



Countering School Segregation: Learning from (Dutch) experience?

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Conference on School Segregation of the Ministry of Education

Kolding, Denmark --- --- *March 7-8, 2013*





Content of the presentation

1. Segregation in primary schools

A general view of 'segregation'

2. Dutch experiences

What works to combat segregation and stimulate integration?

3. Relevance for Denmark?

1. Segregation





Segregation in schools

- What type of segregation?
 - ethnic and/or social-economic
- What types of effect?
 - cognitive (reading/writing, math)?
 - social (social competence & social capital)!
 - waste of talent?!



Why bother?

- Because education in the 21st century is about:
 - Learning to live together – where & when?
 - Learning to be – (functional) identification
 - Learning to do & to know – competencies

[Delors, 1996; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006]

“If the educational system does not stimulate every student to develop to its full potential, the costs are high for both individuals and society.”



International research: segregation

- Attained levels of education depend on
 - starting (pre)school at an early age
 - late selection into different tracks
- school segregation has additional effect (social networks & majority language)
- school climate (welcome vs discrimination)
 - intergroup contact, teacher contact



Equity and quality (OECD, 2012)

- “Investing in equity pays off”
- Avoid system level policies that hinder equity
 - The focus here will be on:
 - Manage school choice to avoid inequities
 - Choice can result in greater sorting and segregation
 - Therefor: Balance choice and equity

Compare the presentation of Anna Pons



Choice and equity

- In an educational system with parental choice, you will get segregation in the end
(Game theory, micro choices & macro effects. E.g. Schelling, 1971)
- So if you do not want segregation, you need to intervene.
- How?
 - Do you want every parent to have the same chance to get his/her first choice?

International knowledge base (2011)




**International perspectives on
countering school segregation**

Joep Bakker, Eddie Denessen,
Dorothee Peters & Guido Walraven (Eds.)

2. Dutch experiences





Dutch school segregation

- Report on mixed schools in the 38 largest cities (2045 primary schools)
 - 2/3 of the primary schools: student population reflects population of the neighbourhood
 - 1/3 schools are too ‘white’ or too ‘black’
 - more segregation in schools than in cities [i.e. mixed neighbourhoods are segregated]

(Wolfgram, 2009)



So?

- One third is a serious problem.
 - Especially since ‘similar populations’ (in schools & neighbourhood) is a mild criterion.
- In fact the segregation is even bigger:
 - ‘white’ schools in ‘white’ neighbourhoods nor ‘black’ schools in ‘black’ neighbourhoods allow students *to learn & live together*.



Who can do something about it?

- School boards
- School directors & teams
- Government (local; national)
- Parents

→ *None of the actors can solve the problem on its own: a (Dutch?) dilemma.*



Characteristics educational system

- Parental free choice
- Schoolboards: freedom to found schools & freedom of conviction
 - non-public schools can have restricting admission policies, public school cannot.
- Government: funding of all schools that meet basic conditions



What can actors do?

1. Make adequate local rules and regulations for admission to schools
 - e.g. quota, double waiting lists, maximum amount of students, zip code policy
2. Inform parents on the schools in their neighbourhood & criteria for choice
 - e.g. brochures, markets, school tours for groups of parents in their neighbourhood
3. Stimulate and facilitate parent initiatives



What have actors done?

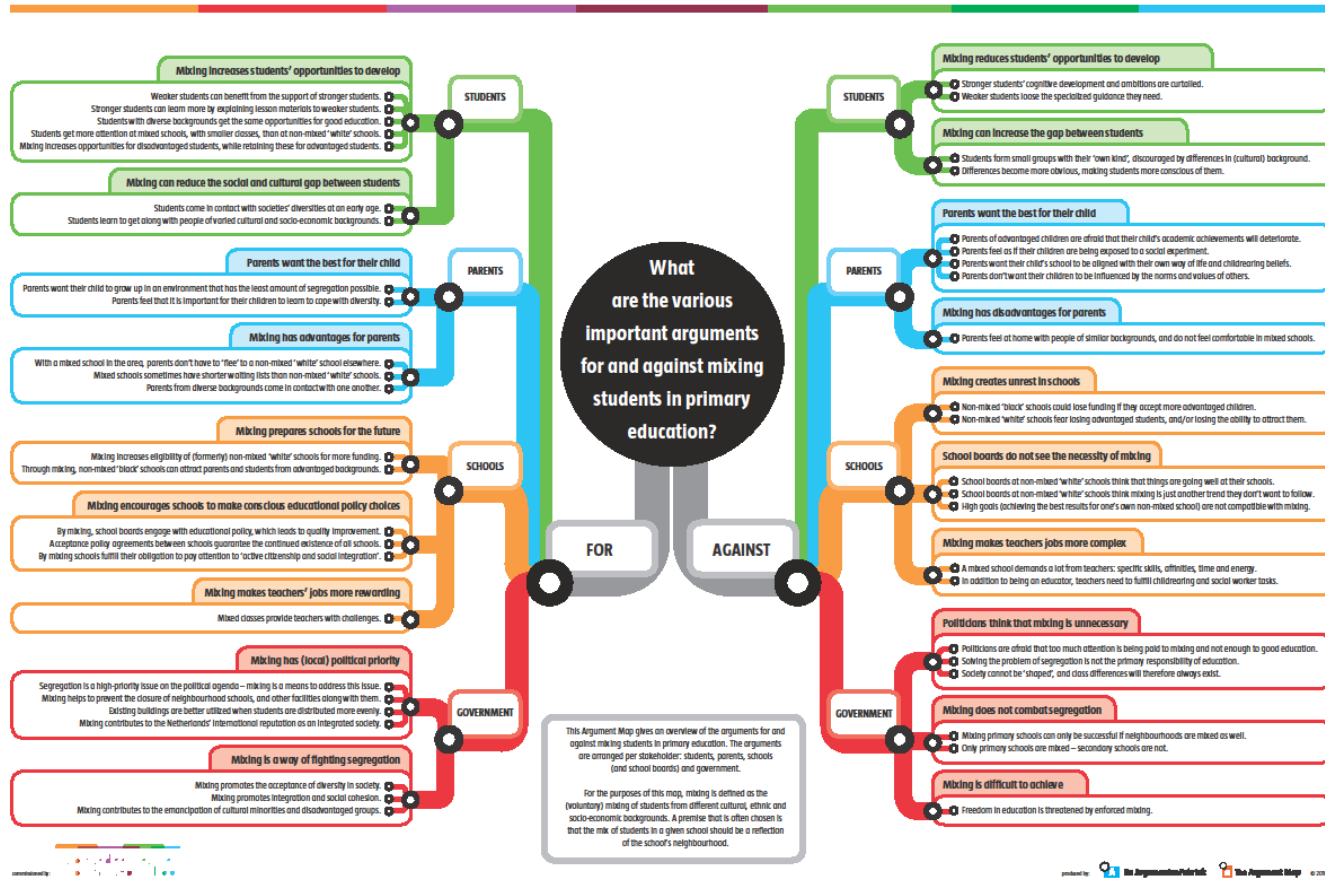
- All 3 types of activities were implemented
 - 12 cities have carried out larger pilot projects, together with schoolboards (2008-2011)
 - More cities and school boards have carried out (often small scale) activities
 - Last years there were more then 60 parent initiatives
 - Information campaigns and local debates
 - Useful tool: argument map



Example: argument map

- Overview of arguments for and against mixed schools
- Useful for discussions, e.g. with parents
- The Knowledge Centre aims at a dialogue with parents and others about mixed schools and respects the informed choice of parents

ARGUMENT MAP MIXING EDUCATION





What have we learned?

- All the (evaluated) experiences were building blocks for our knowledge base
- We learned that there are no rules or regulations that hinder any actions
 - to combat segregation
 - to create a balance between free choice and equity



Lessons about mixed schools?

- Mixed schools are an efficient way to combat **segregation**.
- However: they are a *necessary but insufficient* condition for integration.
- What is needed for **integration**, is *inter alia*:
 - activities that are meaningful, sustainable etc
 - aimed at bonding and bridging social capital
 - cooperative learning.



Example: friendships

- The role of the teacher is crucial, even with friendship between students
 - Structured activities and interventions from teachers facilitate ‘intercultural’ and/or ‘bridging’ friendship
 - If you do not intervene, friendship tend to focus on ‘bonding’ (depending on age of the students)
- *Learning to live together* needs planning
(Agirdag, 2011; Stark, 2011)

3. Relevance for Denmark?





General impression

- Level of school segregation is relatively moderate
 - 10% students with migrant background
- Segregation is on the agenda in policy and research
 - there are initiatives to reduce segregation and counter its effects
- Focus tended to be on ethnic segregation
 - and Danish as a second language



Compare interventions

The Netherlands

1. Types of controlled choice
2. Parent initiatives
3. Inform parents (tours, brochures, markets)
4. Knowledge Centre

Denmark

1. Example of referring students in Aarhus
2. Example of Brug Folkeskolen parents' association Kopenhagen
3. ??
4. ?



Closing remarks

- There are no rules or regulations that hinder any actions in Denmark
- There are examples of good practice
- What makes a difference?

Political will and enthusiasm of

- local stakeholders (schools/boards, elderman)
- the national minister (top-down)
- groups of parents (bottom-up)



QUESTIONS?

Remarks & discussion?



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(page in English)

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