

Christopher Lubienski, Professor, Indiana University

**TITLE:** Quasi-Markets, Educational Organization, and Access/Exclusion

**PREFERRED FORMAT:** On-Site in Warsaw

**ABSTRACT:** While the introduction of quasi-market mechanisms such as choice and competition has the theoretical potential to open up new opportunities to quality educational options, especially for marginalized students, research suggests that quasi-market policies are actually associated with greater degrees of exclusion and segregation. Yet extant research has done little to identify the factors that may be leading to these patterns, particularly as increasingly competitive institutional environments are shaping schools' organizational responses to their rivals, and the consequent impacts on student access across a range of schools in local quasi-markets. The research described in this proposal seeks to expand our understanding of how quasi-markets shape these patterns by mapping student access across different contexts. By doing so, the cross-case comparative analyses can help to isolate policy and other factors that can ameliorate or exacerbate student exclusion in quasi-market contexts, and will allow for further investigation in future research.

**STUDY DESCRIPTION:**

Across the globe, policymakers have been embracing quasi-market mechanisms such as consumer choice, deregulation, and competition between increasingly autonomous providers to promote innovation and improve access and services, especially for marginalized groups (Ndimande & Lubienski, 2017). While these are not full-scale markets or true “privatization” for education — since the state continues a role in funding and various degrees of direct provision or regulation — these quasi-markets can represent substantial challenges to traditional modes of educational organization and governance (Lubienski, 2009, 2016). The “third-way” thinking behind these efforts, often promoted by philanthropic interests, is manifest in a range of policies, from encouraging schools to adopt differentiated curricular options in order to compete, to students selecting individual courses from different providers, or choosing non-assigned schools altogether (as in many nations), to charter schools (as in the US, Liberia, or New Zealand), to public funding schemes for the private sector (Canada, Netherlands, Australia), to full-fledged voucher programs (in Chile, Sweden, or parts of Colombia, Pakistan, the US, and India). Regardless of the specifics of individual policies, these efforts — often by design — bring quasi-market mechanisms into education sectors that have often been dominated by the state, introducing various degrees of competition, non-state governance, operational autonomy, and consumer-based accountability to “public” education. In place of districts or other local education authorities (LEAs, which are often elected), we are seeing the rise of corporate chains, both for- and non-profit, that take the primary role in school governance (Verger, Lubienski, & Steiner-Khamsi, 2016). Instead of government officials assigning students to schools, we are often seeing parents being put into the position of making enrollment decisions for their children.

But what is not known is how these new quasi-market dynamics shape educational opportunity and exclusion patterns, especially in societies characterized by greater levels of economic polarization, immigration, or overall social segregation. In theory, quasi-market education policies could address patterns of exclusion, as families, liberated from assigned attendance zones, for instance, are free to choose new opportunities for their children, and schools may be incentivized to reach out to under-served communities (Allen, 2001; Holt, 1999; Tooley, 1996). But there is also concern that quasi-markets in primary and secondary education

could exacerbate segregation patterns, as is too often evident in higher education, housing, and other (quasi-)markets. Research has indicated that many education reform mechanisms, such as consumer choice and provider autonomy, are associated with greater levels of segregation (Cobb & Glass, 1999; Elacqua, 2012; Lauder et al., 1999; Narodowski & Nores, 2002; Perry, Lubienski, & Ladwig, 2016; Rotberg, 2014; Valenzuela, Bellei, & Ríos, 2014). But there is less evidence as to the specific causal factors influencing those patterns. Some research has focused on parental decision-making, suggesting that parents choose schools with students who have the social characteristics that match those of their own children (Bifulco & Ladd, 2006; Garcia, 2008; Kleitz, Weiher, Tedin, & Matland, 2000; Renzulli & Evans, 2005; Saporito, 2003; Schneider & Buckley, 2002; Tooley, 1999). Less attention has been paid to institutional factors, such as how increasingly competitive environments may incentivize schools to seek certain types of students, while effectively excluding others (Lubienski, 2014; Lubienski & Lee, 2016). This could happen through organizational strategies as schools choose to locate themselves relative to their perceived competitors in local quasi-markets, through marketing, for example.

### **Research and Preliminary Findings**

Because of the trends in research that examine only the parent, or demand side of the equation, my own research on this issue has moved towards a focus on the supply side: how schools recognize competitive incentives to create opportunities or barriers for different types of students. In this long-term effort, I am seeking to understand *how policy, demographic, geographic, organizational, and institutional contexts may influence the organizational behavior of schools as they shape educational opportunities for different communities across social landscapes* — either ameliorating or exacerbating patterns of exclusion and inclusion. For this exploratory stage, I am leveraging an innovative, mixed-methods approach to this question by using geo-spatial analyses to map different quasi-markets in different policy contexts such as in the US, China, Canada, Australia (Lubienski & Linick, 2011; E.-S. Yoon & Lubienski, in press). By “mapping” these quasi-markets, I am using geo-spatial tools (ArcGIS) to overlay layers of data regarding school location, school quality, residential locations of students in given schools, demographic distributions across urban areas, LEA and school catchment boundaries. On this, I can add qualitative information on schools’ competitors, and school marketing strategies.

I am creating these maps in different countries in order to describe and understand how various policies and other contextual considerations may influence schools’ organizational behaviors, and thus students’ educational opportunities. Thus, for instance, I have determined that that New Zealand’s policy of allowing over-subscribed schools draw their own attendance boundaries has led to gerrymandering and exclusion of students from poor and minority communities (Lubienski, Gordon, & Lee, 2013) — patterns reflected in schools’ advertising materials (Lubienski, 2011). While New Zealand has a system of relatively autonomous state schools (and now a small set of charter schools), Australia and Canada have funding schemes that provide various levels of support directly to their private school sectors, thus providing more possibilities for families to choose beyond their neighborhood school. Yet Australia now has one of the most segregated school systems, and my research suggests that the choice system there is leading to sorting through quasi-market mechanisms (Perry et al., 2016; Rowe & Lubienski, 2017). Likewise, my research in Canada suggests that parents’ perceptions of their “choice sets” (the sets of schools they consider to be viable options) is highly influenced by their social locations (Lubienski & Yoon, 2017; E. S. Yoon & Lubienski, 2017). The US has a number of quasi-market systems varying by state (and city). There, my research indicates that public school

districts have recognized incentives to exclude students from poorer communities that might harm the schools' position in local quasi-market hierarchies, even though those students would bring in additional per-pupil funding (Lubienski, 2005a, 2005b). At the same time, charter schools have been creating overt and covert impediments to some students, dissuading them from applying or attending certain charter schools (Lubienski, Gulosino, & Weitzel, 2009). Together, these findings suggest that quasi-markets may be vehicles for increased exclusion and segregation, but that particular policies may matter in mediating the more egregious effects of these policies, for example, by regulating schools' marketing efforts, or restricting schools' ability to select their students.

### **Significance and Potential Collaborations**

As I develop and expand this line of inquiry, I am utilizing cross-case comparative analyses to help build theory and create working hypotheses for further and more rigorous investigation in the next stage of the research. While my work to this point has focused largely on developed, English-speaking contexts, the project needs to include other contexts that can add additional factors to consider in cross-case analyses. Adding both European and developing countries, for instance, would allow me to match or contrast cases based on different economic and institutional contexts, for instance, examining systems that are more or less centralized, that have stronger or weaker private school sectors, or that are changing the level of autonomy granted to schools. Poland represents an intriguing case to consider, since it offers free public education to all students, but also has a nascent private school sector. The case suggests some emerging aspects of a distinct quasi-market, as it moves from a more centralized system to one that is reorganizing curricula, encourages schools to adopt their own curricula, devolving authority to localities, and allowing parents to choose beyond the nearest public school.

This line of inquiry, along with other topics on which I am currently conducting research (the role of philanthropies in education reform, research utilization, incentivism), suggests some potentially promising collaborations with the faculty at the University of Warsaw. For instance, Dr. Tomaszewska-Pękała's work on social inequalities, and Kuleta-Hulboj's interest in urban landscapes and movements, very much dovetail with this current project. Similarly, Prof. Dolata's research agenda deals with social inequality and student segregation, and may have considerable overlap with this project, while his interest in value-added also has implications for this work as well as my work on incentivism (Lubienski, Scott, & DeBray, 2011). Dr. Naumiuk has been conducting research on exclusion, as well as the role of philanthropies, which coincides with my work on these forces in education reform (Au & Lubienski, 2016; Lubienski, 2013; Lubienski, Brewer, & Goel La Londe, 2016). Prof. Wilkomirska examines the ways teacher evaluation systems impact school quality, which is also an interest of Dr. Jakubowska's, and which parallels my own analyses on incentivizing teachers and schools through evaluation and compensation systems (Lubienski et al., 2011).

Such possible collaborations have the potential to greatly enrich this and other lines of inquiry I am pursuing. This work on quasi-markets in education is turning out to be quite a promising approach to understanding the inherent abilities of quasi-markets to influence students' access to quality educational opportunities. By contrasting different cases, I will be able to identify, and thus create working hypotheses, on what factors may be leveraged by policymakers to blunt the more detrimental effects of quasi-markets in education. Thus, this work has potential contributions for both future research as well as policymaking, not to mention the opportunities to collaborate with colleagues at the University of Warsaw.

## REFERENCES

- Allen, J. (2001). Education by Charter: The New Neighborhood Schools. In J. C. Goodman & F. F. Steiger (Eds.), *An Education Agenda: Let Parents Choose Their Children's School* (pp. 56-64). Dallas, TX: National Center for Policy Analysis.
- Au, W., & Lubienski, C. (2016). The Role of the Gates Foundation and the Philanthropic Sector in Shaping the Emerging Education Market: Lessons from the US on Privatization of Schools and Education Governance. In A. Verger, C. Lubienski, & G. Steiner-Khamsi (Eds.), *The Global Education Industry* (pp. 27-43): Routledge.
- Bifulco, R., & Ladd, H. F. (2006). School choice, racial segregation, and test-score gaps: Evidence from North Carolina's charter school program. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 26(1), 31-56.
- Cobb, C. D., & Glass, G. V. (1999). Ethnic Segregation in Arizona Charter Schools. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 7(1).
- Elacqua, G. (2012). The impact of school choice and public policy on segregation: Evidence from Chile. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 32(3), 444-453.  
doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2011.08.003>
- Garcia, D. R. (2008). Academic and Racial Segregation in Charter Schools: Do Parents Sort Students into Specialized Charter Schools? *Education and Urban Society*, 40(5), 590-612.
- Holt, M. (1999). *Not yet "free at last": The unfinished business of the civil rights movement: Our battle for school choice*. Oakland, CA: Institute for Contemporary Studies.
- Kleitz, B., Weiher, G. R., Tedin, K., & Matland, R. (2000). Choice, Charter Schools, and Household Preferences. *Social Science Quarterly*, 81(3), 846-854.
- Lauder, H., Hughes, D., Watson, S., Waslander, S., Thrupp, M., Strathdee, R., . . . Hamlin, J. (1999). *Trading in futures: Why markets in education don't work*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
- Lubienski, C. (2005a). Public Schools in Marketized Environments: Shifting Incentives and Unintended Consequences of Competition-Based Educational Reforms. *American Journal of Education*, 111(4), 464-486.
- Lubienski, C. (2005b). School Choice as a Civil Right: District Responses to Competition and Equal Educational Opportunity. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 38(4), 331-341.
- Lubienski, C. (2009). *Do Quasi-Markets Foster Innovation in Education? A Comparative Perspective* (25). Retrieved from Paris: [http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/do-quasi-markets-foster-innovation-in-education\\_221583463325](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/do-quasi-markets-foster-innovation-in-education_221583463325)
- Lubienski, C. (2011). *Innovations in and through Education: The Role of Quasi-Markets*. Paper presented at the 4th International Congress on Innovation, Porto Alegre, Brazil.
- Lubienski, C. (2013). Privatizing Form or Function? Equity, Outcomes and Influence in American Charter Schools. *Oxford Review of Education*, 39(4), 498-513.
- Lubienski, C. (2014). Re-making the middle: Dis-intermediation in international context. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 42(3), 423-440.  
doi:10.1177/1741143214521594
- Lubienski, C. (2016). Sector Distinctions and the Privatization of Public Education Policymaking. *Theory and Research in Education*, 14(3), 192-212.

Christopher Lubienski, Professor, Indiana University

- Lubienski, C., Brewer, T. J., & Goel La Londe, P. (2016). Orchestrating Policy Ideas: Philanthropies and Think Tanks in US Education Policy Advocacy Networks. *Australian Education Researcher*, 43(1), 55-73.
- Lubienski, C., Gordon, L., & Lee, J. (2013). Self-Managing Schools and Access for Disadvantaged Students: Organisational Behavior and School Admissions. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 48(1), 82-98.
- Lubienski, C., Gulosino, C., & Weitzel, P. (2009). School Choice and Competitive Incentives: Mapping the Distribution of Educational Opportunities across Local Education Markets. *American Journal of Education*, 115(4), 601-647.
- Lubienski, C., & Lee, J. (2016). Competitive Incentives and the Education Market: How Charter Schools Define Themselves in Metropolitan Detroit. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 91(1), 64-80. doi:10.1080/0161956X.2016.1119582
- Lubienski, C., & Linick, M. (2011). Quasi-Markets and Innovation in Education. *Die Deutsche Schule*, 103(2), 139-157.
- Lubienski, C., Scott, J., & DeBray, E. (2011). The Rise of Intermediary Organizations in Knowledge Production, Advocacy, and Educational Policy. *Teachers College Record*, <http://www.tcrecord.org/> ID Number: 16487.
- Lubienski, C., & Yoon, E.-S. (2017). Studying school choice in Canada: Introduction to the special issue. 2017, 25. doi:10.14507/epaa.25.3012
- Narodowski, M., & Nores, M. (2002). Socio-economic Segregation with (without) Competitive Education Policies. A Comparative Analysis of Argentina and Chile. *Comparative Education*, 38(4), 429-451.
- Ndimande, B. S., & Lubienski, C. A. (Eds.). (2017). *The Impact of Market Mechanisms on Educational Opportunity around the Globe*. New York: Routledge.
- Perry, L. B., Lubienski, C., & Ladwig, J. (2016). How do learning environments vary by school sector and socioeconomic composition? Evidence from Australian students. *Australian Journal of Education*. doi:10.1177/0004944116666519
- Renzulli, L. A., & Evans, L. (2005). School choice, charter schools, and White flight. *Social Problems*, 52(3), 398-418.
- Rotberg, I. C. (2014, February). Charter Schools and the Risk of Increased Segregation. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 95, 26-30.
- Rowe, E. E., & Lubienski, C. (2017). Shopping for schools or shopping for peers: public schools and catchment area segregation. *Journal of Education Policy*, 32(3), 340-356. doi:10.1080/02680939.2016.1263363
- Saporito, S. (2003). Private Choices, Public Consequences: Magnet School Choice and Segregation by Race and Poverty. *Social Problems*, 50(2), 191-203.
- Schneider, M., & Buckley, J. (2002). What Do Parents Want From Schools? Evidence From the Internet. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24(2), 133-144.
- Tooley, J. (1996). *Education Without the State*. London: Institute of Economic Affairs, Education and Training Unit.
- Tooley, J. (1999). Parental Choice and Inequality. *Economic Affairs*, 19(4), 51.
- Valenzuela, J. P., Bellei, C., & Ríos, D. d. I. (2014). Socioeconomic school segregation in a market-oriented educational system. The case of Chile. *Journal of Education Policy*, 29(2), 217-241. doi:10.1080/02680939.2013.806995
- Verger, A., Lubienski, C. A., & Steiner-Khamsi, G. (Eds.). (2016). *The 2016 World Yearbook on Education: The Global Education Industry*. New York: Routledge.

Christopher Lubienski, Professor, Indiana University

Yoon, E.-S., & Lubienski, C. (in press). Thinking Critically in Space: Toward a Mixed-Methods Geospatial Approach to Education Policy Analysis. *Educational Researcher*, 0(0), 0013189X17737284. doi:10.3102/0013189x17737284

Yoon, E. S., & Lubienski, C. (2017). How Do Marginalized Families Engage in School Choice in Inequitable Urban Landscapes? A Critical Geographic Approach. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*(25). doi:10.14507/epaa.25.2655