

Educational Policy

Stanislav Konečný

After a number of publications in the fields of social policy, municipal policy, but especially after the monograph *The Theory of Public Policy* (Košice: ŠafárikPress 2021), Stanislav Konečný has expanded his focus on the area of public policies with a scientific monograph on educational policy.

As this background indicates, this is a work that deals with educational policy specifically from the perspective of public policy. Hence, only its fourth chapter, which is itself titled *Educational Policy in the Context of Public Policy*, emerges as the key chapter. In the light of the postulates of public policy theory, the author introduces here, first of all, the complete range of actors in education policy, starting with actors at the global (worldwide) level, such as the UN, UNESCO, ILO or OECD. As far as the scope of the monograph allows, he notes at least in overview not only the legally binding acts, insofar as these actors can issue them, but above all the conceptual documents that have been published on their behalf, among them, for example, the so-called Fauré Report of 1970 and the Delors Report of 1995, through which UNESCO globally advanced the development of educational policy into the twenty-first century. The author returns to both of these key studies at many points throughout the monograph. However, among the global actors, he also notes the documents issued by the world's churches in relation to education policy (in particular, an almost complete overview of the relevant encyclicals of the Catholic Church), as well as global actors from the field of the market (e.g., the World Bank) or from the field of civil society (e.g., the Club of Rome or the Cato Institute). The same approach is followed by the author in identifying actors at the continental level. He analyses the documents of the Council of Europe and especially the evolution that European integration efforts have undergone in relation to training and education issues, from the Treaties of Rome to the Europe 2020 Strategy. In the context of the European Union, the author then looks not only at the Copenhagen process, but above all at the Bologna process and the functioning of the European Higher Education Area. Also in this section, he notes the important activities of market and civil society actors (e.g. some multinational think tanks). At the Slovak level, the work also takes note not only of the state education authorities, starting with the Ministry and its network of subordinate organisations, but also of important think tanks and other actors.

The next sub-section examines the instruments of education policy as public policy. For the strategic-conceptual instruments, which he has already touched upon in the production of global and European actors, at this point he addresses conceptual documents of domestic provenance, whether governmental or non-governmental. A similar approach is followed for

legislative, economic, informational and organisational-administrative instruments.

However, the author, who tends to profile his publications in a multidisciplinary manner, also places education policy in the context of other sciences. Already in the first chapter, he draws attention to the multiplicity of these contexts, and in the second chapter he frames education policy in the context of the educational sciences: this allows readers from the political science background to view the issue from a different perspective (which he continues to do in the following chapters) – and in turn allows readers from the ranks of psychologists and educators to understand education not only as a psychological and pedagogical topic but also in its other scientific contexts. In this way, this chapter sees education as a complex cognitive process in which a sequence of steps (inspired by Green and Ackoff's knowledge pyramid) moves from perceptions through phenomena, data, signals, signs and symbols to the information of knowledge and understanding, and finally to wisdom through knowledge. In the next chapter on the forms in which educational policy is implemented, the author examines in detail the various educational institutions (including out-of-school), forms of education and systemic concepts of education, culminating in the concept of lifelong learning, which is continuous throughout life and encompasses all forms of formal, non-formal and informal education, intentional, incidental and functional learning, with the crucial role of the learner as an individual towards the development of his or her creativity.

In the following chapters, the author also discusses the economic and social-sociological contexts of educational policy, which can be very inspiring for scholars working in the economics of education or the sociology of education.

Certainly there are topics that the author did not address in the monograph. There is no look at the personal or ethical context of education policy, but we can still agree with the opinion that this is a unique and very comprehensively processed scientific monograph, which is also the first such thematically focused publication in Slovakia.

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