



Autonomy, Assessments and Accountability in Global School Reform: A Cross-Country Comparison of Policy Trajectories

Abstract: Since the beginning of the 21st century, a wave of school reforms aimed at improving quality assurance and learning outcomes has swept across the globe. Within this reform wave, numerous governments have introduced complex measures for external assessment, accountability, and control, while also guaranteeing that schools have the necessary autonomy in resource management and pedagogy to address improvement expectations. The School Autonomy with Accountability (SAWA) reform model epitomizes this trend by promoting a simultaneous increase in decentralized, school-based management and reinforced quality assurance controls. My presentation will critically explore SAWA's emergence as a global policy model and its instrumentation across various educational settings. I will highlight the key influence of (supra-)national institutions and instrument constituencies in shaping its adoption and trajectory. I will also reveal significant divergence in the model's rationales and implementation both across and within countries, and how such dynamics often imply undermining the regulatory objectives of the educational reform. The presentation aims to identify the varying policy trajectories and assemblages of SAWA policies. It also offers a comparative analysis of countries with different administrative cultures, degrees of educational marketization, and approaches to teachers' professional regulation enact SAWA policies. The research encapsulates the findings from a 5-year, multi-scalar research initiative funded by the European Research Council (see <http://reformedproject.eu/>), conducted in three countries with distinct administrative and teacher policy regimes, i.e., Norway, Chile, and Spain. Employing mixed-methods and process tracing approaches, the study enriches understanding of SAWA's effects and provides a nuanced perspective on the interplay between policy and practice in diverse educational systems.

May 16, 2024 (Thursday)

10:00 – 11:30

Room 206, Runme Shaw Building, HKU / by Zoom

Speaker: Prof. Antoni Verger

Chair and Discussant: Prof. Priya Goel

Registration: <https://shorturl.at/fsS49>

Zoom link:

<https://hku.zoom.us/j/93269695806?pwd=RUhBMUF1cVV3d21sOW9LWVBiQitQdz09>

[BiQitQdz09](https://hku.zoom.us/j/93269695806?pwd=RUhBMUF1cVV3d21sOW9LWVBiQitQdz09)

Meeting ID: 932 6969 5806 Passcode: 099197



SPEAKER
Prof. Antoni Verger

Antoni Verger is a Professor of Sociology at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and a research fellow at the Catalan Institution for Research and Advanced Studies (ICREA). With cross-disciplinary training in sociology and education studies, his research examines the relationship between global governance institutions and education policy. In recent years, he has studied public-private partnerships, school autonomy, and accountability policies in education. He is one of the lead editors of the World Yearbook of Education and the Journal of Education Policy, and academic director of the Erasmus Plus awarded Master programme Education Policies for Global Development – GLOBED.