

EERA Network 23 Policy Studies
and Politics of Education

Online Seminar Series 2022



This Policy Studies and the Politics of Education Seminar Series brings together a small number of leading academics in the education policy studies field, all of whom have a close relationship with EERA Network 23.

Date	Central European Time	Title	Speaker
Wednesday 30 March	12:00 - 13:15	From Living apart to Moving in: Policy instruments and Institutional perspectives in education reform research	Dr Antoni Verger Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Friday 01 April	10:00-11:15	The effect of the growing participation of private actors to policies and schemes for widening participation into HE	Professor Agnès van Zanten CNRS, Sciences Po, Paris
Thursday 07 April	11:00 - 12:15	Internationalisation in Higher Education: Policy contexts, policy ideas and practices	Professor Nafsika Alexiadou Umeå Universitet

Register for any or all of these seminars by emailing

Benedict Kurz (Seminar Series Coordinator): benedict.kurz@uni-bielefeld.de

Wednesday 30th March at 12noon - 1.15 CET

From Living apart to Moving in: Policy instruments and Institutional perspectives in education reform research

Dr Antoni Verger, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

<https://geps-uab.cat/antoni-verger/>

In educational reform literature, two grand perspectives co-exist. The first perspective focuses on the key role of political institutional arrangements in the configuration of policy instruments. From this perspective, the adoption and enactment of policy instruments are subordinated to predominant institutions (welfare regimes, administrative traditions, regulatory models and so on) as well as to broader education reform goals and expectations. Institutions are also important mediating (and moderating) factors in understanding the outcomes of new policy instruments. The second perspective, on the contrary, puts emphasis on the constitutive role of policy instruments and on their unpredictable relationship with processes of educational reform. Here, instrumentation is the entry-point of educational reform. Policy instruments are seen as autonomous sources of power with a great capacity to alter not only educational actors' subjectivities, but also educational institutions more widely.

These two perspectives are connected to two different theoretical and research traditions, but this does not make them incommensurable. In the presentation, I will bring to the fore what are the main mechanisms and implicit assumptions about policy change in each of these perspectives. Next, I will argue that cross-fertilization between policy instruments and institutional perspectives is not only possible but can contribute to the production of more contingent and explanatory analysis of contemporary educational reform, which may have a special value in the field of comparative studies. I will illustrate the potential of this undertaking with examples of research on privatization and new public management reforms.

Friday 1st April at 10am - 11.15 CET

The development of unofficial public-private partnerships through widening participation schemes in HE in France

Professor Agnès van Zanten, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Sciences Po, Paris

<https://www.sciencespo.fr/osc/en/node/1430.html>

The presence of a strong, centralized State in France had until recent decades limited the penetration of the business sector in education. However, the challenges associated with the expansion and democratization first of secondary education and then of higher education (HE) together with the erosion in the capacity of state policy actors and teachers to face these challenges has created a favourable context for various forms of exogenous privatization. Neither the government, nor business actors have nevertheless justified their participation to education policy and practice in ideological terms. Rather, what can be observed -in education as in other policy sectors but even more so- is a pragmatic justification of their growing role, notably based on their offering services which cannot easily be provided by public actors and institutions.

The wide diffusion, starting in 2001, of widening participation (WP) schemes, based on partnerships between higher education institutions and disadvantaged schools with the former providing tutoring in guidance for transition to HE created a new 'window of opportunity' for business actors to extend their actions or to emerge and for unofficial public-private partnerships to develop. This presentation will present the motivations and strategies of these actors by focusing, on the one hand, on the actors

involved in one WP scheme and, on the other hand, on one specific actor intervening in many schemes. The conclusion will highlight two major effects of the penetration of business actors in this area: the “managerialization” of guidance to HE, and the growing focus on young people’s employability.

Thursday 7th April at 11am - 12.15 CET

Internationalisation in Higher Education: Policy contexts, policy ideas and practices

Professor Nafsika Alexiadou, Umeå Universitet

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Internationalisation of research and education in universities constitutes one of the most dominant policy ideas across the higher education policy space, but with large differences in the ways it is interpreted and applied across national contexts. Internationalisation policies have often made lofty promises about the rewards countries, universities and individual academics can expect when engaging with international discourses and environments. When thoughtfully and sensitively integrated into the fabric of higher education, it is a process that could genuinely improve the quality of education and research. But, internationalisation policies have often been criticized for superficial or uncritical implementation, poorly understood or operationalised institutional strategies, and vague assumptions about their contribution towards the formation of global citizens. Closely connected to debates around globalization, such policies have often been employed to serve the economic expansion of universities, or to feed into the institutional hierarchies produced by international league tables.

In this seminar, I examine internationalisation as a versatile policy idea, embedded within particular policy contexts. These contexts filter and interpret the idea of internationalisation from within national and institutional lenses in order to serve different objectives, different histories and geographies, as well as different disciplinary frameworks. I draw on research on internationalisation policies in Sweden, to exemplify the political and contextual nature of this policy idea but also its limitations and constraints in practice.