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ABSTRACT

This paper considers how school choice is, or is not, a form of privatization in education. Although "privatization" is a predominant reform movement apparent across the globe, the term is used imprecisely, making it difficult to assess the relationship of the movement to education. The first part of this analysis distinguishes essential characteristics of privatization from other sectors to establish a framework from which to appraise the presence or extent of privatization elements in school-choice policies. The second part takes a closer look at different forms of school choice to see how they may embody the elements of privatization suggested in this framework. In this context, school-choice programs in the U.S. do not usually fit typical conceptions of privatization because they do not change the ownership arrangement of schools. At most, school-choice plans draw on a mixture of public and private resources in providing education to the public. This analysis deepens the discussion by clarifying what is meant by privatization. It explores how and in what way school choice may be part of the larger global privatization movement and offers a more complex and comprehensive conception of this phenomenon. (Contains over 350 references.) (RT)

School Choice and Privatization:

Toward an Alternative Analytical Framework

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This paper considers how school choice is, or is not, a form of privatization in education. Privatization is a predominant reform movement apparent across the globe in many sectors. However, the term is used imprecisely, and represents a wide range of reforms premised on the expansion of market authority: market mechanisms, market models, private ownership, private provision, profit incentives, and other specific policies. This imprecision makes it difficult to assess the relationship of the broader privatization movement to education, particularly as school reform is often characterized by politicized rhetoric intended either to obscure or denigrate policy proposals. Therefore, this analysis discerns essential characteristics of privatization from other sectors in order to establish a framework from which to appraise the presence or extent of elements of privatization in school choice policies for education. In doing so, it offers an alternative perspective from which to evaluate this issue.

In fact, market-based approaches are increasingly popular with policymakers around the world as the primary alternative to (prescription for) rigidly centralized state-planning and moribund, inefficient bureaucratic administration of public resources and services. In general, the various forms of what is called "privatization" elevate private control, incentives, and decision-making over public administration through market mechanisms of decentralization, consumer choice, and competition. School choice programs often embody similar aspects and dynamics, but the term does not appear under a consistent definition in school reform debates in the US. Indeed, many school choice proponents vigorously resist that description.

Rather than throwing another hat into the ring regarding whether or not school choice is a form of privatization, this analysis seeks more complex insights into the issue—considering *in what ways* school choice and privatization do or do not overlap. It does this in two ways. First, after establishing the context, the paper examines instances of market expansion in many sectors and areas of life to discern the essential aspects of privatization. The comprehensive review of the literature in diverse spheres not only distinguishes different elemental forms of privatization, but also suggests a related phenomenon of marketization. These examples provide a continuum of characteristics of privatization that together provide an initial framework from which to consider school choice reforms.

The second part of the paper takes a closer look at different forms of school choice to see how they may embody the elements of privatization suggested in the general framework. For the most part, it is difficult to see school choice as a form of privatization in view of the predominant considerations popular in research and policy discussions—supply-side criteria of funding and ownership of the means of provision. However, contrary to typical approaches to this issue, this analysis suggests an alternative consideration: transformations in the nature of a good from the demand-side perspective on the emergent consumer of school choice options. The discussion indicates that education is a unique area, where usual approaches do not sufficiently account for the nature of education as a public or private good, particularly when administered through a choice system.

This paper represents an initial exploratory analysis into the multiple perspectives on an issue that is debated passionately, conceived ideologically, but defined rather imprecisely. Insofar as the meaning of "privatization" in reform debates is politicized, polarizing, and ambiguous, this paper is largely about language and its uses. Yet, inasmuch as those debates rely and perpetuate contested and conflicting understandings of and approaches to the concept, this examination suggests an alternative analytical framework for considering the issue of privatization in education. The analysis demonstrates that school choice is usually not a form of privatization in terms of the dominant analytical perspective focusing on supply-side criteria of ownership and funding. However, the alternative framework proposed here indicates that school choice contributes to privatization of the *purpose* and *pursuit* of education by re-orienting the nature of the good itself into a commodity, from the demand-side perspective of the newly emergent consumer in a competitive choice system.

"Privatization" and School Choice Debates in the US

Recent policy and scholarly debates highlight the relevance of this issue in American education, as well as in school reform movements around the globe. In the US, the prolific charter school movement increases opportunities for private, for-profit, and corporate Education Management Organizations (EMOs) to run publicly-funded schools. While these schools help bring private investment to bear on education through the increasing involvement of venture capital,[1] charter school proponents insist that these schools are "public."[2] Indeed, in terms of funding, access, ownership (usually), and accountability, this claim is correct. Nonetheless, school choice proponents take a defensive stance in protesting the use of the term "privatization" to describe school choice plans (Lubienski, in press). For example, former Detroit Superintendent and current Edison VP Deborah McGriff insists that "It's not privatization...No one is selling a school. It's a public-private partnership. We're bringing resources to a public entity. We're responsible to a public authority and we operate as other public schools operate" (Williams, 1999a; see also 1999b). While this is true, such a definition ignores questions of control and the political context of reform.

The use of "privatization" appears more frequently with other forms of school choice, such as vouchers and for-profit schooling, for instance. In policy and scholarly circles in the US, vouchers are more clearly associated with "privatization." But even here, there is some vociferous dissent, as voucher advocates note that vouchers are (typically) publicly funded, and available to the public, while the schools are accountable to the public, at least through market forces (e.g., DeWeese, 1994; Durant III, 1997; Finn, 1996; Friedman, 1994, 1995). Similar questions are evident in other contexts as well. After studying Chile's decentralization reforms, Parry (1997) sees privatization in terms of public funding for private schools through vouchers. Thus, Carnoy (2000) criticizes academic investigations of school choice that ignore the political agenda of privatization underlying the reforms.[3] He identifies vouchers as just one form of privatization not just in the US context, but in school choice movements around the globe (Carnoy, 1995, 1997, 1998). On the other end of the political spectrum, observers such as Friedman (1955; 1962; 1995; 1980) argue explicitly for "privatization" of education in terms of "consumer" control, institutional ownership, and, eventually, even funding (see also Coulson, 1999; Lieberman, 1989; Tooley, 1995, 1996, 2000). However, except in certain

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[1] Applebome (1997), Bilefsky (1998), Hill (1999), Shales (1998), Symonds (2000a; 2000b), Walsh (1998a; 1999a; 1999b), and Wyatt (1999).

[2] See for example Finn & Gau (1998), Finn, Manno, Bierlein, & Vanourek (1997), Friedman (1994), Hassel (1998), Hill (1994), Manno, Finn, Bierlein, & Vanourek (1998a, 1998b), McGriff (1996) Nathan (1996a, 1996b), Peterson (1997), and Rofes (1996).

[3] See the recent exchange between Goldhaber (1999; 2000) and Carnoy (2000) on this issue.

instances, the term "privatization" appears less frequently in mainstream debates around education policy in the US.

The dearth of reference to "privatization" in US education reform debates is interesting, in view of the curious consensus between observers on either end of the political spectrum that market-driven reforms are promoting privatization, or at least moving substantially in that direction. This odd omission can be understood in different ways. First, there is the possibility that market-driven school reforms are essentially different than privatization efforts in other sectors (an argument considered below). However, there is also the chance that market proponents recognize negative connotations in the term, and therefore avoid its use, even as they embrace various elements of the phenomenon. Certainly, critics of some versions of school choice employ the word to smear the proposals they oppose (e.g., Alexander, 1998; Kozol, 1993; Rethinking Schools, 1996; Schrag, 1996). They claim that any moves toward "privatization" undercuts the US commitment to public education. Consequently, in *Language of the 21st Century*, a handbook for Republicans in Congress regarding how to speak to the public on particular issues, GOP pollster Frank Luntz (1998) warns politicians to "***Dump the word 'privatize' forever.***" Except for social security reform, the "word ***'privatize'*** is dreadful in all other contexts" (p. 170, emphases in original).[4] While many US reformers acknowledge market mechanisms of consumer choice and competition between providers (e.g., Billingsley & Riley, 1999; Hassel, 1998a; Payne, 2000), there is still a pronounced antipathy to the word, to the degree that some reformers attempt to emulate the substance of privatization while avoiding the semantics (Hill, 1994). Thus, reformers in the US are much more likely to talk of "choice," "parental control," or "parents' rights" rather than to use economic terminology of "markets," "products," or "privatization." That is, with a few exceptions (e.g., Murphy, 1996), the term is relegated to contentious use as a polarizing tool in debating the provision of education. Such a politicized (or manipulative) lexicon discourages consideration of the degree to which dynamics of school choice do or do not parallel privatization reforms in other sectors. Stated simply, how is privatization apparent or not in school choice programs?

Markets and Education

Researchers and theoreticians in other countries have pulled ahead of the US in considering how markets in education do or do not represent privatization. In the UK—which has moved substantially toward embracing the market as a model for educational provision since the Thatcher governments—observers deliberate terminology to the extent that it obscures or exposes political agendas. Many refer to privatization in reforms that use public funds to send select students to private schools; that impose market-like conditions on schools, forcing them to compete for students and funding; and that now bring private managers in to administer schools (British Broadcasting Corporation, 1999; Lightfoot, 1999a, 1999b; Whitty & Power, 2000a). In view of the initial reforms, Whitty (1990) described a pattern of subtle privatization that suggested an agenda of private providers assuming responsibility for administering the state sector—with the future possibility of an almost completely privatized system in terms of funding and provision. More recently, Chitty (1997) argues that attempts by policymakers to blur the widely recognized distinctions between public and private schools are a form of privatization. Yet now, Whitty and Power (2000b) distinguish between

[4] Luntz (1998) also admonishes policymakers to use the term "opportunity scholarship"—"*DON'T* USE THE WORD 'VOUCHER'" (p. 82, emphases in original).

privatization and marketization in education. They note that the system is not private in terms of funding or provision, whereas it is increasingly modeled as a market. Thus, "marketization" appears to them to be a more appropriate description of these reforms and their aftermath.

In that respect, others argue that market-driven reforms such as those in the UK do not represent a true market. In view of continued state involvement in funding, controlling costs, regulating and restricting entry of new providers, there is no "market" in the *laissez faire* sense. Instead, education is based on a "quasi-market" defined by consumer choice (within the state sector) and competition between semi-autonomous providers (Bartlett, 1993; Levaçic, 1995). Typical leading characters in market scenarios are conflated or absent (Lubienski, under review). For example, parents as customers may *choose* a child's education, but they do not immediately *consume* education provision by enjoying the direct personal benefits. Instead, they are "proxy-consumers," acting on behalf of the child (Brighouse, 1997). Similarly, while parents choose between providers (and are therefore treated as customers) the state typically pays for the service—thereby divorcing the consumer-chooser from the consumer-payer. Since quasi-markets blur important roles, motivations, incentives that are present in "pure" market dynamics, it is difficult to maintain that school choice schemes accurately reflect market models.

Privatization and Marketization

Thus, some contend that different school choice policies are not really privatization in view of continued public ownership, provision, and funding. For some of those same reasons, others note that such reforms are not really markets, due to conflated characters, roles, and motivations that pervert true market dynamics.

Markets and privatization are not the same thing, although they are closely related. In its most basic sense, "privatization" indicates that control is removed from the interference of others in the public realm. Deriving from the Latin *privare* (meaning to steal or take…the common root of "deprive," for instance), the word suggests changing an endeavor from common to individualized control. Thus, elemental characteristics imply movement and personal governance. Privatization does not necessarily imply a market, insofar as a market indicates multiple buyers and sellers seeking profitable advantage (see below). Profit motives, multiple suppliers and bidders, and competitive environments, for instance, are not indispensable prerequisites for private control. However, since markets are premised on individual property rights, markets presuppose private ownership or control. Hence "privatization," or the movement to private control, needs to be considered as a precondition to "marketization," or increases in market authority.

In order to understand the extent of, or increases in, private and market authority in school choice education systems, this paper moves to an examination of marketization and privatization in fields outside of the field of education. In view of the politicized and polarizing nature of economic terminology in education, and the contested descriptions of marketization and privatization for school reform, examining similar dynamics in other areas can provide a point of reference for returning to this issue in the concluding discussion of this paper. By examining how markets have emerged into a wide variety of other sectors and areas of life, this analysis can identify various characteristics of privatization and marketization in general, to see how they are or are not present in current education reforms.

The analysis that follows is based on a study of privatization involving a review of some 360 monographs and articles from scholarly and policy publications—covering the globe and encompassing many different sectors, such as heavy and extractive industry, public services and resource administration.[5] In reviewing the literature on privatization in these areas, we can identify an initial analytical framework from which to investigate market-style education reforms.

PART 1: Markets and Privatization

Indeed, there is a vibrant and rapidly growing scholarly literature on privatization, focused largely on developing countries and the former soviet-bloc economies, as well as the previously nationalized industries privatized by the conservative restoration in the Western market democracies. The literature takes both global and more provincial perspectives on the privatization phenomenon. However, understanding "privatization" and the expansion of market authority first requires an understanding of "markets."

A Definition of Markets

The modern idea of "the market" is itself essentially a metaphor, since oftentimes no actual marketplace (physical or virtual) exists, particularly in sectors such as education (Henig, 1994; Margonis & Parker, 1995). Still the use of the term has become pervasive in describing and evaluating social institutions, systems, policies, and relationships. For the purposes of this analysis, I am defining a market as an institutionalized area of social interaction[6]

1) that is premised on the exclusive right of individuals to own, control, and dispose of private property or associated prerogatives in a manner that reflects their own choosing;
2) that is driven by the desire of those individuals to exchange goods, services, and/or other manifestations of value (represented by the degree to which they are valued by *other people* in competitive bidding, and relative to other options) in a manner that will maximize their own individual self-interest;
3) that assumes the involvement of any plural number of players who interact competitively—acting only in their own self-interest—in order to establish themselves in positions from which they may enjoy a competitive advantage over others in terms of controlling relatively greater shares of the supply, demand, or information that is integral to their interactions (or the patronage, loyalties, or debts of the other players);
4) where the only limits that can be imposed upon these interactions (in the purest or "free" sense of the market) are those agreed to by individual players party to an interaction, within the context of any constraining conditions imposed by the circumstances of the market itself (i.e., gluts, shortages, panics, inflation, deflation, depressions, or other aggregate effects of the contextualized individual decisions of other participants);

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[5] The survey that follows, incorporating a broad-ranging and somewhat eclectic selection of sources, comes from a computer search, narrowed somewhat by the availability of sources. I ran CARL UnCover and UnCover Reveal Alert searches on privatization in the academic and policy-oriented journals and press as they were published over two years, and then systematically obtained what I could. Library resources (and inter-library loan requests) accessed some of the material, usually the ones that looked the most relevant, or that were available. A few other sources also came from bibliographies.

[6] This is a rather standard definition of markets (see, e.g., Albrecht, 1986; Baumol & Blinder, 1994; Mansfield, 1970).

5) where the sum of individual actions, acquisitions, and wants—demands and supplies—creates patterns, mandates, and particular conditions (market forces) that can inform the measurable value of, and ability of any individual actor to exchange or dispose of, his or her property, goods, or services in a way he or she chooses (gluts, shortages, depressions, recessions, inflation, deflation, booms, etc.).

Thus, since markets by definition depend on private authority, such authority is an implicit and integral part of markets, but not the whole consideration. Both pro-market advocates and observers more suspicious about the effects of markets will admit to the efficiency of markets in the production and distribution of various goods and services crucial for addressing human wants and needs, for example. What is notable, however, is the increasing centrality that markets assume in previously non-market aspects of human interaction. Instead of markets serving as a useful tool for the organization and operation of a society, they are increasingly internalized into the very essence of social existence. Polanyi (1944) described this as a market society (as opposed to a society with markets) where markets order most aspects of human life—what Tamez (1995) sees as the "total market" (see, also, Kuttner, 1996).

Privatization as a Manifestation of Expanding Markets

This expansion of the authority of the market model happens in several ways, many of which are often referred to as "privatization." Privatization a global movement cutting across sectors (Lieberman, Nestor, & Desai, 1997; Lopez-De-Dilanes, Shleifer, & Vishny, 1997; Ricupero, 1997; Yergin & Stanislaw, 1998). The term is a generalization of various distinct forms, including processes such as: *liberalizing* economies through deregulation and elimination of barriers to capital flow; *marketizing* services through user fees, or otherwise employing the market model for the distribution of social services; *de-regulating* private providers to offer public services or compete with state endeavors; or *de-nationalizing* state-owned enterprises by selling them to private investors or by providing vouchers for stakeholders (Armstrong, Armstrong, & Connelly, 1997; Berg & Berg, 1997; Center for International Private Enterprise, n.d.; Gauri, 1998; Horsfall, 1997; Massey, 1997a; Murray, 1997; Whitty & Power, 2000b).

Thus, "privatization" can take the form of private, for-profit producers and providers supplanting public production or provision. Or it can involve simply turning public endeavors or assets over to private control, as in the triumph of the market model over central planning for national economies. Market expansion can involve opening up state or public enterprises to private investment. It is evident in the "rationalization" of organizations and relationships along market lines in order to realize greater efficiencies. This is apparent in the logic and metaphors of markets becoming the *modus operandi* for a sector or institution, or the use of market terms, ideas, and metrics for institutions, endeavors, and enterprises established for collaborative, community, or other decidedly non-market purposes and ends. Still another form of privatization is evident as previously cooperative, communal, or otherwise non-market or public goods become private goods, in a process of commodification (e.g., The Ecologist, 1993; Netting, 1997). The pace is accelerating; the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) estimates the world-wide proceeds from privatized government assets and enterprises at approximately $145 billion (US) in 1999 (Agence France-Presse, 2000).

General Definitions of Privatization

Although the concept of placing public endeavors under private control is not new, the term itself is generally thought to have originated with management "guru" Peter Drucker (1969). Still, definitions of privatization in the current literature show no consensus, being largely brief and nebulous. Most often, the definition is assumed, or stated in a rather pithy manner, such as Reed's (1998, p. 145) definition: the "transfer of a service or an asset from the public sector to the private sector" (see, also, Horsfall, 1997). Herman's (1997) conception focuses on the activities of the government as the fodder for privatization, but is expansive enough to include non-governmental organizations as well, since non-profit groups and trade unions "can respond to democratic political processes." Feigenbaum and Henig (1997) also give a wider meaning that suggests political dynamics across time, and the possibility of commonly-held conceptions as aspects integral to understanding privatization: "any initiative that increases the role of the market in areas previously considered the province of the state (national or local)." Greene (1996b) is likewise very broad, deferring to the National Council on Employment Policy's (1988) definition of privatization as "the attainment of any public policy goal through the use of the private sector."

More rare are the definitions that give some sense of the political dimensions of privatization. While Berg and Berg (1997, p. 357) see privatization as "giving private actors a greater role in decisions about what, where, and how to produce goods and services," Champlin (1998) would claim that such a portrayal is typical of the murkiness around understandings of privatization in that they are conflating privatization with private, government supervised, production. Thus, more complex and sophisticated descriptions of the many methods of privatization give more of a sense of the many policies that fall under the heading of privatization. For example, Goulding (1997) writes of "parallelization" to describe India's opening of state-dominated industries to regulated competition from private providers; while Morris (1997) distinguishes between "formal" and "informal" privatization strategies. Yet, the difficulty involved in putting a finger on the exact meaning of privatization is due largely to the fact that conceptions of what is meant by "private"—in terms of spheres, sectors, actors and interests—as well as the "public" with which it is often juxtaposed, represent the site of shifting and competing meanings (Armstrong et al., 1997; see, also Galbraith, 1999, on the inextractibility of public and private spheres in market system).

Characteristics of the General Phenomenon of Privatization

The literature on privatization is quite descriptive regarding the scope, pace, and shape of the current privatization movement. There appears to be a general consensus in the literature that the range of areas now susceptible to privatization is remarkable both in the geographic and organizational measures of its advance. Privatization has interjected market mechanisms into areas of human life that would likely not have been considered appropriate for market-type organization three decades ago, for example. But areas such as national defense, prisons, health care, mass public pensions, religion, telecommunications, and ownership of forms of life, while showing the effects of market penetration, are hardly unique. Likewise, previously definitive public sector endeavors such as education, welfare, foster services—almost any imaginable public enterprise—are now targeted by the logic of privatization (e.g., Conniff, 1997; Eggers, 1997; Garland, 1997). As Champlin (1998, p. 598) notes, there are "few, if any, limits to the drive toward privatization and the retreat of government," particularly at local and state levels (see also, Daley, 1996).

Yet, of course, this is a phenomenon that is evident not only at the state and local levels, but on a national and international level as well. Much of the weight of the literature on privatization suggests that the fall of the command economy model in the former Soviet Bloc provides perhaps the most dramatic and draconian instances of privatization of previously national assets, industries, and services (Celarier, 1997).[7] While privatization received its most articulate boost in the mixed economies of western Europe,[8] and forceful implementation in Latin America, it is also evident in the self-described "socialist" countries such as Vietnam, China, and Cuba as they become more integrated into the global economy.[9] Thus, many observers describe the "vast privatizations" as a global pattern (Seabrook, 1997).[10]

Focusing on the scope of the privatization movement, however, begs the question as to the shape that it may take in these many and varied contexts. As Herman (1997) points out, although privatization has accelerated recently, particularly in the last two decades, it is not a new or monolithic phenomenon (see, also, Miller, 1987). Thus, forms of privatization have had the opportunity to evolve in response to various particulars—circumstances, forms of resistance, industries, and logical articulations of market and non-market conditions. Although I discuss more specific instances of the many forms of privatization below (and it is not the purpose of this paper to do a comprehensive outline of the many manifestations of privatization), it should be noted that the nebulous essence of privatization means that the literature on privatization describes many different policies.[11] Thus, manifestations of privatization are evident in many degrees of market penetration and government retreat, and may include complete removal of government provision, supervision, or control from a service or sector, the sale of public assets or means of production, deregulation, tax breaks, public vouchers, or contracting out (Greene, 1996b).

However, while the literature is more scattered in describing the manifestations and methods of privatization, there is near unanimity in observing the remarkable pace at which privatization policies have swept into public arenas throughout the globe. For example, in analyzing the privatization patterns of public housing in the UK, Brown and Sessions (1997) note "a sea-change, if not in the direction, then certainly in the speed of development and implementation of British housing policy."[12] Greene (1996b) examined the evidence on privatization in almost 600 municipalities for approximately 60 activities from 1982 to 1992, and found a significant increase in the use of privatization as a policy tool. And instances of privatization are not likely to be rolled back—areas and functions that have been privatized are likely to stay under private control (Daley, 1996).

Still, despite the tremendous pace and likely acceleration in the rate of using privatization as a policy tool, some observers call for even quicker implementation of the privatization agenda—what Klein (1995) calls the "Big Bang" strategy of rapidly privatizing complete

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[7] See, for example, Cui (1997); Frydman, Pistor, & Rapaczynski (1996); Jezek (1997); Katz & Owen (1997); Kaufmann & Siegelbaum (1997); Kolko (1997); Millea (1997); and Thomas (1997).

[8] See, for example, Borde & Dang-Tran (1997); Brown & Sessions (1997); Light (1997); Miller (1997); and Thatcher (1993).

[9] See, for example, Abinales (1997); Fforde & de Vylder (1996); Glewwe & Patrinos (1998); Kolko (1997); and the World Bank (1997).

[10] See also, Dunleavy (1997); Feigenbaum & Henig (1997); Herman (1995); Jordan (1997); Massey (1997a, 1997b); Moore (1997); and Ricupero (1997).

[11] See, for example, Armstrong, et al. (1997); Goulding (1997); and Morris (1997) as noted above.

[12] See also, Beatty (1993) on the remarkable pace of change in the UK coal industry.

sectors or systems in a shock therapy of economic transformation. For instance, Kaufmann and Siegelbaum (1997) suggest that the rapid implementation of certain types of privatization (i.e., de-nationalization of assets through stock offerings and vouchers) will stem the rise of corruption associated with move to market model in the former Soviet Bloc countries. Poland's previous Privatization Minister, Janusz Lewandowski, argued for a re-acceleration of privatization to hasten consolidation of the liberal democratic model—and admission to the European Union (Bonamo, 1997; see also Singer, 1990). And Goulding (1997) cites World Bank projections of potential growth in India's GDP if bureaucratic and popular resistance to "de-nationalization," or privatization, can be overcome (see the World Bank, 1995).

One notable feature of the literature on the scope, shape and pace of privatization is that much of the reasoning assumes a teleology of an inexorable market. That is, observers, for the most part appear to assume that privatization is an organic evolution of social and economic ordering of mass human interaction toward a natural state of liberalized market society (see e.g., Fukuyama, 1992). Although there are exceptions at either extreme of the discourse—those rabidly opposing privatization on the grounds that it undercuts human progress (e.g., Herman, 1995; 1997), and those favoring privatization, but seeing a need to (artificially) promote it because of the (artificial) obstacles placed before it (e.g., Thomas, 1997)—the weight of the literature seems to see privatization as a natural progression. Thus, in an otherwise generic discourse characterized by econometric and technocratic questions of administrative efficiency and effective implementation, very few analysts have had the perspective and ability to question the appropriateness of privatization on other (non-market) grounds (Oettle, 1997).

The Global Context of the Expanding Purview of Markets

Policymakers increasingly embrace market models for organizing social services, a phenomenon evident on a global scale (Yergin & Stanislaw, 1998). Reforms rapidly privatize public services in a wide range of contexts. With the fall of the planned and centrally controlled economies of the soviet model, there has been little to offer a viable alternative to, much less challenge, the free market system as the paradigm on which human relationships are organized. Thus, we can see the penetration of the market into areas—both geographical and social—that had previously been excluded from market influences. While markets are becoming the primary economic policy arrangement in the former soviet economies of Russia and eastern Europe, they are also expanding deeper in the liberal democracies of the West into areas such as health care, public security, mass transportation, and education—social services and public goods previously held to be spheres susceptible to "market failure."

Indeed, the maintenance and growth of comprehensive social safety nets—the European welfare state, or "nanny state" in Thatcher's words, and the federally-funded programs in the United States associated with Roosevelt's New Deal and Johnson's Great Society—are no longer guaranteed or secure from the vagaries of politicized policy reversals. Whereas in the post-WWII consensus, fluctuations between liberal and conservative national governments affected the growth but not necessarily the integrity of publicly-funded social services such as education, in recent years, political labels have become increasingly irrelevant. Challenges to the foundation of social programs come from both "conservative" *and* "liberal" political forces (see, e.g., Ball & Whitty, 1990; Cameron, 1997; David, 1992; McAllister & Vowles, 1994; Reich, 1999; Seabrook, 1997, 1999).

Markets are challenging state provision of public services throughout the world, particularly in poorer nations. International financing agencies and private creditors pressure poorer, debtor nations to scale back on public spending, sell off public assets and enterprises, actively promote foreign investment, export raw materials, privatize services, and generally free up market mechanisms in the name of efficiency.[13] While wealthier nations have cut back on the guarantees of services, governments in the "less-developed" world are forced to choose which segment of society, class, or generation will go without publicly-funded health care or education (Khor, 1995; Sayer, 1993). Although this dilemma is caused by the seemingly inexorable penetration of market forces into areas of public policy and social services through the ascending role of financial (investment and debt) considerations, the "total market" is also held up as the only possible policy alternative in such situations, and, therefore, the only means by which such services may *possibly* be provided in the future.[14] Thus, governments around the globe re-conceptualize areas of public services that can be handed over to the private sector, or at least modeled after the private sector.

The following examples come from a review of the literature on the expansion of markets into various areas of social life. The review is intended to place current education reform efforts in the broader context, showing how the different patterns of global market expansion suggest various themes and values that are useful in understanding market-oriented school reform. Thus, I start with several examples of areas of market penetration to show the pervasiveness of this phenomenon, and then examine the various arguments in the literature supporting privatization, in order to better understand the underlying issues and values informing its advance. I then describe the various characteristics of the privatization movement in general, setting the groundwork for the next section's discussion of privatization and education.

Examples of Market Expansion and Privatization

Criminal corrections and punishment.

Just as schools were founded by social reformers seeking to redress social ailments through the newly-discovered prescription of institutions, so to were penitentiaries set up as the institutional answer to correct flaws in the individual and body politic (Foucault, 1979; Katz, 1978; see also Richardson, 1994, on parallels and relationships to schools). Yet, just as the emphasis in the evolution of the modern prison has vacillated between punishment and reform, rehabilitation, or correction, the superintending purpose of these institutions has always been either improving the most deviant and destructive members of our society, or at least protecting the general public from them.

The idea of privately run prisons is not a new one, as many states had various degrees of privatized prisons in the 19th century—till widespread patterns of corruption and abuse caused reformers to seek a re-assertion of public control (Fennelly, 1998). However, in recent

[13] See also Appleby (1997); Bradburd (1996); Brazier (1997); Cameron (1997); Feigenbaum & Henig (1997); Gold (1989); Kolko (1998); Lappé, Collins, & Kinley (1980); Miller (1997); Multinational Monitor (1998b); Prokosch (1997); Raghavan (1995); Ricupero (1997); and Sparks (1988). See, for instances of these trends, Kikeri, Nellis, & Shirley (1992); Lieberman, Nestor, Desai, & the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (1997); Nankani (1988); Vuylsteke (1988); the World Bank (1993, 1995); and the World Bank, Alexander, & Corti (1993).

[14] Cavallo (1997); George (1993); Gold (1989); Herman (1995), Marber (1997); and Neal (1990). See, for example, Miller (1997, 1987) and Tamez (1995).

years—in response to a growing inmate population, rapidly increasing costs, perceived inefficiencies, high rates of recidivism, and a general desire to be rid of the problems associated with crime—there has been an accelerating movement toward the market as the solution to the problems facing prisons, or seeing corrections simply as an emerging market for firms involved in security.[15] Indeed, public officials rely increasingly on private contractors to design and run prisons for inmates incarcerated by public authorities. Of course, there have been some problems with this new combination of public and private concerns, as charges of inefficiency, corruption, inherent conflicts of interest, and failure to disclose information necessary to the public well-being have been leveled by some observers.[16]

Social security.

In another instance, reformers established systems of public pensions as one of the crown jewels of welfare state policies in the post-war settlement. Due to the havoc of the Great Depression, many people supported a government administered social safety net, funded by mandatory contributions from citizens, as the obvious remedy to the unpredictable whims of market forces. Such systems were intentionally divorced from direct market pressures in that individual successes and failures, and overall inequities, would not affect the guarantee of some financial payment when one's working days were over. Of course, the Social Security system in the US has been the site of constant political wrangling, claims of entitlement, cries of crisis and near panic over potential bankruptcy, and chronic humor regarding what security it provides.

Thus, after years of attention and adjustment, with little overall improvement in public confidence on the system, there are now efforts in industrialized countries to privatize these systems by freeing up personal accounts to the control of individual payers so that they may invest as they see fit (Schulz, 2000). On a larger scale, this would liberate a large block of capital for privately directed investment. Some argue that such an approach—possibly requiring individuals to invest in stocks and bonds—is a more efficient, profitable, and fair approach than the current system.[17] Others characterize these calls as a misguided and short-sighted effort to open up more capital for the stock markets to absorb—implying, in some

[15] On the market as the solution to these problems, see Appleby (1997); Brister (1996); Cameron (1997); CQ Researcher (1996b); and Stolz (1997); on prisons as an opportunity for markets, see Anderson & Cannan (1996). In describing marketization in this context, I am not referring to the marketing of prison labor—including its use by private companies managing prisons (e.g., Covert Action Quarterly, 1995; CQ Researcher, 1996a). That is yet another significant example of the re-emergence of the market in this area. As the US Department of Justice notes: "Inmates represent a readily available and dependable source of entry-level labor that is a cost-effective alternative to work forces found in Mexico, the Caribbean Basin, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Rim countries" (quoted in IFCO News, 1999).

[16] CQ Researcher (1996a) See, for examples, Bates (1998a, 1998b); Button (1997); Field (1987); Lotke (1996); Pens, Wright, & Burton-Rose (1998); Reisig and Pratt (2000); Rodrigue (1997); and Schlosser (1998). As a point of interest, recently, Correctional Services Incorporated (a private prison management company) acquired Youth Services International, which provides privatized instruction to at-risk students under contract from public schools (Hardy, 1999; Walsh, 1998b).

[17] See Berlau (1997); Crook (2000); Feldstein (1997); Ferrara & Tanner (1998); Kotlikoff & Sachs (1997); Matthews (1997); and Wagner (1998). Friedman (1999) argues for privatization, but opposes making participation in the program—privatized or otherwise—mandatory. Tritch (1999) also favors mild and slow privatization, but warns that surveys show that most Americans are financially "illiterate" and unprepared to make informed decisions in the stock market; on the unfamiliarity of most Americans with the culture and language of investing (see Roshco, 1999).

instances, a "crisis" of capital in desperate need of new areas to sustain growth (Cameron, 1997; Murray, 1987).[18]

Health care.

Health care in the US and elsewhere is one of the most publicized sectors demonstrating the effects of market penetration (Khor, 1995). This is interesting because health care in the US has traditionally been administered primarily through private (but not necessarily profit-oriented) means. Doctors provided service through private practice, and patients purchased services privately or at least in part through health insurance providers. The exceptions involved the substantial participation of charity and philanthropic groups in establishing and providing health care facilities and services (with some of the same roots as correction reforms), and government programs to pay for services for some—particularly for those unable to pay otherwise. Other exceptions more peripheral to the doctor-patient relationship involve endeavors like private pharmaceutical corporations which play a significant role in research and development (Tullock, 1996). Recent market penetration has been essentially a corporatization of services, with small-scale providers giving way to larger-scale organizations. Therefore, medicine is moving away from the professional-service model to a corporate-employee model (Andrews, 1995).

Concurrent with the rise of HMOs has been proposals for the re-introduction of individual incentives. Whereas previous insurance schemes often disregarded individualized incentives, popular concerns about rising costs have led groups like the Cato Institute to propose "medical savings accounts" in order to individualize costs and thereby re-introduce consumer cost-consciousness (e.g., Goodman & Musgrave, 1994). The debate, then, centers on costs. Proponents see the elevation of market models for providers and patients as the answer, since economies of scale and standardization of service can reduce costs (Goodman & Musgrave, 1994). Others point to scandals, fraud, and decline in service to the poor as evidence of the misalignment of private-profit incentives with public funding and philanthropic provision (Desai, VanDeusen, & Young, 2000; Multinational Monitor, 1997b; Sparrow, 1996). In the latter perspective, too much market penetration has led to inordinate corporate influence, and precludes a more efficient single-payer option (Andrews, 1995).

War and national defense.

In addition to social security, another area that had, in its essence, been largely immune to market control was national security. Of course, aspects of national defense and warfare have always fallen under the purview of the market in terms of suppliers or support services. Although contractors in national defense industries, for example, represent (pseudo-) private interests, they are theoretically at the periphery of governance in national defense, and their role does not explicitly challenge the fundamental essence of this concern as being under the control of, and for the benefit of, the general public. Very few, if any, serious efforts at national defense for any nation (or ruler) have ever trusted the market to control the heart of

[18] Aaron (1997); American Federation of Teachers (1998); Cullen (1999b); Kay (1997); Leone (1997); Mitchell (1998); and Wildavsky (1997). The AFT (1998) claims that the system is already quite efficient, with less than 3% of the costs going for administration. Thus, they see the effort as based on Wall Street's desire to get access to the biggest pension fund in the world. Cullen (1999b) and Eisner (1998) contend that economic projections used to justify privatization of the Social Security System are unreasonable, and elsewhere Cullen (1999a) sees this as a phony crisis used to promote the agendas of reformers.

the defense strategies and capabilities. These are areas that are generally considered to be too integral, delicate, and essential to be left to the ebbs and flows of market conditions.

Yet, again, as one of the most costly and least productive areas of public budgets, military defense concerns are also being held to the scrutiny of market forces. Mercenaries, an age-old fixture of violence and warfare, are no longer confined to the global periphery of out-back guerrilla actions, but are taking on a more central role through private security corporations (Cleaver, 2000). Thus, the US government is now contracting with private corporations to provide training for peacekeeping forces, and these corporations are also working for other national and emerging governments (Burton-Rose & Madsen, 1999). Indeed, the argument has been made that privatized fighting forces enjoy innate advantages and efficiencies conferred on them by their position in the private sphere, thus enabling them to be more effective in bringing about peaceful resolutions to conflicts (Kaplan, 1997; Shearer, 1998; Venter, 1998). However, in this age of the democratic nation-state, where military force is ideally subservient to democratic control, there is the concern that any military force that is accountable primarily to private market concerns of profit and loss in contracting out to the highest bidder, rather than democratic or national concerns of loyalty, patriotism/ideology, or civil leadership, will subvert the principle of democratic control of arms and armies (Howe, 1998; Kritsiotis, 1998; Reno, 1997; Silverstein, 1996, 1997).

Organized religion.

Even in an area of social life such as the church, we can—perhaps unexpectedly—see the rising influence of the market. While a longer survey of Western religion might show an evolution towards a more individualistic conception of religious world- (indeed, other-world) views, hastened by the Protestant Reformation, religion and church have still maintained their theological and sociological positions as institutions of social cohesion—albeit often through exclusion. So, in an area traditionally associated with community and non-individualistic values of selflessness, it is noteworthy that the fastest growing churches are increasingly adopting characteristics from successful business models in the world of the market (Trueheart, 1996). This is evident in the strategies they employ, the economic issues they embrace and exemplify, and terminology and viewpoints of "customers" and "products" they adopt (see, for example, Bowman & Hall, 1992; Bowman & Hall, 1996; Reeves, 1997; Trueheart, 1996).

However, rather than just reflecting what have been traditionally accepted tendencies within religion for introspection, or even the withdrawal of monasticism, we are now seeing religion being used as more of a tool or justification for a claim on public resources. Perhaps, as Hilfiker (1998) theorizes, this is because we have internalized the norms of the market to the point where they are now, if not permeating popular theology, then at least a belief system akin to a religion. People have observed the general trend in the US and elsewhere for religious movements to incorporate principles of the market as divinely ordained revealed truths (Aeschliman, 1994; Bleifuss, 1998). Thus, rather than giving any credence to understandings of religious convictions that emphasize an outward, philanthropic focus on others, mainstream religion has pursued an increasingly inward, privatized concern for one's own salvation and one's self interest (Friend, 1996).

Telecommunications.
A more typical example of a sector being "privatized" is the telecommunications industry. While this sector is not a "public good" in the economic sense, governments in many developing nations have treated it as such because it is recognized as a general infrastructure requirement integral to national development. Yet, often under the duress of the Structural Adjustment Programs from multilateral credit agencies, governments have been selling or de-nationalizing publicly owned infrastructure and enterprises such as telecommunications systems (Lanuza, 1998; Multinational Monitor, 1997a). Such sales of public assets are intended to promote efficiency, unload costly enterprises, increase foreign investment, improve responsiveness to consumers, and bring a revenue windfall into the public coffers (e.g., Durant, Legge Jr., & Moussios, 1998; Galal, Jones, Tandoon, & Vogelsang, 1994; Wykoff, 1997).

Privatization in this sector is not limited to developing countries, but is a force in post-industrialized nations as well. Officials in Puerto Rico attempted to sell the profitable public phone system to GTE (Gonzalez, 1998). Likewise, many argue that actions by the US Congress to allow broadcasting corporations to divide up the digital broadcast spectrum was an act of privatization, since auctioning off this public property could have earned an estimated $100 billion. While the public benefits of better efficiency and responsiveness are often used to justify such acts, some researchers dispute those assumptions. Collins and Lear (1995), for instance, show that Chile's privatization of the telephone system and other utilities increased costs to consumers, while diminishing the quality of service.

Quite often, privatization of such resources and enterprises means that institutions and endeavors created over time by a nation (or nationalized in previous times for political or economic reasons), can be taken over by foreign investors, or shaped by investors withholding capital (Girvan, 1978). Thus, many citizens see privatization of publicly-owned enterprises such as telecommunications as a intrusion by foreign interests on their national prerogatives. This can lead to instances of popular resistance, as was the case with the often profitable telecommunications sectors in Puerto Rico, Nicaragua, and El Salvador (Gonzalez, 1998; Lanuza, 1998; Prokosch, 1997), for example, in addition to other sectors in Argentina, and Haiti (Duncan, 1995; Hussey, 1990; Multinational Monitor, 1997a).

Genetic codes and life.
Finally, in one last example of the growing role of the market, we can watch its imprint evolve on life itself, as it captures and shapes the genetic codes for life. Although life is not a social institution, it is a unique and, for many, sacred subject that moral systems set largely beyond the more mundane economic concerns of cost and benefit analyses. The abolition of slavery is perhaps the epitome of this perspective, and encapsulates the liberal Western view of the (adult) human being and body as existing essentially above the realm of private property.[19] However, the US Supreme Court's 1980 decision in *Diamond v. Chakrabarty* to permit the patenting of life forms, and the recent acceleration of bio-technological advances point to new economic opportunities and moral dilemmas regarding ownership and the right to capitalize on life (Argyres & Liebeskind, 1998; Nagle, 1998; van der Gaag, 1997). The ability to create new life forms, and therefore, the consequent and traditional right to claim ownership, raises

[19] While there is much evidence of people being economically coerced into physical wage-labor servitude, it is traditionally justified in the western model by the argument that, as free human beings, they have the liberty to accept or reject any particular forms of employment.

serious questions about limits on private property rights: Who has the right to create and own another being for profit? What claims does the public have on any benefits that may arise out of such life forms? What limits may be placed on the creation of new life forms that have the possibility of causing harm to people or our environment? Furthermore, when it comes to the ownership of genetic codes of human beings, does the person, the gene group, or the patent holder have property rights?

Some genetic pools are known to be resistant or immune to various afflictions because of genetically predetermined characteristics (van der Gaag, 1997). Their genetic codes can be useful to others, and therefore have some value, which can be exchanged on the market (Mawer, 1999). Efforts to "map" the human genetic pool—justified by the claim that it is for the common good of all—have ended up in court, after researchers tried to patent DNA information taken from indigenous peoples (Rifkin, 1998b; Te Pareake Mead, 1997). While corporations rush to establish intellectual property rights on plants that have been common and useful to peoples for centuries, such practices with the human body (and codes specific to certain distinct groups) best illustrate market penetration by asserting individualistic conceptions of ownership over claims of communal rights and heritage, and property held (or existing) in common (Hightower & Frazer, 2000). On the demand side of the equation, human attributes that are socially construed as highly desirable—hair color, cheekbones, body shape, certain personality types, etc. (or the avoidance of less socially advantageous characteristics such as Huntington's disease, shortness, the propensity for homosexual orientation, or particular personality traits)—can be identified, packaged, and provided to eager consumers (Marshall, 1998; Rifkin, 1998a). However, there are problematic issues with gene ownership. Companies that have patents on DNA combinations can charge royalties from researchers and patients for whom that DNA is critical to their treatment or survival—even when the DNA sequence is naturally occurring in the patient. While some, such as Argyres and Liebeskind (1998), see the incentives provided by the market as being the primary factor in the acceleration of the advancements in, and potential widespread benefits of, biotechnology, skeptics such as Rifkin (1998c) admonish us to beware of "today's molecular biologists and corporate entrepreneurs in their quest to capture and colonize the last frontier of nature, the genetic commons that is the heart of the natural world."

Arguments For Privatization

In order to better understand the logic of market expansion and privatization, it is helpful to consider arguments used to advance markets in public service provision. In doing so, this section examines the nature of market expansion and privatization not by sectors, but in terms of their logic, breadth, depth, and pace. This examination outlines the issues around market expansions to consider the reasons for its growth (as well as opposition to its expansion). Therefore, this analysis moves through the literature on the phenomenon (exclusive of education, at this point) in order to set this exploration of markets and education more firmly in context. By examining the justifications for market expansion, the concluding discussion of this paper can assess how this logic does or does not apply to education in school choice plans.

Enhanced revenue.

The most obvious argument in support of privatization is the claim that policies of privatization will enrich public coffers, through the revenue generated from the sale of public assets and endeavors, as well as through the sale of specific, inefficient public enterprises that have become a constant drain on public funds (Goulding, 1997; World Bank, 1995; World Bank, Alexander, & Corti, 1993). Indeed, in his research on privatization and municipalities, Greene (1996b) notes that the primary answer given by officials to justify privatization programs was to save money. Others observe that various methods of privatization can be chosen also to attract additional foreign investment (Borde & Dang-Tran, 1997).

While efficient use of public resources is an admirable goal, however, critics argue that patterns evident in privatization suggest that the protection of public funds is an argument that is not always grounded in evidence. Often in privatization regimes, as in that of General Pinochet's Chile, while public assets are privatized, private debt gone "bad"—much of which is incurred in the sale of public assets to private holders—is then publicized or "socialized" (Collins & Lear, 1991, 1995; Girvan, 1978, esp. pp. 93-4). Secondly, while, from a financial perspective, it may make sense to unload enterprises that are continually operating in the red, as Schofield and Shaoul (1997) note in relation to the provision of water in Britain, profitable public endeavors are also sold, regardless of earnings or losses. This was also true in the case of the second round of privatizations in Chile, in the 1980s (Collins & Lear, 1991). Indeed, Cameron (1997) points out that the more profitable public endeavors are obviously the more attractive to potential buyers—people who are often the most vocal in their support for privatization policies. Finally, while privatization sales may temporarily push public budgets into the black, they often appear to be an inefficient method of liquidating or disposing of public resources, as they are often essentially given away at fire-sale prices that ask a fraction of their actual "market" value—"sales" often subsidized by, and financed by, public money (Collins & Lear, 1991, 1995; Multinational Monitor, 1995).

Greater efficiency.

The most common argument supporting privatization is the concern for efficiency—in the management and operation of enterprises, in the production and delivery of goods and services, in the allocation and use of funds, and so forth. The theoretical basis for this concern, coming from the logic of classical economics, is provided by the neoliberal tenets of public choice theory. Greene (1996b) writes that such

> theorists argue that inefficiency is an inherent characteristic of municipal bureaucracies because of incentive structures that encourage empire building and overproduction (Niskanen, 1971). Markets are viewed as superior because they connect the cost of producing something to the income necessary to sustain operations. The connection is provided by the price charged to customers who decide whether to make a purchase. Nonmarket activity removes this link because the revenues that sustain government activity usually come from nonprice sources, namely taxes. This separates the value of output from the cost of production, making nonmarket organizations more likely to use indicators such as budget size to measure performance. The incentives tend to reward personnel for justifying costs rather than reducing them (Milgrom & Roberts, 1992; Wolf, 1988). Public choice theorists believe that altering the delivery arrangements of public services will reduce costs by improving efficiency (Borcherding, 1977).

Poole (1997) also voices this perspective, noting that although a mixed public and private approach to the transportation infrastructure has worked relatively well in the US, the public sector bears the *theoretical* burden of non-economic dis-incentives of political control and ordering. Privatization offers the theoretical *potential* for a more cost-efficient system because it enshrines market incentives (Miller, 1987).

Such concern for efficiency is echoed throughout the literature on privatization, and is a reflection of the predominance of the market model for assessing the value of services and functions, both public and private. Most broadly speaking, a substantial portion of the literature arises from a concern about the overall efficiency of a system of funding, production, and delivery of services to the public or consumers. Thus, from perspective of "customers" (as both funders and beneficiaries of a public service), there is an interest in receiving the best "product" for the least amount of money—similar to that of any other consumer transaction in the market. The difference, of course, is that the "product" is often not an individualized benefit for each taxpayer, but a broader public good to be enjoyed by the citizens regardless of whether or not any one individual has paid for it. Thus, the efficiency emphasis is mostly evident on the funding side of many public services that are privatized to be more cost accountable, such as child protective services (Eggers, 1997), or on the individual client benefits (or the solvency of a system) accruing to payers, such as Social Security (Feldstein, 1997)—but rarely on the more abstract social benefits afforded by the service.

There is often simply an assumption—stated or implied—that public or state provision is inherently wasteful, and markets are efficient. For example, Gilmour and Jensen (1998) note that privatization is often seen as a panacea for inefficient public management. Others, such as Marber (1997) or Gauche (1998), advance their suggestion that governments are inefficient simply by consistently counterpoising implicit public inadequacies to the efficiencies apparently inherent in privatization schemes. Wykoff (1997) is more explicit, holding that inefficiencies of public administration should be exposed by journalists in order to provide sufficient justification in the public's eye for privatization policies. Daley (1996) is still more sophisticated, noting that, although efficiencies are the main consideration, the benefits that may be afforded by privatization need to be assessed in each case, for each service or function.

A significant segment of the literature, then, is more measured and less presumptive in claims about public and private efficiencies, although still concluding that private control inherently leads to more effective allocation and use of resources through incentives unique to private ownership and control. The World Bank's efforts to serve as a catalyst for privatization come in part from the recognition of the inefficiencies of overstaffing of public sectors (Bradburd, 1996). The pressure of competition with the private sector, or the threat of privatization, may also have the effect of increasing the efficiency of government enterprises, as Cavallo (1997) argues has been the case in neoliberal Argentina (World Bank et al., 1993). Lopez-De-Dilanes, Shleifer, and Vishny (1997) portray the public sector as inefficient due to "provider capture"—its allegiance, debts, and reliance on unions and patronage. Finally, Tullock (1996) describes one (admittedly unique and isolated) situation where private incentives outweigh public abilities in promoting the public good. The financial catalysts for inventing new medicines, he explains, have a greater impact on private providers than public enterprises which are limited by political borders; thus, privatization of such efforts lead to inherent incentives for both efficiencies and effectiveness.

But this claim, or, in many cases, assumption, regarding the efficiencies afforded by privatization does not go undisputed in the literature. Appleby (1997), surveying the same neoliberal agenda of privatization in Argentina examined by Cavallo (1997, see above), claims that privatization did not improve efficiencies or lower costs to consumers. Other instances of increased costs to consumers and lower quality of service can also be cited, as when costs rose following Chile's privatization of the telephone system and other utilities (Collins & Lear, 1995), or when water services in the UK decreased in quality following privatization, despite an increase in costs to consumers (McEntee, 1987; Multinational Monitor, 1997a; Schofield & Shaoul, 1997). Greene (1996a) examined patterns of utilization of privatization policies in order to ascertain some of the motivations for their use, and found that fiscal stress, as the most likely catalysts for efficiency concerns, did not appear to be a significant factor. Similarly, in assessing the gains in technical efficiency for nine enterprises privatized in the UK in the 1980s, Boussofiane, Martin, and Parker (1997) found mixed results for the claim that most underlies the privatization agenda.[20]

Hence, as Jordan (1997) insightfully points out, privatization is frequently a short-sighted response in that, often times, the bureaucratic public administration that privatization seeks to replace was established to address inefficiencies and outright failures in market systems in the first place (Fennelly, 1998). Indeed, Murray (1987, p. 100) claims that the supposed efficiency advantages claimed for privatized enterprises are simply a distraction from the actual catalysts and motivations for the privatization movement:

> In part this drive for privatization reflects more on the general crisis of the private economy than on any shortcomings in the public sphere. With falling rates of profit and narrowing outlets for investment, the opening up of the public sector has provided a safe haven for money capital, and expanded frontiers for hard-pressed industries like cleaning and catering. It is also part of the more general monetarist strategy of restoring profitability at the expense of labour. (cited in Cameron, 1997)

In all this scholarly discourse on the possible efficiencies potentially realized by privatizing public functions reviewed here, however, only Oettle (1997) questions the appropriateness of making the efficiency issue the central concern. In examining the research literature from German managerial economics, he sees the European school of "new public management" as imposing a new paradigm on non-market areas of public services.[21] Thus, Oettle warns that there is the possibility that privatization (and its supporting arguments) can simply be cover for raising costs for consumers.

Still, despite academic disagreements on the role, existence, and extent of efficiency gains from privatization of public enterprises, it is important to note, and follow up on, Oettle's observations on the centrality of the efficiency issue in the academic, policy, and public discourse(s). One of the greatest successes of the privatization agenda may be—not the specific public functions that have been transferred to the control of the private sector—but that the rhetoric and proposals around privatization has now moved into the mainstream discourse. In examining the debate on the privatization of the US Social Security system, for example, Wagner (1998) applauds the fact that the discussion is now wholly appropriate and accepted, even if the system itself has yet to be transferred to private control. However, Jordan (1997) holds that the discourse that supports privatization is essentially non-democratic in its nature (and has little evidentiary basis).

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[20] For other views disputing the claim that public administration is inherently less efficient, see also Herman (1997) and Willner (1996). Herman claims that the "efficiencies" claimed are usually just savings on labor through employing low-cost, part-time, non-union workers. Not surprisingly, this is an argument unions have embraced (McEntee, 1987).

[21] This model is reflected in privately managed charter and public schools in the US and in similar autonomous schools in New Zealand (Fiske & Ladd, 2000; Lauder et al., 1999); see also Raab, et al. (1997), and Ball (1997; 1998).

Downsizing government.

So, as the issue of efficiency demonstrates, in examining the logic that supports privatization, we can look critically at some of the underlying values and motivations for the privatization movement. Certainly, in addition to the efficiency issue, one of the primary truisms for libertarians supporting privatization is that less government is, in and of itself, a virtue. This is a theme that is blatant and explicit in the rhetoric advocating privatization. In this strain of the literature, the constraining or contracting of "government" is an end of on its own, without much, if any, explicit attention given as to why this is an appropriate or worthy goal. Usually, the writers assume or state that government uses coercive measures, which they counterpoise to the freedom perceived in the marketplace. Essentially, then, for them, the absence of government is a market (Cameron, 1997).

Thus, Eggers (1997), in his favorable estimation of the privatization of child-welfare services, lauds privatization as a self-evident end in and of itself. Other authors also see the downsizing of public functions, administration, and control in the same way (Feigenbaum & Henig, 1997). Moore (1997), for example, makes this assumption in surveying the privatization movement, and Miller (1997) suggests that it is a basic tenet of neoliberal ideology, which has been persuasive on these matters in recent years. While not explicitly identifying the downsizing of government as a good, the president of New York's Municipal Development Corporation sees opportunities in the trend. He promotes privatization as the sole alternative for cash-starved local governments, unable to raise taxes due to political forces, for financing capital projects and providing services such as water and sewage (Miller, 1987). Indeed, even wealthier communities, which are relatively free from fiscal imperatives and duress, are still even more likely to embrace privatization programs because of ideological commitments to smaller government, according to Greene, (1996a). As Cameron (1997) notes, privatization reformers in nations such as New Zealand have taken to judging the success of their policies by simply measuring the number of enterprises that have been privatized, rather than looking at the social or economic impacts of their efforts (see also, for example, Baird, 1998; Berg & Berg, 1997; Brazier, 1999; Oettle, 1997; Reed, 1996). Even World Bank Chief Economist Joseph Stiglitz (1998) attacked this neoliberal doctrine: "all too often the dogma of [neo-]liberalization became an end in itself." Indeed, such a supposition implicitly and often explicitly equates privatization with progress, and governments with obstruction or social ills (see, for example, Bonamo, 1997; Cavallo, 1997; Lopez-De-Dilanes et al., 1997). Thus, if politics are the problem, markets provide the solution.

Critics note the ideological nature of this imperative, as governments are required to downsize staffing even when it is at less-than bare-bones levels—as is the case with structural adjustment demands on Haiti's anemic public sector (Multinational Monitor, 1997a). Any simplistic portrayal of a zero-sum game between markets and politics can be easily dismissed by the evidence of markets growing in response to state intervention and growth (Carl, 1994; Cohen, 1982; Kuttner, 1997; Oettle, 1997).

But, on a more theoretical level, this juxtaposition of public control of government and private control of markets has profound implications for the future cohesiveness of society. Led by theoreticians such as Robert Putnam in his work on social capital, or Charles Murray in the attack on the efficacy and appropriateness of government intervention in social problems, a school of thought is emerging in support of privatization on the grounds that public, or "government," involvement robs individuals of their initiative, and deprives communities of their social resources.[22] The thinking is that private control of institutions or, subsequently and implicitly, enhanced individual agency is (at least by default) preferable to the coercive and domineering hand of "big government" (Reed, 1998). This view is largely premised on the assumption that public administrative measures—including majoritarian control—rely, by their nature, on forceful or coercive means of participation and direction (for more on this in the context of education, see Chubb & Moe, 1990; Friedman, 1962; Payne, 2000). On the other hand, such logic contends, markets are non-coercive in that they are based on the freely made contractual relationships between two or more autonomous individuals. Thus, privatization is a route to the goal of human freedom (Hayek, 1944).

Of course, this logic is disputed by others on at least two counts. First, while democratic control or "government" can be coercive, particularly from the perspective of the minority voting bloc, this is not, then, a categorical evil to be avoided in all circumstances. Neoliberals and social conservatives have embraced coercive measures such as mandated investing or taxation as a viable method of financing mass pensions or paying for publicly funded vouchers.[23] Likewise, even some ideological libertarians recognize the need for government intervention in childhood for the sake of guaranteeing the autonomy of an adult individual—a necessary prerequisite for a libertarian society of negligible government involvement (Brighouse, 1997). In fact, public control (oftentimes "politics" or "government") can serve as a means of freedom for social minorities in a democratic system that guarantees the rights of such groups. After all, it has been government intervention that has won social and political rights for African Americans, women, and people with disabilities, for example—rights that had been eroded or precluded in a large part because of the dynamics of the market. Similarly, markets can be coercive—particularly without a full-employment economy—as job security can be used to compel desired actions, economic conditions can constrain free choices, etc. (Carl, 1994).

The second criticism of the social capital argument for privatization comes from the field of political thought. Under the social contract theories propounded by Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, governments are formed through the consent of the governed—individuals who will surrender some individual rights in voluntary submission to the will of the people embodied in the government—in order to avoid the more anarchic consequence of no government and rampant and destructive atomistic individualism (Curtis, 1981). While Hobbes took a more pessimistic view of human nature and, therefore, the social contract and its democratic variant—a view that parallels a conception of human nature inherent in the current privatization impulse—he still came to essentially the same conclusion as Locke on the need for an exchange of some rights of individuals for common security (of "life, liberty and property") to avert the greater evil of chaos and survival of only the strongest.

Of course, there are some constraints on the will of "the people," particularly, in this case, the will of majority in a democracy associated with the more Lockean conception of "the sovereign." Thus, under the logic of the liberal social contract, the majority may not deny the minority access to political participation, nor repress "critical inquiry" (Gutmann, 1987). Yet,

[22] Champlin (1998). See, for example, Herrnstein & Murray (1994); Murray (1984); and Putnam (1993, 1996).

[23] See, for example, Feldstein (1997) and Friedman (1955; 1962; 1995; Friedman & Friedman, 1980); see also Brighouse (1997). Furthermore, Herman (1995) points out that, judging by their association with repressive regimes, Friedman and his followers in the Chicago School appear to be much more interested in a narrow conception of economic freedom—at least for those with economic means—than they are in political or social freedom.

as Champlin (1998) suggests, the push for privatization denies the essential tenet of social contract theory that the state is an association established by the voluntary cooperation of the citizens, since the state is now portrayed simply as a source of coercion against those citizens. Similarly, as Argyres and Liebeskind (1998) note, such an attack on a social contract premise is not just limited to the relationship of the citizenry and the governing institution of the state. Proponents of privatization also decry traditional social contractual obligations between society and other institutions, such as research universities, as impediments to progress. (And, as Seabrook (1997) indicates, it is increasingly hard to make the case that the coerciveness of governments is a serious threat to liberty when the rollback of public control and the dominance of private ownership and mobile capital have significantly undermined the sovereignty and strength of public governance anyway (see also Carnoy, 1993; Khor, 1998; Korten, 1997).)

Government as business.

In some of the literature supporting privatization, an interesting twist on the juxtaposition of governments and markets involves the assumption or claim that governments are, in fact, a business. This concept is usually expressed simply through assumptions on the appropriate role, goals, and methods of government. Jasper (1998, 24), for example, supports policies that "improve the way government does business" with the distinctly defined values of cost-effectiveness (rather than equitably providing a public service, for instance). Similarly, in the UK, Horsfall (1997) argues for a form of privatization he calls "corporatization" which would allow for the use of business principles for running government enterprises with an eye on improving the bottom line for the public coffers.

A variant on this is the perspective that governments are subservient to businesses in that one of the primary roles for governments is to support private business development. Thus, if government is not based on a business model, it should at least be aligned with it in order to most effectively serve the business community and, subsequently, the citizens. Hence, governments are primarily responsible for fostering physical and economic conditions that promote private development, efficiency, and competitiveness that would then benefit the political unit in the wider, perhaps global, marketplace (Halal & Varey, 1999; Ricupero, 1997). So, privatization can be a policy of preference for governments under this perspective, since they create a fertile climate for investment (Fairweather, 1997). In promoting the "Third Way" that has been popular with neoliberal thinkers and policymakers, Reich (1999) argues for a realignment of government priorities to embrace the supremacy of the needs of the market, but—in distinguishing between the precedent set by Reagan and Thatcher—sees a central role for government, not in maintaining a social safety net, but in cultivating and providing a flexible workforce for the economy through education and training. While he admits that this approach is based more on a hopeful faith in the market than evidence, Reich suggests that the new-found purpose of the state is to promote the market as an end in itself. Thus, the strict boundary between public and private spheres defined by supposedly inherent incentives for efficiency becomes more blurred under this model, since the utilization of (inefficient) public administrative capacities and resources are thought to be best applied to supporting private enterprises in maintaining efficiencies and public welfare (White, 1996). Hence, the appeal to efficiencies (and assumption of public inefficiencies) appears to be less of a priority when public money can be used to subsidize private endeavors. Yet, while government nourishes the economy, Cui (1997) points to the post-Soviet Bloc countries to restate the long-standing claim that the development, maturation, and consolidation of liberal-democratic forms of government are dependent on the extent of privatized ownership in the economy.

However, this assumption is dissected and contested by a few writers, usually by contending that public and private spheres operate on two different paradigms. While Jordan (1997) notes that government intervention has been necessary largely to compensate for inadequacies and inefficiencies in private sector provision of services (areas of "market failure"), other observers challenge the "business-of-government" amalgamation as a conflation of distinct forms of accountability. Rodrigue (1997) demonstrates a conflict of interests and loyalties between private owners looking for profits and citizens looking for accurate information and quality services (see also Gilmour & Jensen, 1998). Both Dunleavy (1997) and Oettle (1997) question the European school of "new public management" to show the loss of democratic accountability. Dunleavy indicates that the market is unable to then provide a similarly appropriate degree of accountability. Oettle goes further in arguing that some necessary functions simply cannot be put into the profit/loss model. While there is some advantages to treating citizens as customers, rather than subjects, Oettle equates "new public management" with "commercial thinking" (p. 374). Hence, he predicts the potential negative effects of customer selection, decreased quality and options, and conflating the desire for private profit with greater social goods. While Lehman (1997) faults public sectors for being innately incapable of regarding the bottom line, Oettle claims that private accounting practices can *only* consider the bottom line, and public enterprises are not, and, by definition, *should* not be tied to the profit motive:

> In the case of a non-commercial enterprise, however, which from a commercial point of view, should or may show only losses and no profits, these requirements cannot be superseded by a commercial control mechanism. The planning guidelines are rather an expression of parliament's wish to provide services. They therefore reflect the public interest as acknowledged, at least on a majority basis, by a body which is representative of the people....What is open to question, however, is the extent to which monetary incentives appropriate to a market economy can be used or will be sufficient in areas in which, in connection with the public interest, the focus is on non-monetary objectives.... Confidence in the economic effectiveness of market-based competition between enterprises is not misplaced in the case of privatization to the extent that the (continuing) public interest involved is safeguarded through regulation. However, the question raised regarding its appropriateness still remains unanswered. (pp. 375-6)

Thus, Oettle wants to sustain different paradigms so that citizen can at least have choices between public and private options.

Arguments for slow privatization.

Yet another significant segment of the literature on privatization supports such policies to varying degrees, but also recognizes likely dangers. Thus, while much of the more vociferous literature promotes drastic measures and accelerated timetables for privatization, others in favor of privatization suggest a slower, more measured approach, often with more safeguards built in through some type of regulatory system. So, while Lassiter (1997) implicitly supports an agenda of privatization, he is concerned about the human costs to employees affected by such changes, and recommends that management take on a paternalistic role, and policymakers watch their speed. Similarly, when Light (1997) considers the tendencies toward privatization that inform the transformation of the UK's public health care services into a system of managed competition, he concludes that the existence of fundamental regulatory safeguards protects the public from the excesses of market dynamics, and allows policymakers to experiment with and improve upon privatization efforts. While the Center for International Private Enterprise (n.d.) offers a broad, if somewhat shallow case for privatization, it does not allow its distaste for state ownership to blind it to the possibility that public monopolies can be replaced with private ones. Thus, the group still calls for some regulatory oversight in the interest of maintaining competition. Likewise, Marber (1997) contends that the developing countries that can muster the political will to privatize their transportation sectors need to first establish sufficient regulatory safeguards in order to avoid the pitfalls of privatization and enjoy its benefits. Finally, Durant, Legge, and Moussios (1998) note that, in view of social-democratic critics, advocates of privatization of telecommunications in the UK argued that the use of the market strengthens market devices (and services) as well as democratic values. The authors endorse the fears of the critics regarding social values because privatization can raise market imperatives over social values. But they maintain that these fears can be mediated through public goal formation and reporting.

Not surprisingly, corruption is one of the most common dangers associated with the free market excesses of privatization cited by this more cautious crowd. Privatization itself fosters corruption, according to Celarier (1997), particularly when policymakers pursue a headfirst dive into the unfamiliar waters of de-nationalization. Still, she maintains that privatization must be pursued in order to cultivate a developed market economy. Thus, Celarier's solution is to first establish legal means of regulatory oversight in order to diminish the likelihood of the submerged dangers of corruption. Kaufmann and Siegelbaum (1997) essentially concur, noting that, while increased corruption has been associated with the privatization of former soviet economies, corruption is and would have been a fact of life regardless of the superimposition of private ownership. However, certain privatization policies—particularly those promoting a quick and widespread diffusion of ownership—appear to ameliorate the effects and extent of corruption, according to their analysis.

The authors in this strain generally agree that the safeguards must be configured in order to protect individuals in the public realm from the newly-realized power of private control in previously public sectors. While Gilmour and Jensen (1998) seem to accept privatization as a political reality of the times, they seek to hold the privatizing state's feet to the fire of accountability, making sure that the individual rights of citizens are recognized, and not abrogated in the process of privatization. Yet, while agreeing that regulations can be effective in safeguarding certain prerogatives of the public, Oettle (1997) asks whether they are an appropriate approach, or simply beg the question of the transfer of control from public to private means. Appleby (1997) concurs in this, claiming:

> It is not enough that due process realizes a permissible delegation with adequate safeguards in the absence of conflicting public and private values. The social bond and moral commitment of the state must not be weakened or endangered by such public actions. (p. 73)

So, Schofield and Shaoul (1997) argue, promises of regulation are not sufficient to protect the citizen or newly created customer, even in a nation with a relatively strong regulatory infrastructure. Promises of regulatory control of the privatized British water industry failed to prevent the worsening of the quality of service, despite allowing for higher rates.

The problem with regulation.

Perhaps this failure is due to the fact that the logic and forces supporting privatization largely contradict the logic and forces supporting regulation. That is, the drive for privatization is essentially justified on the grounds of the inefficiencies of public administration and control, and the possibilities of unfettered private ownership. Thus, it is somewhat of a logical contradiction, especially in the eyes of market purists who embrace privatization, to remove government involvement and interference from a sector or endeavor and then re-involve it at the level of an authority that oversees and approves essential aspects of the whole process. So, since public regulation flies in the face of the pro-privatization logic employed by market purists, the forces that promote and benefit from privatization are also the ones to resist or reject the idea of regulation, as Collins and Lear (1995) demonstrate in the case of Chile. Furthermore, this conflict may be granted the appearance or facade of resolution due to the likelihood that forces with the political and economic influence to promote privatization also have the political and economic clout to influence the "regulation" of their newly privatized possessions—thus legitimizing a private (or even publicly subsidized) endeavor through the appearance of public oversight.

Finally, there is a distinct element of the literature that sends out a clear and unambiguous call for continued, but more effective, privatization. Studies like that of Korosec and Mead (1996) seek to improve upon past privatization attempts by examining a range of privatization efforts. Such investigations suggest, among other things, that national policies of privatization can be more effective if they employ local means to accomplish their end (Dobek & Thurmaier, 1997; Light, 1997).

Summary

In order, then, to understand the ways in which market forces contribute to or preclude privatization in education, we can discern certain defining characteristics of these phenomena from the varied examples, sectors, and justification outlined above. These examples illustrate the wide front on which market authority has advanced. The ones described here have elements of public or common goods, or represent areas traditionally exempt from the jurisdiction of market authority or private control.

1.) Certainly, the cases that are most obviously privatization are those involving the transfer of *ownership* from the public or state to private individuals or groups. This is evident in areas like telecommunications and some reforms in health care (even when funding may continue to be from public-state sources)—as well as with commonly held or previously non-proprietary areas such as genetic codes. Although the government may maintain its presence through funding (and, therefore, probably some degree of regulation), proprietary ownership introduces the profit motive, which is intended to promote efficiencies and better responsiveness to consumers—either user fee-paying (as with or those enjoying private provision of a publicly funded service.

2.) Yet *provision* can be privately managed, without private ownership. When governments contract with private managers to run publicly-owned enterprises or services, the provision is privatized, even if the means of provision are not. For example, states hire correction corporations to run state-owned prisons, or contract with corporations to provide health care services or other welfare assistance to the poor. Likewise, government can contact with private security services, while maintaining primary ownership and responsibility regarding the actions of those forces.

3.) Similarly, privatization is often evident in terms of *governance or control*, as when individuals gain more decision-making power over investing their public pensions. This aspect also appears in terms of the proprietary rights that emerge in genetic research, for example, as private parties have prerogatives regarding the use and disposal of genetic information—rights that are divorced from the needs of others (including the people in whom the genetic combinations exist).

4.) Less clear are issues of *funding or access*, where individuals in the public sphere pay user fees for access to services which were previously provided through tax revenue. For example, some reforms place more of the burden for public transportation on passengers, or require students to pay more tuition as the government reduces subsidies. In these instances, the service can still be publicly owned, governed, and operated, while access to such services is transposed onto individual private funders. Therefore, it is more difficult to see clear privatization in these cases, while marketization is apparent in the use of a market model.

5.) Even more ambiguous are examples where goods and services remain outside private control in terms of ownership, governance, provision, funding, and access, but the production or provision of such services is ***modeled*** on a private business-style paradigm. Government units can be required to compete with each other for contracts. Non-profit pursuits such as churches can embrace business models for the sake of greater efficiencies and effectiveness. While these endeavors clearly remain outside the realm of for-profit market relations, incentives from such relations are embedded in the provision of a non-profit endeavor. Market values are both elevated and internalized—indicating an acknowledged supremacy of private self-interest over public spiritedness. These instances are more clearly cases of marketization.

6.) Finally, changes in "goods" and services may indicate transformations in the beneficiaries of the production or provision of goods and services. As reforms in many areas seek to introduce profit-style incentives, *orientations* of the production or provision of a good can change from a general to an individual focus as well. Social security and corrections, for example, were both established with the general common good in mind. As private incentive structures come into play in such areas, these endeavors are increasingly evaluated (and criticized) and pursued in terms of individual private benefits, rather than the general public good.

The term "privatization" is often used to refer to various sorts of market expansion. While there are competing and often contrasting definitions of privatization, some basic characteristics are evident, primarily and most clearly around issues of ownership, provision, and control, but also in terms of funding, access, models, benefits, and orientation.

By its nature, privatization implies movement; a good or service moves toward the private sector in terms of control or ownership, usually from the state sector or public sphere. Although the method of privatization can vary, the effect is often to move primary financial responsibility (ownership or cost) from the public (taxpayers, community) to an individual or defined group of individuals.

Thus, privatization refers to the de-publicization of ownership and/or costs through re-assigning the control of the production/provision of a good or service to the private sector. Because of the widespread attention given to de-nationalization in western European social democracies, and the transfer of state and collectivized enterprises to private owners in the former Soviet bloc, privatization is often closely associated with the "means of production," such as heavy industry. Similarly, in Latin America and Africa, privatization often refers to services previously provided through state assets, like the telecommunications sector. However, a broader exploration of the expansion of markets suggests that "privatization" is also evident in terms of ownership, governance, control and decision-making on the means of provision of services as well.

Furthermore—a point that is central to this analysis—while privatization is often understood to apply to the means of production of goods (i.e., industrial endeavors), it can also apply to the means of provision of services. A privatized good or service falls under either the ownership or primary control of an individual(s) driven by self-interest; unlike government bureaucracies, private ownership is held to provide incentives for eliminating waste, controlling costs, and responding to consumer preferences (World Bank, 1995). However, as a good or service is privatized, the internal logic of the endeavor is re-oriented; instead of a primary concern with serving a "public" (or protecting and perpetuating bureaucratic fiefdoms), the enterprise becomes primarily construed by the interest of the owner(s) in maximizing returns—which may be apparent to the "public" only in terms of better and cheaper goods and/or services.

The remainder of this analysis focuses on instances of market penetration in public education. As with many other areas, public education is an endeavor that provides private benefits while at the same time serving the public good. However, as with these other areas, markets are increasingly evident as the emerging paradigm on which the organization of the endeavor is modeled, and through which the good is shaped.

PART 2: Markets, Privatization, and Education

So, is school choice a form of privatization?

Typically, in US education, the term "privatization" is used in reference to services peripheral to the classroom, or from more extreme and politicized points on the political spectrum, as noted above. For example, one of the leading state-level groups supporting market measures in education—Michigan's Mackinac Center for Public Policy—advocates openly for privatization in education, but often in terms of outsourcing support services such as transportation, food service, etc. (e.g., Gladney, 1997; LaFaive, 1997; Reed, 1997a; see also Flam & Keane, 1997; Keane & Flam, 1997). Fewer speak explicitly of privatization in reference to the provision of teaching.[24] Instead, activists use terms like "market-based" or "private practice" to describe such arrangements.[25]

Other uses of the term in research on education policy indicate a general imprecision in how it applies to school reform. Laitsch (1999), as one example, focuses on private take-overs of whole schools or districts by for-profit management companies, commercialism, or for-

[24] However, even with the Mackinac Center, some of its advocates argue in favor of contracting with individual teachers for general services (Leeson, 1997), contracting with private groups to educate certain students (Beales & Bertonneau, 1997; Bertonneau, 1997), or, of course, public funding for private schools (Brouillette, 1999; McFarland, 1999); (see also Koshelnyk, 1997; Mackinac Center for Public Policy, 1994; Reed, 1997b; Rehfuss, 1997).

[25] See, for instance, the Goldwater Institute's Center for Market-Based Education at http://www.azschoolchoice.org, or the Association of Educators in Private Practice at http://www.aepp.org.

profit privately owned schools—leaving out choice, charters, and vouchers. Rhim (1999) observes "privatization" in terms of contracting with EMOs (e.g., Hill, Pierce, & Guthrie, 1997), although she notes that this is somewhat of a misnomer in common usage. Wells (2000) sees privatization in terms of private fundraising for charter schools.

Indeed, just as there are many forms of market expansion and degrees of market authority, there are many different school choice schemes, making it difficult to generalize on this issue. "School choice" plans include arrangements limited to traditional common or comprehensive public schools, theme-oriented public magnet schools, quasi-autonomous public charter schools, privately managed public schools of various sorts, privately owned schools that serve the public through contracts or publicly funded vouchers, private schools accepting privately funded vouchers, home schooling, and so forth. Inasmuch as all of these arrangements are based on (1) consumer choice, and (2) autonomy and/or competition for providers, there is certainly an increase in market-like dynamics from the old, state-administered common school model. Therefore, these endeavors can be described as "*marketization*" in education.[26] But are they *privatization*?

Using the framework from the examination of general privatization in other sectors outlined above, it is difficult to see how different forms of school choice unambiguously privatize education. Reforms almost never transfer *ownership* of public schools to private hands. While there are increasing examples of private EMOs contracted to run public schools, that form of *provision* does not necessitate "school choice"—since districts can hire such managers while maintaining attendance zones that preclude consumer-style choice. In most school choice plans, there is still a semblance of public *governance*, as state or elected authorities charter autonomous schools, for instance, and schools accepting vouchers and homeschoolers often have to meet minimum state requirements (Lubienski, 2000). (In fact, even in the absence of state involvement, many market advocates argue that schools are accountable to the "public" through consumer control (Lubienski, in press).) Certainly, most school choice proposals and programs in the US maintain public *funding,* and presume public *access*. Likewise, while reformers may attempt to inject competition into education by borrowing aspects from business *models*, they correctly note that the schools are still publicly owned, funded, governed, and accessible (e.g., DeWeese, 1994; Finn & Gau, 1998; Finn, Manno, & Vanourek, 2000). Finally, school choice proponents argue that the public is the primary *beneficiary* of choice, in terms of freedom to choose, and enhanced efficiency and effectiveness of the system.

Nevertheless, the term "privatization" still appears in an almost arbitrary manner in school choice debates to describe some of these different arrangements. In order to make sense of privatization and school choice, some analysts assess school choice programs according to different criteria, particularly funding and ownership of the means of provision (e.g., Whitty

26 Since *movement* from one sector to another is a key element in this issue, it is important to note that there are opposing views on the direction of that movement. Whereas self-described "defenders" of public education advance from the premise that public schooling exists naturally in the public sector, others would note that, in an historical perspective, "public" schooling in the US existed prior to the emergence of the state role in administering schools (Lubienski, in press). Hence, rather than privatization, they diagnose the problem as prior *public-ization*. Many radical scholars as well as advocates of private control note that statist reformers in the common school era moved "public" education under government control—creating a public monopoly of publicly funded schooling (Jorgenson, 1987; Katz, 1968, 1971; West, 1996). This is accurate. Indeed, in the 18th and 19th centuries, enterprises thought to be targeted to primarily public purposes were often granted monopoly status in order to shield them from market forces of competition (Horwitz, 1977).

& Power, 2000b). For illustration purposes, consider this generalized continuum of institutional arrangements in different school choice plans:[27]

Mostly public/state control or ownership		**Mostly private/individual control or ownership**
Magnet schools	Charter schools	Privately funded vouchers
◄────────────	────────────	────────────►
Public school choice	Publicly funded vouchers	Privately purchased ed.
Mostly public/state funding		**Mostly private/individual funding**

In this scheme, traditional "public" schools—including those associated with school choice (magnet schools, public school choice plans, etc.)—fall toward one end of the spectrum characterized by public or state institutional ownership and funding; the other end of the scale is defined by private ownership and funding, such as privately-purchased education from a for-profit school, or home-schooling. Typically:

- <u>*Magnet schools*</u> are publicly owned, governed, and funded. They were designed to appeal to the interests of students or families based on school themes—such as a curricular emphasis on arts or science—thereby promoting voluntary integration in the public schools (while stemming white flight by offering schools of higher prestige). However, they are often subject to district regulations and quotas based on race (Crain, 1993; Gamoran, 1996; Jones, 1998; Orfield, 1990; Riley & McTighe, 1997).
- <u>*Public school choice*</u> allows parents to choose between publicly owned, governed, and funded schools through open-enrollment within a jurisdiction (usually district or state). While this can introduce some competition into the public system, depending on how many parents embrace the option, it is popular with supporters of public education who wish to maintain the integrity of the system while allowing some choices—or it can be a way to pre-empt a more radical choice plan (Bastian, 1996; From, 1999; Kahlenberg, 2000; Lee, 1999; Lieberman, 1990; McKinney, 1996; Natt, 1999; Schneider, Schiller, & Coleman, 1996).
- <u>*Charter schools*</u> are publicly financed, but privately run, in the sense that they are divorced from local education authority (elected or bureaucratic) in the ideal legislation praised by their supports (Lubienski, in press). For the most part, they are publicly owned,[28] although in many instances their sponsors may hire a private or for-profit company to mange them. Charter schools are open to all students, and may not select their students, although they may set themes that attract interest from particular students. They are based on parental choice, and are intended to introduce a measure of competition into the public sector, to promote efficiency and innovation. They are accountable to their

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[27] Similar models are available in other analyses, such as Cookson (1994) and Johnson & Landman (2000). Two more sophisticated models appear in Whitty & Power (2000b). However, their models are defined by provision and funding (although they begin to consider the locus of control). As I indicate below, the provision-funding orientation is insufficient to explain changes in education.

[28] There are exceptions: states like Arizona—lauded by market advocates for its "strong" charter law (Center for Education Reform, 2000; Price & Hunker, 1998; Schneider, 1998; Viteritti, 1999)—assign charter school operators ownership of the assets of the school (Essigs, 1997).

governing boards (outlined in the charter they obtain from a specified public entity), as well as to the parents who choose them (Finn et al., 2000; Manno, Finn, Bierlein, & Vanourek, 1998a; Nathan, 1996a; Vanourek, Manno, Finn, & Bierlein, 1997).

- *Publicly funded voucher* programs are currently in operation in only a few areas—Milwaukee, Cleveland, and Florida. While schools in these programs often have to meet minimum requirements, control is placed primarily with the parent-as-consumer. The rules of the program determine which families qualify, but the parents then choose between public and private (religious and/or for-profit) schools, and have the exit option if they are not satisfied. Therefore, schools compete to attract and satisfy parental preference (Friedman, 1955; Greene, 2001; McGroarty, 1996; Metcalf et al., 1998; Witte, 2000).
- *Privately funded vouchers* remove virtually all state involvement in education. Access to these programs is determined by the funders, but parents are then empowered with primary control in choosing from a variety of schools—typically private, and constrained only by costs not covered in the voucher (Godwin, Kemerer, & Martinez, 1998; Meyerson, 1999; Moe, 1995; Steiger, 1998; Weinschrott & Kilgore, 1996). Similar dynamics exist with tuition tax credit plans that encourage private education spending by people other than parents (Walsh, 1999c).
- *Privately purchased education* gives the parents (as usual funders) virtually complete control over education. Families can choose from any school regardless of state education regulations, or they may choose to educate their children on their own free from external considerations (Lubienski, 2000; Ray, 1997, 1999; Whitehead & Crow, 1993). Schools in such schemes would compete in a virtually free market, able to innovate without interference from public authority. Some market advocates hope that eventually parents will be liberated from dependence on state funding so that families will purchase as much and any type of education that they want and can afford (Coulson, 1999; Tooley, 1995, 1996, 2000; West, 1995).

The continuum of "school choice" arrangements is really quite dispersed on a number of factors, including ownership, funding, control, school autonomy, sectors, competition, and so forth. Thus, the ambiguity evident in the discourse as to how "school choice" is or is not privatization depends largely on where individual observers place the distinction between "public" and "private" schooling. Many see forms of choice such as magnets and charter schools as appropriate in the "public" system, but draw the line at "for-profit" charter schools, for instance, because of the importance of the profit motive in their estimation.[29] Others point out that for-profit charter schools are still publicly-owned.

Therefore, two points emerge. First, under the framework provided by the above examination of market expansion in general, school choice is, generally speaking, more clearly an example of marketization than of privatization. Secondly, even inasmuch as specific forms of school choice may or may not be privatization, that description can be disputed—largely due to the imprecise nature of what we mean by "privatization," and the numerous factors that may be important to different people in addressing that issue. If, however, there is any consensus on what constitutes privatization in education, it appears to be most apparent in

[29] An excellent example of this is the recent vigorous opposition to the "privatization" plan to allow Edison to manage five schools in New York City as charter schools. Although New York's system offers many choices, and allows private management in some instances, many activists were upset about the profit motive.

the areas of funding, ownership, and provision—although, even in these areas it can be disputed.

The Unique Nature of Education: Toward an Alternative Analytical Framework for Assessing Privatization in Education

For decades (if not longer) economists, sociologists and others have considered the essential nature of mass education as a public or private good. Typically, reformers seeking an expansion of the state's role in providing education laud the "public good" effects of mass education: increased literacy, civic participation, inculcating a common culture, tolerance, social and human capital, social efficiency, equity, and so forth. On the other hand, education is often treated as a private good, as individuals compete for more prestigious credentials to enhance economic opportunities (Collins, 1979; Labaree, 1988), for example, or as businesses seek to transfer training costs onto schools (Gelberg, 1997).

Indeed, in a strict economic sense, public education is in an ambiguous position. A public good is usually assessed in terms of a good that is non-rival and non-exclusive—or, in the absence of those criteria, embodies positive externalities that make it a de facto public good (Fisher, 1988; Olson, 1965).[30] Some argue that education is a public good due to its general availability or because of these externalities (e.g., Gauri, 1998; Labaree, in press). Others downplay a general societal interest, emphasizing the competitive nature of learning and achievement, or the individual or organizational economic benefits coming from specific approaches to education (e.g., Beers & Ellig, 1994; Friedman, 1955; Hanushek, 1996; West, 1982).

While disagreements arise largely from the philosophical perspective of the various observers, they dwell largely on the supply-side issues of the appropriate form of provision in terms of ownership and funding. However, what such apparently intractable dilemmas neglect is that *the way education is provided* largely determines its nature as a public or private good. This is most apparent from the perspective of those most immediately "consuming" education—the demand side. Education is generally delivered as a public good in this country—publicly funded and administered. But it has elements of a private good that drive its pursuit by individuals and economic interests. When it is publicly administered, it is generally available, and individuals cannot be excluded from obtaining education. When it is privately provided (even if publicly funded or through publicly owned schools), "choices" in a competitive environment change the nature of the good—making it both rival and exclusive.

Indeed, school choice reformers explicitly transform education into a good to be privately pursued by individuals. Elhauge (2000) argues that education should be treated as the "new property" in terms of ownership, management, choice, and control—entailing the traditional legal protections afforded other private property rights. Koshelnyk (1997) remarks on how the "new calculus of market incentives in government education is *changing the way people view education*....That *market penetration* is good news for kids and for the fledgling industry that is serving them" (p. 14; emphasis added).

[30] A good is non-rival if it can be enjoyed by more than one individual without denigrating the enjoyment by another—watching fireworks for example, as opposed to purchasing an ice cream sundae at the fireworks. A good is non-exclusive if its use cannot be denied to an individual for cost or other reasons (for example, it would not be feasible to charge people to view fireworks). Externalities are effects that accrue beyond the immediate consumer-produce relationship to third parties, including society. A negative externality is pollution. In the case of a public good, positive externalities, such as general social tolerance, need to be considered.

School choice in education, then, is a unique form of privatization. Although there have traditionally been public and private purposes for education, private goals of individuals now predominate (Labaree, 1997). Thus, regardless of the different forms of provision, governance, institutional ownership, funding and other issues on the supply side in the school choice continuum, education is now a private commodity to be pursued competitively by individuals—a privatization of the purpose and pursuit of education from the demand-side perspective that is ill-considered in school choice debates. In most of the choice plans across the spectrum above, the nature of the choice arrangements explicitly or implicitly encourages parents to view themselves as consumers in pursuing the most appropriate education for their children. Even if reforms or proposals do not explicitly or completely privatize schools into profit-making ventures, they do promote, even mandate, the privatization of the purpose of education. That is, these plans make education into a private commodity, with certain citizens now necessarily consumers. By making education into a primarily private good, children of parents who fail or resist treating public education in such a way are effectively disadvantaged in the race for education.

Precedents

While this perspective may be unique in education, it is not without precedent in the wider context of research on market expansion and privatization in other sectors. Typically, privatization is evaluated in terms of ownership, funding, benefits, access, etc.. However, it is important to remember that, as noted in the first part of this paper (see # 2, 3, &5, and especially # 6), while discussions of privatization are often preoccupied with funding or ownership of the means of production or provision, privatization can also involve the re-orientation of a resource or good from a public or communal purpose to a private one. This is illustrated in the re-orientation of public goods and services like public security and pensions from public to private purposes. This is also apparent in the drive for patents on genetic codes, for instance, and has been evident in the emergence of private property rights in previously communal realms—the historic enclosures of commonly held lands, for instance, privatized or "deprived" commoners of their communal claims on common holdings, as individuals fenced off sections of the commons for exclusive private use (Dahlman, 1980; Polanyi, 1944). Even now, researchers in anthropology as well as agricultural and political economics describe processes by which changing distribution patterns an introducing market-based relationships can re-configure the nature of a good by privatizing its purpose (e.g., Brito, Intriligator, & Sheshinski, 1997; Donahue, 1999; Ecologist, 1993; Hardin, 1968; Jones & Ward, 1998; Netting, 1997; Pearce & Warford, 1993). Simply by employing market mechanisms of private control that transform them into commodities, reforms can privatize goods and resources previously understood to be public or common goods—grazing rights, access to drinking water, safety, etc..

This form of market expansion transforms the way people perceive those goods, as well as how they interact with each other regarding those goods. Thus, the introduction of the consumer model can privatize the purpose of a public good like education by re-configuring it as a commodity. Such private control is ascendant in education, largely due to school choice plans. By elevating the individual under a consumer-rights model, choice-oriented reforms undermine broader social and political rights previously exercised through what is than a diminished public governance. Control of education is privatized to individual decision-makers acting in their own self-interest.

CONCLUSION: Do the "Rules Matter?"

Recently, several observers have noted in assessing choice programs that the details on the regulations substantially shape the outcomes and equity effects of school choice arrangements (e.g., Arsen, Plank, & Sykes, 1999; Gauri, 1998; Gintis, 1995; Goldhaber, 2000; Witte, 2000). However, under this alternative framework outlined here, the privatization of the purpose of education as a commodity largely negates the rules and regulations specific to various school choice arrangements. With the predominant market mechanisms of consumer choice and competition between providers common to (indeed, defining) almost all school choice schemes, market control, rather than public control, emerges as the key form of authority. Inasmuch as markets are premised on individual private ownership and the pursuit of self-interest, then using market mechanisms of choice and competition as the basis for organizing a "market-driven" system of education elevates private-ism, regardless of the specific form that system takes. (Indeed, one could argue that preoccupation with the "rules" ignores the bigger picture of the penetration of schooling by mechanisms of choice and competition, neglects how these dynamics privatize the purpose of schooling from a consumer's perspective, and contributes to that process by obscuring this pattern of privatization.)

Summary and Implications

Debates about school choice and privatization continue on. For instance, teacher union official Leo Casey (2000) warns that

> corporate forces are joined by conservative politicians and right-wing ideologues who view charter schools as the "thin wedge" which will prepare American society for greater educational privatization, for the transformation of public schooling…into a market driven by consumer demand and corporate franchise supply.

On the other hand, some advocates of for-profit charter schools, for example, note that these schools are open to the public, funded by the public, are accountable to public authorities, and serve public interests in the wide diffusion of education, not to mention being publicly owned (Finn & Bennett, 1997; Keegan, 2000). According to this analysis, both may be right. But the politicized and ideological tone of the school choice discourse in the US highlights the need for a balanced analytical framework on this issue.

According to the framework outlined above, most school choice policies and programs in the US do not represent privatization in terms of ownership, which would entail transferring the ownership or control of an institution from the public to the private sphere. Apart from a few proposals (e.g., Friedman, 1995), school choice plans do not change the institutional arrangements of ownership for schools. At most, choice plans draw on a mixture of public and private resources in providing education to the public.

However, based on the less obvious consideration involving the nature of a good, most versions of school choice represent forms of privatization in that they encourage the re-orientation of the purpose and pursuit of public schooling into an individualized private commodity. Even if the institutional structures remain under public ownership, many forms of school choice privatize the good itself by transforming its immediate users into consumers who compete in the marketplace for access to the most valued services.

Thus, too often the focus has only been on supply side, rather than considering the demand-side perspective as well. By taking into account this less recognized consideration, this analysis offers a more balanced perspective that illuminates a process of commodification, with implications for the impact that a re-oriented nature will have on provision. That is, from the vantage point of consumer in a competitive environment, it makes little difference whether the provider is public or private, since the good is now pursued as a commodity for the private benefit of individuals. In education it would *initially* appear that privatization is usually identified in terms of moving production or provision of a good or service from public to private sector or authority. But privatization can also be seen in terms of marketization: using classical economics or neoliberal paradigms to assess and analyze the production and provision of a good previously removed from economic reasoning. Insofar as school choice relies on market mechanisms with continued state provision, then it is a quasi-market model. However, inasmuch as quasi-markets rely on (and encourage) the elevation of private interests, then school choice is a form of privatization.

School choice programs in the US do not usually fit typical conceptions of privatization because they do not change the ownership arrangements of schools. However, this analysis deepens the discussion by clarifying what we mean by privatization. Premised on the fact that the move toward the market model in US education cannot be divorced from similar patterns in other sectors and in other contexts across the globe, the paper advances beyond simple claims of *whether* school choice is or is not privatization. Instead, it explores *how* and *in what ways* school choice may be part of the larger privatization movement. In doing so, the analysis sharpens the understanding of privatization, offering a more complex and comprehensive conception of this phenomenon.

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