysing administrative statistical and documentary data, we aim to model how local authorities respond to novel, local inequalities, and the demands of freedom to choose and equality of opportunity, simultaneously.

The research design consists two extensive sets of data. First, a set of demographic, financial and municipal performance data, provided by National Board of Education, Statistics Finland, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities and the municipalities themselves, will be analysed. Second, documents concerning the provision of education at local level, including laws, strategies, memorandums and evaluation reports will be analysed.

By revealing the diversified policies concerning positive discrimination and other forms of control of negative externalities, we discuss about the formations and estimations of social cost for school choice. Our analysis models three different sets of policies in the municipalities in Metropolitan Area of Helsinki (approx. 1 million inhabitants). First (the municipality of Espoo), the local institutional space for school choice is constructed in favour for choice, without any current policies for positive discrimination. Second (Vantaa), school choice is more restricted, the policy is to prevent segregation by emphasising the uniformity of schools. Third model is 'very pro-choice' (Helsinki), where the policies to prevent segregation have included actions in regional policy and direct positive discrimination to schools located in sub-standard socioeconomic status neighbourhoods.

Shifting paradigms of social justice in a competitive school system

- Nafsika Alexiadou, Umeå University & Marianne Dovemark, Göteborg University & Inger Erixon Arreman, Umeå University & Ann-Sofie Holm, University of Borås & Lisbeth Lundahl, Umeå University & Ulf Lundström, Umeå University

Since the early 1990s education reforms in Sweden have led to a significant privatization of the school system with 39% of the total upper secondary schools being independent schools. Schools compete against each other to recruit students, and in urban municipalities the competition is intense and with serious effects on the organization and culture of schools, as well as their curriculum offer and pedagogic differentiation. In a country where egalitarian goals for schooling have always been prominent, we observe increasing tensions between the pressures from competition and the older (and still present) goal of inclusion. Depending on personal and professional ideologies, but also the particular local contexts and nature of local market dynamics, teachers, headteachers and municipal actors construct different versions of educational 'inclusion' through their delivery of education provision and engagement with particular social groups. Our research explores the following questions:

- 1) How are the competition and inclusion demands understood by actors at the municipal and school levels, and what strategies and practices emerge as a response?
- 2) How are teachers' work and school cultures changing in response to the new policy context? In particular, how are teaching, learning and pedagogy practices organized to meet these demands?

In our paper we shall present the findings of our extensive research over 4 Swedish municipalities in the north and south of the country, which explored policies in action around inclusion and marketization at the level of local policy actors, and school participants.

Our research views inclusion not merely as equal participation and access to the institution of the school, but as enabling young people through the work of the school to overcome barriers to a full engagement with the social, economic and political life. This has guided our research design to include a multitude of data that combined survey methods with ethnographic observations of schools. In total we have conducted 101 interviews with system school actors (to include municipalities, union representatives, school principals, teachers and students), and 20 observations in Upper Secondary Schools (including 3 marketing conferences).

Our preliminary analysis suggests that in order to understand the tensions produced by marketization pressures and inclusion demands we need to move beyond the abstract theorizing, and draw on detailed empirical work. The outcomes of such tensions are varied and diverse, and depend on the nature of the local school markets and their demographics, the histories of schools and their networks in various urban contexts, the ideologies of institutions (municipalities and schools) and the ways these have been shaped by institutional narratives, but also individual positions and political affiliations.

Our data reveal a very patchy picture of still unsettled relationships between schools and municipalities in relation to competition and inclusivity. But, we observe an increasing erosion of trust to the idea and practice of inclusion as a fundamental goal of the education system, and a narrowing of spaces where the older narratives of equality can be asserted.

2A) Transitions, educational expectations and social justice

Educational inflation and social justice

- Mikko Aro, University of Turku

When people acquire education, they usually have some kind of expectations concerning the societal position to be obtained with the the degree in question. Due to to steep expansion of education and the related educational inflation, the gap between the expectations and the actual purchasing power of the degree is widening.

Previously access to education, especially university education, has been considered an indicator of equity and social justice. However, due to the inflation of educational degrees declining, even university degrees may be considered only "cooling-off" routes in the Goffmanian sense.

Empirical data and analyses will be drawn from three studies concerning Finland. The first one concentrates on the relationship between education and socio-economic status. The second one focuses on the connection between education and welfare deficits. The third one examines the relationship between the expansion of education and educational inflation.

Two register-based data-sets are used. The first one represents 30–39-year-olds Finns in the years 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000 (4000 cases/year). The second one is an aggregate level data-set from the years 1970, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1993, 1995, 2000, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008. Methods of analysis used in the studies include cross-tabulation, odds ratios and linear regression.

The expansion of education and the development of educational inflation in Finland will be introduced in the paper. The results will be discussed especially from the points of view of equity and social justice.

Social justice in Swedish upper secondary education? - the case of the Introductory programme

- Inger Erixon Arreman, Umeå University / Dept. Applied Educational Sciences & Marianne Dovemark, University of Gothenburg / Dept. of Education and Special Education

Today, education at upper secondary level has direct implications for individuals' social and economic opportunities in life (Olofsson & Östh, 2011; OECD, 2013). In Swedish post-war policy-making, central aims were to provide equal educational and universal access to post-compulsory education (Lundahl et al, 2010). By 2011 over 85% of the Swedish 25 year olds had graduated from upper secondary education (OECD, 2013). By a current reform sharp restrictions apply for entrance to upper secondary education, including strict differentiation between academic and vocational study paths. Unqualified students are offered a new Introductory programme which is meant to serve as a bridge into regular education or paid work. Against this backdrop, the aim of this article is to analyze the situation of the new Introductory program and its implementation at local levels. For the analyses the concept of inclusion is used along with marketization and governance. "Inclusion" in the context of this paper refers to policies for equal education opportunities (Englund, 1996; Sainsbury, 1996; Dovemark, 2011, 2012; Lundahl et al. 2010), further related to social inclusion (Silver, 1994; Alexiadou, 2002; Jones, 2008). By marketization we refer to the transformation of education from being centrally governed, regulated and provided within a mainly public education system, into a competitive and market-driven system (Lundahl et al., 2010, 2013; Erixon Arreman & Holm, 2011a). The term governance (Blomqvist & Rothstein, 2000; Pierre & Peters, 2000; Hudson, 2007) is used to explicate activities and policies at the local school markets as related to the national steering system of objectives and results.

In the study we draw on empirical data collected in 2012 and 2013 in the upper secondary sector, within a handful of different 'local school markets' (see Skolverket, 2011). Data comprises interviews with municipal politicians, school leaders, teachers, study and guidance officers, students, school visits and observations, complemented with document studies.

In line with the policy intentions, the proportion of students who gets access to post-compulsory education has dramatically been reduced. The first year of the reform, the introductory program recruited almost a fifth (18%) of the newcomers (Skolverket, 2012). Interviewees raise many questions about the policy intentions. They point to misbegotten national policies which result in increasing costs for the municipalities and doubtful outcomes for the students concerned. An overall picture emerges of segregating policies and practices between students who are "included" and "excluded" in regular upper secondary education. In line with socially segregating outcomes of market policies in the UK, this study suggests that the underpinning ideas of the current reform, including the introductory programme, are socially aggressive (cf. Jones et al. 2005 p. 2).

Differentiation and inequality in Nordic higher education

- Ulpukka Isopahkala-Bouret, University of Helsinki

Although the educational systems differ in many important ways from country to country, all Nordic countries have experienced a similar trend in the form of an increasing number of graduate degrees. Nordic countries have in general had relatively homogeneous and equal higher education systems. However, as the Nordic higher education sector has become more complex, the differences between institutions, study programmes, and degrees have widened. As a consequence, not all graduate degrees have the same credibility and status in the labor market. Some graduates benefit more than others from the some higher education degrees. Social differences such as gender, ethnicity, social background and age contribute to differentiating the benefits.

Social justice through equal access has been the key discourse that has legitimized the expansion of higher education sector. However, in contrast to the rationale of social justice, the deployment of neoliberal education reforms and the new discourses of positional competition, employability and learning outcomes have only increased the divide between different types of institutions, and moreover, the stratification of higher education along class lines. Neoliberal policy seems to favor elitist educational hierarchies.

This is a theoretical paper, based on critical literature review. The purpose of this paper is to present a preliminary framework for investigating how the Nordic principle of educational justice has evolved in the context of higher education.

Study skills and student integration as keys to learning for all students

- Jan-Erik Mansikka, University of Helsinki & Monica Londen, University of Helsinki

The study is exploring a student perspective on academic achievement in different university programs – including both academic vocational study programs and programs leading to a general qualification. Our main objectives are to explore the relationship between student integration (Lähteenoja 2010), self-regulated learning (Zimmerman and Schunk 2001) and study strategies. We are interested in this relation from different group perspectives: ethnicity, language, gender, social class and academic background. Are all students supported? How are the programs coping with student diversity? Our main research question is: How is diversity met in higher education with regard to student integration and self-regulated learning. This gives rise to the following, more empirical questions:

1. What kind of obstacles do students experience in their studies (for example regarding time management, study strategies)?
2. How are students experiencing integration in the studies (on a social, cognitive, skills, and affective level)?
3. How are students experiencing their development of self-regulation in their studies? What expressions does the self-regulation take in the course of the studies?

This presentation we will focus on the preparation of the study: mainly on elaborations of a theoretical framework on Social Justice in Higher Education but also on questions emerging from our pilot study conducted in 2012-2013, consisting of both a survey and courses on study skills.

Our project is a longitudinal study following students through their bachelor studies within University of Helsinki. We aim at following students from their first month of academic studies (focusing mainly on their expectations and motivation), through their first-year experience (focusing on study strategies, study habits and awareness of self-regulated learning) through the completion of their bachelor exam (focusing on deep- and self-regulated learning).

All programs participating are in Swedish (minority) language. Main reasons for this is (a) the relative smallness of the programs enables us to intervene regularly with data collection and include the whole student cohort (important in the longitudinal approach) (b) we can raise issues about language minority and bilingualism in relation to student integration.

Preparation studies will be made autumn 2013- spring 2014. Data will be collected from autumn 2014 to spring 2017, mainly in three different ways: surveys, essays (written by students relating to research questions), focus group interviews.

Results from the pilot study indicate that already with relatively small interventions (such as a short course in study skills) it's possible to improve students study habits, study strategies and consequently their awareness of their self-regulated learning as a mean to deep-learning (Biggs & Tang 2011) and good study results. In this study we want to explore how this can be seen in the light of questions concerning diversity and social justice. Is there social stratification at work in the process of academic achievement within our context?

The expected outcome of this study is to provide a rich picture of student diversity within particular study programs and how they are related to academic progress. Further, we also expect to find and/or develop effective and doable interventions to improve learning for all students; that is, to identify challenges encountering different student groups – and ways to support them.

2B) Policy discourses of inclusion and exclusion

Handling diversity in a changing professional landscape

- Ingvil Bjordal, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

The shift towards a more neoliberal education policy has changed the professional landscape and discourses related to professionalism and social justice. In this paper I will explore the following research question: In what ways does a shifting educational landscape characterized by marketisation and accountability policies impact on head teachers' work with culturally diverse student groups? Building on Ball et. Al (2012) theorising on policy enactment, the objective of this study is to explore how the current policy plays out, and especially how schools and head teachers deal with multiple, and sometimes contradictory, policy demands. In order to study policy enactment at local level, three facets will be discussed: context, professional interpretation, and discourses. The first facet of context implies an understanding of policy and policy making as closely related to school-specific factors as well as external factors. The second aspect of professional interpretation refers to how head teachers as policy actors interpret policy in their work. The third facet on discourses refers to how dominant discourses of professionalism, cultural diversity, and social justice enables or restricts different practices. Building on Foucault's concept of governmentality, it is relevant to explore how the different policy discourses legitimises strategies and approaches at school level.

The paper is based on an extended case study of policy and policy enactment in primary schools and lower secondary schools in Oslo, with a particular focus on policies regulating schools work with cultural and linguistic diversity. Through analyses of policy documents and in-depth interviews with 15 head teachers, policy enactment is being illuminated from a discursive and professional perspective in relation to the three facets of policy process. The study is based on a social constructionist paradigm, influenced by a reflexive methodological research approach. The study starts from the premise that how we understand and deal with cultural diversity in education, is linked to a broader policy context and to social constructed ideas of what constitutes social just practises in education. This has implications for our understanding of the area of investigation, but also for our representation of it. An underlying assumption of the knowledge production as intimately related to knowledge use is emphasised as an important aspect.

The preliminary findings show that the external contexts of marketisation policies, and the use of governance mechanisms related to choice and competition, have a significant impact on the situation for the local school. This is particularly evident in relation to issues concerning local school budgets, parental choice, student population and segregated schools, the school reputation and performance targets, and the relationship with media. The findings show that the head teachers relate and respond to these contextual factors in different ways, and that their interpretation and translation of policies are related to different understandings of professionalism and conceptions of social justice. In relation to the discursive aspect of the study, the findings indicate a shift towards a more "colour blind policy" emphasising the rights of the individual as the main goal of socially just education, and a rejection of cultural recognition policies as a threat to this objective.

The rise of survival discourse in education of young adults

- Kristiina Brunila, University of Helsinki

The past 15 years or so have seen a discernible therapeutic 'turn' particularly in compulsory and post-compulsory education. Consequently, responding to diverse concerns about the declining state of citizens' emotional and psychological well-being, there has been a large increase in therapeutic interventions informed in education of young adults. This presentation focuses on how neoliberalism and therapisation are shaping perceptions of the problems that young adults, particularly those considered 'at risk,' are facing, and how young adults as a consequence are identified. It argues that the alliance of neoliberalism and therapisation offers young adults the position of survivalist, especially those deemed to be at risk. How this survival discourse, derived from government policy and educational programmes shapes the way young people are expected to present themselves in order to be heard, will be considered. One outcome is the subtle yet important ways in which notions of 'social justice' emanate from and fuel a therapeutic turn.

This presentation combines theoretical analysis drawing on concepts of governmentality, new governance and subjectivity with empirical study (policy analysis, interviews, observations) in Finland.

This research aims to engage critically with the ways in which therapeutic forms of education shifts focus towards therapeutic recognition of the vulnerable or 'at risk' self, and create a 'diminished' image of the self.

From responding to societal needs to responding to the demand of individual students in open and flexible education. The case of teacher education in Iceland

- Thurídur Jóhannsdóttir, University of Iceland

In the Iceland University of Education a full distance programme (blended, with on-campus sessions) for initial teacher education was first offered in 1993 in response to lack of qualified teachers in rural Iceland. Traditionally the university had recognised the need for educating teachers in and for sparsely populated districts and uncertified teachers in those places had priority in admission. With development of online technology similar programmes were also offered for teacher professional development in the graduate programme. Admission was restricted to teachers with substantial experience of teaching. Over time both programmes became open to all students and after 2000 the majority of courses were offered as open and flexible where student teachers could select courses and the form for teaching-learning at their individual convenience (online with on-campus sessions or traditional on-campus). Distance student teachers were enrolled in cohorts supposed to correlate. In 2010 the organization were changed. When the financial crises made it necessary to cut cost in teaching, distance students and traditional students were no longer taught in separate groups. Students can now select courses and enrol in each course either as distance or on-campus students and lecturers are supposed to serve the needs of both groups within the same course. Students are now enrolled irrespective of their experience of teaching and the connection to schools which characterized the initial distance programme has been abandoned.

This case will be analysed and used as an example to shed light on the impact of ideology on the development of education.

Research questions:

1. In which way has the ideology of neo-liberalism and marketization had impact on the development of distance teacher education programmes in Iceland?
2. How can the development be redirected by proposing a different ideology that opens up new possibilities and rooms for creative action aiming for equality and equity?

Cultural-historical activity theory will be applied in a discourse analysis of policy documents and other official documents on the inception and development of the programmes for revealing the way in which the ideology of neo-liberalism has directed the development. Basing on Vygotsky, Anna Stesenko and colleagues (e.g. Stetsenko and Arievich 2004) explain the importance of ideology in development. Oblivious impact of ideology is subtle at it is suggested that those responsible for policy in development of the programme were affected of neo-liberal ideology although unintentionally. The analysis reveal how the educational discourse has been taken over by discourse claimed to be politics-neutral, in fact being the marketization discourse.

For reclaiming educational discourse we educators need first to uncover the effects of the marketization discourse on the development and in turn negotiate ideology appropriate for taking the role of future oriented ideology for directing educational development. Guided by Stetsenko's theoretically grounded expansion of Vygotsky's approach to development named Transformative Activist Stance (Stetsenko, 2010) I consider how we might draw on theories developed with an agenda for individual contribution to the collective endeavour of societal change such as Feminist Theories, Critical Theories and theories on Education for Sustainability.

Inequalities and imbalances within Nordic education: How do we quantify these, how do we determine how much of a problem they present and what can the schools or the school systems do to counteract these?

- Jón Torfi Jónasson, University of Iceland

Inequalities and imbalances within Nordic education: How do we quantify these, how do we determine how much of a problem they present and what can the schools or the school systems do to counteract these?

I. What data does there exist on the Nordic education systems that allows assessment of the dimensions and extent of inequalities within the national systems, but particularly as they relate to education. We will use the PISA 2009 data as a point of departure (OECD, 2010), which shows the Nordic countries in some cases in a peculiar and unexpected light (see e.g. Figures II.5.1 and II.5.4). But we explore what other data sets exist, at the Global, OECD, Nordic or national levels. We will also explore the question: are the Nordic countries similar or dissimilar along these dimensions and what metrics might we use in order to answer these questions? Here the reference is to attempts made to develop metrics in some previous studies on adult education (Jónasson & Tuijnman, 2001a, 2001b).

II. When is inequality a problem and against what reference is this measured or assessed? Or the other way round when is equality the solution, see e.g. increasing emphasis by the OECD, the IMF and the Worldbank on economic equity as a precondition for economic growth. We will discuss, both which dimensions might most fruitfully be explored, but also what might be the advantages and disadvantages of the level of analysis adopted, i.e. national, school, inter-class or intra-class levels.

III. We will then turn to the question: if there are inequalities and they can be shown to be a problem, which role, if any has the school system or individual schools or teachers in counteracting the differences? Here the reference is to discussion if the system of education should not be concerned with correcting educational inequity, partly because it is powerless to do so.

All of these are huge problems which will be addressed in one way or another by all the researchers within the JuseEd group. This paper is just one contribution to this debate and an endeavour by the author to become involved in the debate and participating in presenting a birds eye view of the challenge presented by the equality issue. A large part of the rationale of the paper (which is being developed) is also an attempt to present one holistic perspective in a discussion that by virtue of expertise becomes, deep, detailed and perhaps.

2C) Constructions of otherness, minority & normality

Supporting minority belonging: Teacher perspectives on the significance of minority religious education for pupils

- Harriet Zilliacus, University of Helsinki & Arto Kallioniemi, University of Helsinki

The purpose of this study is to investigate how Finnish teachers of minority religions view the significance of education in supporting pupils' identities. Finland currently has a religion-based model of organizing religious education. Religious education is offered in pupils' "own" religion or in secular ethics according to their religious or non-religious belonging throughout the comprehensive school. Today Finnish basic education offers 12 religion-specific minority religion curricula and a secular ethics curriculum parallel to the majority Lutheran curriculum. Finnish religious education aims to be knowledge-oriented and non-confessional, but is closely linked to the denominations of pupils. The current system of education is under debate partly with respect to how it supports pupils' identities. The overall aim of the comprehensive school curriculum reflects a view of students' identities as active and evolving. A concern within minority religious education is that the education is closely connected to the strengthening of pupils' minority identities. According to Skeie (2006) religious education needs to take into consideration both traditional and modern plurality in education. Within traditional plurality the child's religious identity is seen as given and tied to a specific tradition. In contrast, modern plurality stresses the child's individual freedom to construct a personal world-view or religion. In this perspective different identities are tried out and developed, and children develop plural identities. Traditionally religious socialization has focused on the transmission of religious faith, values and norms. Modern socialization, on the other hand, considers individuation as the core of socialization (Vermeer, 2010).

The methodological stance of this study lies in constructivism. To answer the research question of how teachers of minority religions view the significance of education in supporting pupils' identities a semi-structured interview study was undertaken in 2011. The informants consisted of 23 minority religion teachers of comprehensive school grades 1–6 in the Helsinki metropolitan area. The informants represented all forms of minority education offered in the metropolitan area, and approximately 40 % of all the minority religion teachers in the school year 2010–11. The interviews were on average 50 minute long. The data was analysed through thematic data-analysis (Hatch 2002) and inductively searched for themes emerging in the data.

The preliminary findings show how teachers view religious education as supporting pupils' identities through three main areas: by strengthening a sense of belonging to the minority class community, by strengthening pupils' "own" religious identities and by furthering pupils' societal integration. The current system of education appears in teachers' views as having an important impact in regard to supporting religious belonging within a given tradition. However, in a view of modern socialization the scope of education appears narrow. Elements of traditional socialization such as encouraging pupils' to get involved in the religious communities and to religious practice outside class stand out as problematic in regards to the general curricular aims of the comprehensive school.

Justice and education: the case of Roma and Sinti

- Francesca Gobbo, University of Turin & Giorgia Peano, Primary School "Giuseppe Parini" Turin & Federica Setti, University of Turin

The research is related to the Comenius Project INSETRom that was coordinated by Francesca Gobbo in Italy, with the assistance of Giorgia Peano and Federica Setti who subsequently continued the research for their PhD. INSETRom was devised in order to understand reasons for the persistent school failure and exclusion of Roma pupils and students.

Giorgia Peano carried out her year long participant observation in an Italian primary school where a number of Roma pupils are enrolled most of whom live in a campsite nearby. Her aim was to understand the relationship between Roma children and the Italian school system so that solutions could be found and then enacted. By using the concepts of cultural discontinuity and school culture, and by listening to the "voice" of those children, she interpreted the Roma pupils' difficult condition in terms of "liminal zones" that did not promote their integration but allowed them (especially in the so called "nomads' workshop") to develop intercultural abilities.

Federica Setti carried out an ethnographic research in the Northern town of Trento where a number of Sinti families live with their children. She did a year of participant observation in a middle school and another year in a Sinti extended family and stresses that regardless of the fact that Sinti and Roma are rooted in the Trento territory, they are perceived as outsiders and characterized by "a" culture, while her findings indicate that they are multilingual, multicultural and familiar with computer culture. It also emerged that teachers often relate to those students through stereotypes and thus tend to exclude them from much of the classroom work.

In order to answer the research questions, participant observation was carried out inside the schools in Turin and in Trento, followed by extensive informal and formal interviewing.

Giorgia Peano's findings indicate how the school system tends to reproduce material and symbolic boundaries between Roma and non Roma pupils that can be found in Italian society at large, while teachers keep themselves at distance from Roma pupils and their families and maintain an unrealistic image of them as "nomads". On such image, together with the idea of "a" Roma "culture" are then constructed the learning environment and opportunities for Roma pupils.

Federica Setti's findings indicate that the limited inclusion of Sinti and Roma students into the learning opportunities and their limited educational achievement can be related to school policies whereby those students are likened to foreign ones or to those with special educational needs, and to a persisting misrecognition of their roots into Trento's society and history that are instead redefined in terms of a "unique" Gypsy "culture" that here, as in the case of Turin, appears as essentialized.

Culture speak and categorization in the work of teaching assistants with Roma background

- Jenni Helakorpi, University of Helsinki

In the presentation based on my Master's I ask how culturalist notions and categorization are present in the work of Finnish teaching assistants with Roma background. Teaching assistants with Roma background are wanted to schools to improve the contact between Roma families, Roma pupils and schools. Many post-colonial scholars have recently paid attention on how in Nordic welfare state context "culture speak" i.e. culturalist explanations are often in use when addressing issues concerning ethnic minorities or people with immigrant background. Cultures are often represented as solid units that program people to act in certain ways and cultural differences as explanations can start to follow stereotyping and even racializing logics. In addition, addressing phenomena only in terms of culture conceals structural questions such as ethnic power-relations or racism. Using only culturalist explanations, the social, economic and political dimensions are not addressed.

My data consists of five ethnographic interviews and two thematic interviews with teaching assistants with Roma background. The ethnographic interviews took place over the workdays of the interviewees. The ways the possible narrations are constituted in discourses are studied. Contradictions in the interviewees' talk are studied as well as their ways to resist discourses and the ways to negotiate with and within them. In my analysis I ask how the subjectification becomes possible in the existing discourses and what kind of talk and understanding becomes possible in them.

Discourses of culturalism, cultural difference and categorization were strongly present in schools and my interviewees both challenged and used them in their work. In the presentation it is studied how teaching assistants with Roma background negotiate with the culturalist and categorizing discourses. They are expected to interpret issues concerning Roma pupils and Roma families in terms of culture. However, they also resist these discourses. It is explored how the culturalist and categorizing notions are in use in the context of Nordic welfare state and education and how the practices enable and constrain justice.

Constructing otherness in school: A study of curriculum texts and everyday life of two primary schools in Helsinki, Finland

- Anna-Leena Riitaoja, University of Helsinki

My presentation, that is based on my PhD dissertation (Riitaoja 2013), deals with how differences and Otherness are constructed in curriculum texts, in everyday talk and practices, and institutional orders in two Finnish public primary schools. Compared to educational studies that aim to understand “diversity” and take “diverse students” into consideration in the practices of schooling I analyze how the Other as different and deviant is constructed against the notion of normality and how the students designated as different and deviant become the objects of worry and normalizing practices. I also analyze how schooling is based on categorization of students and how the categories enable both inclusive and exclusive practices. The study draws from postcolonial, poststructural, and related feminist theorizations (e.g. Foucault 1980; Butler 1993; Popkewitz 1998; Spivak 1999) that pay attention to the inter-relatedness of knowledge and power in the processes of difference-making, subjectification, normalization and regulation. By using the concept of Otherness I analyze the asymmetric (power) relations in the levels of knowledge, discourses, social practices and material-physical issues in the Finnish context.

The research method of the study is ethnographic. The data consist of Finnish National Core Curriculum texts for basic education written in 1970, 1985, 1994 and 2004, interviews from two authorities who served on the National Board of Education in 2007 and elaborate ethnographic observation and interview data from two years of observation at two primary schools in Helsinki 2008–2009. I have analyzed the curriculum texts through discourse analyses and the interview and observation data through ethnographic reading.

In the national core curriculum 2004 and in the everyday practices of the schools under scrutiny, the notion of a “normal individual student” yields simultaneously a starting point of school practices and an individualistic educational aim. In the everyday practices certain differences of learning and behaving as well as “race,” nationality and religion were considered “more deviant” than other differences. Students labelled as special, multicultural, immigrant, and urban became the objects of normalization. The notions of embodied differences and “natural” categories delimit equality and equity. Although the staff tried to change negative meanings toward the positive in many ways, that tended to reproduced the distinctions of normal and abnormal again. Negotiations to change the school culture were problematic, especially when negotiating with the colonial Other constructed as traditional, lacking autonomy, irrational, and intolerant in relation to the autonomous, rational and tolerant Finnish subject considered as white, middle class and secular-Lutheran.

3A) Critical views of special education needs

For what it's worth: How pupils in need of special support are valued, within different local school ideologies, in an evolving school market

- Johan Malmqvist, Jönköping University

The Swedish education system encompasses goals towards inclusion, where all schools according to the school law also shall work towards equity. Such ambitions may can be seen as contradictory to business goals and principles of competition in an evolving school market. The aim of the study is to describe solutions used in five schools, classified as having different local school ideologies, in their work with Pupils in Need of Special Support (PNSS) and to describe motives for these solutions.

Eight schools were initially chosen, in a stratified purposeful sampling procedure, from 546 independent comprehensive schools answering a national survey comprising all independent comprehensive schools in Sweden (response rate 79,5%). These schools have previously been classified within a theoretical framework related to inclusion. They represent very clearly different value patterns in relation to inclusion.

Three schools are labelled holistic-inclusive and two schools are labelled market-oriented-exclusive. Holistic-inclusive local school ideologies are fully in line with inclusion whereas market-oriented-exclusive local school ideologies show a value pattern which is entirely the opposite. These five schools were finally chosen for this study.

Interview data from semi-structured interviews with principals, special educators, class-teachers, pupils in need of special support and class-teachers provide major source of data. The data was analysed in regard to school situations for Pupils in Need of Special Support (PNSS).

Preliminary results show substantial differences between schools with different local school ideologies in allocation of resources and competence to pupils in need of special needs. The resources allocated to pupils in need of special support are restricted in market-oriented-exclusive schools. This may be seen as an indication that neither the pupils' needs nor goals of equity are of high priority in these schools. Results show the opposite situation in holistic-inclusive schools.

Private equity companies have been questioned as owners of schools due to profit demands. Interview data show that the situation in some schools with private owners may be an complication as well in regard to goals of inclusion and equity.

Social justice in vocational special needs education markets?

- Aarno Kauppila, University of Helsinki & Katariina Hakala, The Finnish Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities & Reetta Mietola, University of Helsinki & Antti Teittinen, The Finnish Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Our paper focuses on the transition processes and educational pathways of special education pupils from lower secondary to upper secondary level. The paper will discuss the inclusion ideology, governance and institutional structures of vocational special needs education in Finland. We ask what kind of policy ideals are set for education in policy documents and how these ideals are able to promote equality and justice when meeting the stratified structures and practices of education. In policy documents education has been represented as central measure for promoting social inclusion and equality of people with disabilities (UN 2006, Haarni 2006) and normalization. In the Finnish Program for Disability Policy (VAMPO 2010-15) education has been tied to promotion of inclusion in two ways: raising overall education level of the disabled population was placed as a major target, as well as preparing individuals for citizenship, to actively participate in society. Education has been named as “the cure” to social exclusion and marginalization of people with disabilities and almost all young adults with disabilities already are receiving some type of post-compulsory education in Finland.

Our data consists of disability and education policy texts, education statistics, documents on historical and current developments in the vocational special education institutions, and life-historical interviews of people with disabilities about their educational choices and paths. The neoliberal ideals of privatization, individualization, competition and marketization are taken as keys to interpretation of the results of the analysis. Our collaboration is part of Nordic Centre of Excellence: Justice Through Education in the Nordic Countries. Our studies have been conducted mostly in the research project “Citizenship, Agency and Difference in Upper Secondary Education - with Special Focus on Vocational Institutions” (Lahelma, Academy of Finland 2010-2013). The data for analysis has been collected in our individual studies which we have shared and “analysed by discussion”. Our theoretical perspectives for interpretations come from feminist poststructuralist theorizations on discursive subjectification, difference, diversity and power relations.

At the level of practices, policy targets are deeply stratified; education system is offering segregated provision for different groups of people with disabilities. In terms of qualifications that specific training programs for people with disabilities provide, some could be provocatively even called pseudo-education. There is ambivalence in the formulating ideas of inclusion and exclusion in the data, as the policy is on the other hand for full inclusion and on the other hand legitimates the separated vocational special schools.

Towards inclusion: a case study of perceptions of schooling children with SEN

- Sonia Lempinen, University of Turku & Joel Kivirauma, University of Turku

In this case study three 6-8 year-old childrens parents, teachers and assistants were interviewed to find how they perceived group settings for these three children diagnosed with ADHD. Furthermore, the aim was to discuss the new education laws (The Special Education Strategy 2007, Basic Education Act (642/2010) and Basic Education Programme) and the effects that these laws have on the three Finnish cities where the children participating in this study now live. Influences of the worldwide inclusion movement can be seen in Finland as well; a new system was introduced to kindergartens and schools. The key idea of new laws was that all children should be provided with education and care in the institution nearest to them so that the education system would be equal to all (Finnish National Board of Education 2011). In addition three layered support system was added in order to provide different levels of support from general, intensified to special education.

Head of the municipality education board as well as participants gave their consent for the interviews to take place. Interviews were recorded with these three children, their parents, teachers, special education teachers and assistants. Interviews were then transcribed and four categories were formed on the basis of grouped answers. These categories were: 1. Characteristics of classrooms, 2. Attending to the nearest school to home 3. Is diagnosis beneficial, and finally 4. Stereotypes and stigma.

The study found that the larger two cities had more variety in terms of educational support than the smaller city. Is this equal? Attending to the nearest school was important for all participating in the study, but group dynamics are to be carefully thought out before forming the groups or classrooms. Participants believed that these children benefit from being in smaller integrated groups. Moreover, that a beneficial group would hold such characteristics as less children with special education need and more without, to provide support. The participants thought that these pupils' teachers are to be highly professional and to understand the need of these children. Further findings were that minimization of stigmatization and stereotyping was a high priority for the parents.

3B) Embedding policies and practices

Education policymaking and local dynamics

- Jaakko Kauko, University of Helsinki & Maija Salokangas, Trinity College Dublin

In the English policy discourse, the Nordic countries have been used for legitimising changes in the schooling and its steering. The Swedish model of Free Schools, along with the American charter schools, has been used to promote independent state-funded schools. In addition the notion of Nordic municipal autonomy has been used as an example for reforming the role of Local Authorities. We argue that the changes stemmed from the English Academies programme have, quite independently from the claimed international examples, been a result of simultaneous deregulation and reformulation of relations between actors through a set of varying steering tools. These steering tools are deeply embedded in the English socio-historical context of education, have become all the more powerful as the schooling has been deregulated and have iterated some earlier trajectories.

We analyse the English academies policy from the perspectives of policymaking and practice. We focus on three steering powers: school inspection, the national curriculum, and the national standardised testing. The perspectives of both national policymakers and school-based practitioners are considered. We set out to scrutinise the way in which the formal enhancement of school autonomy is restricted by the basic dynamics of the strengthening steering powers.

The research draws on interviews of key policymakers and officials, three year ethnographic observation, and an extensive documentary material from the national and local level. The analysis was conducted independently in two different research projects. The policymaker interviews focused on the relations between different actors in education politics as well as the most important national and international reforms and processes according to the interviewee. Particular focus was on the ways in which the academies policy has changed the relationships within national policy actors and the steering capacity of the central governance. The ethnographic work observed the implications of the academies policy within a case study Academy and its relations to the sponsor of the academy, the Local Authority and the central government. Documentary data was used for historical contextualisation.

The initial findings indicate interesting contrasts in the national policy and the local practice. Amongst the policymakers the school inspection regime is considered as the most important mechanism for ensuring accountability of schools operating outside local authority control. This resonated with the findings from the case study Academy, as inspections proved to have a significant influence on the day-to-day practice of teachers as well as the school management. The general academies-related policy discourse suggests that these schools are liberated from the National Curriculum. However, in the case study Academy, the National Curriculum was followed rigorously across subject areas. This was due to the third steering tool, the national standardised tests. All in all the findings indicate that as opposed to promoting freedom and innovation at local levels, the academy policy has strengthened school level and sponsor level managerial practices and enhanced the remaining steering tools.

The construction of lifelong learning

- Heikki Kinnari, University of Turku

Lifelong learning has been seen as a required response to rapid growth of economical, technological and societal pressures since the 1960s. Nowadays the ideology of LLL has been constructed to an unquestionable truth which most scholars say is governed by the hegemonical discourse of economy. The common phrase goes, that if nations do not join the race for a learning society, then all maybe lost. Looking it from the Nordic perspective, LLL has become one of the leading policies in the European Union and its policy is to make Europe "the most competitive area" in the world. The LLL has emerged as an unquestionable self-governing policy which is constantly reconstructed through different "techniques", such as self-assessment, self-evaluation and recurrent updating of the skills of becoming "an active citizen".

From the genealogical and historical perspective things haven't always been the same. Many scholars have divided its development into three different "generations" or "orientations" in Europe. Its institutionalized history started from humanistic paradigm and it was mainly ruled by Unesco from the late 1960s to the beginning of the 1980s. Second generation lasted from the beginning of the 80s to the millennium. It was mainly governed by the economical views of the OECD and it is often referred as an economist generation. Third generation started from the beginning of the 21st century and is said to be a mix of the last two orientations and called as a soft economist generation.

The paper deals with the ongoing research, where I study the construction of lifelong learning discourses from three perspectives in its third generation in Finland. First perspective's material constructs the economical discourse of LLL. Second dimension material represents the state's official discourse of LLL. The third discourse material is constructed from "the public debate" of the LLL. The material will be analyzed through critical discourse analysis in the context of the Foucauldian concepts of power, governmentality and ethics.

An analysis of the Finnish school finance reforms: A fairness perspective

- Virpi Pakkanen, University of Helsinki / Faculty of Behavioral Sciences

The decentralisation boom of the 1980s and 1990s and its effects on education and education policy have been examined extensively in the international literature of the sociology of education. In Finland the education policy and the education system went through a radical reform in the 1990s (e.g. Varjo 2007; see also Lundahl 2007; and Johannesson, Lindblad & Simola 2002). So did the funding of basic education. Consequently, the so called school funding formulas have gained popularity in several countries, Finland included.

How has the school finance system been constructed since the school finance reforms in 1990s? What arguments have been used by the government to justify the reforms? How does the education finance policy relate to the values of the basic education? The study aims to answer these questions.

The theoretical framework comprises concepts used in analysing funding formulas, for instance equity (vertical, horizontal), adequacy, efficiency, administrative costs, transparency and accountability. The emphasis is on equity, which can be defined as "fairness, as judged by impartial observers, with which resources in education are allocated and used" (Levacic 2008). The research is multidisciplinary: it integrates sociology and politics of education and economics and finance of education.

The qualitative data consists of legislative texts such as government proposals and committee (e.g. the Education and Culture Committee) reports regarding school finance from the beginning of the 1990s to 2010. In analysing of the data I will combine both data-driven and concept-driven content analysis.

First, the research seeks to increase the understanding of the school finance policy in Finland. Second, the study intends to complement the prevailing efficiency perspective in research on schooling. Finally, following Berne and Stiefel (1984), the study aims to make explicit the values applied to the distribution of funding to schools in the Finnish society.

Effects of the economical downfall on education in Iceland

- Anna Kristín Sigurðardóttir, University of Iceland

The aims are to investigate the effects of the economic downfall in in Iceland in 2008 on education with focus on the school for all policy and inclusive schools. This is investigated at political level and in practice. Research questions are: To what extent has the economical downfall in October 2008 caused educational disruption in Icelandic schools in three municipalities? How has it affect the political debate in education and policymaking with regards to school for all?

The global economic downfall hit Iceland hard in the autumn 2008. It is assumed that the neoliberal movement involving strong believes on the marketing solutions created conditions for this and even was one of the main reasons. Political debate of the following years was influenced as people start to review and question different fundamental values that underpinned decision making at a political level. The downfall led to disbelief in political ideas, rooted in a neoliberal atmosphere and solutions based on privatization, competition and accountability. A new government took over at the beginning of 2009 (until 2013),gave a tone that challenged this perspective by openly state the importance of inclusive education free of charge as a key to social equity and national success.

Data were collected by a group of researcher working in the Centre for Research in Educational Leadership, Innovation and Educational Evaluation at the School of Education, University of Iceland, in the years 2009 to 2013 in three municipalities. Interviews and focus groups were conducted with superintendents, school leaders, teachers, other staff, parents and students of selected pre-, primary- and secondary schools. Information about the cost of running the schools was gathered from the years of 2005 to compare with situation before the downfall. Besides political documents are reviewed and official, national statistic for the comprehensive schools.

Preliminary results suggest that compulsory schools have been protected, to a greater extent by law than the pre- and upper-secondary schools. In one of the municipalities, schools have been merged, both within school level and between them, causing disruptions in daily work, but also provided opportunities. Classes have become bigger, leadership positions have been cut, support staff is hired on a part-time basis, extracurricular activities and specialist work of the schools have been cut, as well maintenance of equipment and housing. The special education has been relatively well protected but has been re-arranged in many schools. Proportion of each cohort receiving special education has increased in the comprehensive schools. The main opportunities created by the downfall are in form of tighter cooperation between the schools and the homes, as the parents and community decided to support their children's school better than before.

3C) Reconfiguring school choice from a justice perspective

Municipalities as mediators and enactors of marketisation and inclusion policies

- Ulf Lundström, Umeå University & Ann-Sofie Holm, University of Borås

In Sweden, as well as in the other Nordic countries, inclusive and egalitarian aims in education are increasingly paired with demands for schools to perform strongly and competitively in local school markets. This new situation motivates a need to deepen the knowledge of how local actors actually go about combining the demands of competitiveness and inclusion. Municipalities and private providers are in charge of organizing and operating school services within the framework of national regulations and goals and, consequently, mediate and shape national school policy.

By focusing four different municipalities (which constitute, or are part of, 'local school markets'), the paper aims to answer two questions: 1) What are the characteristics of the local school markets and what approaches do the municipalities use concerning marketization and competition?, 2) What strategies and priorities of social inclusions are taken by the selected municipalities in this new policy context?

The findings are based on local policy documents and school statistics as well as interviews with municipal school directors, chairs of local education committees and principals. A neo-institutional perspective is used in the analysis, in which the municipalities' responses to school-choice and inclusion are focused. The documents constitute a message system (Bernstein 1971) of priorities and desirable outcomes of schooling. The study is part of an on-going Swedish research project; *Inclusive and competitive? Changing understandings and practices of social inclusion in upper secondary school*, financed by the Swedish Research Council (2012-2015).

The concept inclusion is scarcely expressed. However, the idea of a school for all and the intentions to give extra support to students who need it are clearly emphasized. The documents exhibit a tension between the welfare-liberal perspective on education (regarding visions) with the neoliberal perspective (regarding evaluation/control). The school market and competition are not explicit in the documents, but may underpin the emphasis on quality and results. However, the interviews exhibit that competition is ever present, and also more taken for granted than just a few years ago. The market situation varies greatly between the four school markets and the municipalities' strategies vary accordingly, and are also influenced by the political majority in charge. The municipalities feel pressures for being flexible and exhibiting good performances. The need to attract students results in marketing schools as brands which implies the sorting of students in line with a customer segment model.

Reproducing social divisions: a cross sectional analysis of upper secondary school choice in Iceland

- Þorlákur Axel Jónsson, University of Akureyri

There is a considerable and lengthy history of scholarship which shows how schooling reproduces wider social inequalities. However, this phenomena might not be expected in a Nordic country such as Iceland which prides itself on being comparatively class-less. This paper sets out to explore and explain how the policy and practices of school choice effects this shift from comparative equality to marked inequality.

I examine the association between social origin of students, former educational attainment and school choice in order to establish if the Icelandic case differs from the findings in other societies. By multilevel analysis the contextual effects of social composition of compulsory schools will be added to the analysis. Data from Educational Research Iceland and Statistics Iceland of a sample of 2635 students that finished compulsory school in 2006.

PISA shows that Icelandic compulsory schooling can be characterised as relatively equitable. Yet upper secondary schools in the capital Reykjavik are heavily stratified, with parent social background being a key differentiating feature.

The classed school choice within Finnish comprehensive school

- Mira Kalalahti, University of Helsinki & Janne Varjo, University of Helsinki

Traditionally, Finnish comprehensive school system has been built on principle of equality, and the provision of basic education has been governed through school districts. Since the 1990s, reforms based on principles of decentralisation and deregulation, have reduced direct state control. As a result, local education authorities have developed distinctive policies concerning local models of selection and admission with diverse possibilities to exercise parental choice.

Education is an important definer of social standing, a basis for income disparity and an enabler of privileges; nevertheless it has always been distributed unevenly among the population. As a general rule, families in upper social classes are more able to utilise the changes in education policies – like increased parental school choice, competition and diversification of schools – than families in lower social classes.

In this presentation we aim to analyse the variety of socio-economic and attitudinal preferences within the school choice in Finnish comprehensive school system. First, we describe the Finnish school choice mechanism, which is mainly based on selection to (municipal) schools/classes with emphasis on certain subject(s) by aptitude tests. Second, we analyse the intertwinement of different family background determinants that indicates parental school choice in urban Finnish school choice contexts.

As a primary data we use family survey (n=2617), collected from 5 municipalities in Finland for Parents and School Choice -research project. We describe classed educational strategies by analysing the measurements of school choice (with the parental reasoning), parental attitudes towards school choice, and social class. By multivariate analysis we analyse the determinants of different types of school choices (i.e. admission to schools/class with special emphasis and/or “opting out” the neighbourhood school) and use the discriminant analysis to describe the variety of classed school choice family strategies.

Based on our previous research, we argue that especially the middle classes have been able to utilise the novel school choice space and the lower classes are relatively excluded from the Finnish version of school choice, which grounds on aptitude tests. Evidently, the selection to school/class with a special emphasis is a middle class distinction mechanism; whereas the issue of opting out the neighbourhood school, and the reasoning behind it, has been studied mainly by qualitative methods. Now we seek to discuss about the classed reasoning for choosing/opting out the neighbourhood school.