

# Private Schooling and School Choice as Global Phenomena: An Introduction

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More than 25 years ago, Chubb and Moe (1990) revitalised Friedman's (1982 [1962]) earlier contention that a market-driven approach to education, in which parents have primary control over schools, will produce better schools than a state-driven one. More power to the consumers (pupils and parents) and less influence by state authorities would improve academic achievement and make schools more efficient and just. School organisation and school control should therefore no longer be the business of the state, but of the civil society and private respectively market protagonists—more (private) suppliers and more choice would make schools 'great again' (Chubb and Moe 1990). The state's or government's role should be strictly limited to that of an "ensuring state" (Schuppert 2004). Or, as Milton Friedman originally expressed it in *Capitalism and Freedom*: "The role of the government would be limited to insuring that the schools met certain minimum standards, [...] much as it now inspects restaurants to insure that they maintain minimum sanitary standards" (Friedman 1982 [1962], p. 89).

These recommendations for organising school systems have not remained merely academic. Marketisation and privatisation have really changed school landscapes globally. There is an expansion of market instruments in governing

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schools and improving students' achievement. These political and legal instruments are expressed in various market mechanisms: more school choice and the expansion of private/charter schools. These developments have had effects on school quality, school organisation and school landscapes, on teacher professionalism and teaching practice in schools, on social segregation and educational inequality. The most recent landmark seems to be the appointment of Betsy DeVos, a wealthy Michigan philanthropist, as the new U.S. Secretary of Education. As the *New York Times* reported in November 2016, DeVos "has spent her career promoting a market-based, privatized vision of public education" (NYT 2016). Even keeping in mind that the federal government in Washington, D.C. contributes less than 10% to the nationwide costs of K-12 schooling, the new Trump administration is planning to spend \$ 20 billion to support DeVos' 'vision' (ibid.) and the U.S. Department of Education will still act as an influential change agency to spread ideas on altering schools and the school system.

It is not surprising that the United States are a main starting point for this change. The history of American schooling in the 20th century is marked by many milestones, where the schools and the school system were turned into powerful instruments to change society, to integrate millions of migrants, to fight poverty, to counteract communism, to end racial segregation, to win the race to the moon and to leave—very metaphorically speaking—no one behind (e.g. Graham 2005; Ravitch 2010). The "One Best System" (Tyack 1974) underwent many changes and turned itself into a model other countries tried to learn from—both good and bad (e.g. Koinzer 2011). However, or consequently, not just in the U.S. but worldwide, the above-mentioned ideology of a market-based, privatised education has been spread. Since at least the 1990s school choice has become a global phenomenon and with it, market driven models of schooling have grown. With that wave, in many countries private schools including for profit and non-profit institutions have become important actors in the field. In many countries school choice and a strong private school sector is changing the relational structure and the educational governance regimes—and finally the role of the state in compulsory education.

There is a long tradition in research, especially in the Anglo-Saxon world, examining the intended and unintended effects of school choice (e.g. Berends et al. 2011; Henig 1994; Gewirtz et al. 1995). School choice's advocates claim the parental right to choose as a human right to enable parents to guarantee the best education for their children, and to improve the equality of opportunities and thus to enable disadvantaged pupils to visit a 'good school' too (Musset 2012). However, critics assume that strengthening these market mechanisms in the field of schooling will change traditional values of public schooling and education as a

‘public good’. Walter Feinberg and Christopher Lubienski summed up that it will “further advantage the already advantaged” (Feinberg and Lubiensky 2008, p. 1), as it reinforces existing inequalities and social segregation. Nonetheless, already in 1994 the OECD identified some school choice policies spreading worldwide; from policies that strongly support for-profit and/or non-profit private schooling by introducing voucher systems, the removal of catchment areas for public schools, to policies encouraging schools to take special profiles (OECD 1994). School choice and the expansion of private schools seem to go well with each other. However, there is a need for more research for a better understanding of the interrelation of both phenomena, especially in a comparative perspective (e.g. Dronkers and Avram 2015). Only a few studies have focused on the phenomena of privatisation of education globally so far (e.g. Forsey et al. 2008, Chakrabarti and Peterson 2009; Verger et al. 2016).

One aim of this book is to approach this interrelation by analysing the development of private schools and its interaction with school choice policies in selected countries or world regions. Therefore, part one of the book comprises case studies from around the globe that show the extent of private schooling in a number of countries (England, Sweden, Germany, USA, Chile, Ghana, China and Australia), all of which experienced an expansion of private schooling in the last 20 years. The OECD offers data about the share of students enrolled in private schools. Across the OECD member states, the state is still the main provider of schools, but an increasing share of students are attending private schools. The share of students enrolled in private institutions includes different types of private schooling. The OECD distinguishes between government-dependent or government-independent private schools based on the level of public funding. Government-dependent private schools receive more than 50% of their core funding from government agencies, whereas for government-independent private schools less than 50% of their core funding comes from government agencies. Based on the share of students in private schools, we obtain four different quadrants for the public-private division in providing primary schools in the OECD (see Table 1).

Our case studies of the United States (see chapter by Köppe), Sweden (see chapter by West) and Germany (see chapter by Nikolai and Koinzer) belong to quadrant 2, with the share of students in private primary schools falling between 2 and 10%. China also falls into this group (see chapter by Schulte). The United Kingdom belongs to the group of countries in which between 10 and 30% of students attend private schools (Quadrant 3); however as the share of students in private schools is low in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland (West and Nikolai 2017), the chapter by Exley will reflect the situation for England only. In the chapter by Aziabah we also offer a case study of Ghana, which is also part of Quadrant 3. Quadrant 4 shows countries with a high share of students in private

**Table 1** Share of students in private primary schools (government-dependent and government-independent private schools), 2014

(1) (Almost) only public		(2) Between 2 and 10% of students in private schools	
Finland Ireland Japan Latvia New Zealand	Netherlands Slovenia South Korea Czech Republic	<i>Germany</i> Estonia Greece Canada (2013) Iceland (2013) Italy Norway	Mexico Austria Poland <i>Sweden</i> Switzerland Slovak Republic Turkey USA <i>China</i>
(3) Between 10 and 30% of students in private schools		(4) More than 30% of pupils in private schools	
Denmark France <i>United Kingdom</i> Israel	Luxembourg Portugal Hungary <i>Ghana</i>	<i>Australia</i> Belgium <i>Chile</i> Spain	

Source OECD (2016). For Ghana the data are based on GoG (2015)

primary schools. This group includes Chile (see chapter by Alarcón) and Australia (see chapter by Forsey et al.).

The second part of the book takes a closer look at the processes of school choice, the motives of choosers, as well as the change of education privatisation policies. Therefore, we assembled here articles that describe and analyse school choice practices in Germany's capital Berlin that stands more or less as an exemplar for school choice in (western) urban environments, with a growing supply of school choice options, private schools, and a changing school landscape (see chapters by Mayer, Schwarz et al. and Habeck et al.). Additionally, the final article in that part (see chapter by Fontdevila et al.) analyses the disaster-induced education privatisation processes in the Americas, and shows how the (ruling) market ideology is articulated to cure the wounds of natural disasters and to demonstrate the 'virtue of persuasiveness of ideas' that has to be proven by critique and further research.

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