

Taking Stock: JEP, heading for a mature, middle age

As incoming Managing Editor, my first, and very pleasant task, is to thank Ivor Goodson and Stephen Ball for the execution of an idea, apparently first dreamed up in 1984 in Alabama, USA, for a journal of education policy.

Over its thirty plus years, papers in JEP have analysed the different global, national, local and institutional contexts of education policy, as the role of the state in providing education has been influenced by globalisation, privatisation and fragmentation. New non-state actors have emerged around the world, and authors in JEP have been assiduous in analyzing the effects of such changes on educational equity. Many education systems have diversified in terms of providers, at the same time as they have been subject to high stakes accountability systems, and the effects of these on teachers and students have been highlighted. Focusing on developments in particular countries, articles have also covered the relationships between education policy and one or more of race, gender, class, social mobility and social reproduction, learning needs, disability, religion and sexuality. They have included historical analyses and comparative studies. The profound changes to early years, schools, higher education, and, in many countries, the continued marginalization of vocational education have been consistent themes throughout the Journal's history. The roles of students and their parents also remain a key focus, as they are analysed, not simply as the rational choosers imagined by education policy-makers across the world, but as embodied, affective agents and subjects, acting and acted upon by national, local and institutional education policies.

From the Journal's beginnings, there has been an emphasis on theorized and scholarly analysis of policy. Its first volume printed in 1986, contained four issues with a total of 17 papers. The papers were mainly from the UK, but with contributions also from Australia and New Zealand. Themes included analyses of contemporary education policies (including the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative and the Swann Report in the UK, selective schooling, financing of education, pastoral care, the changing relations of accountability) as well as discussions around the processes of policy analysis.

Ten years later, by 1996, the issues had increased to 6 per year. The topics discussed included policies in relation to higher education, vocational education, families, teachers, indigenous people and sex and sexuality education. Theorized, critical analyses of the effects of marketisation (in particular), globalisation, and the role of education in producing particular subjectivities amongst students, parents and teachers are amongst the topics covered.

Another ten years: the 2006 volume of six issues covered policy on privatisation, policy borrowing, new managerialism, 'value-added' accountability measures, and policy around youth and young people. Marketisation, choice of school, HE policy, globalisation also continued as themes.

By 2016, the language of neoliberalism had clearly cemented itself into the titles, abstracts and narratives of the papers. Themes covered included human capital, non-state actors and

the changing role of the state in education, the effects of performativity and high stakes testing in schools, and the role of 'big' data. Again, accountability, marketisation, choice, globalisation, privatisation and profit-making, youth, HE, and policy networks and policy mobilities ('policy borrowing') remain as stable themes.

Last year, 2019, the papers have included some of the core themes I have identified here as well as transgender inclusivity, quantitative Critical Race Theory and whiteness, 'datafication', and sustainable education. The 2019 volume of JEP has six issues comprising of 40 papers and book reviews.

Since JEP's first edition to the present day, there have been some discernible shifts: more attention to the micro-level of policy enactment, and also to the various shifts experienced by higher education; more comparative studies; greater discussion of the varied forms of expression that neoliberal education policy takes in different historical, social and political contexts; and more attention to emotion, affect and subjectivity. These reflect shifts not only in education policy itself, but in the frames and lenses used for analysis within sociology and cognate disciplines. Authors from a far wider range of countries now submit papers to the Journal, although the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand are still dominant amongst those published. We continue to seek to publish analyses of contemporary education policy from a broad range of countries. Stephen and Ivor's words in the first editorial in 1986 remain pertinent today: 'In such a period of policy ferment, the need for well-informed policy debate becomes acute' (1986 p.1).

JEP has always had a specific personal resonance for me, as in 1992, my first article was published in it. It was a critique of a court ruling on the legitimacy of the transfer of a white child from a majority-Asian school to a majority-white school in response to the mother's dislike of the teaching of a nursery rhyme in Hindi. As we go into 2020, migration has ushered in increasingly heterogeneous populations in schools in countries in the Global North, with education systems perhaps no more able to effectively react to a clash of values over what should and should not be taught than they were thirty years ago. I would welcome more discussion in the Journal of the complex and contested relationship between state education, liberalism, multiculturalism, faith and secularism.

Whatever the topic however, I am aware that I inherit a journal that, as Ivor said in his editorial in the last issue, 'continues to interrogate policy...and to provide empirical evidence and scholarly analyses which "speak truth to power"' (2020 p. x). I am immensely grateful to Ivor as Founding Editor, and to Stephen as Founding and Managing Editor for leaving the Journal in such robust shape. I am also very pleased that Stephen has decided to stay on in the role of Consulting Editor. This means that the Editorial Team is now Meg Maguire, Stephen Ball, Sonia Exley, Patricia Bursch, Toni Verger, Greg Thompson, Taylor Webb, Kate Hoskins, and Andrew Wilkins. Many thanks to them, and to Chiz Dube, Prasanna Kanagaraj, Paula Berry and Helen Wheeler at Taylor and Francis; and finally, to JEP's reviewers and authors, all of whom contribute to setting and maintaining high standards for the Journal.

Carol Vincent
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