Front. Educ. China 2015, 10(1): 164–173

BOOK REVIEW

DOI 10.3868/s110-004-015-0010-3

The formulation and transition of China's educational policy from 1978 to 2007: A policy discourse analysis. Wen Wen. Columbus, OH: Foreign Language Publications, The Ohio State University, 2013. 403 pp., (paperback), $109.00, ISBN 978-0-87415-373-6.

Quite a lot is known about the dramatic changes in educational policy in China over the period after Deng Xiaoping came to power and declared China open to modernization, the world and the future. However it is rare to see a sophisticated analysis of the policy formulation and implementation process, set in the frame of the literature of critical discourse analysis, as is done in this volume.

A great strength of this study is the presentation of the background to the education reform and policy changes in an overview of the political and economic system that challenges the widely held stereotype of a highly centralized system where decisions are imposed from above by the all-powerful Chinese Communist Party. Few are aware of the multi-party cooperation and consultation that takes place, and the role of non-party elites in the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in the policy-making process, whose proposals feed into policy decisions. Even fewer are familiar with the petition system established in the early 1950s, which provides a channel for the voices of concern and complaint from the masses of ordinary people to reach policy makers. One of the eye-opening features of this book is the mapping of the tens of thousands of such petitions over time and by theme and the discussion of the impact of this public input into the overall policy-making process.

Overall, one is impressed by the meticulous detail and thoroughness with which a large number of significant policy texts have been tracked down, covering a wide spectrum of themes, from rural education and equity to decentralization and marketization, to language, vocational education and teacher education and then mapped by theme and frequency. The periodization is also very helpful, showing a trajectory from major concerns over efficiency and economic development that give way to equity concerns, as increasing gaps between more and less prosperous regions of the country became evident with rapid economic change.

The careful attention to discourse and the unraveling of the connotations associated with terms such as marketization and equity shed enormous light on

the ways in which policies are understood within a Chinese community. Excerpts from major speeches of key national leaders at the highest level of party and state are presented in ways that illuminate Chinese understandings of key terms such as marketization. For example, marketization is connected to the nurturing of a wide range of human talent needed for the formation of a "modernized socialism," in a speech by Wan Li, something far removed from the Western associations of marketization with capitalism in the raw (pp. 209–210). In dealing with the concept of equity the same chapter shows how closely it reflects features of the Chinese context, such as the divide that has been fixed between rural and urban inhabitants through a long standing residential permit system. Changing views of equity in Chinese policy documents are then identified, from a discriminatory approach whereby the rural ending up subsidizing the urban, through a redistributive approach that shifted resources to rural communities to a recognition approach which see education as a human right that should be assured to all those suffering from disadvantages, not only rural inhabitants.

The author concludes by identifying a space for debate and choice between education for economic efficiency and effectiveness, on the one hand and sociopolitical stability on the other. She suggests that it is within these constraints that policy changes have unfolded. This is not entirely new or surprising, yet what is extremely valuable in this volume is the profound insight given into processes of discourse, debate and intertextuality that shaped the changing policies and made possible adaptations that balanced economic with sociopolitical and cultural concerns. The concept of economic development and education as an investment in effect shifted to one of education for the construction of society and the safeguarding of the rights of all (p. 220). This is illustrated in excerpts from two speeches of State Councillor Li Lanqing, that carry the discourse forward to the point of an emphasis on education as having an internal logic of its own and being a value in itself. Education is thus given a role that is parallel to the economy and politics rather than being seen merely an instrument subservient to progress in these two sectors (p. 224). Out of this have arisen new forms of Confucian humanism recently encapsulated in the concept of a harmonious society.

Another great value of the book is in the way in which policy discourse is related to practice through an elaboration of the regulative, normative and cognitive dimensions of a discourse-resource model. An interesting example of a regulative resource that had huge consequence was noted in the reform document of 1985, which established the presidential or principal responsibility system under

the leadership of Party Secretary as the reformed approach to university and school leadership. This gave much greater autonomy to management, freeing educational leaders from direct political control and manipulation. From another perspective this is also presented as a cognitive discourse-resource in the way in which the state responded to the demands of intellectuals for greater autonomy through a discourse of decentralization that made possible the requisite conditions (p. 241).

Only too often are Western-derived sociological theories applied to East Asian societies in ways that obfuscate rather than illuminate, imposing interpretations reflecting the mindset of a social science rooted in the European experience of modernization and change. The remarkable achievement of this volume is a mastery of current theory on policy-making and the policy process whose application makes possible deep insights into changing educational policies in China over three decades. The reader is drawn into a Chinese world of thought rooted in Confucian understandings of family and society and shaped by dramatic and deeply conflictual experiences of social, political and economic change over the whole of the 20th century.

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DOI 10.3868/s110-004-015-0011-0

中荷研究型大学教师信念比较研究 [*A comparative study of the beliefs of teachers in research universities in China and the Netherlands*]. 吴薇 [Wu, Wei]. 广州, 中国: 广东高等教育出版社 [Guangzhou, China: Guangdong Higher Education Press], 2012. 330 pp., (paperback), ¥46, ISBN: 978-7-5361-4181-0.

While the education model in Chinese higher education has been criticized as highly formalized, with universities lacking the capability to cultivate top-notch innovative talents, few studies have sought to understand the problem and seek solutions from the perspective of teachers' beliefs. As teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning basically determine the quality of classroom education and the success or failure of pedagogical reforms in Chinese higher education, it is essential to understand their beliefs. Wu Wei's book, based on her doctoral