



Why are immigrant students better off in certain types of educational systems or schools than in others?

Invitation

The effects of educational systems, school-composition, track-level, parental background and immigrants' origins on the achievement of 15-years old immigrant students

Jaap Dronkers

Tuesday, July 5, 2011 – 4 p.m., Room A 300/310

The main research question of this presentation is the combined estimation of the effects of educational systems, school-composition, track-level and country of origin on the educational achievement of 15-year-old immigrant students. The paper (co-authored with Rolf van der Velden & Allison Dunne) specifically focuses on the effects of socioeconomic and ethnic background on achievement scores and on the extent these effects are affected by characteristics of the school, track or educational system these students are in. In doing so, the authors examine the 'sorting' mechanisms of schools and tracks in highly stratified, moderately stratified and comprehensive education systems.

The results highlight the importance of including track-level and school-composition factors in the debate of educational inequality of opportunity for students in different education contexts. The findings clearly indicate that the effects of educational system characteristics are flawed if the analysis only uses a country and a student level and ignores the track-within-school-level characteristics. From a policy perspective, the most important finding is that educational systems are not uniformly 'good' or 'bad', but they have different consequences for different immigrant groups. Some immigrant groups are better off in comprehensive systems, while other groups are better off in moderately stratified systems.

Jaap Dronkers is Professor at Maastricht University, holding the chair for international comparative research on educational performance and social inequality. From October 2001 until December 2009 he was Professor of Social Stratification and Inequality at the European University Institute in Florence. Between 1990 and 2001 he had successively a chair in the educational sciences (especially for questions on stratification and mobility) and in empirical sociology at the University of Amsterdam.

He published mostly in research-articles on the causes and consequences of unequal educational and occupational attainment, on several issues in stratification and mobility research, on changes in educational opportunities, on effect-differences between public and religious schools, on education of Dutch elites, on relations between school and labour, on causes and consequences of growth of educational participation and on the effect of parental divorce on their children.

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