Macrothink Institute™

Journal of Education and Training
ISSN 2330-9709
2015, Vol. 2, No. 1

Book Review: Two Books on Minority Perspectives in European Education: *Successful Educational Actions for Inclusion and Social Cohesion in Europe* and *The European Second Generation Compared – does the Integration Context Matter*

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Received: January 30, 2015 Published: February 8, 2015

doi:10.5296/jet.v2i1.7064 URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.5296/jet.v2i1.7064

In recent publications, two European research consortia have concluded that certain vulnerable groups have good and improved perspectives in education and society, under certain conditions. The achievements in the vulnerable groups were beyond expectation, whereas they and their families contributed strongly to social cohesion in their environment of e.g. school and neighbourhood. These publications are:

1. The final report of the INCLUD-ED consortium "successful educational actions for inclusion and social cohesion", published in late 2014 by Springer[1]. The final report followed upon five years of research in fourteen European countries[2]. The consortium was lead by the Centre of Research in Theories and Practices that Overcome Inequalities (CREA) of the University of Barcelona, with Ramón Flecha as its main researcher. The project was a major and highly esteemed project of the 7th Research Framework Programme of the European Union. It was listed among the ten top-projects as the only one in the field of the social sciences. Among other publications that followed from the project, one was awarded as the best 2013 paper of the Cambridge Journal of Education.[3]

[1] R. Flecha (ed), INCLUD-ED Consortium (2014). *Successful educational actions for inclusion and social cohesion in Europe*. Heidelberg: Springer, 108 pages, € 41,64 (e-book), € 52,99 (soft cover).
[2] Spain, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Latvia, Romania, Slovenia, United Kingdom. To these countries, the Netherlands can be added, while the final report summarised documentation on a Dutch community project.
[3] R. Flecha, and M. Soler (2013). *Turning difficulties into possibilities: engaging Roma families and students in school through dialogic learning*. Cambridge Journal of Education, 43(4).

2. The final report of the TIES-project "The European second generation compared – does the integration context matter", published in 2012 by Amsterdam University Press[4]. For the TIES-project, research teams have carried out city surveys on 'the second generation' in nine European countries.[5] The consortium was lead by Maurice Crul of the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMES), University of Amsterdam, and Jens Schneider of the Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies (IMIS), University of Osnabrück. The Volkswagen Stiftung, the European Science Foundation, Marie Curie Network-grants of the European Commission and national research funds have financed the project. The European research focus was on young people belonging to second migrant generations with specific origins, i.e. with parents born in Turkey, Morocco or former Yugoslavia.[6] For the major part, the final publication is further focussed on the second generation with a Turkish background in seven countries and 13 cities, where considerable groups of this second generation youngsters are living.[7]

The two projects regard a similar issue and research question, to a certain degree. Besides, both represent the best comparative and international research we can rely upon. For these reasons, both publications and their conclusions deserve high attention on behalf of the academic, educational, policy etc. communities. This review is primarily underlining the high attention both publications deserve.

As stated above: certain vulnerable groups have good and improved perspectives in education and society, under certain conditions. The evidence from the two publications, in shorthand:

1. All average members of the 'Turkish' second generation in the TIES-cities realised school achievement beyond the level to be expected on behalf of their deprived starting position or the deprived living conditions and perspectives of their parents, who arrived as refugees, as guest workers or as their family members in Western European cities.
2. The 'Turkish' second generation performed (much) better under favourable educational systems, i.e. educational systems with long and comprehensive obligatory education, early start in pre-schools, full day education, late streaming and tracking and compensatory tracks in higher education. In countries, where pre-school was less likely, where obligatory education is starting relatively late at the age of 6-7, where the 'Turkish' second generation is closed up in vocational training at a low age of 10-12, this generation remained clearly at the lower performance side in terms of academic

[4] M. Crul, J. Schneider, and F. Lelie (2012), eds. *The European second generation compared – does the integration context matter*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 437 pages, € 48,99 (pdf), € 52,95 (paperback).

[5] The Netherlands, Austria, Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

[6] The full scale and scope of TIES is wider, i.e. trans-Atlantic. With John Mollenkopf of the Center for Urban Research (City University, New York), second generations in European cities and in the US cities New York and Los Angelos were compared. See: M. Crul, and J. Mollenkopf (2012), eds. *The changing face of world cities – young adult children of immigrants in Europe and the United States*, New York (Russel Sage Foundation).

[7] Sweden (Stockholm), Germany (Berlin and Frankfurt), The Netherlands (Amsterdam and Rotterdam), Belgium (Brussels and Antwerp), France (Paris and Strasbourg), Austria (Vienna and Linz), Switzerland (Zürich and Basel).

achievement and employment. 'The system', i.e. what the country wants as its educational system and priorities, is making a major difference with regard to the perspectives of young people belonging to the second generation, in education and society. In comparative terms: Sweden and France offer, comparatively, the best conditions with their highly comprehensive educational system for all young people up to the age of 18. Many enter into higher education thereafter and find professional jobs on the labour market. Germany and Austria are countries with a late start of obligatory education and with early tracking and streaming. A larger part of the 'Turkish' second generation is finishing its educational career in job-related vocational training. Higher education is unlikely as are professional jobs. The Dutch were somewhere in the middle, because there has grown a wide second-chance practice of further education in higher (vocational) schools after basic vocational training.

3. Although TIES does not refer to the concept of inclusive education for vulnerable groups, it proves the importance of major indicators of inclusiveness in education, i.e. long obligatory education for all and late streaming and tracking in relation to individual achievement, potential and ambition, for the chances of the second generation in education and society.
4. The INCLUD-ED consortium has carefully assessed what the authors call Successful Educational Actions and Successful Integrative Actions in many places. These are assessed in the frame of inclusive educational and social policies. The research corpus consists of policy reviews of 26 EU Member States as well as "20 case studies of effective educational practices and six longitudinal case studies of communities involved in learning projects" (p. 3). The Successful Educational Actions and the Successful Integrative Actions showed how schools can and do create favourable conditions for children and young people belonging to vulnerable groups such as "youth, migrants, cultural minorities, e.g., Roma, women and persons with disabilities" (passim).
5. The actions reinforced the academic achievements of the children and the young people, opened up good perspectives on the labour market and strengthened the social cohesion in and around the school, also in clearly deprived areas. For these effects, the most important mechanisms were dialogue, consultation and (rather) open classrooms.
6. In didactics and organisation, an open and free dialogue was fostered between the traditional key agents in education (teachers, school leaders, policy makers) and the vulnerable groups in and around the school community, i.e. parents and other representatives of women, youth, migrants, cultural minorities, and persons with disabilities. Theoretically, the studies relied on the *Kommunikations*-concept of Jürgen Habermas (*die herrschaftsfreie Dialog mündiger Menschen – dialogue between reasonable people not disturbed by power relations*), and didactically on e.g. Paolo Freire, and, on the background, perhaps Kees Boeke and Maria Montessori. In the classroom, a rather wide openness appears to be necessary: not a single teacher, but a wider group of (remedial) professionals and volunteers manage, help and educate the diversity and the mixture of pupils.

7. Therefore, the mixture is not managed through progressive streaming and tracking (see above!). It is not the playground of solitary and overworked teachers, but it is a fruitful workplace for the educators and with them: all (vulnerable) children, all (vulnerable) people and all resources that are made available and are recruited for the benefit of (vulnerable) children. The schools run during extended hours and times as to assure highest commitment and performance. The schools really need high family involvement, also or even with priority the involvement of parents from vulnerable groups, who are to be involved at all levels, including didactics and decision-making.
8. The school is to be seen as a *learning community*, a concept that was taken up by the European Union in its 2020-perspectives as a follow-up of the INCLUD-ED project, among others. Such schools will function and can function as a resource and support mechanisms for wider integrative actions and perspectives, e.g. in the field of employment, housing and community development, and political participation.

The presented evidence of both TIES and INCLUD-ED is convincing. Therefore, the projects represent most valuable contributions to educational policies, and, as said: deserve highest attention of the academic, educational, policy etc. communities, in Europe and worldwide. Yet, some points of criticism and debate are justified. I may refer to the following points:

1. The INCLUD-ED book is not giving clear clues to its body of knowledge, such as the national policy reviews and the case study reports. Neither academics, who are interested in the replication of cases and case assessments, nor educational agents, who would like to start up Successful Educational Actions or Successful Integrative Actions will easily trace the relevant documentation.
2. Both academics and educational agents might wonder in how far the actions were confronted with negative mechanisms, and how these negative mechanisms were successfully handled. These mechanisms must have occurred, both from within and from the outside. From within, there is the inherent danger of group-dynamics such as the exertion of power or the habitus of selfishness on behalf of key agents. From the outside, we may mention occurring 'white flight' away from vulnerable groups that is reinforcing the vulnerability and discrimination of the people and groups concerned,[8] or budget cuts in educational and social policy sectors, e.g. in relation to the ongoing economic crisis and its heavy consequences for Southern European countries such as Spain.
3. Another external factor that was discussed on e.g. Hungary is that minority associations are not all in favour of 'inclusive education' for children from their culture.[9] They may fear loss of control on their new generation and therefore keep to their special Roma schools. Such vested interests may have occurred in the INCLUD-ED cases, but they were not discussed, and therefore neither how they were counter-acted.

[8] For discussion of white flight mechanisms see e.g. Zay, D. (2012). *L'éducation inclusive – une response a l'échec scolaire?* Paris (Harmattan), and Peters, D. and G. Muskens (2011). *School segregation exists: possibilities of counteracting measures*, The Open Education Journal, volume 3, pp. 158-163.
[9] E.g. Tamas, P. (2011). *Roma inclusion policies in a Central European education system - the case of Hungary*, The Open Education Journal, volume 3, pp. 141-147.

4. Pre-schools are valuable, and so are full-day schools as well as low and late streaming and tracking of pupils. Both studies have underlined this conclusion for the sake of youth at risk. It is clear that obligatory education starting at the age of 6-7 is late and that an earlier start would be needed, even in Germany and Austria. It is clear that 'special education' in not necessary for at least 98 per cent of all pupils in primary and secondary education and that almost all pupils with special needs and challenges can be included in mainstream education. It is also clear that streaming and tracking can be postponed up to the age of 14-15. But: at a certain moment in time and for pupils with very extreme needs and challenges, light or full streaming and tracking is unavoidable, and parents and 'society' will oblige schools to stream and track the young people in relation to their talents, ambitions, needs and challenges. One cannot avoid the necessity without dysfunctional consequences. How to handle this issue?
5. For the TIES-surveys, the 'second generation' was reduced and restricted very much for methodological reasons, i.e. to the second generation of Turkish descent. But even in this frame and notwithstanding extended attention to sampling issues in the publication, the population and the samples might represent very different 'second generations' in certain countries and cities. 'Turkish descent' includes very different denominators of immigrants in Western Europe. There are refugees with a Christian, socialist and/or minority background (Armenian, Kurdish), compared to 'Turks' from Anatolya, who arrived as guest workers and their family members. One-third of the latter spoke Kurdish as their home language. The first group arrived in rather high numbers in France and Sweden, while the second one came in greater numbers to Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and Belgium. The obvious academic differences and those with regard to access to higher education in these countries were not controlled for this factor. Further research might be needed.

Then, there are the current concerns of public opinion. Highest concern at the moment does not regard the good achievements and perspectives that were presented both in the TIES and the INCLUD-ED book. It regards the fear of radicalisation and jihadism among immigrant youth in general and those with a muslim background in particular. It is good to know that there is strong and reliable contra-evidence against the current concern, and that controllable mechanisms were scientifically assessed on how best educational achievements are realised. At the same time, these conclusions become obsolete as long as the assessment of educational achievements and perspectives among vulnerable young people and the 'second generation' is not responding to the highest concerns in public debate.

Therefore, further assessment of youth at risk and inclusive education is certainly needed.