

## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

### Education and Social Exclusion

For many, education conjures up thoughts of the ideal, if not idyllic notions of hope, possibility, and limitless democracy, while for others, it calls forth the harsh and stark reality of the limits of a free and democratic society. The clash between these two perspectives make clear all that is at stake in the universalization of education worldwide: the seemingly endless possibilities are limited by increasingly expanding levels of exclusion that exist throughout educational systems worldwide.

Initiatives, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) have aimed to universalize education as a right for all children, yet the realities of social exclusion continue to plague education efforts, with particularly problematic results for children from disadvantaged groups. Unequal educational chances in turn lead to unequal life chances, and hence, to fewer opportunities to participate actively in social, economic, and political life. This millennial release of CICE's fourth issue provides space to contemplate and discuss the goal of Education for All set a decade ago in Jomtien, Thailand, and gives educators and administrators an opportunity to explore and assess patterns of exclusion in the education process.

This issue of CICE grows out of the CIES 2000 Northeast Regional conference on the same topic, which CICE sponsored along with Teachers College (TC), the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE), and UNICEF. Many of the articles submitted to CICE for this issue are based on presentations given at the conference and thus continue the debates started in February, 2000.

The articles we received ranged broadly in scope, revealing a variety of perspectives regarding the definitions, evidence and implications of social exclusion as it relates to education. In an effort to produce a unique compilation of literature, CICE selected articles by giving priority to issues discussed infrequently or rarely presented from the perspectives shown here. We begin the issue with four articles presenting debates external to the educational process itself, but impacting it from a wider societal level. These are followed by two articles focusing on issues more related to the internal functioning of education in schools. The last article combines an examination of external influences on education with an explanation of resulting internal, curricular adjustments.

Sangeeta Kamat critically examines the discourse of decentralization and educational reform in *Deconstructing the rhetoric of decentralization: The state in education reform*. Based on an analysis of a recent World Bank paper, Kamat challenges the common notion that decentralization of education implies the weakening of the state, arguing that some models of decentralization exacerbate social inequities at the local level. Through the lens of Henri Lefebvre's theory of the state as a socio-spatial configuration, Kamat recasts decentralization reform discourse within the context of globalization, suggesting that decentralization must be understood as a necessary feature of the current phase of globalization.

Lidia Henales and Beatrice Edwards present three stages of neo-liberal theoretical development and examine its historical application in Latin America. In *Neoliberalism and educational reform in Latin America*, they argue that education reform toward privatization and voucher systems has been implemented through loans from international financial institutions with neo-liberalist agendas. In the context of neo-liberal orthodoxy, the most effective school prospers in a market economy, just as any efficient enterprise would. Despite this tendency toward success among some schools, however, the authors show that neo-liberal reforms in education have, in fact, contributed to increased inequality in education.

Grazia Scoppio also contributes to the external debate through a comparative analysis of recent school reform in England, U.K., California, U.S., and Ontario, Canada. In *Common trends of standardization, accountability, devolution and choice in the educational policies of England, U.K., California, U.S.A., and Ontario, Canada*, she shows that on the one hand, the reforms of standardization, testing, school effectiveness, and accountability have enhanced centralization; on the other hand, reforming schools by increasing self-management and school choice have enhanced decentralization. Based on an analysis of policy implementation, Scoppio suggests that proponents of the recent reforms are more concerned with global economic competitiveness than with educational equality and equity.

Bonnie Johnson and Nalini Chhetri continue the external debate with their discussion of minority education policies in China in *Exclusionary policies and practices in Chinese minority education: A case of Tibetan education*. Using the case of Tibet under Chinese rule, they illustrate how modifying minority education policies, aimed to address distinct regional needs, often results in exclusionary practices. The paper discusses the contradictory nature of the national educational policy of the People's Republic of China as it attempts to contain regional ethnic resistance while maintaining national unity.

Rachel Kline brings the reader closer to the school level by tracing the development and implementation of a particular intervention, the *Escuela Nueva*, designed to address disparities in educational opportunities in rural communities in Colombia and Guatemala. In *A model for improving rural schools: Escuela Nueva in Columbia and Guatemala*, the author analyzes the characteristics of the model that are central to its success in impacting teachers' practices and students' achievement, differences in the implementation process in Colombia versus Guatemala, and various effects of the mass expansion of the program to the national level.

Laurie Mook, in an article focusing on school-level activity, discusses the topic of inclusion/exclusion by examining the impact of college student-faculty interaction on equality of educational opportunity and achievement. While most studies of the role of student-faculty interactions in reinforcing social inequalities have focused on classroom settings, this study directs attention to interactions outside of the classroom. Analyzing data from a large U.S. sample, and looking at several types of interactions, the author examines how the type and rate of interaction varies across student populations in *Exclusion and inclusion in student-faculty informal interaction: A critical perspective*.

Finally, this issue ends with a historical contribution by Nancy Lesko that examines the role of the adolescent at the turn of 20th century in the United States, and points to the particular experience of girls as an excluded sub-group. In *Making adolescence at the turn of the century: Discourse and the exclusion of girls*, the author explains the use of the "technology of adolescence," namely education systems and juvenile justice systems, to regulate the lives of young people as well as reinforce dominant social norms at a time of great transition and uncertainty in the United States.