Education Recommendations for Inclusive Education from the National Arena in Spain. Less poetry and more facts

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Abstract

The transfer of global education policies occurs unevenly across contexts and fails to consider local identity and characteristics. These policy practices are wrapped up in political interests, power relations and ideological implications. Transferring global policies of inclusion in education to national education systems is a relevant example of this. Drawing on empirical data from 39 semi-structured interviews conducted with policymakers and bureaucrats from 17 regions in Spain, this article examines the transfer of UNESCO guidelines for inclusive education in favour of cultural diversity to national contexts. The analysis reveals that policymakers and bureaucrats recognise international guidelines and highlight education policies aimed at promoting access and participation for all in schools, in line with the UNESCO Framework for Action. However, they also consider local traditions based on compensation through policy structures that favour segregation. The analysis suggests that the transfer of international discourses to national contexts wrapped up in political interests, power relations and ideological implications and reinforce structures of inequality.

Keywords: *UNESCO, policy transfer, policy making, inclusive education, cultural diversity*

Introduction

The requirements of educational reforms under conditions of global interconnectivity and interdependence means that educational purposes previously established in specific countries have become international and subject to analyses and stipulations provided by international agencies. As the focus of educational policymaking appears to have shifted, the question now is how some international policies are establishing their own priorities—considering cultural and historical traditions—and whether the national and local systems are overwhelmed by policy dictates from agencies operating across and beyond nation-states (Rizvi, 2017).

The transfer of educational policies is one aspect of a growing internationalisation of education (Verger, Altinyenken and Novelli, 2018) in terms of common policy approaches that are known to materialise unevenly across contexts and that fail to consider re-contextualisation (Mikelatou and Arvanitis, 2021). These common policy approaches can focus on meaning or action and have political interests, power relationships and ideological implications (Farley, Leonardi and Donnor, 2021). Inclusive education is a relevant example of this (Slee, 2019).

Inclusion is recognised in the education policies of all countries (UNESCO, 2018). More specifically, in the 2030 Agenda (UNESCO, 2015), inclusion is proposed alongside equity and sustainable development as a basis for addressing the social, cultural and economic barriers limiting quality education and learning for all students rather than only for students with special educational needs. Inclusive education reflects values and principles and

focuses on challenging the ways in which education systems reproduce and perpetuate social inequalities concerning marginalised and excluded groups of students across a range of abilities, characteristics, developmental trajectories and socioeconomic circumstances. Hence, inclusion is inexorably linked with the principles of equality and social justice in both educational and social domains (Artiles, Harris-Murri and Rostenberg, 2006). Extensive research on inclusive education highlights that it benefits children (e.g. Arnaiz and Guirao, 2015; Ramberg and Watkins, 2020; Szumski and Karwowski, 2012). However, developing inclusion and equity within education systems should be based on an analysis of specific contexts (Ainscow, 2020).

In this article, we will highlight how policymakers' and bureaucrats' discourses transfer and manage international guidelines of inclusive education in line with the UNESCO Framework for Action in particular contexts and, more specifically, those focused on the inclusion of cultural diversity in education. Although international declarations represent important inclusion commitments, they require support from within national frameworks. In fact, several studies have demonstrated how inclusive education is widely misunderstood. A lack of consistency could impact negatively on the desired policy and school practice by generating wrong meanings of inclusive education based on assimilation and integration (D'Alessio, Farrell, and Cologon, 2018).

A perspective on inclusive education from UNESCO Framework has brought significant changes to education policy and school management and organisation (Diem, Browning and Sampson, 2020). Teachers are to act in new ways and form new partnerships with parents and other social actors to improve and safeguard the quality of learning, and pupils and parents have to 'assume responsibility' for taking individual control over the learning process in school. This means policies for educational change should become imperative, given

current conditions of inequality, injustice and marginalisation in schools, education systems and society (Farley, Leonardi and Donnor, 2021; Verger, Altinyenken and Novelli, 2018). However, we need to reflect on how to do this (Beach, 2017; Matthews, 2018), which, by the way, is our research problem. As different authors (e.g. Lakoff, 2002) have pointed out, the way in which policies are framed and constructed affects policy creation and implementation.

From 2017 to 2021, we conducted a project on cultural diversity discourses and practices in Spain and we structured it in three phases: (1) policy analysis; (2) exploration of schools with a high population of foreigners; and (3) ethnographic studies in several schools.

Using an analysis that includes the discourses of policymakers and bureaucrats in education about how they frame guidelines of inclusive education in line with the UNESCO Framework for Action in a particular context, the aim in this article is to investigate how policymakers and bureaucrats from a particular country transfer these guidelines to ensure the inclusion of cultural diversity in education. Two research questions have guided this analysis:

- How international guidelines for inclusive education from the UNESCO Framework for Action are adapted by policymakers and bureaucrats of education in the national arena?
- How do national policymakers and bureaucrats in charge of education manage guidelines for inclusive education in line with the UNESCO in their context to construct inclusion of cultural diversity policies?

Our aim is to learn how international orientations for inclusive education in line with the UNESCO Framework for Action are managed and framed by policymakers and bureaucrats in charge of education in Spain to promote the inclusion of cultural diversity in education.

Inclusive education policies as a global framework

In 1994, the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), signed by 92 countries, presented inclusion as a guiding principle in the development of education for all. This changed the course of the global agenda by focusing on inclusion policies. These countries committed to transferring this global agenda to their national contexts.

Recently, in the Incheon Declaration adopted at the World Education Forum, inclusion became a principle and a process: 'Inclusion and equity in and through education is the cornerstone of a transformative education agenda. No education target should be considered met unless met by all' (UNESCO, 2015:2). In the same vein, UNESCO (2016) identified this cornerstone as a reference for developing guided education policy in a context of diversity and democracy. The essence of strategic features such as identification and removal of barriers, while considering the presence, participation and achievement of all students, is a statement of political aspiration in a context where competitive societies and educational systems focused on the results accept the inequality as natural for pupils from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and ethnic minorities (Slee, 2019). More specifically, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Global Education Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2016) in SDG 4 aim to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'.

Currently, international guidelines for inclusive education —with terms such as 'inclusive education' and 'equity'—and policy purposes of prevention and intervention are considered to achieve specific policy goals that meet the educational needs and raise the achievements of all learners (Ramberg and Watkins, 2020). Nevertheless, studies from several countries show some

limitations and contradictions in policymakers' transfer of inclusive education policy:

- Inclusive education is used as an umbrella term for a variety of approaches characterising children's participation or exclusion in schools (Alves, 2019; D'Alessio, Farrell, and Cologon, 2018).

- New policies merge with old assumptions and new terms may replace old ones with little or no change in thinking behind the policy or subsequent practice, thus creating confusion as to policy purposes (Matthews, 2018; Ramberg and Watkins, 2020).

- Some countries independently of their cultural and local knowledge and experiences construct policies based on international guidelines of inclusive education (Duke et al., 2016; Ronning Haugen, 2011).

- Education policies designed to help disadvantaged students have the perverse effect of harming them by exacerbating the very problems they were intended to solve (Gottfried and Conchas, 2016; Liasidou, 2014; Matthews, 2018).

- A persistent focus on a narrow set of possible solutions to educational problems arises, in part because of the politics of distraction, which promote taken-for-granted ideas and notions to mask more troubling rhetoric. Thus, both problems and solutions relate to individual actors, symbolic gestures and practices that, while accepted, are rooted in white supremacy, cis-heteronormativity, or patriarchy, to name a few (Farley, Leonardi and Donnor, 2021).

Any transfer of orientations for inclusive education to national arenas it depends on particular political discourses and the interpretation(s) of inclusion (Alves, 2019) at both local and national education levels (Magnússon, Göransson and Lindqvist, 2019). Few studies, however, have highlighted the need to analyse the context of national education policy (Diem, Browning and Sampson, 2020;

Mizrav, 2021; Ronning Haugen, 2011). In this context, we are interested in investigating how guidelines for inclusive education in line with the UNESCO Framework for Action policy are framed in national arena through and by the voices of policymakers and bureaucrats by considering policies on inclusion of cultural diversity in education.

Theoretical framework: transferring inclusive education policies

According to Massey (2008), socio-spatial and material practices develop within the historical social-spatial relations of production, that is, within particular places. Thus, educational relationships are formed in specific spatial and temporal contexts. In this regard, places comprise stakeholders with local and global action space horizons (Verger, Altinyenken and Novelli, 2018) and policymakers and bureaucrats transfer orientations to policies into a particular context. This way of viewing the 'global' as local and specific is important as it emphasises locality and place as a meeting point for complex networks, social relations (Massey, 2008) and ideology. Ideology is pervasive and 'material'. In other words, governments and policies represent an essential and important contested space for reproducing and/or challenging policies that can normalise the status quo and reproduce existing power relationships (Farley, Leonardi and Donnor, 2021; Mikelatou and Arvanitis, 2021). Governing classes exercise symbolic power through policies by supporting the idea that schools include the variety of cultures forming the broader society, but they do so by also generally disconfirming the value of their cultures, which they include mainly to promote subjugation (e. g. Beach, 2017; Matthews, 2018). Concerning the inclusion of students from migrant or minority backgrounds, research shows that cultural diversity has posed one of the major challenges for schools (e.g. Garreta, 2014; Faas, Hajisoteriou and Angelides, 2014). This rethinking has been underpinned by national and international education policies, resulting in calls for more inclusive and fairer education, as is the case in Europe (UNESCO, 2016).

In a critical sense, and in specific terms, ideology exists materially in policies through the meaning of discourses, but it also reflects the dynamics of the reproduction model structuring the unconscious of policymakers, researchers, teachers, students and families (Ocampo, 2014). Using the terms introduced by Gramsci (1971), understanding discourses on inclusive education is part of culturally hegemonic forces turning the ideology of the dominant class into an active force to mold and incorporate the needs and interests of subordinate groups. Even countries that do legally acknowledge inclusive education can maintain structures that differentiate between population groups. The colonial past of European countries has often made its presence felt (Grosfoguel, 2013; Quijano, 2000), even in countries where inclusion has been recognised historically (Beach and Dyson, 2016; Beach, 2018). However, Spain has been a clearer example of this colonialism. A pattern of colonial power has affected all social spheres, and, therefore, education, thus perpetuating situations of oppression that continue to this day (Quijano, 2000).

Spain: research context

This study has been conducted in the decentralised Spanish school system. Decentralisation began in 1979, when the state curriculum granted some autonomy to the regional communities (Catalonia, Galicia, Andalusia, etc.) for local content. However, the most recent general common education laws have reintroduced common exams, thereby re-emphasising state jurisdiction and control over official knowledge. Education is provided through preschools and primary, secondary, upper-secondary, vocational and special schools. Although schools are generally public owned, private institutions now account for 32.9 %; of these, 25.5% are partially funded by the state (Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, 2019) and education expenditure depends on regional regulations. While education is compulsory from the age of 6 to 16, our focus in this study is on state primary education for children aged 6 to 12. However,

knowing the whole structure of the education system is important to understand the state of education.

Since the Spanish Civil War and Francoism, Spain's education system has been extremely traditional, emphasising direct teacher instruction, strong subject guidance and a low degree of pupil differentiation; all pupils are given the same material and they mostly work individually (Ronning Haugen, 2011). The country has developed education systems embodying various ways of dealing with disadvantaged children. In 1970, a law on general education considered that children with disabilities in the education system should be in special schools or in special classrooms in regular schools.

Concerning cultural diversity, Roma's illiteracy rate was about 55% in 1978. As a result, an agreement between the National Secretariat of Roma Apostolate, dependent on the Catholic Church, and the Ministry of Education and Science agreed to create 'bridging' schools for the vulnerable population. In the same vein, educational policy in the 1980s tried to alleviate the educational disadvantages of some students caused by their social or economic circumstances, which especially affected Roma children (Salinas, 2009). This covenant lasted until 1986, when the decision was finally made to enrol Roma children in ordinary schools (Llevot and Garreta, 2006). This mainstreaming process began in Spain with the 1983 Compensatory Education Decree, which established the right of pupils to receive help to compensate for possible family-related deficiencies if they were disadvantaged by 'their economic capacity, social level or place of residence'.

The 1990 Constitutional Law of the General Organisation of the Education System (LOGSE), based on a comprehensive school model, underscored respect for cultures and education in solidarity and cooperation. In line with the Council

of Europe's directives, it opened the door to intercultural education programs from the perspective of an education system that compensates for inequalities without parallel action. The international scenario began to exert considerable influence on Spanish policies after the Warnock Report (1978) in its original sense, which focused on the conceptualisations of special educational needs attending interaction between the individual and the context in which he/she lives. More specifically, in 1995, a decree on special educational needs recognised pupils' social and cultural context as a possible cause of special needs. This document reinforced the interactive meaning of the needs and promoted curricular adaptations for children with special support requirements. Later, the 2006 Education Act (LOE) and the 2013 Education Act (LOMCE), factoring in the Salamanca Statement (1994), made an important contribution to inclusion. Currently, according to UNESCO (2015), Spanish legislation, through the 2020 Education Act (LOMLOE), underlines the idea of 'a school for all', embracing diversity, inclusive education, human rights, pluralism and democracy. However, they all keep the term 'specific educational support needs' to identify children with special educational needs, that is, children with various forms of disability, learning difficulties, sociocultural disadvantages and an ethnic minority background, as well as gifted learners. Other decrees reinforce curricular adaptation only for labelled children and a common programme for other pupils, thus favouring homogenisation.

Spain, as other European nations, has experienced a migrant movement from other countries since the end of the 1990s (Portes and Aparicio, 2013). According to official statistics of 2020, up to 13.2% of students have foreign background, although figures vary enormously within and across different regions. Up to 80% of these students are currently in state education, placing new demands on the system and requiring changes in management and professionalism. Concerning management, these education policies and school practices are at an intersection between inclusion and equity policies on the one

hand, and competitiveness and excellence on the other (Verger, Fontdevila and Zancajo, 2017). In this vein, while quantitative data about results in schools and institutional practices are based on competence and efficiency (OECD, 2020), ideas about equity and inclusion tend to be secondary for educational administrators.

Despite the influx of these new ideas about inclusion into official philosophy, several indicators show that schools resist fundamental changes, as they continue with traditional teaching and curricula and restrict inclusion processes (e.g. Domingo, Pérez-García and Domingo, 2019; Echeita, 2013). Thus, the OECD-2019 report (2020) pointed out that the Spanish education system perpetuates a structural pattern of student exclusion and segregation that hinders access to inclusive education. In fact, a high percentage of children whose parents did not complete upper-secondary education do not reach this level either (Murillo and Martínez, 2019), which points to an extremely low intergenerational mobility in the education system for this group of students. In this context, the UNESCO (2015) idea of inclusion is really a standard category of laws and education policies for Spanish regions from 2017 to 2021, but they understand inclusion as assimilation and integration. This is a failure and misunderstanding of 'inclusion'.

This research maps policymakers' and bureaucrats' discourses about how they transfer and frame one of the current global perspectives of including cultural diversity in education. The goal is to learn how international guidelines for inclusive education from UNESCO Framework are managed in a national context. Our purpose is to open up areas to critically analyse the power implicit in political and institutional discourses.

This article examines whether analysing the transfer of international guidelines for national policy discourses on inclusive education and cultural diversity in Spain is valuable in other countries. We attempt to investigate this point with a study of the discourses of policymakers and bureaucrats in charge of education. Our aim is to learn how international guidelines for inclusive education from UNESCO Framework are considered in a national context attending to cultural diversity. Actions stemming from this theoretical position are not purely voluntary and there are close connections between space, place and the construction of social relations, practices, meaning and spatial identities.

Methodology

This research is based on a critical perspective with a dynamic view of change in which the dialectics between social structures and agency interplay in everyday educational action, language and practice (Banfield, 2015; Massey, 2008).

As global documents form the official discourse on inclusive education (OECD, 2020; UNESCO, 2016, 2018, 2020), policymakers and bureaucrats could construct particular meanings to foster commitment to the notion of universal public interest in their countries. We look at how policymakers and bureaucrats' discourses transfer global guidelines of inclusive education from UNESCO Framework in a particular country. Our interest lies in analysing the transfer policy on the inclusion of cultural diversity in education, underpinning that concern with questions on policies of participation in and access to educational practices for disadvantaged groups.

The research is part of a national research project in Spain on 'Cultural diversity in schools. Discourses, policies and practices' (CSO2017-84872-R) involving 17 researchers from the universities of Granada, Zaragoza, Cantabria, Lleida,

Girona, Balearic Islands, La Rioja and Alcalá de Henares that will conclude in 2021. Its aim is to explore how curricula and educational policy stakeholders balance and address inclusion and cultural diversity in educational policymaking. The first phase began by analysing legislation on the inclusion of cultural diversity in education in the 17 regional communities and two autonomous towns and conducting interviews with policymakers (policymakers) and bureaucrats. Surveys and ethnographies in schools completed the second phase. A deep analysis of different schools will allow to understand the interpretations that they make of legal guidelines.

Based on the first project phase, the focus in this article concerns the discourses of policymakers and bureaucrats of education from all regions in Spain on how they re-contextualise global guidelines for inclusive education from UNESCO Framework in terms of cultural diversity. In Spain, policymakers represent the Ministry of Education in each region and bureaucrats are permanent professional education staff (of the state) representing a branch of the Ministry of Education (i.e. supervisor; educational resource centre manager). They can be employed in two ways: a) some are chosen by the government; b) others access by curriculum.

This study is based on a design of semi-structured individual interviews (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009) that comprised 40 policy interviews: 14 for policymakers and 26 for bureaucrats. The policymakers mainly work for the directorate-general or provincial directorate for education in several regions. The bureaucrats are permanent professional education personnel (of the state) that are appointed by politicians to represent a branch in the Ministry of Education (i.e. supervision manager, manager at an educational resources centre). They can obtain their positions in two ways: a) some are chosen by the government; b) others access based on professional experience. They were selected using snowball sampling (Taylor, Bogdan and DeVault, 2015).

Table 1. Participants.

REGIONS	POLICYMAKERS (P)	BUREAUCRATS (B)	TOTAL
REGION 1 **(A)**		**1** Minors Area Technician	1
REGION 2 **(AR)**	**1** Managing Director	**1** Head of Service **1** Resource Center Director	3
REGION 3 **(CAN)**	**1** Managing Director	**1** Head of technical unit	2
REGION 4 **(CLM)**	**1** Managing Director		1
REGION 5 **(CyL)**	**1** Provincial Director	**1** Head of Service	2
REGION 6 **(CAT)**		**1** Resource Center Director **2** Head of Service	3
REGION 7 **(CCE)**	**1** Provincial Director	**1** Advisory technique	2
REGION 8 **(CME)**	**1** Provincial Director	**1** Head of Service	2
REGION 9 **(CM)**	**1** Deputy general manager	**2** Advisory technique	3
REGION 10 **(CFN)**	**1** Managing Director **1** Service Director	**1** Section chief	3
REGION 11 **(CV)**	**1** Managing Director **1** Deputy general manager	**4** Head of Service	6
REGION 12 **(PV)**		**1** Innovation Manager	1
REGION 13 **(EX)**		**1** Head of Service	1
REGION 14 **(IB)**	**1** Managing Director	**1** Head of Service	2
REGION 15 **(LR)**	**1** Deputy general manager	**1** Head of Service **1** General coordinator	3
REGION 16 **(AS)**	**1** Managing Director	**1** Education Counseling Technician	2
REGION 17 **(RMU)**		**1** Head of Service **1** Area Manager	2
TOTAL	**14**	**25**	**39**

The interviews were conducted by education researchers participating in the project from the different regions; one is the first author in this article. The interviewers established a rapport with their interviewees by phone first, and then in their institutional office when they were in the same region, or by phone again when the interviewees were in a different location. Interviews lasted

around 90 minutes. The interviews with key policymakers contained questions addressing the provision of inclusion of cultural diversity in education and its current implementation. We explored how policymakers and bureaucrats address policies to include cultural diversity in education based on the following aspects:

- The educational administration's theoretical approach to addressing and implementing inclusive education in primary schools
- Current objectives of cultural diversity policies in primary schools
- The evolution of discourses on education inclusion policies
- Actions performed (general programs, projects and actions) to address the inclusion of cultural diversity in education

All interviews were recorded, transcribed and then analysed. The identities of all respondents were protected using initials.

While this article draws heavily on the specific policy discourses of policymakers and bureaucrats to better understand how policies are transferred, it does so by elaborating on links to the broader socio-political context in which inclusion principles are adopted in country settings.

Given the interviewees' knowledge and years of experience, we listened to them carefully and respectfully. They contributed their perspective as key figures in educational policy. The interviews provided them with an opportunity to comment on their observations, experiences and perceptions of their world freely and in context with subjectivity gained from a long career. In ethnographic interviews, informants provide details on the issues initially raised and they also discover new topics (Spradley, 1979).

According to Spradley (1979, 59), an ethical attitude towards the context and the interviewee was essential during the process. We highlight three major aspects for ethnographic interviews: a) explicit purpose, whereby the interviewee and interviewer know the reason for the conversation, where it is heading; b) ethnographic explanations, whereby the interviewee is given the necessary information; and c) project explanations covering general research aspects. In this sense the role of the interviewer was important to facilitate the expression and the reflection in the interviewees.

Information analysis

Three researchers performed the analyses using content from transcribed interviews (Charmaz, 2006). Each researcher initially analysed the information collected based on the interview questions. Then, we discussed the extracted data, the main concepts we considered emerged from them and their interpreted meanings. We read each other's analyses and we then recoded and regrouped the data depending on how the policymakers and bureaucrats generally constructed their discourses on how they use international guidelines for inclusive education of cultural diversity in education. Next, we organised the information by coding it in terms of concepts, professionals, objectives, theoretical frameworks and actions. Categories emerged from deconstructing the multiple meanings in the responses. As the analysis was cyclical and continuously moved between the coding cycles, we recoded, re-categorised and returned to the data to follow new leads (Charmaz, 2006) using the Programme NVivo-12.

Results

When we analysed how policymakers and bureaucrats manage guidelines of inclusive education from UNESCO Framework, the discourses surrounding issues relating to the inclusion of cultural diversity in education in the

regional/state arena are varied and sometimes shared similarities. Policymakers and bureaucrats recognize the guidelines for inclusion expressed within UNESCO Policy Guidelines for Inclusive education (2009, 2018) as a reference for local inclusion policy on their discourses. However, more guidelines for inclusive education advocating and valuing cultural diversity are combined with local policy perspectives based on segregated approaches based on the compensation of special needs.

This combination of international guidelines of inclusive education from UNESCO Framework and local perspectives in local contexts could reflect how broader neoliberal influences on education have been interpreted (Beach, 2017; Liasidou, 2012; Matthews, 2018; Verger, Altinyenken and Novelli, 2018). In this context, aspects such as a closed curriculum do not allow everyone to participate. While more substantive references to manage guidelines for inclusive education from UNESCO Framework are evident for policymakers and bureaucrats, the transfer of international inclusion-related policies to the local culture is not obvious. A high-profile policy focused on recognising international educational guidelines from UNESCO Framework and failing to refer to carry out policies leading to inclusion for all (see Figure 1).

(1) Recognising the guidelines of inclusive education from UNESCO Framework as a reference to manage policy on inclusive education.
(2) Leading the transfer from inclusion guidelines of inclusive education from UNESCO Framework.
(3) Using superficial policy inclusion on local tradition focused on the integration and assimilation. Using policy inclusion from diversity as a category based on local tradition. A high number of iterations built on earlier policy work can be seen, through discourses managing the policy

of inclusive education from a local perspective based on diversity as a deficit.

(4) Combining international guidelines and local perspectives on inclusive education.

Figure 1. Spanish transfer of guidelines of inclusive education to national contexts (1).

In the next Figure we can again see how all the interviewees recognise the inclusive education guidelines in the UNESCO Framework as a reference for managing inclusive education policy. Nevertheless, all the participants bar one consider diversity as a deficit at the same time (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Spanish transfer of guidelines of inclusive education to national contexts (2).
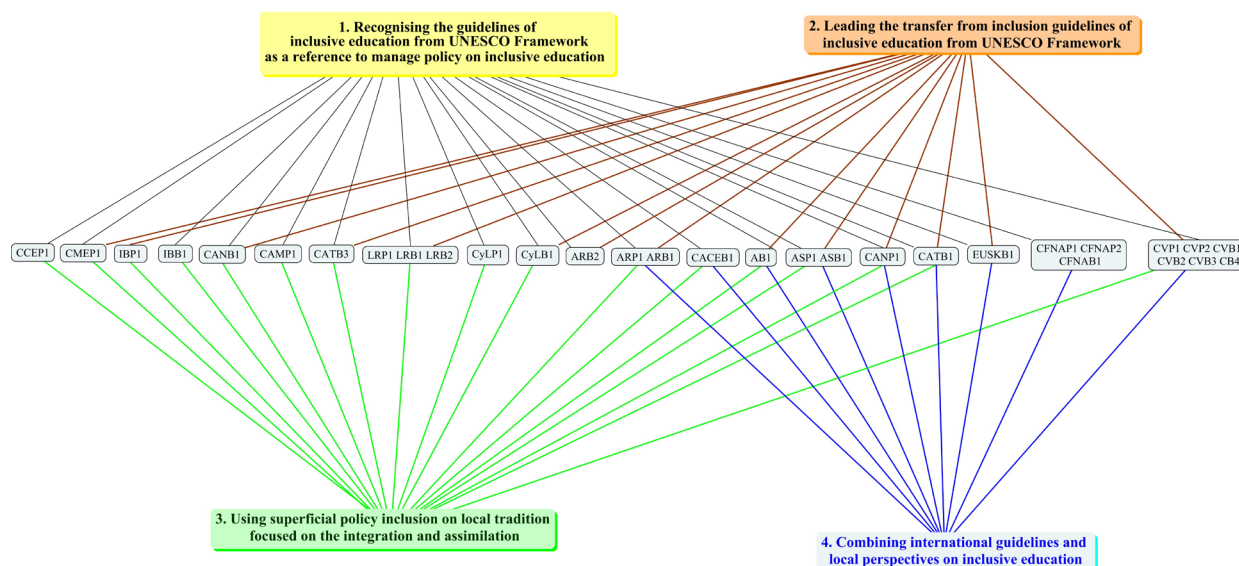
Principles of equity and quality are usually assumed

Guidelines for inclusive education from UNESCO Framework are a standard category of regional policymakers' and bureaucrats' voices. They consider this international perspective by transferring and recognising ideas such as diversity and equity, inclusive teaching practices and teacher education. There was a strong sense that guidelines for inclusion from UNESCO Framework influenced the voices of officials in all the regions.

Diversity and equity are considered common terms in the discourses of regional policymakers and bureaucrats and a reference to manage inclusive education guidelines (Assarson, Andreasson and Ohlsson, 2016). As one bureaucrat says, the 'principles of equity and quality are usually assumed' (CMB1). In accordance with the guidelines for Inclusive education from UNESCO Framework, these terms are considered to achieve given policy goals meeting all learners' educational needs and raising their achievements (Ramberg and Watkins, 2020). In this context, by transferring inclusive education guidelines, policymakers and bureaucrats use the term 'diversity' as a common aspect. One policymaker comments 'we do not use the term cultural diversity anymore' (ARP1). Following this idea, one bureaucrat expresses that, as far as he is

concerned, there is not a 'classified diversity' (CFNAB1), and another says that 'diversity is the normal state of life' (CMEB1).

Policymakers and bureaucrats also acknowledge that schools should respond to pupils' cultural diversity needs, recognise their identities and promote the participation of everyone when they say:

> /…/ I can teach with the best will in the world, but I have to teach Manuel, Pepe
> … and Manuel, Pepe, Antonio, Mohamed, Mahathir and Yasmina are six different
> realities I come across in my classroom /…/. (MEP)

They underline the potential and value of cultural diversity in the classroom. In this sense a bureaucrat said '[the] classroom is endlessly diverse … you take advantage of this potential and if you have pupils of three different nationalities, there are three diversities /…/'. (CANB1).

Moreover, they highlight the relevance of incorporating other cultures into the curriculum.

> /…/ It is important for pupils to feel they identify with the curriculum being
> taught … For example, when we talk about history, our only focus is Eurocentric
> and the history taught is only based on what has happened to us, and the other
> continents form part of history when Europe is involved with them /…/.
> (CATB1).

To address the identities of everyone, policymakers and bureaucrats point out how to manage them in the classrooms.

> /…/ This requires work in the classroom. The school tries to perform activities
> through methodologies that respond to diversity, that get everyone to participate,
> those that have lots of ability to progress in their studies and those that don't,

> whether this is for personal, contextual, family or cultural reasons, etc. /…/
> (IBP1).

Policymakers and bureaucrats emphasise policies connected with the need to recognise everyone, to listen to them, to incorporate their experiences in the classroom and to manage teaching practice from an interactive perspective. Policymakers and bureaucrats acknowledge that these policies mean teachers need to work in a different way and that education is key to achieving this purpose. They highlight the relevance of initial and continuing teacher education as a main line in their educational policy. Policymakers and bureaucrats recognise that teachers need to change how they work in the classroom. /…/ [Initial] and continuing teacher training is one of the priorities promoted to transition towards a shift in outlook on diversity. (ASP1)

Transforming to a neoliberal context and global inclusion policies has now significantly changed the way the educational policy and school management and organisation are viewed (Verger, Altinyenken and Novelli, 2018). Ideology has shifted toward teaching practice goals. Politicians have incorporated official global policy considerations addressing problems of the excluded groups in a homogenous school with a common curriculum created from a Western standard (Beach, 2018; Torres, 2009). Thus, teachers have to consider all students and their identity and culture. Consequently, policies related to teaching practices should provide knowledge and skills that are relevant and meaningful for each student's sociocultural context and future life (Jaffe-Walter and Villavicencio, 2021).

All the regulations we have designed stem from the United Nations
As well as recognising guidelines related to ideas such as diversity and equity, inclusive teaching practices and teacher education, policymakers and

bureaucrats consider other more specific actions. They underscore the importance of re-contextualising the perspective of inclusive education from UNESCO Framework to create legislation, achieved by considering the relevance of listening to society. One policymaker tells us that 'the first thing educational authorities must do, and I think we have done this, is to listen to society's needs' (ARB1). This should entail discussion and debate in which policymakers and society learn to listen to and respect one another. In this debate, policymakers and bureaucrats draw attention to UNESCO references in this educational legislation. Some examples are as follows.

> /…/ How do educational authorities make the society for which they are responsible work? … with regulations responding to an inclusive education…UNESCO points out the direction we should take and gives us some parameters. (ARB1)

As in other countries, legislation is interpreted by policymakers and bureaucrats as an important support to manage guidelines for inclusive education from UNESCO Framework (i.e. Alves 2019). Along these lines, one bureaucrat states.

> /…/All the regulations we have designed stem from the United Nations and signed agreements. These are regulations we comply with. They help you gain a different outlook on the education system and pupils. I believe this is the major challenge we now face in this region /…/. (ASP1)

The challenges of achieving universal inclusive education policies are stressed by official voices from several regions in Spain.
When policymakers and bureaucrats discuss how to consider guidelines for inclusive education from UNESCO Framework in the regions, besides

legislation, they highlight professional development and innovative projects as ways to achieve this.

They mention several policy actions related to training teachers. '/…/ It is one of the challenges we have' (CATB2). They put the emphasis on professional development in teacher training schools addressing methodology and from a reflective perspective

> /…/Teacher training in active methodologies to respond to everyone's needs and overcome mechanical textbook-based teaching practices and to know more about how to assess using these active methods /…/. (ARP1)
> /…/At teacher training schools, educational requirements focus on new methods, cooperative working, project-based work or how to work with skills /…/. (CATB1)

A reflective perspective is present for policymakers and bureaucrats as a relevant means of training (Jaffe-Walter and Villavicencio, 2021).

> /…/ I'm not signing up for a mindfulness or coaching course. That's different ... I have to reassess my educational practice because I can't teach a textbook, a curriculum, when that's not my situation in my class /…/. (AB1)

And they perform several policy actions related to this education of practicing teachers.

> /…/ This change of perspective in the teaching staff is the axis of the permanent training of teachers, so it is one of the priority lines that are promoted by the Ministry each year through work groups, seminars, courses /…/. (ASP1 ASB1). Policymakers and bureaucrats also consider innovative projects.

> /…/ The regional Ministry of Education often prioritises projects contributing to inclusive education at schools ... We foster innovative projects on cultural diversity while integrating all kinds of pupils /…/. (ARB2)

Transferring guidelines for inclusive education from UNESCO Framework has now significantly conditioned local education policy. Policymakers and bureaucrats consider a variety of actions to provide teaching practices that are relevant and meaningful for each student (Jaffe-Walter and Villavicencio, 2021).

The Integra2 programme is a success

We can see how the guidelines for inclusive education from UNECO framework has been understood in the local setting of Spain and what guidelines are like in several regions. However, policymakers and bureaucrats superficially established UNESCO discourses on inclusion by combining the preventive discourse on inclusive education with a compensatory perspective focused on diversity as integration and assimilation (Ramberg and Watkins, 2020). In Spain, there has traditionally been an overemphasized idea about cultural homogeneity.

The tendency is to promote individual educational solutions and teaching practices for some students (Jaffe-Walter and Villavicencio, 2021). A great number of policymakers' and bureaucrats' voices highlight policies to address diversity based on deficit or integration and assimilation education solutions. They demonstrate their responsibility in considering policies for inclusive education by underscoring special measures for special children. Politicians have incorporated official global policy considerations addressing the excluded groups' problems, rather than the systems they were being excluded from, or the processes and mechanisms of their exclusion (Beach, 2018). Thus, their voices

on policies for inclusive education are based on compensation. They stress structures like the special classroom, special human resources and special programs for foreign children and minorities, taking the homogenous level in regular classrooms as a reference (Ramberg and Watkins, 2020). However, as none are inclusive, they essentially demonstrate misunderstandings of inclusion. The role of policies related to special classrooms to meet foreign and minority children's needs is a common element in policymakers' and bureaucrats' discourses. Different kinds of classrooms are considered. Some receive children when they arrive in the country. Students in these classrooms are given the opportunity to acquire the Spanish language. The following excerpt shows the purpose of these classrooms.

> /…/ Language support classes for newcomers are for language immersion and attention to diversity... they manage to iron out the imbalance when the pupil arrives in the Spanish education system without knowing the language /…/. (CMEP1)

In other cases, policymakers and bureaucrats consider 'link classrooms' to compensate children's low academic level in various subjects. In the words of a policymaker 'the purpose of these classrooms—focused on facilitating access to curricular classes—is to help foreign pupils catch up with curricular competency ... and to provide curricular support' (ASTP1).

Sometimes, these special classrooms are justified to meet Spanish language and curricular support requirements.

> /…/ They are language and curricular support classrooms. They have two parts: on the one hand, the language immersion we mentioned and, on the other, curricular support. These make it possible for them to fully integrate in an ordinary classroom /…/. (ASP1, ASB1)

Similarly, policymakers and bureaucrats highlight special human resources to support these pupils. Professionals are present in their discourses to respond to children's requirements, individually or as a class group.

> /…/ There has been an increase in the number of people with a specialized professional profile addressing diversity out of all the teachers. In recent years, we have gone from having no guidance department or education specialists, nor counsellors or guidance units, to rolling out specialised educational guidance services /…/. (ASB1)

Policymakers and bureaucrats point out educational requirements related to addressing cultural diversity based on one curriculum for all in the local language. Consequently, to meet these children's requirements, they consider the need for special programs that are both part of the school's timetable and extracurricular. In some cases, these programs consolidate curricular support. Although these kinds of programs might be viewed as transitional, this is not usually the case. These programs tend to keep the same children in the same groups (Murillo and Martínez, 2019)

> /…/ The Educational Support Programme (PAE) mainly targets children with the worst results but who are also those we would describe ... as in a lower socioeconomic situation and who possibly joined our system a bit later /…/. (CMP1)

In other cases, these programs highlight the attention paid to these children in their free time.

> /…/ The Integra2 programme is a success. Its aim is to organise leisure time. University graduates in educational guidance, physical education and community

> service teaching assistants perform activities with these children outside school hours /…/. (CyLP1)

Despite a shift in ideology towards teaching practice goals for all, we can see how Spanish policymakers and bureaucrats maintain an overemphasised idea of teaching practices for some population groups (Arnaiz, 2019). This leads to the tendency to maintain policies on cultural diversity based on categorisation as a common thread in policymakers' and bureaucrats' voices. Several population categories and definitions pervade the discourses of policymakers and bureaucrats in the way Barton (1997/2006) mentioned decades ago.

> /…/ They are all the immigrants that don't know the language and with an achievement gap, Spaniards with an achievement gap and disadvantaged due to geographical, social and cultural conditions, minorities, unfavourable environments, social exclusion, seasonal fairground workers /…/. (CLP1)

They consider some foreign pupils as a diversity category, especially those with problems. A special reference in this respect is a tourist community in which a high percentage of the population is from other countries. In this tourism context, cultural diversity is interpreted as poverty.

> /…/ When we talk about cultural diversity at school, we have immigrants or foreigners or ethnic minorities ... all those pupils with social, educational, economic and cultural problems /…/. (IBP1)

> /…/ Cultural diversity is understood in a broad sense of the term and includes both ethnic minorities with their own culture, such as minorities and Roma. Immigrants with other cultures or languages /…/. (CANB1)

Therefore, policymakers and bureaucrats manage guidelines for inclusive education from UNESCO Framework but keeping 'others' as a category of children with special needs, thus reinforcing an underclass (Kramarczuk and Tefera, 2017) and special education solutions, which implies a misunderstanding and misapplication of the concept of inclusion itself.

Diagnosing in order to get more resources for inclusion

This article aims to render an account of policymakers' and bureaucrats' voices on the transference of guidelines for inclusive education from UNESCO Framework in certain countries. It has progressed by describing and analysing how policymakers and bureaucrats managed guidelines for inclusive education in education in particular contexts. We can see two perspectives in this category. The first concerns accepting UNESCO discourse on inclusive education and the second, a local historic understanding of inclusive education policies by transferring guidelines from UNESCO Framework.

Inclusive education becomes the core value of democracy and an ideal of human values (Biesta, 2015), motivated by a globalised world (Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou, 2011), and it is transferred to policies almost uniformly without knowledge of the local context (Mikelatou and Arvanitis, 2021; Slee, 2019). It seems that when it is applied misunderstandings arise about what inclusion actually is. Examples show how some global discourses on inclusive education guidelines from UNESCO are present in both the voices of regional policymakers and bureaucrats in Spain. However, there is hardly any critical reflection. Instead, following UNESCO (2015, 2020), policymakers and bureaucrats highlight inclusive education guidelines as a reference with only a partial connection to inclusion policies between international and national spaces. Consequently, emphasis on the most comprehensive dimension on ordinary education responses to children was muted (Verger, Altinyelken and

Novelli, 2018). Policymakers and bureaucrats from different regions seem to misunderstand inclusive education. These discourses on policies of inclusion are often accompanied by mainstreaming ideas involving special actions and segregation (Arnaiz, 2019; Barton, 1997/2006; Liasidou, 2012; Slee, 2019).

> /…/ We need to identify and diagnose in order to get more resources for inclusion. (IBB1)

> /…/ Special classrooms include rather than exclude because the style of teaching with children outside the ordinary classroom is a style that works /…/. (AB1)

Despite international support for inclusion, stemming from work on the UNESCO Salamanca Statement, and the recent revalidation of this agreement, there is still considerable discrepancy in policy support for inclusive education in the voices of national/state education policymakers and bureaucrats.

Arguably, the OECD's more neoliberal logic has contributed to these discrepancies at an international level (Mikelatou and Arvanitis, 2021). Policymakers' and bureaucrats' voices have genuinely embraced policies on inclusion based on UNESCO guidelines for diversity and equity and inclusive teaching practices while considering the relevance of teacher education. However, they lead to policies based on organisational and teaching practices resulting from differentiation as exclusion. Consequently, policies on inclusive education are considered partially and with contradictions.

> …The ONU tells us where we have to go, it sets parameters. We make regulations, we say what specific measures teachers have to apply, we train them... we give them specialised resources... and we teach them how to use them. (ARP1).

According to Massey (2008), local situations need to be understood in relation to a more general history and traditions of law and hegemony. Places comprise stakeholders with local and global action space horizons (Verger, Altinyenken and Novelli, 2018). The transfer of guidelines for inclusive education produces and contextualises the historical social relations of production, and also their connections to local identities and actions, related to a background of special education mainstreaming in Spain. From this perspective, the transfer of inclusive education from UNESCO Framework is a result of connections between space, place, time and the construction of social relations, practices, meaning and spatial identities. No such connections are present in the data. Places are concrete, lived and experienced realities formed by spatial and material practices. Policies based on a cultural homogenisation perspective in Spain are present when policymakers and bureaucrats talk about policies on the organisation of inclusion.

> /…/ Primary schools are working intensively with educational measures and attention to diversity that are usually included in their educational project for the school. And they do not deviate from the inclusive regulatory framework. In other words, there are resources in the form of specific professionals, such as therapeutic pedagogy teachers, there are early intervention teams, etc. /…/ (CMEP1).

Although Spanish policymakers and bureaucrats discuss guidelines for inclusive education from UNESCO Framework, their response also stems from a perspective of unawareness by mentioning policies for differentiated practices for some groups of children. According to Gramsci (1971), this kind of differentiation seems to be normalised. Policies based on special classrooms differentiate teaching practices for diversity as an excluded category and as a culturally and historically constructed metaphor for agency, representation,

identity and power (Verger, Altinyenken and Novelli, 2018). It has been a strong aim in the past (Arnaiz, 2019).

Discussion

By transferring inclusive education guidelines from UNESCO Framework, policymakers' and bureaucrats' voices denote a confluence of institutional routines and structures within a historical culture. Originating from capitalist modes of production and their inherent hegemony, they will most likely hinder empowerment and change by reproducing patterns of injustice, through consent to the status quo (Gramsci, 1971). Thus, the way in which policies are framed and constructed affects policy creation and implementation (Lakoff, 2002). This has long-term economic and social consequences, not only for those individuals and groups, but also for the rest of society (Kramarczuk and Tefera, 2017; Mikelatou and Arvanitis, 2021; Verger, Altinyenken and Novelli, 2018).

As in other studies (see, e.g. Mikelatou and Arvanitis [2021]; Ramberg and Watkins [2020]), this article enables us to see how governments and policies represent essential and important spaces for reproducing capitalist production relations (also Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Educational policies normalise the status quo and reproduce its existing power relations (Gramsci, 1971). We can see how some orientations for inclusive education still depend on special neo-traditional educational knowledge reproducing exclusion. Despite language and terminology changes, the meanings are similar to others. New and old policy discourses have merged (Mikelatou and Arvanitis, 2021).

Concerning the transfer of guidelines for inclusive education from UNESCO Framework, data suggest the local policy frameworks associated with inclusive education of cultural diversity have catalysed some connections of both global educational objective and associated terms (Massey, 2008). Firstly, by transferring guidelines for inclusive education to local contexts, policymakers

and bureaucrats assume the perspectives of international and global objectives (Alves, 2019; Duke et al., 2016; Farley, Leonardi and Donnor, 2021). Secondly, policymakers and bureaucrats use international orientations to lead local policies (Alves, 2019; Ramberg and Watkins, 2020; Ronning Haugen, 2011) without considering conditions of the local contexts. Thirdly, when they have to make a proposal to structure it, policymakers and bureaucrats underline policies based on their experiences accomplishing the exact opposite (Gottfried and Conchas, 2016; Slee, 2019). Fourthly, there are contradictions and ambiguities in their discourses that can often be traced to formal relationships and 'normalised' educational policies based on performativity (Farley, Leonardi and Donnor, 2021; Mikelatou and Arvanitis, 2021). In this way, the hegemonic system seems to limit the ways of thinking and talking about global policies of diversity.

Though policymakers' and bureaucrats' voices about educational policies are dominated by the rhetoric of inclusive education, exclusion persists in their discourses due to entrenched exclusion policies (Alves, 2019; Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou, 2011; Farley, Leonardi and Donnor, 2021). Policies that accept and reinforce homogenisation in the education system place some individuals and groups at risk of becoming part of a social underclass. Social power relationships are at play here, without overcoming the division of labour that has developed in societies with a strong differentiation between policymakers and professionals, families, communities and between policies of education for all in global and national spaces.

The results show that the hegemonic structure (Gramsci, 1971) is common in policymakers' and bureaucrats' discourses when transferring guidelines for inclusive education from UNESCO Framework. They are unconscious of the reproduction and they reproduce the unconscious as a component part of the

cultural hegemonic forces that, in order to shape and integrate the needs and interest of subordinate groups, transform the ideology of the dominant class into an active force.

This article explores how guidelines for inclusive education from UNESCO Framework are managed in a regional context, in a fashion that makes it difficult to address policies connecting education, cultural diversity and equality without critical reflection. To what extent does this stem from a failure to take the procedural reflection from a global to a local level? In our view, these difficulties are linked to policies and structures in schools and society, hierarchy, and power relationships that: (a) position an education discourse developed by an organisation of economic development for their own interest at the local point of education policy; and (b) badly equip education leaders with contextualisation policy skills. They do not build on skills such as reflection, action and research to address the problems of education systems in which some groups of children are being excluded, nor do they address the processes and mechanisms of their exclusion (Beach, 2018).

Recognising conflicting perspectives in policymakers' and bureaucrats' voices when transferring guidelines for inclusive education does not have to involve relinquishing hope for change. It is evident across regions that what was actually transferred was a deeply contradictory idea of inclusion, and when they have to explain how to achieve this through local policies, they combine this perspective with old ones (Farley, Leonardi and Donnor, 2021). Understanding what is happening with interactions in global and local places is crucial. We argue that, while research and debate on inclusive education are important, both are insufficient without analysing the context of national education policy (Farley, Leonardi and Donnor, 2021; Rizvi, 2017; Verger, Altinyenken and Novelli, 2018). Any interpretation of inclusive education is

necessarily situated within a general education policy. However, it is worth recognising that misunderstandings of inclusion need to be addressed and 'segregation' should not be misinterpreted as inclusion. Political interpretation(s) of inclusive education, resource allocation and political discourse on both local and national educational levels are important to understand the concretisation of global discourses (Magnússon, Göransson and Lindqvist, 2019).

Concluding remarks

The argument is often made that global frameworks are re-contextualised in national settings, sometimes following global directives and sometimes diverging from them (Cowen, 2006; Rizvi, 2017), by placing the data from the different regions side-by-side we can see a particular kind of engagement. The value of having an in-depth discussion and listening to varying positions with respect and an open mind should be promoted to consider local history and meaning. It might contribute to considering how global hegemonic discourses on education purposes and governance should be interpreted, resisted and negotiated. The global mobility of policies, people, ideas and media has developed in ways that are uneven and unequal. While inclusivity is seen as one of the precepts of participatory school management reforms, some elements of these policies on how to ensure equitable participation of children from different cultures are unclear in their policy local context. In the same sense, this research study conducted in Spain has some limitations arising from the fact that different regions with particular context must follow the same legislative guidelines, which are common for the whole country. We could talk about institutional pressures to conform to discourses, to certain expressions and ideological markers when regions have to adhere to the policy agendas of the country.

Studies such as the one proposed in this article are important as they investigate how international orientations for inclusive education are conveyed in local contexts. Such analyses have become part of a global trend in the field of education, and the research presented here may offer some insights and valuable empirical evidence for other countries to reflect on the transfer process of these education policy changes in their local contexts.

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