Equity, Privatization, and the Right to Education

Webinar 2 - Comparing Approaches: Lessons from Different Education Systems

Webinar Series organized by UNESCO's International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP)

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Assisted by Meredith Galloway, Doctoral Candidate, Sacramento State
Webinar 1: (17 February) *Introduction to the privatization of education: forms and diffusion*

Webinar 2 (24 February): *Comparing approaches: lessons from different education systems*  
Special guest Dr. Antoni Verger

Webinar 3 (3 March): *Moving forward: delivering on education as a human right*  
Special guest Ashina Mtsumi

Webinar 4 (10 March): *Final discussion and key conclusions*  
Special guest Camilla Croso
Webinar 1 Recap: Definitions, Pathways, and Global Diffusion of Privatization

Privatization is...
Shifting of State responsibility\(^1\) for the management and provision of equitable, high-quality education to the Non-State (private) sector, including for funding and/or ownership, thereby relegating government to a subsidiary role.

Key Components Include...

1. Established in International Human Rights Treaty (ICESCR, 1997)

\(^1\) - Established in International Human Rights Treaty (ICESCR, 1997)
Webinar 1. Recap

Pathways, Mechanisms, & Country-level Saturation of Education Privatization

Webinar 1 Recap. *Global Heat Map of the Spread of Education Privatization at ISCED 1* (using Funding & Management), by Quintile (global median 8.3%)
Audience Themes from Webinar 1

1) Evidence from specific country contexts
2) Examples of policy reversals
3) Key takeaways regarding impacts
4) Interplay of politics and education policy, including privatization
5) Power dynamics: policy borrowing or colonialism?
Webinar 2 Overview:
Comparing Approaches and Evaluating Evidence

1) How does privatization relate to quality and achievement?
   - Results mixed at best
2) What about equity?
   - Segregation concerns
3) What policy alternatives exist?
   - Public investment
4) Analyzing privatization sub-types (Verger)
5) Achievement and equity from a global perspective (Verger)
1. Compares privatization and public investment models of education

2. Examines evidence in three pairs of countries using case studies, showing *mostly* higher achievement and equity in public investment

3. Explains policy contexts undergirding each approach
Country Level Case Studies

Public Investment
- Canada
- Cuba
- Finland

Privatization
- United States
- Chile
- Sweden

What about us?!!
Example Key Findings and Issues

1) **Quality** in Low-Fee Private Schools (LFPS)
   a) High mobility and teacher attrition
   b) Competition for teachers between private schools increases moonlighting
   c) Income insufficient and parents often unable to pay

2) **Outcomes**
   a) Mixed results

3) **Widening stratification and inequality**
   a) Increased financial burden on families
   b) Creates economic micro-segregation
   c) Excludes more expensive students, such as special education

(Volume in press, May 2021)
Comparing Approaches to Education

**Public Investment**
- Public responsibility, democratic decisions

**Policy Drivers**

**Economic Rationales**
- Universal Access, Preparing Citizens, Equity

**Educational Mechanisms**
- Well-prepared teachers, Equitable funding, Whole-child pedagogy

**Privatization**
- Deregulation, Liberalization

**Policy Drivers**

**Economic Rationales**
- Efficiency, Choice, Competition, Resource Scarcity

**Educational Mechanisms**
- Vouchers, Charters, LFPS, Standardization, Test-Based Accountability
Neoliberal model embraced through school vouchers in 1980

Changes to the educational system:
- Funding – vouchers
- Structure – scaling private providers
- Assessment – standardized tests
- Administration – decentralization

In 2018, UNESCO recorded over 60% of Chile’s primary and secondary students enrolled in a private school.
Highly centralized social control system in Cuba resulted in state-driven social capital:
- Equal social class with little deep poverty
- Less classroom violence compared with other Latin American school systems
- Robust social programs
- General wage equality across sectors aids teacher recruitment.
- Teachers closely supervised and centrally trained.
Example Alternative: Cuba’s Public Investment Model Outperforms Chile (and Latin America)

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Percent of Students at Highest Proficiency Level 2005-06 SERCE, by Test Subject and Grade Level

Cuba
- 6th grade reading: 50.68%
- 6th grade math: 51.13%
- 3rd grade reading: 44.27%
- 3rd grade math: 54.36%

Chile
- 6th grade reading: 13.52%
- 6th grade math: 17.76%
- 3rd grade reading: 14.02%
- 3rd grade math: 17.76%

Latin American Average
- 6th grade reading: 11.44%
- 6th grade math: 11.23%
- 3rd grade reading: 8.41%
- 3rd grade math: 11.23%

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Cuba’s Public Investment Model Outperforms Chile (and Latin America)
In 1950’s Sweden had embraced the public school model as fundamental to a democratic society.

To ensure parents retained religious and cultural liberties, private schools were preserved but operated in the minority.

In the 1990’s, Sweden embraced the private, independent schools as an alternative form of ownership and operation of a previous public entity.
Glimpsing Sweden’s Reframing of Education

1948 1
“The prime task for the school is to form democratic humans.”

1970 2
Education is the “spearhead into the future” and the “key to abolish class society.”

2006 3
“To run a school and to sell refrigerators are one and the same. Its about having your ear to the market and to understand where the needs are for our customers.”

1 – Swedish Parliamentary School Commission for a School Reform
2 – Swedish Prime minister, O Palme
3 – Hellmark, Founder of Fourfront Schools
In 1970, Finland enacted a series of educational investments:

a) equalizing educational opportunities by eliminating tracking of students due to performance,

b) establishing of a common curriculum

c) upgrading of TE to a master degree program focusing on higher order skills.

Despite an economic crisis in 1990’s, Finland did not privatize its schools.

“Saved by the PISA” in 2000.
# Pasi Sahlberg’s Comparison of Educational Change Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Global Education Reform Movement</th>
<th>The Finnish Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competition between schools</td>
<td>Collaboration among schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School choice</td>
<td>Equity of outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standardized learning</td>
<td>Personalized learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on literacy and numeracy</td>
<td>Focus on whole child development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test-based accountability</td>
<td>Trust-based responsibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PISA Scores Show Large Differences, but also Convergence

Country-Level Mathematics Literacy PISA Scores, 2000-2018

Note: Chile did not participate in PISA 2003.
OECD Concerns over For-Profit Education Companies, Referring to Sweden

“While there is little robust and consistent evidence concerning the performance of for-profit schools in advanced economies, subsidising commercial providers without ensuring that profits are reinvested to improve the delivery of educational services raises concerns over the efficient use of public funding for education.”
United States: Competing Ideologies

The United States has deep values-based links to both Privatization & Public Investment models.

Privatization links:
- Federalist political structure
- Decentralized school systems
- Personal liberty

Public Investment links:
- Separation of church & state
- Civil rights movement
- War on poverty
U.S. Education Finance Pathways

**Differentiating Education Funding Streams: Introducing the Middlemen**

**Taxes Collected by Levels of Government**
- Pay Taxes
  - State & Federal
    - Local
      - Citizens

**Taxes Distributed by Governments on these Routes**
- Public Route
  - Addresses Gaps in Achievement and Funding
    - Preserves Gaps in Achievement and Funding
      - Government Organizes and Provides Education
        - Taxes Pay for Educators and Public Servants
- Privatization Route
  - Achievement Gaps Used as Justification, but Remain
    - Adds Middlemen
      - Charters Organize Education or Vouchers Pay for Private Schools
        - Taxes Pay for Educators, Public Servants, and Private Interests
New Orleans: Catastrophe Eliminates Public Infrastructure, Resulting in Wholesale Privatization via Charter Schools

**Policy Drivers**

- Privatization

**Economic Rationales**

- Choice

**Educational Mechanisms**

- Charters

**2003** – Louisiana “Recovery School District” established; authorized transformation of low performing public schools to charters

**2005** – Hurricane Katrina cripples infrastructure and local economy.

**2005** – First NOLA “failing” schools charterized; over 7,000 teachers fired without due process

**2007 – ongoing** – Widespread zero-tolerance discipline

**2015** – Remaining NOLA public schools charterized
New Orleans Student Achievement, by School Tier

Tier 1

Tier 1a: Selective OPSB
Tier 1b: Priority OPSB
Tier 1c: Open Enrollment OPSB
Tier 1d: OPSB Public (Direct-Run)

Tier 2

Tier 2a: RSD CMO Charter
Tier 2b: RSD Stand-Alone Charter
Tier 2c: RSD Charter (Direct Run)

Tier 3: Alternative Schools
Segregation in New Orleans Student Enrollment, by Race/Ethnicity and School Tier

- **White**: 89.3% Tier 1, 10.6% Tiers 2 & 3
- **Asian**: 72.7% Tier 1, 27.3% Tiers 2 & 3
- **Other**: 63.6% Tier 1, 36.4% Tiers 2 & 3
- **Hispanic**: 48.4% Tier 1, 51.5% Tiers 2 & 3
- **African American**: 23.5% Tier 1, 76.3% Tiers 2 & 3
• “We teach for the pure knowledge.”
• “We want kids to be active and involved and engaged”
• “true high school experience...more freedom”
• “we’re not obsessed with tests...”

Tier 2 Schools
(Open Enrollment)

• “We think a lot about remediation because of this student population”
• “our curriculum is kind of like an emergency management system and the teachers have the ideology like they’re a team of firefighters...”
• “the pressure is so extreme ...you can have kids take nothing but math and English all day.”
• “the kids’ experiences are pretty narrowly focused on their acquiring basic skills that will get them past tests”

Tier 3 Schools
(Alternative)

• “Sitting down the whole time on the computer”
• “You’re not really interacting with anybody”
• “It’s a lot of revisiting basics”
Expanding Achievement and Equity Analyses to Six U.S. Cities

Districts with Charter School Enrollment Greater than 10% (percent of total U.S. K-12 enrollment)

Data year: 2017
Intense Segregation in U.S. Schools

Schools with 90% or greater concentration of students classified as “students of color”
Frankenberg et al. (2019)
Intensely Doubly-Segregated Charter Schools

1 Schools with 90% or greater concentration of students classified as “students of color” and 90% or greater students who qualify for Federal Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Program
**Equity Concerns for Special Education Complicate Achievement Differences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District, St.</th>
<th>Special Education</th>
<th>English Learners</th>
<th>Met ELA Proficiency</th>
<th>Met Math Proficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Camden, N.J.</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>8.2***</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wash D.C.</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>-1.3</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flint, M.I.</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit, M.I.</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>3.5**</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natomas, C.A.</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>5.8**</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakland, C.A.</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>4.6***</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Positive** differences signify percent greater representation in public schools; **Negative** differences signify percent greater representation in charter schools.

* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001; t p < .10.
Summary U.S. Privatization Outcomes

1. Charter schools are unevenly dispersed nationally and concentrated primarily in urban areas serving students of color.

2. Segregation remains a major education issue for all schools, with students of color in urban contexts often attending intensely segregated schools.

3. Instead of mitigating the segregation problem, charter school selection appears to exacerbate it, specifically for special education students and for students in doubly segregated schools by both race/ethnicity and FRL status.

Ontario, Canada

First Adopts Neoliberal Approach to Education

1995 -- Harris’ Common Sense Revolution

Economic Approach: aggressive neoliberal agenda of deficit reduction
- lower taxes
- budget cuts to government programs
- financial accountability

Education Policy: reduce costs
- Cut $1 billion from education sector on annualized basis
- Reduced the number of school boards from 129 to 72
- Tax credit was offered for tuition at private schools (voucher)
Ontario, Canada

Neoliberal Approach Does Not Work

Results of Neoliberal Approach:
1) Stagnant student performance
2) Labor disruption and low teacher morale – teachers strike in 2003 for first time since 1987
3) Public dissatisfaction with Ontario’s public education system
Ontario, Canada
Subsequent Shift to Public Investment

2003 Election Shift
Dalton McGuinty, leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, wins on platform of renewal of public education as a high priority

Ontario Implements Whole School Reform:
1) a relentless focus on a few ambitious goals, and
2) progressive partnership with the teaching profession
3) collective capacity building linked to results
Observable outcomes associated with education strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market Based</th>
<th>Public Investment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Declining achievement overall</td>
<td>• Growing achievement overall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Greater segregation by race and class</td>
<td>• Greater integration of schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Greater inequality in access and outcomes</td>
<td>• More equity in access and outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More push out of low-achievers</td>
<td>• Increasing attainment across student groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shortages of teachers with more unequal knowledge and skills</td>
<td>• Surpluses of teachers with high levels of knowledge and skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research outcomes associated with education strategies

Research studies have **mixed findings** for student outcomes.

International studies often find that positive outcomes for students attending private schools are explained either by **cream-skimming** (student sorting by wealth, parent educational attainment, and peer effects) or by **improved school resources** (Baum, 2018; Harma, 2015; Pedro, Leroux & Wantabe, 2015).

Many studies reveal at least some degree of student **stratification or segregation** as privatization increases (Ladd et al., 2011; Adamson, Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2015).
For Further Reading:


Saltman. *Schooling in Disaster Capitalism: How the Political Right is Using Disaster to Privatize Public Schooling.* (2007)


Please welcome ...

Dr. Antoni Verger

1) Studies the relationship between global governance institutions and education policy
   i.e. how education policies are internationally disseminated and enacted in concrete institutional settings
2) Identifies effects on education quality and equity.
3) Specializes in the study of public-private partnerships and accountability policies in education.
Next Webinar ... March 2^{nd}, 2021

Moving forward: delivering on education as a human right

In Webinar 3, we will address the issues of education privatization within the broader framework of states' obligations in education and respect for human right. We will focus on the *Abidjan Principles*, adopted in 2019. Ashina Mtsumi will join as a presenter.