Friday 30 March 2012, The Finnish Institute (35-36 Eagle St, London WC1)

Lessons from the North? Education, Teaching and Schools

ESRC Seminar Series "The Nordic and Baltic States in the European Political Imagination"; in collaboration with the Finnish Institute in London, the Embassy of Finland in London and the UCL European Institute

UK interest in the Nordic region as the source of policy ideas remains strong. For many years interest in the "Nordic model" was often associated with the political left, but more recently the Nordic countries have also attracted the attention of the right, and specific examples have been cited by Coalition politicians in the last few years. In January 2011 the Prime Minister David Cameron held a summit meeting in Downing Street with the leaders of all the Nordic and Baltic states.

Education seems to have been especially prominent in these debates. The Education Secretary Michael Gove visited Sweden while still in opposition, and has cited the Swedish 'free schools' as a source of inspiration for his plan to introduce similar arrangements in England and Wales. Meanwhile, Finland's education system has attracted favourable international attention since the publication of the first PISA test results in 2001. Finland was cited extensively in the Department of Education's November 2010 Schools White Paper, "The Importance of Teaching", especially in relation to its provisions for teacher training. At the same time, some education experts and commentators have criticised the Coalition's emphasis on the Swedish/Finnish educational models, pointing out that this overlooks important aspects of the Nordic education systems which may point to policy directions quite contrary to recent UK trends. Further, it is sometimes pointed out that other distinctive characteristics of the Nordic societies – the relative homogeneity of the population in Finland, for example – may make it difficult to transfer policy ideas.

The final seminar in the ESRC-funded seminar series, "The Nordic and Baltic States in the European Political Imagination" takes education policy as a case study for an examination of the transfer of policy ideas, and the adoption of foreign models in the UK. The theme of the seminar is broad, but the seminar will explore three sub-themes in more detail: 1) free schools; 2) teacher training; 3) education and diversity.

This seminar is organised in co-operation with the Finnish Institute in London, and is timed to coincide with another event on specifically Finnish education policy and its implications for the UK on Thursday 29 March. For more information see: http://www.finnish-institute.org.uk/en/society/articles/37/365

In collaboration with:

THE FINNISH INSTITUTE IN LONDON

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THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE

E·S·R·C ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

Programme 30th March 2012

Seminar Moderator: Senior Researcher Louise Thomas, The RSA

10.15-10.45 Registration and coffee

10.45-11.00 Introduction by Mary Hilson, Senior lecturer in Scandinavian History, UCL

11.00-12.30 Panel I: "Education in Diverse Societies"

- Olga Cara, PhD Cadidate at UCL and Research Officer at the Institute of Education
- Yvonne Mørck, Associate Professor at the Department of Society and Globalization, Roskilde University
- Arto Kallioniemi, Professor at the Department of Teacher Education, University of Helsinki
- Uvanney Maylor, Reader in Education and Director of the Institute for Research in Education at the University of Bedfordshire.

12.30-13.30 Lunch

13.30-15.00 Panel II: "Nordic and British School Models"

- Stephen Ball, Professor of Sociology of Education, University of Oxford and Institute of Education
- Sirkku Nikamaa, Consultant, Work In Progress
- Håkan Forsberg, Doctoral Student at the department of Gender, Culture and History, Södertörn University
- Kristiina Kumpulainen, Professor at the Department of Teacher Education, University of Helsinki

15.00-15.15 Coffee

15.15-16.45 Panel III: "Teachers – Academics or Practitioners?"

- Riikka Koistinen, Language Teacher at Southbank International School and University of Westminster
- Auli Toom, Adjunct Professor at the Faculty of Behavioural Sciences, University of Helsinki
- Bernadette Youens, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences, School of Education, University of Nottingham

16.45-17.15 Conclusions and general discussion

The seminar will be followed by an informal reception at the Finnish Institute, to which all attending are invited.

The event is free of charge but a registration is required by the 15th of March:
http://lessonsfromthenorth.eventbrite.co.uk/