**Professor Dennis Beach, University of Gothenburg, Sweden**

*Personalisation and the education commodity: A meta-ethnographic analysis*

The Nordic countries of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark are identified by the OECD as amongst the five most egalitarian countries in the world in terms of their levels of education equity and social justice. Their Education Acts all point out that education at both primary and secondary levels should promote the maximum development of all children across all forms of diversity, by compensating for any potentially negative variations in their learning possibilities. More or less word for word they each state that all children and youth should have equal access to education regardless of gender, ethnicity, place of residence, physical or intellectual differences, or social and economic factors, and that special support should be given to pupils who have difficulties in completing their education successfully for any of these reasons. This is expressed as important moreover, not simply because inequity is unfair in itself, but also because a ‘good education for all’ is seen as the way of creating a more just society. The following presentation will be directed at these issues. It is based on the outcomes of ethnographic and/or meta-ethnographic research that has to some degree described various ways in which the Nordic models of education have become educational structures that on paper promise to provide equal educational opportunities for all, regardless of their diversities, but in practice have actually failed to do so. The presentation is very much one that is still in process and under development. Concepts and policies of personalisation and privatisation in education will be given specific attention.

**Dr. Jaakko Kauko, University of Helsinki, Finland**

*Finnish education system: political dynamics and historical trajectories*

Focusing on Finnish higher and basic education, the presentationunpacks the ways in which education policy is tied to longer term socio-historical developments and constrained or enabled through institutional rearrangements. Drawing on the results of different research projects at the Research Unit focusing on the Sociology and Politics of Education (KUPOLI, University of Helsinki), the conclusion is that Finnish education is guided by different sets of dynamics in higher and basic education. The political dynamics support continuity of the comprehensive school, however, with incremental internal diversifying trends through school choice. The conceptualization of international competitiveness reform higher education, while regionalism in education policy and complexities of decision-making hinders these effects.
Dr. Alejandro Carrasco, The Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

Failed regulations and school composition: selective admission practices in Chilean primary schools

Admission regulations are central in understanding issues of school mix, segregation, and educational justice. Chile introduced in 2009 legislation that prohibited schools from selecting students until 6th grade. Using a questionnaire for head teachers (N=581) and qualitative data from case-study schools, we explore the efficacy of such regulations within a market-based educational system where, we hypothesised, schools seem to be pushed to use selection practices. Results show that despite being legally prohibited, half of the head teachers states still using some mechanism to select students (play sessions, student testing, or parents interviews). Data suggest higher levels of selectivity on private subsidised schools than public. Analysis shows strong association between ‘selectivity’ and homogeneous social and academic intake composition. A probable reason for the uselessness of the law lies in the structuring force of a double system of educational accountability; strong pressure for performance within a testing regime and where funding depends on enrolments make selection a fundamental schools’ strategy which however is impacting seriously on equality goals.

Dr. Ruth McGinity, University of Manchester, UK

Unpacking the neo liberal policy complex: democracy, power and position-taking in localised policy making

Arguably there is no longer a school “system” in England. Instead, we have an ‘increasingly fragmented local landscapes of schooling with different patterns emerging in different parts of the country’. As such this talk will map a typology of schooling in England. Such a mapping exercise is important for two reasons: First, it has been a true of both Conservative and Labour policy that school-type diversity, following market ideology, would improve the system. This has produced a thirty-year period of diversification, unparalleled anywhere in the world, which merits thorough investigation. Second, neoliberal discourse underpins much reform internationally; England may consequently be seen as a relevant case study for attempts elsewhere to introduce choice in schooling provision. The typology is a heuristic device – it is not definitive, nor complete in that this is a vastly complex system and so attempts to explain it using such systems of analysis are rare. This is thus an exploratory exercise.