



Researching education, improving learning



ESR 9: Effectiveness of Equity Funding Policies

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Equity Funding Policies

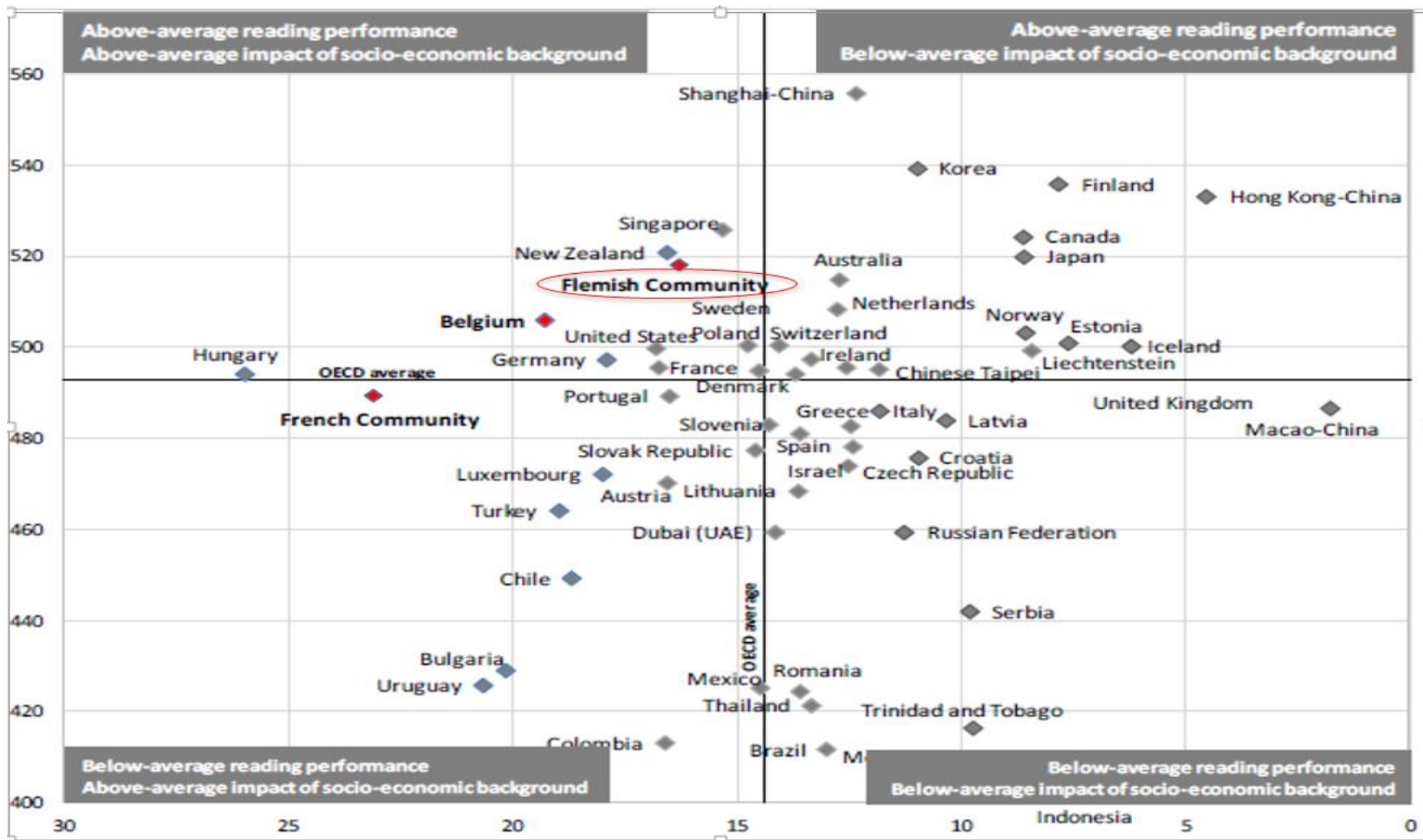
- Equity funding policies (EFP) are defined as various forms of positive needs-based discrimination in the funding of schools for additional investments targeted at socially disadvantaged students
 - Most Western countries have introduced such policies but the evaluation suggests rather weak positive effects (if any)
- How can we make EFPs more effective?**

Focus of research

- **Part 1:** Focus on the Flemish Community of Belgium:
 - *Inequalities* in the Flemish education system
 - The *effectiveness* of EFPs in the Flemish education system
- **Part 2:** International focus
 - Comparing the *inequalities* in education systems between countries
 - Evaluating the *presence/absence* of EFPs in countries
 - Comparing the *effectiveness* of EFPs between countries
- How can countries learn from each other?
- How can we make the EFPs (in the Flemish Community) more effective?

Inequalities and EFPs in the Flemish Community

Social inequalities in the Flemish education system



Social inequalities in the Flemish education system

- **Equal Educational Opportunity (EEO) Act (2002):** most important instrument to combat social inequalities in education
 - Schools receive money based on the amount of students who are disadvantaged
- **Weak effectiveness of EEO act:**
 - Literature review: since 2002 inequalities in the Flemish education system have not changed, except the impact of students' SES has slightly declined between 2003-2015
 - *How can we make the EEO act more effective?*

How can we explain these persistent inequalities despite the EFPs?

6 confounding factors that may help explain the weak effectiveness of EFPs

The effectiveness of equity funding in education in Western countries: literature review (1)

1. The (un)favourable general context in which EFPs are implemented

– Adverse social trends such as:

- *The rising socioeconomic inequality in Europe and other rich economies since the 1980s*
 - under-investment in education among low-income groups
- *Increasing (school) segregation*
 - Unequal learning opportunities and peer influences
- *Changing family dynamics*
 - more difficult family environment for children to grow up

The effectiveness of equity funding in education in Western countries: literature review (2)

2. The pre-existing Matthew effects in the baseline funding of schools

- Schools attended by disadvantaged students are themselves often disadvantaged in terms of economic, cultural, social and human resources
 - E.g. less qualified school teams, poor infrastructure, etc.

The effectiveness of equity funding in education in Western countries: literature review (3)

3. The (in)efficient use of additional resources

- Disadvantaged schools often lack strong management teams which possibly results in an inefficient use of the resources (! Autonomy)
 - E.g. Flemish Community of Belgium, the Netherlands, Finland, the UK (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) have full discretion on how to spend the additional resources

The effectiveness of equity funding in education in Western countries: literature review (4)

4. The (in)adequate targeting of the additional resources

- Territorial **vs.** student-based targeting
- Target groups should reach minimum level of competences **vs.** boost educational outcomes off all socially disadvantaged students (also high performers)

The effectiveness of equity funding in education in Western countries: literature review (5)

5. The (absence of) monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

- **Many educational systems do not monitor and evaluate the use of additional resources regularly**
 - ! Limits possibility to adjust EFP to emerging local challenges and to make well-informed spending decisions

The effectiveness of equity funding in education in Western countries: literature review (6)

6. The degree of equity of educational systems as such

- EFP are embedded into national education systems with their own characteristics
 - E.g. ‘free school choice’ > fuel competition between schools > more segregation
 - E.g. tracking age > early > bigger disparities

Plans for future

Plans for future: articles

1. Inequalities in the Flemish education system

- PISA data
- SEM Multilevel analysis
- Part 1 – focus on Flemish Community

2. Inequalities in education: international perspective

- Multilevel analysis
- Part 2 – international focus

3. Long-term perspective on inequalities in career outcomes: The Flemish case

- LFS (Labor force survey)
- Multilevel analysis
- Part 1 – focus on Flemish Community

Plans for future: articles

4. Possible solutions for the existing inequalities in the Flemish education system

- Delphi Approach
- Part 1 – focus on Flemish Community

5. Shifts in inequalities using decomposition techniques

- PISA data (if possible also other datasets)
- Multilevel analysis
- Part 1 – focus on Flemish Community
- If possible Part 2 – international focus

Thank you for your attention!

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