

EDUCATION MARKETS

International Seminar

Organizers: Georges Felouzis and Agnès van Zanten

University of Geneva/FAPSE/GGAPE Geneva Group of Analysis of Educational Policies
and
RAPPE – Network of Multidisciplinary Policy Analysis

Geneva, March 13-14, 2009

Problematic

The existence of *education markets* is currently a subject of debate among sociologists as well as among policy-makers. This question, that arose as the result of recent changes in world educational systems, presents real conceptual challenges to sociologists and, more generally, to researchers in the field of education. The problematic status of the concept of “educational markets”, at least in French research, is attested to by an almost systematic usage of quotation marks in the literature. However, the sociological imagination of researchers has been fertile to take into account competitive processes and to analyse them from different theoretical and empirical perspectives: sociology of regulation (state markets, quasi-markets), sociology of organisations (competitive interdependence between schools), economic sociology (competition arenas, education quality markets). However, formal uses of the concept are not yet truly established and debates about the realities of these markets and their consequences as well as about the relevant theoretical concepts to study them are far from being closed. The purpose of this conference, organised jointly by the University of Geneva and the RAPPE Network, is to clarify these debates and to give more visibility to on-going research work on this theme in various countries.

An object at the intersection of multiple disciplinary and thematic domains

First, it is important to note the difficulties that sociologists encounter in defining and thinking about the notion of education markets, whose hybrid character transcends disciplinary boundaries and usual theoretical references. The concept of market is first of all an economic concept, and its use in sociology is not without approximation. Applied in a naïve fashion, it comes to include all of the phenomena related to consumers’ choices and competition between providers; used in a more restricted manner, as in neo-classical economics, it becomes ineffective, as the concept for economists is inseparable from regulation by price (François 2008). Therefore, sociologists have either chosen to use the term market in a metaphorical way (thus, the quotation marks) or substitute for it other terms, more rooted in the sociological tradition such as, interdependence; yet at other times, they have established it within the heterodox frame of economic sociology, resorting to the notion of markets of quality. These choices reflect varying theoretical and empirical perspectives, but also the displacement of boundaries, what can be called a ‘new alliance’ between sociology and economics.

It is also within major sociological fields that boundaries have become blurred. Studies on education markets use concepts from urban sociology simultaneously with those of the sociology of education because the analysis of educational markets inevitably entails that of changes in the structure and dynamics of contemporary cities (Donzelot 2004). At the same time, research on parental choices brings together the sociology of family and of education. Actually, the detailed analysis of how family choices are constructed and negotiated encourages fieldwork on a relatively little explored domain by both of these sociological fields, that is, educational practices within families, notably those of middle and upper class families (Reay 1998; Lareau 2003). At the same time, analyses of modes of regulation of education markets through school maps, academic or social or ethnic quotas, or dialogue and negotiation between schools have led sociologists of education to focus, like policy sociologists and political scientists, on policy instruments (Hoods 2007; Salamon 2002; Lascoumes and Le Galès 2004; Buisson-Fenet 2006, 2008), and, more generally, on the “bureaucratic revolution”, that is, on new relations between state and market within the education field (Woods and Bagley 1996; Le Galès and Scott 2008).

State policies and actors' strategies

As we know well, sociological objects of study are constructed by a subtle interaction between sociological traditions and social reality. Concerning education markets, it is primarily the emergence of new policies promoting market mechanisms in the field of education that have encouraged research on this topic (Maroy 2006). In the 1980s, conservative American and British governments, drawing on theories of public choice (Chubb & Moe 1998), encouraged reforms aimed at reducing the alleged inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the bureaucratic management of schools by increasing their autonomy as well as parental choice (Glennerster 1991; Ball 1993; Uchitelle 1993; *American Journal of Education*, 2005). Similar reforms have also been implemented in various European countries for over twenty years (Mons 2007). In France, the 2007 reform of procedures that limited parental choice is also part of this general movement (van Zanten and Obin 2008).

Despite their powerful effects, it is important not to reduce these reforms to the spread of the liberal ideology and to the educational policies it inspired. Choice policies have been developed in response to changes in the educational strategies of the middle classes. The latter were the first to take advantage of the opening of educational competition (Turner 1960) that was encouraged by the expansion and democratization of secondary education in the post-war period, but from the 1970s onwards, as the result of changes in economic, social and academic spheres, they have become less confident in comprehensive school systems. School choice, especially within urban education systems, has become for them a new form of “social closure,” permitting access to new social positions and limiting competition from members of the working classes (Ball 2003; *Education et sociétés* 2004; van Zanten 2007).

These policies also interact with the strategies of schools. In many countries, and especially in metropolitan contexts, the latter had anticipated policies increasing their autonomy through the development of competitive strategies allowing them to cope with a declining demography and to limit the effects of the massive arrival of students from the working classes and from ethnic minorities in secondary education. These strategies, concerning recruitment and selection procedures as well as educational provision, have a significant impact on the internal organisation of schools. They also produce important effects at the local level with respect to hierarchies, segregation and inequalities among schools (Hugues and Lauder 1999; Felouzis 2005; *Revue Française de Pédagogie*, 2006).

2. Four questions about education markets

The aim of this conference is to bring together researchers working on education markets in order to confront different research perspectives and results. Four main topics are proposed for presenters but papers can combine several of them depending on their subject.

The definition and functioning of education markets

Education markets take various forms depending on national traditions and education policies (Maroy 2006; Meuret 2007). In some countries, such as Belgium or the Netherlands, school autonomy and parental school choice are constitutional rights reflecting a political, religious and social heritage (Vanderberghe 1997; Karsten 1999). In others, as in the UK, markets have been created by education policies that purposefully encourage competition among schools and parental choice to improve the performance of the education system presented as “fossilized” by uniformity and bureaucracy. In France, unofficial and opaque educational markets were at work in many areas before the recent reform and were produced by middle class parents and schools managing to work previous official rules to their advantage (van Zanten and Obin 2008). These different models can be an object of analysis for economists and sociologists as well as for political scientists.

These contrasting situations necessarily have an impact on the nature and functioning of education markets that can be explored theoretically and empirically. What consequences do different national systems have for the definition of educational markets? Should we define them only as exchanges of educational goods whose provision is defined and regulated by the state, as in the concept of quasi-markets (Adnett and Davies, 1999)? Should we focus on competition for clients as well as for human and financial resources as an ordinary component of school organisations (Briand and Chapoulie, 1993) whose importance can be exacerbated by certain demographic, social and institutional configurations (Gewirtz *and al.* 1995; Broccolichi and van Zanten 1997; *Revue Française de Pédagogie* 2006)? Should we focus on the specific nature of this good, education, whose quality is always uncertain and difficult to measure by families (van Zanten 2007) and analyse it as a “singular” product (Karpik 2007; Musselin and Paradeise 2002; Musselin 2005; Felouzis and Perroton, 2007)?

Education markets, strategies of families and strategies of institutions

As education markets are not only shaped by political decisions, but also by actors' strategies, especially those of families and schools, presentations can also address the factors that influence these strategies. Parental strategies can be studied from different perspectives: individual aims concerning economic and social advantages of educational credentials and trajectories or personal well-being and happiness, individual values, especially concerning social and ethnic mix in schools or individual economic, cultural and social resources (van Zanten 2006; Poupeau 2008). The questions of parental access to information (from official statistics to “reputations” and to advice from education professionals), and parental “interpretative work” and judgments can also be the object of analyses. The links between parental residential and school strategies may also be addressed in proposals (François and Poupeau 2008; van Zanten 2007).

Proposals for communication can also focus on schools and on the impact of local contexts on dynamics of school competition, for instance, on variations linked to the density of school provision, to the accessibility of schools or to hierarchical differences among them (Barthon and Monfroy 2005). They can take into account resources that are at each institution disposal, especially its “reputation capital”, usually strongly related to pupil

composition and academic results, but also its degree of internal organization, which determines the elaboration of collective strategies. Proposals could also explore the interactions between school and parental strategies and between actors' strategies and administrative regulations as well as political discourses, which vary strongly not only among national contexts, but also among localities, even in countries with a strong tradition of centralisation (Maroy and van Zanten 2007).

What regulation for which education markets?

What role do educational policies play in the creation and the functioning of education markets? What role do they play in the regulation of these markets? National situations can be located on a continuum from those characterized by total free choice of schools to those where there is no possibility for choice (Maroy 2006; Mons 2007; van Zanten and Obin, 2008). In all cases, education markets are the result of educational policies. Either in an explicit fashion, for instance, when competition among schools and free choice are considered as means for greater effectiveness and equity or in an implicit way, when regulation policies, because of their unintended effects and because of actors' capacity to work the system to their advantage, in fact, participate in the creation and reproduction of markets. Proposals could address these questions from the point of view of principles of justice: according to which principle should we limit school choice when education remains the prerogative of parents? On what basis can public authorities pretend to be more legitimate than families in defining what is best for a child? They can also analyse educational markets in terms of equity and equal access to educational goods, irrespective of place of residence, and the role of public authorities on ensuring similar levels of academic, social and ethnic mix between schools (Maurin 2004).

These policies can also be analysed from the point of view of concrete practices of policy-makers and administrative actors (Dutercq 2005a). How do various policy configurations (for instance, those that integrate private education in existing regulation policies and those that do not) and their interaction with differentiated local contexts restrain or enable the daily actions of administrative and political officials? How are pupils effectively allocated to schools and what is the role of administrative procedures and of counselling and selection in schools? How are other resources allocated? Papers could also address the ethics of local officials and head teachers who are central figures in educational markets. Do they consider themselves as bureaucrats applying pre-existing rules (Laforgue 2005) or as managers driven by performance indicators? What definitions of the common good, of social mix and equity inform and are used to justify their decisions (Dutercq 2005b; Ben-Ayed 2008)?

Consequences of education markets

Finally, papers could also address the consequences of education markets from an individual's point of view (instrumental returns from choice conceived as an educational investment, degree of satisfaction of students and their parents, effects of markets on sociability patterns among students etc.) as well as from a collective point of view (effects on school effectiveness, on social, ethnic and economic segregation, on the production and reproduction of educational inequalities). Research seems to be scarce on some individual dimensions. Do parents who can choose have more favourable opinions about schools and about the education system, do they participate more in the collective functioning of schools, as is suggested by some studies on private schools (Coleman and Hoeffler, 1987)? What are the effects of school choice on academic careers, but also on students' well-being and on relationships among peers?

From a collective point of view, following the famous Coleman report (1966), research studies have for a long time, in the American context, and more recently in Europe, been interested in the relationship between urban segregation and school segregation. Several types of effects of educational markets have been studied such as that of schools on urban social differentiation (Butler and Robson 2003; Oberti 2007; Zoïa 2009) and of urban segregation on social and ethnic concentration in schools (Trancart 1998; Felouzis *and al.* 2007), and on their internal organization (Payet 1997; van Zanten 2001). The effects on the effectiveness and equity of educational systems have been examined in surveys of the literature (Meuret, Broccolichi & Duru-Bellat 2001) and in recent studies based on national and international data (Gorard 1993; Hugues and Lauder 1999; Mons 2007), but these should be linked to the analysis of enactment of policies and social dynamics at national and local level.

3. Seminar organisation

Conditions of submission and selection of proposals

Proposals for papers, in English or French, of maximum one page, including bibliographical references, should be sent exclusively by email to Georges Felouzis (Georges.Felouzis@unige.ch and Barbara.Fouquet-Chauprade@unige.ch) and to Agnès van Zanten (agnes.vanzanten@sciences-po.fr) by **December 19, 2008**. Authors should present their subject and theoretical approach, their samples or case studies, their research methods and the sources that they draw on if it is not an empirical work.

Proposals will be examined by members of the organizing committee of Geneva and of the scientific committee of Rappe. Each proposal will be evaluated by two experts, the organisers having a final say in case of diverging evaluations. The results of the selection process will be announced on **January 23, 2009**.

Dissemination of papers

Selected candidates will have to send their papers by **February 27, 2009** at the latest. In order to limit the time of presentations and facilitate discussion among participants and with the audience, which will be composed of researchers, students and some policy-makers, printed texts will be available on the day of the conference. They will also be available on the Rappe website.

There are no projects for publication of the conference papers as a whole but some of them might be selected for a book or a special journal issue.

4. References

Adnett N., Davies P., "Schooling quasi-Markets: Reconciling Economic and Sociological Analyses", *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 47(3), 1999, 221-234.

American Journal of Education, "School Choice: Public Education at a Crossroad," n° 111, 2005.

Ball S., "Education Markets, Choice and Social Class: the market as a class strategy in the UK and the USA," *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 14(1), 1993, 3-19.

Ball S. *Class Strategies and the Education Market: The middle classes and social advantage*. Londres, Routledge Falmer, 2003.

Barthon C., Monfroy B., « Illusion et réalité de la concurrence entre collèges en contexte urbain : l'exemple de la ville de Lille », *Sociétés contemporaines*, 59-60, 2005, 43-65.

Ben-Ayed C., « Mixité sociale et mixité scolaire : mots d'ordre mobilisateurs ou euphémisation de la question sociale ? » in C. Ben-Ayed, *Education, territoire et société*, Habilitation à Diriger des Recherches, Paris, Sciences Po, septembre 2008.

Bosetti L., "School Choice: Public Education at a Crossroad," *American Journal of Education*, 111, 2005.

Briand J. P., Chapoulie J. M., « L'institution scolaire et la scolarisation : une perspective d'ensemble », *Revue française de sociologie*, 34, 1993, 3-42.

Broccolichi S., van Zanten A., « Espaces de concurrence et circuits de scolarisation. L'évitement des collèges publics d'un district de la banlieue parisienne », *Annales de la recherche urbaine*, 75, 1997, 5-17

Buisson-Fenet H., « Rationalisation gestionnaire et éthiques professionnelles : le cas d'un logiciel de gestion dans l'Education Nationale » in V. Boussard, *Au nom de la norme. Les dispositifs de gestion entre normes organisationnelles et normes professionnelles*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2006.

Buisson-Fenet H., Le Naour G. *Les professionnels de l'action publique face à leurs instruments* Toulouse, Octarès, 2008.

Butler, T., Robson, G., *London Calling: The middle classes and the remaking of inner London* Oxford, Berg, 2003.

Chubb J., Moe T., « Politics, Markets, and the Organization of Schools" *American Political Science Review*, 82, 1998, 1065-1087.

Coleman J. et al., 1966, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, Washington : US Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Coleman, J.S., Hoffer, T.B. *Public and Private Schools*, New York, Basic Books, 1987.

Donzelot J., « La ville a trois vitesses : gentrification, relégation, péri-urbanisation », *Esprit*, Mars-Avril 2004.

Dutercq Y. *Quelles régulations pour les politiques d'éducation?* Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2005.

Dutercq Y. « Les chefs d'établissement entre rationalisation moderniste, contraintes culturelles et désir de justice », *Politiques et management publics*, 23-1, 2005, 125-135.

Education et sociétés, « Les classes moyennes, l'école et la ville : la reproduction renouvelée », (dir. A. van Zanten), 14(2), 2004.

Felouzis G., « Performances et 'valeur ajoutée' des lycées : le marché scolaire fait des différences », *Revue française de sociologie*, 46(1), 2005, 3-36.

Felouzis G., Liot F., Perroton J., *L'apartheid scolaire*, Paris, Point seuil, 2007.

- Felouzis G., Perroton J., « Les « marchés scolaires » : une analyse en termes d'économie de la qualité », *Revue française de sociologie*, 48(4), 2007, 693-722.
- Felouzis G., Perroton J., « Repenser les effets d'établissement : marchés scolaires et mobilisation », *Revue française de pédagogie*, 159, 2007.
- François P. *Sociologie des marchés*, Paris, A. Colin, 2008.
- François J-C., Poupeau F., « Les déterminants socio-spatiaux du placement scolaire. Essai de modélisation statistique appliquée aux collèges parisiens », *Revue française de sociologie*, 49(1), 2008, 93-126.
- Gewirtz, S., Ball S. and Bowe, R., *Markets, Choice and Equity in Education*, Buckingham, Open University Press, 1995.
- Glennerster H., "Quasi-Markets for Education?", *The Economic Journal*, 101(408), 1991, 1268-1276.
- Gorard, S., Fitz, J. "The more things change... The missing impact of marketisation", *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 19(3), 1993, 365-375.
- Hoods C. *The Tools of Government in the Digital Age*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Karpik L., *L'Economie des singularités*, Paris, Editions Gallimard, 2007.
- Karsten S., « Parental choice and the competition between schools in the Netherlands », *La Revue Tocqueville*, vol. 20, n° 2, 1999, p. 101-109.
- Laforge D., *La ségrégation scolaire : l'Etat face à ses contradictions*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2005.
- Lareau A., *Unequal Childhoods. Class, Race and Family Life*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2003.
- Lascoumes P., Le Galès P. (dir.), *Gouverner par les instruments*, Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 2004.
- Lauder, H. and Hughes, D. *Trading in Futures. Why markets in education don't work* Buckingham, Open University Press, 1999.
- Le Galès P., Scott A., « Une révolution bureaucratique britannique ? Autonomie sous contrôle ou « free markets, more rules » », *Revue française de sociologie*, 49-2, 2008, 231-267.
- Maroy C., *École, régulation, marché. Une comparaison de six espaces scolaires locaux en Europe*, Paris, PUF, 2006.
- Maroy C., van Zanten A., « Régulation et compétition entre établissements scolaires dans six espaces locaux en Europe », *Sociologie du travail*, 49, 2007, 464-478.
- Maurin E., 2004, *Le Ghetto français : enquête sur le séparatisme social*, Paris : Seuil.
- Meuret D., *Gouverner l'école, une comparaison France /Etats-Unis*, PUF, 2007.
- Meuret D., Broccolichi S., Duru-Bellat M., « Autonomie et choix des établissements scolaires : finalités, modalités, effets », *Les Cahiers de l'Iredu*, 62, 2001.
- Mons N., *Les nouvelles politiques éducatives. La France fait-elle les bons choix ?*, Paris, PUF, 2007.

Musselin C. Le marché des universitaires : France – Allemagne – Etats-Unis, Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 2005.

Musselin C., Paradeise C., "Le concept de qualité : où en sommes-nous ?", *Sociologie du travail*, 2002, 44(2), pp. 255-260.

Oberti M., *L'école dans la ville. Ségrégation – mixité – carte scolaire*, Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 2007.

Payet J. P., *Collèges de banlieue : ethnographie d'un monde scolaire*, Paris, Méridiens Klincksieck, 1997 (2e éd.).

Poupeau F. « Familles (Choix scolaires des) », in A. van Zanten (dir.) *Dictionnaire de l'éducation*, Paris, PUF, 2008.

Reay D., *Class Work. Mothers' Involvement in their Children's Primary Schooling*, Londres, UCL Press, 1998.

Revue Française de pédagogie, « Les espaces locaux d'interdépendance entre établissements : une comparaison européenne », 156, 2006.

Salamon L. M. (ed.) *The Tools of Governance. A Guide to the New Governance*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002.

Trancart D., 1998, « évolution des disparités entre collèges publics », *Revue Française de Pédagogie*, 124, 43-53.

Turner R., « Sponsored and Contest Mobility and the School System », *American Sociological Review*, 25(6), 1960, 855-867.

Uchitelle S., *School choice : Issues and Answers*, New York, Phi Delta Kappa Educational Fondation, 1993.

Vanderberghe V., « Le dispositif institutionnel scolaire belge : un mécanisme hybride alliant Etat et marché, marqué par la ségrégation entre écoles », *Savoir, éducation, formation*, n° 3-4, 1997, 363-375.

Woods P., Bagley C. (1996), « Market elements in a public service : an analytical model for studying educational policy », *Journal of Education Policy*, 11(6), 1996, 641-653.

van Zanten A., *L'école de la périphérie*, Paris, PUF, 2001.

van Zanten A., « Une discrimination banalisée ? L'évitement de la mixité sociale et raciale dans les établissements scolaires » in D. Fassin et E. Fassin(dir.) *De la question sociale à la question raciale ? Représenter la société française*, Paris, La Découverte, 2006.

van Zanten A., « Individualisme et solidarité dans les choix éducatifs des familles » in S. Paugam (dir.) *Repenser la solidarité. L'apport des sciences sociales*, Paris, PUF 2007.

van Zanten, A., Obin J-P., *La carte scolaire*, Paris, PUF, coll. « Que sais-je ? », 2008.

Zoïa G., *La carte scolaire et le territoire urbain*, Paris, PUF, 2009 (in press).