

Mantilla, Marta E. Teachers' Perception of Their Participation in Policy Choices: The Bottom-up Approach of the *Nueva Escuela Unitaria* in Guatemala. In: Policy as Practice: Towards a Comparative Sociocultural Analysis of Educational Policy. Ed. Margaret Sutton and Bradley A. U. Levinson. Ablex Publishing, 2001.

Abstract

In this chapter I show the relationship between participation on the one hand and policy formation and appropriation on the other. More specifically, I address the issue of teachers' participation in the formation and appropriation of educational policies within the context of the *Nueva Escuela Unitaria (NEU)* in Guatemala. NEU is an educational reform initiative that seeks innovative ways of engaging different actors such as teachers, parents, students, government officials and program administrators, in the decisions concerning the educational choices that affect their lives.

I begin with a brief summary of the views of donor agencies and international organizations on people's participation in local affairs during the last five decades. I introduce the NEU educational reform initiative and provide background information on Guatemala's social and political conditions. I concentrate on the teachers' perception of their participation in the formation and appropriation of educational policies and conclude the article with a discussion on NEU's bottom-up philosophy on policy formation and appropriation.

Key words: Education, Escuela Nueva Unitaria; NEU, New Unitary School, Guatemala, Educational Reforms, Participation, Appropriation, Educational Policies, Bottom-up. Educación, Reformas Educativas, Políticas Educativas, Participación, Apropiación.