

***Internationalization of Educational Policies: Challenges and Transformations.*** Akkari, A. (2011). Petrópolis: Vozes. 143p. ISBN 978-85-326-4158-8.

The book *Internationalization of Educational Policies: challenges and transformations*, written by Abdeljalil Akkari (professor at the University of Geneva, UNESCO consultant and scholar of political and educational inequalities), deals with the various issues that traverse the topic of internationalization of educational policies. The book covers the history of economic and political world transformations that occurred in the beginning of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and discusses what happens in relation to Education in several countries across diverse continents, aiming at analyzing how the internationalization of educational policies occur in Latin America, especially in Brazil.

In the first chapter, *Internationalization of educational policies*, the author begins by defining educational policies and their components and principal axes. He then talks about the internationalization of these policies and, further, questions if national policies still exist in the context of globalization and the weakening of the nation-state. Also, what stands out in this chapter is the presentation of the classification, made by the World Bank, of the four existing types of educational systems in the world. Akkari also cites the most recurrent concepts taking place in the debates pertaining to the internationalization of educational policies, of which he selects many of them to discuss in the subsequent chapters of the book.

Talking about the meaning of the term globalization and differentiating it from the term internationalization, the author, in the chapter *Globalization and Education*, deals with the consequences of globalization in diverse contexts and, specifically in the case of Education, considers the resulting positive and negative impacts of it. Akkari informs, in the third chapter, how the influence of international organizations impacts on national educational policies by identifying the new actors of this influence. The author talks about the actions undertaken by the United Nations, through UNESCO and UNICEF, and the current prevalence of the influence exerted by the World Bank, which transforms the characteristics of the influence from a previously humanistic aspect to market necessities. This also included dictated demands from the WTO.

The concept of education decentralization is recurrent throughout the book as the author claims this to be one of the most constant orientations in international education policy tendencies. In dedicating an entire chapter to the analysis of the topic, Akkari contends that decentralization aims at diminishing bureaucracy and reducing costs, and presents countries that are more or less decentralized. The author warns that decentralization has not been sufficiently studied for us to affirm that it is in fact a determinant for educational quality. He ascertains, however, that decentralization is disastrous for education, especially in those cases where those who are assigned new tasks and have not been sufficiently trained or do not have the professional skills to carry out their new tasks.

In the chapter dedicated to the privatization of education, the author discusses the major education market opened in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when education, for political and economical

reasons and under a liberal argument to stimulate a positive competition in the public and private educational sectors – aiming at increasing the quality of education, was no longer a monopoly of the state. The book also features some graphics on the level of privatization of education in many countries, raising more questions than conclusions and leaving the idea that privatization is a question that needs to be researched until it can be said that the increase in the quality of education is its consequence.

Akkari devotes a chapter specifically to the theme of dual systems of teaching, identifying the boundaries between the public and private sectors in Brazil, and in discussing the increase of the private sector of education in the country and the main blurred mechanisms between the public and private, affirming that this blur is increasing. The work also seeks to identify those who benefit and those who do not benefit from this policy and how these benefactors do not necessarily seem to be interested in the improvement of the quality of education. The author treats educational standards and evaluation as the two-sided faces of the internationalization of educational policies and illustrates with the case of Switzerland, whose national and international evaluations, impacted by globalization, determine the recommended standards aiming at various goals. Even while dedicating the following chapter to the training of teachers, the book, in this chapter, advances a lot on this issue by mentioning PISA examinations and the current international process of performance measures of educational systems. Last but not least, Akkari discusses the influence of the quality of teachers on the students' learning processes and cites Sanders' research pertaining to the faculty effect. In the specific chapter about policies for the training of teachers, the author presents three main international tendencies of this training: privatization, decentralization, and scientificization. The text also discusses the ideas of various authors about the theme and exposes some practical examples, including the current state of affairs in what relates to the training of teachers in Brazil.

Finally, Akkari affirms the following perspectives: 1) We are moving toward a new regulation of educational policies, and 2) that internationalization in the last decades is a path that might forever alter the role of the State. Privatization and decentralization are pointed out as the main changes caused by the internationalization of educational policies. Emerging in this scenario, there are many public and private actors that circulate across national borders creating the change.

This book has, in addition to its clear language, the virtues of being objective, consistent, and comprehensive while discussing the main topics pertaining to the internationalization of educational policies. Another positive characteristic of the book is that it presents the topics of the chapter in a chained-like fashion, linking concepts and experiences with one chapter introducing the next, making it easier for the reader to understand. The author reaches the goal to which he sets himself, i.e., of providing theoretical frameworks about educational public policies from the standpoint of internationalization and analyzing the tendencies and transformations in the world, in Latin America, and in Brazil.

This is a well suited work to introduce the beginning student to the topic of the internationalization of educational public policies. It will also be a good reference book for the veteran student, the professor and the educational public policies researcher who is looking

forward to do quick queries about certain concepts, data and the most recurrent issues about the topic. Finally, it is necessary to consider, also, even because the proposal was not this at the outset, that despite having a substantial content, this is a very compact work and it does not delve into deepening any of the many of its mentioned issues, requiring the reader with broader interests to look towards more specific references.

*Gérlia Maria Nogueira Chaves*  
*Universidade Católica de Brasília, Brazil*  
[gerliachaves@yahoo.com.br](mailto:gerliachaves@yahoo.com.br)