

# Inclusive Education Public Policies as An Alternative to The Process of Social Fragmentation

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Inclusive education is considered a process whose objective is to achieve social inclusion. The objective of the study was to analyze public inclusive education policies as an alternative to the process of social fragmentation. The research was developed under a qualitative approach, the design used was hermeneutic phenomenological under inductive method. The study participants were four former ministers of education and the technique used was the conversational interview. The results obtained were lack of public policies promote inclusive education, the existence of unequal schools, discrimination towards students with special educational needs and main challenge is implementation of educational policies for diversity. Therefore, it is concluded that there are factors that impede the inclusion process in Peru, poverty, social and economic inequality, the lack of educational policy and some special educational needs, the lack of public policies that help educational quality.

**Keywords:** public policies, inclusion, education, social fragmentation, inequality.

## 1. Introduction

Inclusion in education implies the creation of certain characteristics that together should reduce exclusion and increase student participation, also the cultural restructuring of the practices of certain educational centers to accommodate the diversity of the student body, which seeks to promote learning so that students with disabilities are part of a single community and finally overcome limiting barriers of exclusion to give way to the strengthening of their intellectual, physical and social skills (Valdez, 2017). Social fragmentation is the process that occurs through a group of people set apart from society, likewise, it is a strategy that has the power to dominate the fragmented society in those situations of the population that is not only away from that power, but would affect in certain

capacities of each individual by building mostly with aspirations to achieve a predominance in politics, in addition, there are various causes such as low economic, educational levels or social inequality that would affect in those people who are very set apart from the rest of society (Gonzalez, 2018). Therefore, in social fragmentation is not only a simple cause of socioeconomic inequality, but it is the result of social indifference and form feedback processes. However, socioeconomic fragmentation and residential segregation are associated with lifestyle, in addition, impoverishment and middle classes is considered the effects of precariousness and labor fragmentation, as it is one of the causes that occurs in withdrawal of the welfare state and a damage in income levels, likewise, in the socio-cultural fragmentation manifested in said measure that arise in new profiles of poverty, ie, insufficient income, labor implantation and urban violence (Ramirez, 2013).

In Latin America, international organizations have shown that inclusive education is at risk of educational exclusion, which is linked to the context of the pandemic, has opened an educational gap, as a result of economic inflation maximizes and makes students vulnerable, and it is necessary to rethink educational proposals affect students with special educational needs (Cruz and Hernandez, 2022). The problems arise despite fact inclusive education is in force in agenda until 2030, as a sustainable development goal, with the purpose of establishing it as a pedagogical and social strategy in favor of well-being and increasing world peace and social justice; promoting equity and promoting learning opportunities for life (Galván 2017). In Peru, the Peruvian inclusive education policy has gaps in terms of sanctions to be carried out for non-compliance with regulations, there are special educational needs that are not supported by a legal instrument such as the public education policy, for the Peruvian state inclusive education is not a priority, there exists a population is legally unprotected, discriminated and segregated from their rights to access to quality education (Quispe and Sulca, 2021). There is a constant struggle to achieve an education system based on equality, participation and non-discrimination, maintaining a democratic society, inclusive education is the opposite of competition and selection among students, because it reflects access they have to an education established according to their qualities that allow them to create an entry to current knowledge, where the objectives revolve around solidarity within an active citizenship, social responsibility and cooperation in a respectful manner that recognizes different existing social groups (Arnaiz, 2019).

Inclusive education is considered as the general acceptance given to all students who suffer from educational needs or limitations. For Echeita (2017), this means recognizing all children as participatory and equally valued beings within the school environment, putting into practice strategies related to the form of organization and modes of learning, so that these students are provided with the highest possible academic level and performance, based on three important pillars such as access to common spaces; coexistence according to human welfare and learning for acquisition of competencies. Based on the above, the diagnosis of education is that it is presented fragmented, educational segregation, the state does not guarantee inclusion, the processes are presented in a dissociated manner and according to Rodríguez-Rodríguez et al. (2016) indicated it is necessary to develop processes in a comprehensive manner in the appropriate contexts. Educational fragmentation or fragmented school is one of latent problems in Peru and in South America, such fragmentation allows visualizing the conformation of a group where each group is locked in its ideas, educational agents who do not have an inclusive culture continue to carry out practices of social exclusion by not



managing inclusive strategies, the phenomenon of fragmentation is framed in a social exclusion (Jimenez et al., 2009).

In this sense, the analysis of educational inequalities in relation to these public policies shows not only how these inequalities have increased despite increase in access, but also how they have been expressed in other social dimensions. The common consequences are inequality, abandonment and a transformation of inequality aimed at social fragmentation. Evidence of social and cultural distancing and weakening of social cohesion (Santos, 2020). Likewise, this research is of paramount importance because it contributes to science in interpreting, analyzing social fragmentation as a problem that many citizens, teachers do not take the necessary measures in the search for solutions for the social good. The public policy of inclusive education, the theory of inclusive education in schools is based on teachers, students and parents to develop acceptance of a community in which all are participants without discrimination of race, culture, religion or different abilities each has. This model seeks to effectively restore the inclusive school by adapting standards to support all students. Several scholars attest that schools must achieve intervention of the entire educational corporation to respond to the inadequacies of students, that is, inclusion is the intervention of all to avoid exclusionary educational practices (González et al., 2017).

Another approach widely used by policymakers is cycle theory, which divides policy implementation process into six distinct stages. These stages are recognized for their cyclical nature, repeating periodically over time. The stages are: agenda, in which the problem to be addressed is identified and selected; policy formulation, in which decisions are made about measures to be implemented; legitimization, in which the support needed to implement proposed policy is obtained; implementation, in which policy is carried out; evaluation, in which impact of the implemented policy is examined; and policy maintenance, in which implementation is completed or the cycle continues due to additional factors that arise (Viennet & Pont, 2017). In education, policies are programs promote these aspects because they affect entire educational system. They aim to prepare students in areas such as financial literacy, efficient governance, evaluation, and decision making, with the aim of transforming them into competent citizens who drive the comprehensive development of their country in different fields and levels (OECD, 2016).

The public policy category of inclusive education presents process approaches of Sabatier (1999) indicated approaches such as: The framework of policies that allow the fulfillment of the characteristics of scientific theories, the guidelines should consider the current level of development, taking into account the conceptual theories and cover all relevant factors for formulation of public policies. In this sense, Law No. 30797 (2018) establishes promotion of an inclusive approach in education, in all its modalities. It amends article 52 and includes articles 19-A and 62-A in law no. 28044 (General Education Law). According to this law, persons with disabilities have the right to education on equal terms with their peers. It is responsibility of the education system to adapt and provide the necessary support, measures and resources to meet characteristics and educational needs of persons with disabilities. In 2007, the Peruvian government ratified the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which promotes inclusive education. The public policy of inclusion involves recognizing all children as participatory and equally valued beings in the school environment, implementing strategies related to the form of organization and modes of learning so that these students

receive the highest level and possible academic performance, based on three important pillars such as access to common spaces, coexistence according to human welfare, and learning for the acquisition of skills (Echeita, 2017).

Public policies are relevant because they allow education to develop without limitations, consider changing attitudes, fighting stereotypes to support social inclusion in long term and thus ensure that people become local communities (Mangiaracina et al., 2021). Inclusive education policies take into account the economic that prioritizes effectiveness and achievement as educational goals and are situated in education policies across board (Magnússon et al., 2021). According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2009), educational inclusion is a model of education aims to take into account needs of all students, promote activities that ensure their participation in education and reduce discrimination against students. While it is true that there are different types of students either in schools or universities, within this student body, there are a number of them who have greater ability to learn than the rest of their peers are the same who have greater motivation for learning and require more detailed or specialized teaching. These are the gifted learners who do not find the opportunities they need to thrive in a basic or average education. They face simple and routine school situations where their abilities are not recognized and they are taught at same pace as the rest or the class group, which makes them lose motivation to learn (Arancibia et al., 2012, as cited in Llancavil et al., 2015).

This is an issue that has been in works for a long time and is a very important point of discussion to ensure that students with disabilities receive an education regardless of their conditions. Likewise, they have a sense of inclusion in educational system. As indicated by Mayo et al. (2015), inclusive education became a milestone in Peruvian education in 2003 through D.S. N° 026-003. The Supreme Decree aims to address the needs of children with SEN, considering that this population is excluded from the educational system, the regulation mentions that every person with any disability should receive quality education on a mandatory basis in educational institutions. Social fragmentation, according to Lozares et al. (2013) the authors stated that social fragmentation is associated with differences, rejection, exclusion and discrimination that can occur through two aspects: deprivation or the appearance in such distribution of dividing lines or cut-offs in collective existence. There is a social, economic, political, religious, educational and ethnic fragmentation, due to the polysemic character from different perspectives in people being the result of pluricausality, the existence of an absence of equal opportunities, such fragmentation is evidenced in the loss of global ideals in favor of non-inclusive groups with personal interests (Misseri, 2011). In the same line, Barreto et al. (2016) stated social fragmentation is one of the great dilemmas that harms population, causing a rupture of relations and spatial differences between collective associations.

On the other hand, Serrano and Durán (2020) pointed out that fragmentation has the peculiarity of always occurring as a result of a social and spatial phenomenon, since it is generated by poverty that is significantly increasing, which causes the formation of fear and violent behaviors among citizens, causing them to divide, This is influenced by globalization and the competition between cities to achieve superiority in terms of resources and goods, leading to the beginning of economic and special inequalities based on this problem, which will be expressed through disorder, disconnection, separation and exclusion of those groups

considered marginalized. The theories of social fragmentation, Martinez (2011) stated that there is a broken, fragmented structure of society due to the lack of identity of members of society, people think only of their personal welfare and not in a common good. Social breakdown is a problem of the dominant individualism based on social inequalities, exclusion by various cultural, educational and economic factors, it is not that the majorities are treated as discriminated minorities, therefore it is inferred that social breakdown is considered as a strategy of the dominant power, the society moves away from power.

Social cohesion and fragmentation are central issues in the organization and functioning of large societies. As such, these concepts have a long history of study (Bruhn, 2009). Concerns have been raised that due to continuous changes in recent decades, societies may gradually lose their cohesion and become more fragmented (Schiefer & Van der Noll, 2017). This could have numerous disastrous consequences, such as civil unrest, civil wars, government shutdowns, or even decline of democracy (Denton & Voth, 2016). To avoid these undesirable outcomes, it is therefore necessary to understand mechanisms lead to social fragmentation (Bramson et al., 2017). There are two main approaches to this problem: one considers fragmentation as a general organization of a social network that emerges through the evolution of its social ties, and the other considers it as the formation of clusters of similar social actors based on their preferences (Minh et al., 2020).

## **2. Methodology**

The paradigm of the study was interpretive one, which takes into account the experiences for understanding world, recognizing the particular characteristics that make up their culture, their beliefs and, in general, the subjective aspects surround the subject of study.

Qualitative research is interested in points of view of participants and methods must be open enough to allow understanding of these points of view and processes involved. At this level it would be said that the qualitative approach also implies an interpretive approach to the world (Flick, 2007).

The inductive method was used in research part of actual validity of the information, which will then serve him for the implementation. This method seeks the subject and his behavior, a process referred to as inductive model inquiry. While researcher to achieve this model must connect with participants and with the information to obtain and reach the answer (Escudero et al., 2018).

### **Research Design.**

The design was phenomenological, because the study will focus on the interpretation of experiences of the participants. In this regard, according to Castillo (2021), phenomenological design focuses on describing the experiences provided by people from their reality, without making inferences or a priori conclusions from the expressions provided by the participants. Husserl, German philosopher, the phenomenological approach is a paradigm seeks to explain the nature of things, the essence and veracity of phenomena (Husserl, 1998).

### **Study setting and participants**

The study was carried out within framework of a high-level executive institution, from which  
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the specific norms of supervision and monitoring of inclusive education policies emanate. The participants of present study were 4 former high-level officials of Ministry of Education, who were interviewed separately using the instrument designed for this purpose.

Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

Regarding technique, this was the conversational interview and the anecdote, because through it we will obtain the verbal expressions of the experiences of participants in relation to the public policies of inclusive education and social fragmentation in opinion of Feria et al. (2020) the interview in an empirical method to obtain information through a series of questions on the categories and the problematic of the research, where an interviewer and one or more interviewees intervene. On other hand, the instrument used was the semi-structured interview form, which is a format that includes a series of initial questions aimed at obtaining information about experience of the interviewee.

Scientific rigor

The information was analyzed using criteria of scientific rigor, in which logical consistency is used through support of theories and scientific bases obtained from the previous bibliographic review. According to González et al. (2021), scientific rigor is a characteristic of the naturalistic paradigm, which, in parallel with the positivist paradigm, seeks to provide the instrument with validity and reliability criteria through the criteria of credibility, transferability and confirmability.

Data analysis method

For Velosa and Rodriguez (2020), it is a strategy to corroborate the findings that come from two or more different sources, allowing greater flexibility in interpretation of data obtained. The method used to process interviews is called triangulation, which consists in comparing the opinions of the experiences expressed by participants to find similarities and differences and identify new categories. This information was then used to draw general conclusions. In summary, the method to be followed is as follows: (1) elaboration of the categorization matrix, (2) codification process (microscopic analysis of the codification of conceptualizations), (3) categorization, (4) triangulation, formation of abstract knowledge.

3. Results and discussion

For the development of this research work, the technique of interviewing specialists who were senior officials of Ministry of Education was used, which was duly analyzed by researcher in order to have a broad perspective on subject. Also, normative analysis and participatory observation by researcher have been considered.

For the normative analysis, the following components were taken into consideration:

Table 1 Documentary analysis standards regarding educational inclusion

Legal Standard	Purpose
General Education Law (Law No. 28044)	Establish the regulatory framework for the Peruvian educational system.
General Law for Persons with Disabilities (Law N° 29973)	Promote the full exercise of the rights of persons with disabilities.



Supreme Decree  
N° 013-2017-MINEDU

Law on Education Institutes and Schools  
(Law N° 30512)

Law that promotes inclusive education  
(Law N° 30797)

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To regulate the application of the General Law for Persons with Disabilities in the educational field.

Promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in higher education.

Promote inclusive education that respects cultural diversity.

The General Education Law, enacted in 2003 in Peru with the purpose of establishing regulatory framework for country's education system, reveals that the primary objective was to guarantee right to quality education for all citizens, promoting equity, inclusion, and non-discrimination. The benefits identified in this law are recognition of right to inclusive education. This is because it recognizes the right of all people to receive an inclusive education, regardless of their condition or characteristics. This promotes equal opportunities and access to education for all students. Likewise, this law establishes inclusion as a fundamental principle at all levels and modalities of the educational system. This implies adapting education to needs of students, guaranteeing their active participation and promoting the valuation of diversity. Conversely, this legal framework endeavors to diminish disparities and inequalities in access and quality of education. It concentrates on furnishing equal opportunities for all students to actualize their potential and achieve satisfactory academic outcomes.

It is noteworthy this law lacks specific directives on how to implement inclusive education in educational institutions. This can give rise to ambiguity and disparate interpretations, rendering its efficacious implementation challenging in practice. Another limitation is the dearth of economic resources allocated to inclusive education. This has resulted in a lack of accessible infrastructure, specialized pedagogical materials, and teacher training on inclusion issues. While the law does acknowledge importance of teacher training in educational inclusion, it does not specify the necessary requirements or mechanisms to ensure teachers are adequately trained in this area. The General Law on Persons with Disabilities was enacted in 2012 in Peru with purpose of promoting, protecting, and guaranteeing the full exercise of rights of persons with disabilities. This legislation acknowledges disability as a form of diversity and outlines measures to facilitate their inclusion in various domains, including education.

Among the positive elements of this regulatory framework is guarantee of the right of persons with disabilities to access inclusive and quality education on equal terms with other persons. This is achieved through promotion of principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination. Furthermore, the legislation mandates educational institutions provide inclusive educational programs and services that are tailored to individual needs of individuals with disabilities. The framework encourages adaptation of curricula, the creation of accessible physical environments, and the removal of obstacles to full participation. Finally, the framework promotes the active participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making related to their education, fostering their autonomy and empowerment.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that, despite the significant advancements in recognition of inclusive education, the effective implementation of law has presented challenges. Among these challenges, we can highlight difficulty in achieving uniform compliance with law across all educational institutions. This can lead to inequalities in access

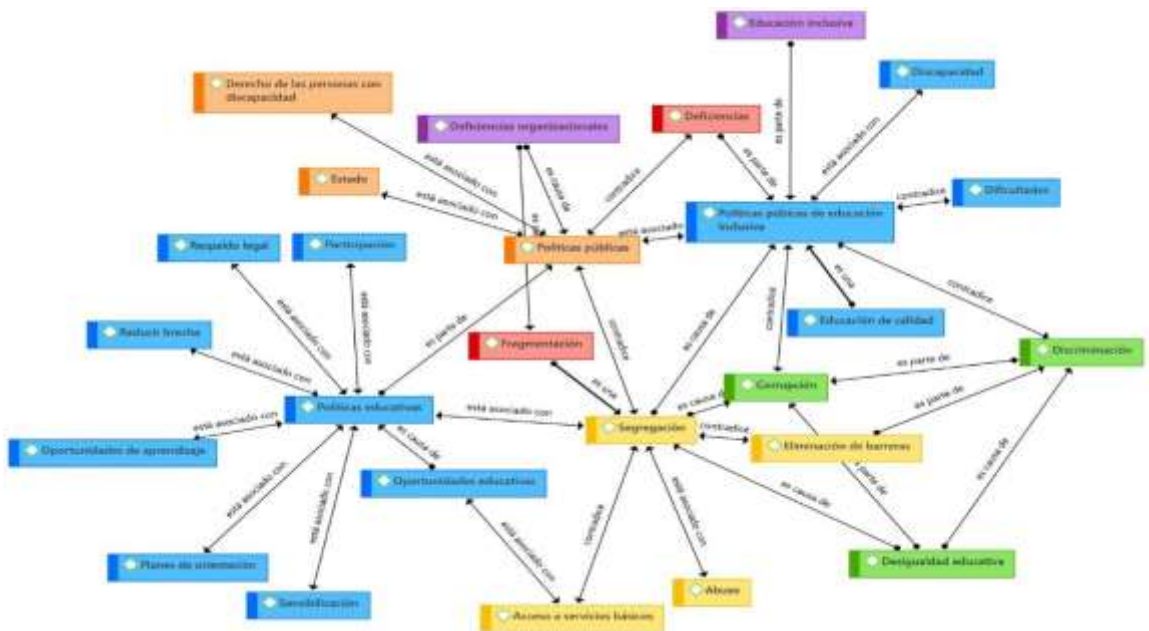


to and quality of education for people with disabilities. Another challenge has been inadequate training of educators in the field of inclusive education and the importance of diversity. This has constrained capacity of educators to provide an inclusive educational environment and adapt pedagogical practices to the individual needs of students with disabilities. Moreover, physical and environmental barriers have been evident. Although the law does promote physical accessibility, there are still barriers in educational facilities that hinder the full participation of people with disabilities. This encompasses the absence of ramps, elevators, adequate signage, and adapted spaces.

In accordance with Supreme Decree N° 013-2017-MINEDU, which was issued by the Peruvian Ministry of Education in 2017. The decree's objective is to establish provisions to ensure inclusive, quality educational care for students with disabilities at various levels and modalities within the education system.

Among the positive elements to be highlighted is that this decree promotes the inclusive education approach, thereby recognizing right of all students with disabilities to receive a quality education with equal opportunities. The decree aims to eliminate discrimination and guarantee full and effective participation of these students in educational system. Furthermore, the decree obligates educational institutions to implement curricular adaptations and provide necessary support to ensure the participation and learning of students with disabilities. This encourages the diversification of pedagogical strategies and use of accessible resources and materials. Finally, the decree promotes the active participation of the educational community, including students with disabilities, their families, and teachers, in decision-making and action planning for educational inclusion.

Figure 1. Thematic network of public policies on inclusive education and social fragmentation



A thematic network of public policies on inclusive education and social fragmentation is evident. Inclusive students lack access to quality education due to lack of preparation of regular schools to receive them, as Martínez et al. (2020) have observed. Furthermore, gender segregation and the separation between special and regular education serve to reinforce limitations to democratic opportunities and influence, which are fundamental elements for a country's democracy. In practice, inclusive education is found to present deficiencies and contradictions between theoretical principles and their actual implementation. It is observed educational inclusion is fragmented and presents challenges in terms of equity and guarantee of equal opportunities. Accordingly, the study by Palacios et al. (2022) demonstrated that social fragmentation represents a socio-political issue, whereby society is divided and there is a social rupture, with marginalized, excluded, and discriminated groups, such as students with SEN, being identified. This contradiction demonstrates a discrepancy between theoretical principles and the reality of inclusive education in present era.

Social inequality is a political problem that requires implementation of fair public policies and recognition of structural injustice. A significant challenge is implementation of gender-sensitive education policies to guarantee access to quality and culturally relevant education for girls, adolescents, youth, and women. Furthermore, challenges arise due to lack of specialized materials for diverse needs, the lack of preparation of teachers to address diversity, and the lack of knowledge of public policies on part of teachers and school managers.

Conversely, social justice in context of inclusive education, which from a sociological perspective, seeks to promote social justice and guarantee equity and equal opportunities for all, is a concept that warrants further examination. However, in practice, it is observed that educational inclusion is segmented and presents deficiencies. This indicates a contradiction between theoretical principles and the actual implementation of inclusive education in present era.

The dearth of training resources, including a paucity of teachers who have undergone specialized training in inclusive education, inadequate instructional materials, and suboptimal infrastructure, as well as discriminatory practices, have emerged as significant impediments to implementation of inclusive education. Furthermore, gender segregation and separation between special and regular education contribute to lack of preparation of teachers and lack of knowledge of public policies.

#### **4. Conclusions**

It can be concluded there are a number of factors impede the inclusion process in Peru. These include poverty, social and economic inequality, a lack of educational political will, and the existence of some special educational needs. Furthermore, there is a lack of public policies help to improve educational quality.

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