INTRODUCTION

ESTABLISHING A NEW POLICY-MAKING MECHANISM AND ACTUALIZING THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE POLICY-MAKING MODELS: REFLECTIONS ON HOW TO BUILD A MODERN PEOPLE-ORIENTED NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

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0.1. Introduction

The new policy-making mechanism discussed in this paper refers to the policy-making mechanism that enables educational policies to respond appropriately to national strategies. The transformation of policy-making models refers to a shift from an experience-based policy-making model to a modern, scientific, and democratic policy-making model.

0.1.1. Why Analyze Educational Policies of the Past Thirty Years

It marks tremendous advance in the field of practice when policies themselves become the objects of analysis. Policies are large-scale plans that are put forward by the government. Policies have targets, values, and tactics. Educational policies are the blueprint for the development of an education system. Studies on educational policies are important because it is unthinkable to explore the internal logic of an education system without examining the educational policies that shape it. Studies on educational policies also provide the theoretical base for the development of a healthy and comprehensive education system. In implementing the strategy of revitalizing China through science and education, it is necessary to review educational policies over the past thirty years. This paper fills this task and reviews the development of China’s educational policies over the past thirty years.
In the past thirty years, Chinese educational policies have focused on many things. According to Professor Xie Weihe, education policies can be classified into education management policies and educational policies on teaching. In this paper, we focus on education management policies.

0.1.2. Perspectives on Analysis of Educational Policies: Equality in Education

Educational policies can be analyzed from different perspectives. In this paper we choose the perspective of educational equality to analyze the development of educational policies over the past thirty years.

Educational equality is the basis of social equality. It is the guiding principle of educational administration. Educational equality is the most fundamental ethical principle in a society because education concerns everyone’s welfare. Educational equality not only determines equal access to social resources but also the sustainable development of a society. Because of the importance of educational equality, Professor Xie argues that equality in education is an absolute in society, and is a principle that does not need to be proved. Educational equality is the most fundamental factor to measure the quality of an education system.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to put the principle of equality in education into practice. Many factors are responsible for the gap between ideals and realities. This situation also motivated current study. We choose the perspective of educational equality to evaluate educational policies over the past thirty years because we believe that research on educational equality has profound political and ethical implications.

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1 According to Xie Weihe and Chen Chao, there are 352 policies on higher education and 343 policies on basic education. Xie Weihe and Chen Chao, “Direction and Analysis of Policies on the Development of Education Reforms in China: Research on Quantity of Education Policies and Their Changes since the 1980s,” Education Research of Tsinghua University (2006).

2 “Education justice” was first proposed in the communique of the 6th conference of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 2006. General Secretary Hu Jintao stressed it again in his report to the 17th Congress of CPC.

3 Professor Xie Weihe elaborates well on this: “As an ‘absolute order’ of education, education justice actually embodies people’s dignity. This dignity does not need an explanation, or regulations. It is a basic faith or belief.” “Education justice has a meaning of ‘noumenon.’ Education justice is the most important and essential quality of education.” Xie Weihe, “Justice: ‘Absolute Order’ of Education,” China Education Newspaper, September 11, 2008.