

DETAILED COURSE DESCRIPTION

Towards a Political Economy of Education - Regionalisation, Globalisation and Privatisation in Education

Over the past two decades, there have been major challenges to and changes in, education systems around the world arising from processes broadly associated with the dynamics of globalisation. A key change has been in the governance of education systems, so that not only is the sector challenged to work in more efficient ways, but there is a view that more hybrid forms of arrangements between the public and private will open up more opportunities choice, realise increased accountability, and expand the capacity of the sector by bring in new revenue streams. In most countries these changing dynamics of education over the last twenty years obscures an understanding of how the requirements of human rights and economic and social justice are to be met under the new and increasingly pervasive conditions of public, private, and public-private provision in education.

However, studying the changing form, scope and outcomes of the 'governance' of education systems (variously referred to as privatization, marketisation, Public Private Partnerships, or stakeholder-driven models), is simultaneously important, difficult and controversial. It is *important* as an area of research, and research-based policy and advocacy for a variety of reasons. These hybrid forms of governance of education systems, involve a range of new actors other than the state (such as for-profits, civil society organizations, community groups) bringing into the education sector a range of actors with different interests and different logics of intervention. Key issues to be considered here include the effect of these arrangements on the form, pattern and scope of the sector, on the nature and distribution of education entitlements, and the overall accountability of the actors in the sector, given the public good nature of education. Of concern here in the education sector is that education is not only an entitlement both in citizenship and human rights terms, but an important means of producing workers, as a means of social mobility as well as mechanism of stratification. In other words, education plays a complex role in modern societies – culturally, socially, economically and politically. For this reason, education as a sector must be viewed in all of its complexity if we are to understand the implications of these changes on societies.

It is *difficult* in conceptual and therefore operational terms. This is because much of the research (empirical and policy analysis work) on these new hybrid models of governance of the public sector is characterized by highly ideological or normatively-driven rather than more analytical accounts; there are very different understandings of the purposes, benefits and outcomes of these new governance arrangements arising from different value systems; and there are different logics of intervention, depending on the actors involved. Finally, it is *controversial* in that, given the widely shared and deeply felt view that education is a public and not a private good, we can appreciate that fundamental changes in the governance of education that open the space for new actors with different values and objectives has been, and continues to be, highly contested.

The purpose of this course will be to examine a family of initiatives that aim at opening up the education sector to a greater range of private actors. We will look at why these developments are taking place now, the actors involved in advancing these initiatives, what evidence from the field tells us about the opportunities and outcomes for various groups

(the learner, families, the state, transnational firms, local entrepreneurs, venture philanthropy, consultants) and why these kinds of initiatives continue to be highly controversial. The aim of the summer school is therefore to examine education policy from the perspective of service delivery arrangements and will focus a social justice lens through which to debate the consequences of changes in the coordination, governance and provision of education services. Private provision and the privatizing of education services not only looks different in different regions and countries of the world, but these services are shaped by a different set of dynamics between the global and the local, and between the state, economy, civil society and religious organizations. The school will therefore also work with a range of country initiatives and case studies to trace out the issues involved, review the evidence, and consider the outcomes and alternatives. We will also propose a series of normative frameworks as a lens on the relation between education and social justice, and as a means for assessing the nature of framing issues and shaping outcomes. Hybrid forms of education service provision have significant consequences for access, resourcing, governance and achievements in and across national education systems. In turn, this has implications for social cohesion, economic development and political engagement.

The curriculum of the course will also build on the research findings of the Privatisation in Education Research Initiative (PERI). PERI is a multi-annual global initiative supported by the Education Support Program of the Open Society Foundations that seeks to contribute to a better understanding on whether, through what mechanisms, with what outcomes, and for whom the increasing adoption of a widening range educational service regulation and delivery mechanisms might lead to more effective and equitable education systems. PERI finances state-of-the-art academic research on the privatization of education or private provision of education that are focused on one or more countries in the following regions: Africa, East Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa. South East Asia and South Asia PERI has also produced four short documentaries of illustrative case studies of different forms of non-state education provision; low-fee private schools in Pakistan; for-profit private schools in South Africa; Public private partnerships in the UK (academies); and an overarching piece on globalisation, commodification and marketization of education.

The course will bring together original thinking, internationally renowned academics, and new research resources in unprecedented ways for a five-day intensive course.