THE WORLD COUNCIL OF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION SOCIETIES

Rethinking Public Education Systems in the 21st Century Scenario

New and Renovated Challenges between Policies and Practices

Felicitas Acosta and Sonia Nogueira (Eds.)

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Rethinking Public Education Systems in the 21st Century Scenario

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Scope:

The WCCES is an international organization of comparative education societies worldwide and is an NGO in consultative partnership with UNESCO. The WCCES was created in 1970 to advance the field of comparative education. Members usually meet every three years for a World Congress in which scholars, researchers, and administrators interact with colleagues and counterparts from around the globe on international issues of education.

The WCCES also promotes research in various countries. Foci include theory and methods in comparative education, gender discourses in education, teacher education, education for peace and justice, education in post-conflict countries, language of instruction issues, Education for All. Such topics are usually represented in thematic groups organized for the World Congresses. Besides organizing the World Congresses, the WCCES has a section in CERCular, the newsletter of the Comparative Education Research Centre at the University of Hong Kong, to keep individual societies and their members abreast of activities around the world.

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As a result of these efforts under the auspices of the global organization, WCCES and its member societies have become better organized and identified in terms of research and other scholarly activities. They are also more effective in viewing problems and applying skills from different perspectives, and in disseminating information. A major objective is advancement of education for international understanding in the interests of peace, intercultural cooperation, observance of human rights and mutual respect among peoples.

The WCCES Series was established to provide for the broader dissemination of discourses between scholars in its member societies. Representing as it does Societies and their members from all continents, the organization provides a special forum for the discussion of issues of interest and concern among comparativists and those working in international education. The first series of volumes was produced from the proceedings of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies XIII World Congress, which met in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 3–7 September, 2007 with the theme of Living Together: Education and Intercultural Dialogue.

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Volume 6: Geo-JaJa, M. A. & Majhanovich, S. (Eds.) Effects of Globalization on Education Systems and Development: Debates and Issues
Volume 7: Acosta, F. & Nogueira, S. (Eds.) Rethinking Public Education Systems in the 21st Century Scenario: New and Renovated Challenges between Policies and Practices

Rethinking Public Education Systems in the 21st Century Scenario

New and Renovated Challenges between Policies and Practices

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FELICITAS ACOSTA

1. RETHINKING PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEMS

An Introduction

PRESENTATION

This book, *Rethinking Public Education Systems towards the 21st Century* emanated from presentations at the World Congress of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES), held in Buenos Aires, Argentina in June 2013. The Congress was organized around the topic of new times and new voices for education. The articles edited for this book were originally presented at one of the working groups of the Congress: New times for public education systems. The working group addressed the issue of new and renovated challenges for educational systems. Therefore, the working group considered studies that analysed new challenges such as: market driven reforms, transnational schemes, national-regional tension within education systems and quality assurance systems. It was also aimed at studies that analysed traditional education reforms as well as innovative models for programmes and institutions, new patterns of public-private relationship, the inclusion of ICT into educational management, the impact on contemporary educational reforms in the public sector, their links to past reforms and their cumulative impact on educational systems, among others.

As the Congress was held in Latin America, the working group also paid special attention to studies focused on countries in need of overcoming a lag in their educational development and/or requiring political, technical and management competences to accelerate their change process in order to assure quality education for all. In this sense, this book puts together studies from authors from Latin American countries, in particular from the Southern Cone, as a way of giving voice to particular educational problems and perspectives in a globalized world. Getting into educational systems in Argentina, Brazil and Chile and analysing some of its current particularities through the lenses of regional and international comparison, contributes to a better understanding of the processes of circulation, reception, appropriation and translation that historically characterizes educational systems development.

The chapters of the book focus on different aspects of schooling: problems in secondary education organization, introduction of new ways of student assessment, restructuration of higher education, teachers' education evaluation. The scope for comparison also differs, from case studies localised in one province in a country to

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regional comparison between countries to international comparison between world regions. Nevertheless, the studies do have one aspect in common: the relationship between the educational system under scrutiny and the role of the state (central or provincial). It is evident that this derives from the fact that educational systems were a state invention and the study of educational reforms always involves the understanding of the changing relation with the state.

Indeed, since the nineteenth century education occupies a central place on the agenda of states. Throughout the twentieth century international educational discourses came together in the installation of the Right to education and the extension of schooling as a way to access that right. In this sense, the image of an educator State is linked to the configuration of educational systems in terms of a technology for the expansion of schooling.

Arguably the global expansion of education systems became the predominant rational concept for schooling: it worked as a myth but also as a script giving legitimacy to the institutions and states organized under that concept. It covered and covers the systemic and institutional dimension as well as the set of actors and agents involved in the development of this script.

According to the above, it seems that education systems are the result of State action; but it is well known that this is a complex configuration structure, involving various actors who interact at different levels -from the enunciation of global educational principles to decision making in daily school life (Acosta & Ruiz, 2015).

This phenomenon can be analysed from two perspectives. From a legal and political perspective, the configuration of an educator State and the expansion of schooling can be traced to the French Revolution. It was by the time of the Revolution of 1789 and after the formation of the classical liberal that individual private and public rights were recognized, giving birth to a State of right as a State of the citizens.

However, it was with the creation of the institutions of the Welfare state that recognition of the right of all men and women to universal and free education was conferred. Each State defined the range of mandatory education within a progressive extension to higher educational levels. Thus, education became part of fundamental human rights, which requires positive intervention from the State to ensure them to all individuals who live in a particular country. But States guarantee the right to education via schooling; hence we could say hat the right to education is in fact a right to schooling

From the perspective of expansion of schooling, understanding the process of equalization between education and schooling involves analysing three passages: the passage of the discourse of education to schooling in the late eighteenth century, the passage of a school of basic institutional arrangements to the modern school during the nineteenth century and the passage of a school system to education systems by mid-twentieth century (Acosta, 2014).

These passages show an increasing process of educationalization (Tröhler, 2013; Tröhler, Popkewitz, & Labaree, 2013), that is to say resolving social problems,

such as the consolidation of nation States and capitalism, through the expansion of schooling. The formation of citizens, as a new way of self-regulation and of social governance, became the centre of the schooling agenda; in the words of Popkewitz (2009): the new moral issue.

The internationalization of schooling took place under this agenda. The concept of internationalization, as developed by Schriewer (2010), refers to the process of transnational migration, expansion, and reception, a process constructed historically in a range of logics of appropriation determined by deep cultural structures (Caruso & Tenorth, 2011). At the same time, it assumes the global expansion of transnationally standardized educational models and the persistence of various networks of socio-cultural interconnection (Schriewer, 2010).

Following Tröhler, Popkewitz and Labaree (2013), schooling is understood as a set of institutional and cultural practices associated with the assembly of the society through the construction of a particular subject: the future citizen. It can be linked to the global phenomenon of national developments towards society and school modelling as a result of the intersection between the emergence of schooling and the formation of the Nation state.

The authors' concern does not only refer to the institutional, legal and organizational qualities of the school but also to the language of school (or schooling) as a set of principles about what counts as knowledge and how will that knowledge take place. It also refers to systems of reason that overlap in cultural and political values. Thus, the analysis of schooling refers to relations between political and cultural systems and practices.

From the perspective of internationalization, it includes similar processes such as (a) state education systems as a condition of survival of the republics, (b) growth of republics throughout the world over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and (c) expansion of mass schooling also throughout the world in those centuries. In their view, this would indicate that the combination of republicanism and education was a worldwide success.

They argue that during the eighteenth century this combination became necessary, at the time that social problems were educationalized and education seemed to be increasingly the answer to any social problem. The association between republic as the political form, reformed Protestantism and education seems to have been the global amalgam of success and the engine for its global development.

It is widely known that educational systems in Latin America have operated and continue to operate at a pace different from their counterparts in central countries. It would seem that the origin of many of these differences lies in how the region took part in the Enlightenment's emancipation project and the consolidation of the modern state.

There are commonalities between how educational systems took shape in countries in Latin America and in Europe. As Ossenbach has pointed out (1997), after the emancipation of the metropolis, public education was handled at the municipal level. It was not until the wars after independence had come to an end that central states

began to take charge of primary education pursuant to the notion of common education where the State defined itself as the educating State. Thus, educational systems in Latin America contributed to both the forming of the nation through a process of social and cultural homogenization and to the emergence and development of the middle classes.

In terms of the project of homogenization that gave rise to national integration as the distinctive matrix of modern educational systems, there are two main traits that distinguish the configurations of those systems in Latin America from their European counterparts: the precarious connection, until the fifties if not later, between the configuration of the educational system and economic development; a striking disparity within the Latin American region regarding the consolidation and expansion of educational systems.

After a *lost* decade, the educational reforms of the nineties placed the problem of change to the educational system back on the political agenda. Albeit with disparate results and educational segmentation due to the prevailing neo-liberal orientation, the region was, by 2000, more homogenous in terms of the universalization of basic education. Thus, the problem of providing mass-scale access to secondary schooling took center stage in debates on education. At present, the transition between primary and secondary levels of education is fluid. In the vast majority of the countries in the region, the rate of transition from primary to secondary school is high, with an average regional rate of 93.5%.

Regional heterogeneity is evident in other educational indicators. The percentage of children to receive some schooling ranges from 72% to 97% (SITEAL, 2008, 2010) and the percentage that attends secondary school fluctuates tremendously within countries according to socio-economic level. The regional average for this second rate ranges from 93.6% amongst a country's wealthiest children to 78.9% amongst its poorest.

As Acosta points out (see chapter in this book) the region faces a triple challenge. First, the challenge of solving historical problems related to access and coverage, infrastructure, and the professionalization of teachers pursuant to the first great expansion. Second, the ability to effectively include all school age children and enable them to complete their school careers, a problem that dates back to the second great expansion and that could be linked to the institutional model. Third, the provision of quality knowledge that enables the development of human resources with skills relevant to the contemporary world, a problem particularly pressing in these times (if their use as an indicator were accepted, the results of PISA would evidence this challenge).

ABOUT THIS BOOK

As mentioned above, through this book, as editors and authors, we set out to provide recent empirical studies that focus on the study of Latin American educational systems from a comparative perspective. In the following six chapters that make up this book, the authors discuss the many features of policies adopted by governments in order to reform educational systems in some Latin American countries. Comparisons are made between schools, countries and regions. Policies are also compared showing similarities and differences between units of comparison. Moreover, as the topics

of the chapters show, there are many important aspects of educational change that come to light, specially when referring to the influence of international discourses and practices that have historically oriented the development of educational systems. In this sense, the chapters adopt different perspectives, from the internationalisation framework in comparative education to the analysis of educational policies.

Following the organization of other books in this series, the chapters can be read and thought about in a range of ways, can be read cover to cover, but also could be dipped into and out of. To facilitate the reading the chapters are organized from international and regional comparisons to local studies of educational systems taking into account the voices of actors in regional and local contexts. In summary, the chapters cover the following:

Renata Maldonado Da Silva (*The restructuring of higher education in Brazil and the European union: concepts and politics*) offers a comparison between regional and national educational policies. She studies the policies implemented by the Brazilian Federal government and the European Union (EU) in the area of higher education based on the analysis of documents produced by multilateral agencies. The aim of her work is to establish possible relationships between the restructuring of Brazilian university model under the government of president Fernando Henrique Cardoso and the educational policies currently implemented by the EU, which had the 1999 Bologna Declaration as a starting point. The author argues that even though the EU and Brazil are distant from the socioeconomic point of view, they do share similar educational policies intended to overhaul their higher education systems to meet the demands set by capitalism in its present phase. Her analysis is guided by the critical analysis of educational concepts and guidelines produced as from the late 1980s by the so-called Washington Consensus.

By means of a comparative historical perspective, Felicitas Acosta (*Secondary education policies in Europe and Latin America: a historical comparative analysis*), analyses the process of expansion of secondary education in Europe and Latin America. To do so, the chapter considers the characteristics of this expansion in some countries in those regions with particular emphasis on two issues: the historical configuration of secondary schools' institutional models and the most recent policies aimed at those schools. In both cases, policies to expand secondary education have come against problems when it comes to adjusting classic secondary education institutional models to fit the social sectors with recent access to this level of education, These problems often mean increased dropout rates and the decreased graduation rates. Western European countries adopted different strategies, among them comprehensive schooling, to address this problem. Most countries in Latin America, on the other hand, still face very basic problems of expansion (infrastructure, completion of previous educational levels, teacher training, among others). Despite the different problems, the authors finds similarities in recent programs towards secondary education and warns about the possible effect of these programs on strengthening historical problems of educational systems, chief among them the segmentation of educational supply.

Adriana Bauer and Sandra Zákia Sousa (*Teacher evaluation: contributions from literature and propositions in America's countries*) present an overview on teacher evaluation, exploring purposes and procedures of existing proposals in eight American countries, taking as reference contributions of academic literature on the subject. To complete this task, they organize the chapter into three sections. The first section provides a brief historical context of teachers' evaluation proposals and its recent expansion in Latin America, and discusses the concepts underlying these models nowadays. The second section presents purposes and procedures of teachers' evaluation approaches in eight American countries. The third section arises some conclusions about evaluation trends, which can be perceived on the models analysed, questioning their role in educational policies. Emphasizing main arguments in favour of teacher evaluation in academic literature, which advocate its need to qualify the teaching, the study analyses the extent to which teacher evaluation approaches, which have been proposed, permit, effectively, better education or contribute positively to the professional development of teachers.

Cristian Perez Centeno and Mariana Leal (*Pisa in a Latin American context: the cases of Argentina, Brazil and Chile*) analyse the degree of alignment between implicit and explicit goals established by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and implicit and explicit goals defined by developing countries in their regulations, plans and programs for secondary education in Argentina, Brazil and Chile. Through a critical analysis of official OECD documents -specifically PISA reports- its educational goals are matched with those set by the countries' education policies. As a result, the authors question the articulation between national goals that guide developing countries' policies and supranational policy guidelines designed on the basis of quality assessment systems and standardized tools, and question the appropriateness of assessment tools for the studied countries. Such tools built by central countries, based on their own needs and interests, do not necessarily reflect the interests and needs of Latin American emerging countries with education systems in contexts of strong inequality. For example, central topics for the countries under study, such as attainment, retention and quality of the educational supply, are not seen as priorities at the PISA reports.

Fernanda Da Rosa Becker and Fabiana De Assis Alves (*Quality and Monitoring in Brazil: Prova Brazil and its impacts on public education)* analyse the impact of large-scale educational assessments in Brazil. The authors focus on the importance of this kind of tool on the different levels government and how they may well determine the consequences of certain policies, such as correcting the course of ongoing programs. Currently, they argue, the results of the systems of educational assessment are being used for purposes ranging from the creation of indicators of educational development to individual performance evaluations. Thus, teachers, students and administrators discuss the indicators of their school or district. Mayors and governors are also constantly asked about the performance of the education systems. Considering this situation, the chapter aims to bring

to the debate the biggest large-scale assessment program in Brazil focusing on primary education: *Prova Brazil*. Through the analysis of the exam design, its range and its use its use as an instrument of public policy at the local level, the authors seek to shed light on the program's possible contributions to the education supply.

Finally, Daniel Pinkasz (*Re-systematization of secondary education in the past two decades in the Province of Buenos Aires: A conceptual framework for the study of recent changes in education systems*) develops some arguments for the study of the educational system expansion process in the last decades by using the concepts of *systematization* and *segmentation*, which have shown their productivity in the explanation of the educational systems formation processes in several European countries during the nineteenth and early twentieth Century. The chapter is divided into two parts. In the first, the author describes, in the province of Buenos Aires, Argentina, the segmentation process of the sub-secondary education system as a result of the formation of different types of institutions. In the second part, he develops a brief case study focused on two administrative units (districts) of Buenos Aires, in eleven schools. The author argues that different institutional types have different institutional cultures and that those cultures are related with the results and with students' educational experiences. The empirical data for this part arises from the analysis of the socioeconomic indicators of the school, indicators of efficiency and qualitative information gathered in interviews with principals and teachers and observation in schools.

In sum, the present volume offers cases grounded in empirical research in a particular region: Latin America. If also offers studies located in different arenas of comparative education, that may contribute to a deeper understanding of the various levels, scales and even temporalities inherent to the process of changing educational systems.

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