



***The Role of the Ideas and their
Change in Higher Education
Policy-Making Processes from
the Eighties to Present Day:
The Cases of England and New
Zealand in Comparative
Perspective***

The Theoretical Context

- Higher Education and idea of knowledge
- Campbell (2002)
- Røvik (1996)
- Halpin and Troyna (1995)
- Kekk e Sikkink (1998)
- Surel (2000)
- Geva-May (2002)
- Swedlow (2002)
- Hall (1993)

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Ideas and Higher Education Policy

A grayscale image of a hand holding a glowing lightbulb above a person's head, symbolizing an idea or inspiration. The background is a light, neutral color.

- Clark (1983)
- Van Vught (1989)
- Keith (1998)
- Capano (1998)
- Bottani (2002)

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General Hypothesis

- If and in which way the changes in the dominant ideas in the English and the New Zealander contexts influenced the higher education policy making and the reforms in this sector from the Eighties to present day
- Independent variable: main ideas in the period taken into consideration
- Dependent variables: policy making process and policy outputs
- Intervening variables: individual interests and institutions in the same period

Methodology

A hand is shown holding a multi-colored bar chart. The chart has several vertical bars of different colors: red, yellow, green, blue, and white. The hand is positioned on the right side of the chart, with fingers gripping it. The background is a light, neutral color.

Qualitative techniques, in particular:

- Both for England and New Zealand:
 - Dense analysis of the processes of reform in the two contexts taken into consideration
 - In-depth interviews to personalities belonging to the political and cultural elites within the years taken into consideration
 - Analysis of the dominant themes on the mass-media in the periods taken into consideration. In this perspective I will take into exam newspaper articles and indexes of the Times Higher Education Supplement for England, and of New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies for New Zealand from 1980 till present-day

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The Case Studies: England (1)

- The evolution of the system
- Polytechnics and universities
- The reforms
- The end of the binary system
- The Eighties (Thatcher) – Jarratt Report
- The Nineties (Major-Blair) – Dearing Report
- 2004: Higher Education Act

The Case Studies: New Zealand (2)

- The context
- Four periods
- Two TEAC reports (the second and the fourth)
- The quality issue
- Fees
- Access and diversity
- Marketizing scientific knowledge
- Globalization and internationalization

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Specific Hypothesis Deducted from the Case Studies: England (1)

- Thatcher as a policy entrepreneur
- Great role of conservative think tanks
- Continuity of the process from Thatcher to Blair
- Humanistic faculties took in more innovations than scientific ones

Specific Hypothesis Deducted from the Case Studies: New Zealand (2)

- Authorities for quality assurance main actors of the reforms
- Idea of efficiency not depending on political assets (National/Labour parties)
- Idea of efficiency = more money to some faculties (especially technical ones). To test especially from 2000 until present day

Results (I)

- England:
- Hypothesis 1: Verified
- Hypothesis 2: Verified
- Hypothesis 3: Verified
- Hypothesis 4: Not Verified

Results (II)

- New Zealand:
- Hypothesis 1: Partially Verified
- Hypothesis 2: Substantially Verified
- Hypothesis 3: Not Verified

Results (III)

- General Hypothesis: Verified. Prominent role of the ideas in the two contexts; intervening roles of individual interests and institutional contexts

Conclusion

- Differences within a common trend
- England: reform process within H.E. needed a more radical action by Thatcher because there were more policy legacies to change. Important role of think tanks
- New Zealand: reform process was more fast and related to the other compartments of the public sector. Important role of TEAC, then TEC, on behalf of the government

Equality & Diversity

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