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Businesses seeing like a state, governments calculating like a business*

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on why education is a lucrative business for private sector providers. It identifies the five most common strategies that education businesses apply when selling goods or services in the education sector. In addition, this study also cursorily presents examples of how public education has networked with, reframed its mission, and built institutional structures that resemble businesses. The author proposes that the interaction of the two types of providers – public sector versus private sector – should constitute the focus of academic inquiry. Nowadays, the two sectors react to, and compete with each other. As a result, changes in one sector impacts the other. The article provides examples of boundary work and translation in the two sectors.

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1. The education market model revisited: quality improved, diversity augmented?

For more than three decades, proponents of the quasi-market model in education have ceaselessly pointed at the salutary effects of parental choice on the quality and diversification of educational programs. If we were to subscribe to the Education Market Model, we would firmly believe that parental choice will generate competition among schools, and by proxy improve the quality of education, provided that a set of prerequisites are put in place such as periodic assessment of student and teacher performance, a per capita financing policy which rewards schools that manage to attract the greatest number of students, public information on school performance, bidding or entrance rules for private providers, etc. Figure 1 below presents the logic of the neoliberal Education Market Model, visualized by Susan Robertson and Antoni Verger (2012, Figure 2.1).

There are, at least, two grand assumptions made by advocates of this model that deserve greater scrutiny. First, the mythical belief that competition among providers will – to speak in the language of the global education industry – improve the quality of ‘goods and services’ in the education sector. Second, the assumption that a demand-supply driven school system augments the diversity of available educational goods and services offered by the various providers. This study attempts to challenge these two grand assumptions of the Education Market Model. I intend to show that the contrary applies: as a result of businesses entering the public education sector, educational goods and services will be further standardized and cheapened, and the diversity of educational programs will only exist between the various providers. In fact, the diversity of educational programs that private and public providers have to offer will most likely increase as a result of the Education Market Model, because – depending

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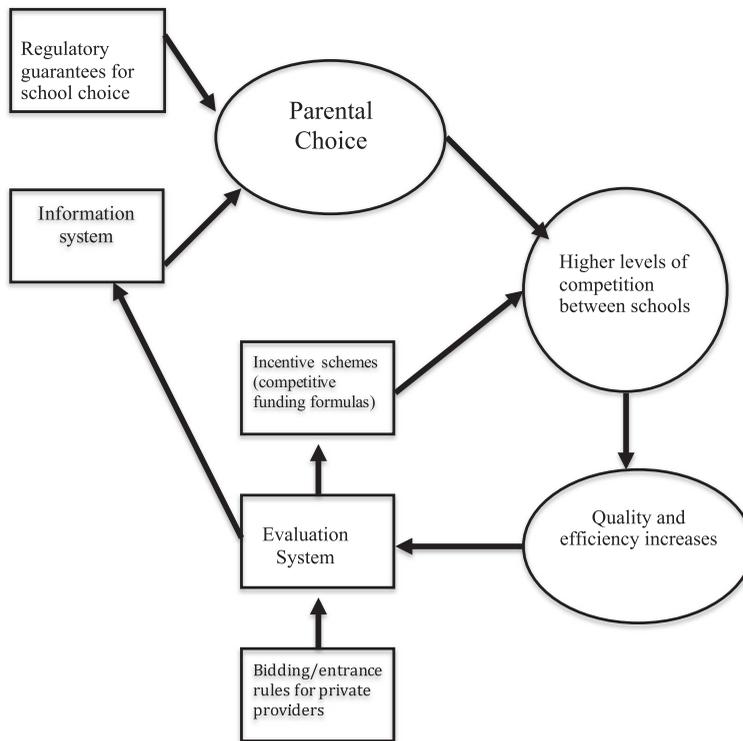


Figure 1. The logic of the education market model.

on household income or tax revenues – parents, schools, or school districts buy different packages affordable to them.

Conceptually, this study proposes to examine the interaction between the two sub-systems: public versus private providers in education. Twenty years later, we should consider it an opportune moment to ask whether the assumed causal relation between choice, competition, quality improvement, and diversification has materialized in practice, and how that relation is informed by the interaction of, or more accurately the competition between, the State versus businesses as providers of educational goods and services. Formulated differently, in countries with a long history of ‘endogenous’ privatization (Ball & Youdell, 2008) such as the United States or the United Kingdom, the public sector has absorbed the business logic – notably standardization, lowering of production and delivery cost, introduction of a fee structure augmenting social inequality – in order to attract private sector providers *and* as a result of private sector involvement. The fact that the entry of private sector providers into the public education sector has exacerbated the standardization, lowering of production and delivery cost, and fee structure, in the *public* education sector implies a functional de-differentiation between the public and private education sectors. From a systems theory perspective, the two types of education sub-systems compete for the same subjects or clients, and therefore react to changes in the other sector. As a result of this kind of interaction, they ‘learn’ from each other, selectively adopt each other’s logic, and ‘translate’ what they have adopted into their own language. As a result, businesses end up seeing like a state, and governments calculating like a business. In this article, I intend to show the contours of the functional de-differentiation process or the convergence, respectively, of the two types of education sub-systems (public and private sector providers of educational goods and services). The focus of this article is on business strategies of the private sector that seem to increasingly resonate also in the public education sector.

2. Business strategies in education

By way of exploring this question, this study will show that the global education industry functions first and foremost like a business and therefore constantly seeks ways to (i) lower the cost of goods and services, (ii) sell the same products and services, or variations thereof, to an ever increasing number of customers, (iii) issue long-term service and sales contracts, (iv) develop a fee structure for its educational goods and services that reflects the various degree of affordability, and (v) create new needs and actively promote the exodus from the public system.

2.1. Lowering production and delivery cost in education

We are currently witnessing a renewed rhetoric on the value of teacher professionalism; a discourse which is in great part triggered by applied policy analyses who attempt to explain why students in Finland, Shanghai, and Singapore – league leaders in PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) and TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) – outperform their peers in other countries (Barber & Mourshed, 2007; Liang, Kidwai, & Zhang, 2016; Sahlberg, 2010; Tan, 2013). Pre-service teacher education in these countries prepare teachers to develop their own teaching material, carry out action research, evaluate themselves, and provide feedback to others. These professional skills are in stark contrast to scripted curricula, modularized teacher preparation crash courses, on-the-job mentoring programs that many non-state providers are currently offering or selling, respectively. Ironically, the affirmation of rigorous teacher education as a prerequisite for effective student learning occurs precisely at a time when university-based, rigorous teacher education has been globally under siege. New York State, for example, considers the (very expensive) university-based teacher education to be of the same value as the (very cheap) teacher programs offered by private colleges and businesses. In other places, universities have resorted to offer shorter or workplace-based teacher education programs simply because the qualification requirements for entering the teaching profession have been lowered. In developing countries, hiring contract teachers has become a viable alternative for securing a constant supply of teachers without having to invest too much in initial teacher education and instead train teachers on the job. The liberalization of qualification requirements benefits a broad spectrum of providers, ranging from very cheap providers such as Bridge International Academies to medium-cost enterprises such as Teach for All and to high-end teacher education programs such as International Baccalaureate. What these drastically diverse for-profit, non-profit, and not-for-profit organizations have in common is the preparation of a specific brand of teachers: teachers that are licensed exclusively to teach in their own parallel, privately run educational system.

Without any doubt, the ubiquitous talk of global markets and international student mobility has helped boost the business of transnational certifiers. In an era of globalization, 'global' is likely to become increasingly positively associated with 'cosmopolitanism' and 'global citizenship' and 'national' with backwardness and parochialism. Strikingly, schools that claim to implement 'international standards' are on the rise globally. Their main 'selling points' are English as a language of instruction, technology integration, and, in some countries (such as Indonesia), accreditation of the exit examinations by one of the OECD education systems (ACDP, 2013; Steiner-Khamisi, 2015). To render the trend even more fascinating: depending on the standing of a national economy within the larger world economy, a private international school leaving certificate (e.g. International Baccalaureate) or transnational accreditation may in some countries have a greater value than a certificate from a public national system (Hartmann, 2016; Resnick, 2011).

2.2. Creating an economy of scale by means of standardization

With the fast advance of the global education industry, we have now entered a vicious cycle or, more specifically, a standardization helix: standardization of education is a condition for businesses to enter the education market. However, once businesses enter the education sector, they further standardize

and modularize education to lower production and delivery cost and to increase the number of customers (see Steiner-Khamsi, 2015). As a result of outcomes- or standards-based educational reform, the same test, textbook, teacher education module, etc. may be sold not only once, that is, to the client (a school or a district) who its development, but to many new clients. A good case in point is Pearson PLC who first developed the Common Core State Standards for New York and then tried to sell – with large legal repercussions – the same product to other districts and states in the United States.

To be fair, the process of continuous standardization, rationalization, and normalization occurs in every sphere of society (Bromley & Meyer, 2015). Standards-based education reform and ‘governance by numbers’ (Jenny Ozga) are perhaps the two most visible signposts of the standardization process in education. The latter is sometimes referred to as ‘soft power’ because national policy actors have the choice of using, or not using, the results from international rankings to either generate or alleviate reform pressure on aligning their own national system with international norms or best practices. However, they need to communicate and convince the other stakeholders in education *in the language of education*. Pedagogical language is by default one that puts the learner at center stage, regardless of whether the learner is a child enrolled in pre-school, a school-aged student, a university student or an adult who is trained in non-formal education settings. To push through any kind of standardization in the education sector, policy-makers have to make the case that a reform is good for the learner, or even better, improves learning outcomes.

The proliferation of tools to measure and compare the quality of education cross-nationally (OECD and IEA-type studies), nationally, within a district, within a school, and also within a class setting is in the education system functionally equivalent to what standardization does to society at large: setting norms. Against this backdrop, the non-state affiliated, private testing industry has become a main arbiter of whether the quality of education or the learning outcomes have improved. The private test development industry nowadays does not only develop tests but also provides learning material to improve student learning, thereby creating a self-referential system or conflict of interest, because their high-stakes tests ensure a constant flow of new customers. In addition, as a result of standardization and outcomes orientation in education, we are witnessing today at process of backward reform mapping, in which first the tests are determined and afterward, the same businesses or organizations (e.g. Pearson, Cambridge Education, International Baccalaureate), produce their own textbooks and teacher education curriculum that match their tests. In effect, this means the creation of parallel education programs or curricula, which, if taken to scale and implemented globally, leads over time to educational systems that differentiate themselves by brand names rather than by nationality. As part of such a doomsday scenario for public education, national educational systems may end up becoming dumping ground for the ‘rest’, that is, the low-income families that do not afford to pay tuition for additional educational services, provided by the global education industry.

2.3. Establishing long-term service and sales contracts

The education industry has grown so rapidly in some countries that the competition is not any longer restricted to private providers, businesses, or non-state education providers, but also between private *and* public providers. In an endeavor for their own survival or expansion, respectively, the State has adopted private sector thinking on one hand and businesses learned to speak the language of the democratic state on the other.

Today’s belief in, and regulatory frameworks for, lifelong learning grant unlimited opportunities for education businesses to sell new courses, certificates, diplomas, and degrees. Even though schools nowadays constitute only one of many educative sites, it is clearly the most lucrative one: the mass of learners stays in school for up to 12 years, is tested periodically in core subjects at critical stages of the education systems, is supplied with textbooks, learning material and technology/equipment, is taught by a large number of teachers that undergoes teacher education and certification, and is managed by well-paid administrators who both supervise the learner and the teacher. In the wave of neoliberal

reforms, governments have systematically commercialized education and provided incentives for businesses to run schools from public funds.

The sheer size of the education system, characterized by long-term contracts for a great number of individual ‘clients’ who stay up to 12 years in schools, returning customers willing to invest in lifelong learning, the complexity of the value chain (alignment of tests, textbooks, teacher training), and last but not least the opportunity to sell all of the above not only to every student, teacher, and administrator at one school but to hundreds of thousands or millions of schools across the globe must be mind-boggling for business people. Standards-based education, English as the global lingua franca, and the infusion of technology in instruction, and most importantly a business-friendly policy environment account for why we currently experience an epidemiological spread of transnational businesses in education.

2.4. Introducing a fee structure

Perhaps the bluntest example of a fee structure is reflected in the business philosophy of GEMS schools (see Ridge, Kippels, & Shami, 2016). GEMS Education, founded initially as Global Education Management Systems, is an education industry based in the United Arab Emirates which runs schools in the UAE and worldwide. Its foundation is based in London, United Kingdom. Sunny Varkey, Chief Executive Officer of GEMS, proudly announced: ‘We adopted the airline model of economy, business, and first class to make top-notch education available based on what families could afford’ (cited in Rai, 2013, p. 1; see Ridge et al., 2016). The differentiated fee structure with different levels of service is depicted in Table 1 below. Parents who afford to pay the full service or the first-class fare of \$22,300 are able to have their children taught by American or Canadian native English speakers. The majority of children in that group are UK nationals. GEMS grants them access to all facilities: ranging from the swimming pools to the indoor climbing wall. Parents who pay the business class fare (\$10,100–\$12,700) have to enroll their children in schools, where teachers are mostly UK nationals. The class sizes are on average larger and the accessible school facilities fewer than in the first class model. Finally, parents who only afford economy class (\$2,000–\$4,300) must acknowledge that they provide their children a limited educational experience with no access to sport facilities and with instruction by teachers from India, Pakistan, and non-Gulf Arab countries.

In its home city, Dubai, it enrolls one-quarter of all private school students. In 2014, GEMS ran seventy schools (in UAE, United States, United Kingdom, Kenya, India) and employed over 11,000 people worldwide. One cannot help but wonder: How do business tycoons in the GEI manage to make their business look like a charitable organization? GEMS is a good case in point to investigate the phenomenon: GEMS hooks up with UNESCO, OECD, the Clinton Global Initiative, the Brookings Institute and other reputable organizations. The Varkey Foundation granted, for example, US\$ 1 million to UNESCO’s Global Partnership for Women’s and Girl’s Education program in Kenya and Lesotho and another undisclosed amount for UNESCO’s school principal leadership programs in India, Ghana, and Kenya. These programs did not benefit GEMS but rather enabled UNESCO to receive funding for its programs. In the case of the GEMS corporation, UNESCO replicated the favors and appointed Varkey as Goodwill Ambassador for Education Partnerships. Ridge et al. (2016) round up their study with several social network analyses that demonstrate the kinship of the global education industry with governments, international organizations, think tanks, and charitable organizations.

2.5. Scandalizing public education

The fifth strategy of the global education industry is to constantly criticize the quality of (public) education. A more recent body of research deals with the emergence of a ‘scandalization industry,’ a term used to denote the policy usage of PISA, TIMSS and other international large-scale student assessment (ILSA) studies. There are many reasons of why politicians and national policy actors participate in ILSAs, including at the top of rationales the ability to mobilize economic resources and build political coalitions to fix the supposedly broken education system. In fact, every educational system that does not rank top,

Table 1. Economy, business, and first-class K-12 schools in Dubai.

	School name	Tuition fees (USD) ^a	Largest student nationality group(s)	Largest teacher nationality group(s)	Teacher/student ratio	Facilities ^b
First class (USD 16,001+ for annual tuition)	GEMS World Academy – Dubai	22,300	UK	American and Canadian	N/A	Swimming pools, auditorium, planetarium, symphony center, garden, design technology lab, language labs, tutoring rooms, Discovery World (library with science, robotics, and design technology), athletic track, all-weather artificial pitch, tennis courts, gymnasium, fitness center, and indoor climbing wall
	Dubai American Academy	19,500	American	American and Canadian	1:12	Swimming pools, theater/auditorium, soccer field, weight training room, gymnasiums, covered playgrounds, both covered and uncovered tennis courts, and library media centers
	Jumeirah College – Dubai	16,500	UK	UK	1:12	Swimming pool, multipurpose hall, interactive whiteboards, digital projectors, iPad trolleys, communication and resource center, music suites and practice rooms, drama studios, tennis/netball courts, and grassed playing fields
Business class (USD 8001–16,000 for annual tuition)	GEMS Wellington Primary School – Dubai	12,700	UK	UK	1:15	Swimming pools, climate controlled gymnasium, and AstroTurf field
	GEMS Royal Dubai School	11,100	UK	UK	1:15	Swimming pools, multipurpose hall, interactive whiteboards, artificial sports field, tennis, basketball and netball courts, dance studio, and creative learning zone
	GEMS Modern Academy – Dubai	10,100	Indian	Indian	1:16	Swimming pool, auditorium, squash courts, basketball courts, tennis courts, running tracks, and AstroTurf field
Economy class (less than USD 8000 for annual tuition)	GEMS Winchester School – Dubai	4,300	Indian	Indian and Pakistani	1:16	Auditorium
	Our Own High School – Al Warqa'a	2,300	Indian	Indian	1:22	Play area, math lab, and bookstore
	The Westminster School – Dubai	2,000	Non-Gulf Arab and Pakistani	Non-Gulf Arab, Pakistani, and Indian	1:17	Covered play areas, activity rooms, and craft rooms

^aTuition for eighth grade fees during the 2014–2015 academic year are listed, with the exception of GEMS Wellington Primary School – Dubai where sixth grade fees are listed.

^bThe following facilities have been omitted as they are common across schools: computer labs, science labs, cafeterias, art and music rooms, medical centers, and libraries.

Source: Ridge et al. (2016).

opens up the opportunity for politicians and policy actors of that country to put pressure on teachers and lower level state bureaucrats to improve delivery and management of education. This applies even to the 'Asian Tiger' states and other high performing educational systems that rank among the top five or so educational systems (see Takayama, 2010; Waldow, Takayama, & Sung, 2014). The use of ILSAs for generating reform pressure is well documented in comparative policy studies and in fact is a key research area of policy borrowing research (Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2012; Verger & Curran, 2014). In many countries, the reform pressure implies nowadays incentivizing the private sector to enter the education market, because they supposedly do a better job in fixing the education system than the State.

Steiner-Khamsi, Appleton, and Vellani (2018) investigated the reasons why the business community is interested in school reform in general and in the international large-scale student assessments such as in PISA and TIMSS in particular. They carried out a comprehensive media analysis of education-related news coverage and reports over the period 1996–2016. Their analysis of three financial news magazines and papers *The Economist*, *Financial Times* and *Wall Street Journal* shows a significant increase in education-related publications. Their content analysis shows a crisis scenario of public education painted by the business community. More specifically, their in-depth analysis of 59 articles yields interesting results about how the business-oriented readership of the three media outlets frames public education and why it sees education as a profitable business opportunity. The three most common narratives, reflecting the business logic, are the following: (i) Public education is in crisis; (ii) there is no correlation between spending and education outcome; (iii) school accountability, teacher performance, and decentralization represent the most effective policies to improve the quality of education. Drawing on these three common narratives, the financial media outlets present a particular vision of how to improve education; a vision in which the private sector is supposed to play a major role.

As was the case in the previous phase of privatization (in the 1960s; see Tyack and Cuban 1995), scandals start to surface. For example, one of the critiques of the standardized tests, which the GEI giant Pearson PLC developed for schools in New York City in 2014, is that the test was not only inappropriate and too long, but also too difficult resulting in a large number of students *and* schools that failed, benefiting in the end privately run charter schools that absorb the exodus from failing state-run schools. Other scholars have examined in great depth how No Child Left Behind created a business for remedial education and the private tutoring industry (Koyama, 2010).

3. The transformation of national public education as a reaction to the advance of the global education industry

The five business strategies, which the Global Education Industry has applied to turn education into a lucrative enterprise, merely serve as examples to illustrate how global businesses are guided by a set of goals and objectives that used to be completely different than the ones held by national governments. As a result of the interaction between the two types of education sub-systems, however, the public sector has begun to act, think, and speak like the private sector. Stephen J. Ball and Deborah Youdell (2008, p. 18ff.) label this type of privatization an 'endogenous' form of privatization. Endogenous privatization, coupled with the pressure on governments to reduce public expenditure and at the same time raise funds from private sources (fees for special classes, tuition in higher education, etc.), has created unprecedented business opportunities in the education sector of both OECD countries and developing countries.

The stated goal of business is to make money. In order to do so, GEI continuously (i) reduces costs, (ii) enhances the number of customers, (iii) establishes long-term contracts with its customers, (iv) applies a fee structure, and (v) actively promotes the scandalization of, and the exodus from, public education. In contrast, the goal and objectives of public education used to be diametrically opposed. For example, the business strategy of standardization which would enable mass production and an economy of scale, actively pursued by the global education industry, may be seen as diametrically opposed to the pedagogical project of acknowledging individual and special needs of students. Similarly, business calculations in terms of 'affordable [private] education,' as reflected in the fee structure of the GEMS

private schools in the United Arab Emirates presented earlier, is in stark contrast with values of equity, typically held by governments. For the past 200 years or so, the stated goals of modern schooling have been social integration, equity, and justice. How are these diametrically opposed goals and value systems reconciled and translated in the private sector?

Similarly to this article that described five common business strategies which the public sector has started to selectively adopt, it would be important to also examine the inverse: in which areas has the private sector mimicked values associated with modern schooling and possibly has begun to speak the language of the public sector? In their fascinating network ethnography, Hogan, Sellar, and Lingard (2016) have examined the global web of private and public policy actors that have contributed to *The Learning Curve*, a joint publication of the education industry giant Pearson and *The Economist* Intelligence Unit. According to the authors, *The Learning Curve* clearly demonstrates the move from government to governance; a process that has implied a 'privatisation of policy' (Ball, 2012, p. 94). As a result of this transformation, businesses now serve as public policy advisors by drawing on values of the common good on one hand and by implementing 'policy solutions' that serve their own business interests on the other. As Hogan et al. point out, Pearson and *The Economist* assert that governments do not possess adequate data to evaluate the quality of their education system in a comprehensive manner. *The Learning Curve* is supposed to fill this gap. Hogan et al. cite Sir Michael Barber who in the foreword of the first report of *The Learning Curve* highlights the limitations of international large-scale student assessments (PISA, TIMSS, etc.) and offers 'evidence-based policies' which 'ensure a country is on track for economic and social success in the twenty-first century' (Hogan et al., 2016, p. 249).

There is much to be gained from examining how sub-systems interact, learn from each other, and then reframe what was transferred in terms of their own system logic. Arguably, an investigation of how boundaries between the public and private education sectors are being redrawn in today's Education Market Model (Robertson & Verger, 2012), presented earlier in this article, requires an ecological social framework. In this regard, I consider several key features of Niklas Luhmann's system theory as a source of inspiration. According to Luhmann's theory of self-referential systems (Luhmann, 1990), sub-systems (e.g. the education sub-system) distance and differentiate themselves from their so-called 'environment,' that is, from other sub-systems in an endeavor to preserve their own logic and modes of regulation. Differentiation from other sub-systems is indispensable for its autonomy and own survival. Therefore, actors in the educational system selectively adopt or reframe modes of thinking, arguing, or regulating that are typical of other systems such as, for example, the adoption of quasi-market models from the economic system or the good governance model adopted from the political systems.

This article does not attempt to provide an overview of systems theory. Others have already convincingly illustrated how Luhmann's analytical framework may be applied for interpreting new phenomena in the social realm. For example, Niels A. Andersen provides succinct analyses of how private companies have become an integral part of the political system because they are contracted for implementing public services. Vice-versa, as part of the boundary work between the two systems that constantly have to communicate or interact with each other in an era of the Market Model, the public or political sector has taken on private sector modes of operation (Andersen, 2000, 2013). Another system theorist, Frank-Olaf Radtke, points at the history and politics of standardized comparison, propelled by OECD (Radtke, 2016; see also Lepenius, 2013; Troehler 2013). As before with introducing the indicator of gross domestic product to measure whether the financial investments of the Marshall Plan actually led to economic growth in post-World War II Europe, OECD introduced in the form of PISA the equivalent of a 'gross education product' in which the performance of national educational systems is compared based on universal competencies and skills needed in twenty-first century knowledge economies. The economic logic of OECD – establishing a cause-effect relationship between (human) investment and economic growth – has been preserved even though the indicators for measuring investments have changed.

From a theory perspective, two interesting phenomena have surfaced over the past few years: today, the 'others' are not only other sub-systems within a society (notably, the economy, religion, politics, etc.) but also on one hand the world society, represented by transnational regimes (e.g. OECD, World

Bank), and, on the other hand, the private education sector (including businesses). The first type of actors functions as global norm setters for national governments (see Luhmann, 1997; see Mundy, Green, Lingard, & Verger, 2016). From a system theory perspective, these transnational regimes represent environment for the national education sub-systems and therefore they react to each other. It is therefore essential to examine the boundary and translation work that system undertakes to differentiate themselves from each other. National government therefore engage in 'global speak' or discursive policy borrowing to acknowledge the adoption of international standards or global norms. The selective borrowing of international standards is an attempt to survive as a national educational system at a time when international educational credentials are valued more than national degrees. Additionally, national education systems have come under attack from within, that is, from private providers. Here again, public education has selectively adopted the logic of the private sector for the sake of its own survival. Twenty years after the establishment of the market model in education, public education in some countries has reduced the cost of production and delivery cost including initial teacher education or introduced fees for 'special classes' not considered essential for the basic curriculum.

4. Conclusions

The scholarship on the global education industry is relatively new (see Ball & Youdell, 2008; Verger, Lubienski, Steiner-Khamsi 2016). In particular, studies that, analyze how and why the fast spread of GEI impacts public education is at its stage of infancy (see Verger, Steiner-Khamsi, & Lubienski, 2017). In this article, I attempted to focus on the varied goals, logic, and mode of operations that the public and private providers in education used to have. I observe how they, as a result of their interaction, converge to a hybrid model that reflects similar business strategies (standardization/modularization, lowering production and delivery cost, fee structure for different service levels, etc.) as well as a similar public talk on the quality of education, the common good, and on education as a human right.

It is an opportune moment to revert back to the two questions put forward in the introductory paragraph of this article and re-examine the two grand assumptions underlying the Education Market Model: improving the quality of education as a result of the Market Model only applies to some at the expenses of others who do not afford to pay for better quality educational products and services. In turn, the increasing diversification process, resulting from the demand-supply mechanism, only applies to the spectrum of educational goods and services made available. Businesses generate revenue by marketing themselves as different or superior, respectively, from their competitors. The opposite applies for the educational goods and services of the businesses themselves: they standardize and modularize their educational goods and services in order to reach the largest number of customers possible. Very often they do so in the name of 'quality assurance' and better 'learning outcomes' speaking again the language of the education sector.

What is true for the state also applies to the private sector: bureaucracies create bureaucracy. They do so by continuously introducing new rules and regulations, by establishing tools to implement and monitor them, and by creating specialized professions that get certified to act on behalf of the bureaucracy. Strikingly, businesses adopted bureaucratic regulations of public accountability. Similar to national governments, education businesses test students and teachers, monitor, evaluate, and publicly report.

Finally, businesses create business. They in turn grow the sales of their goods and services by continuously creating new needs and new clients, developing new products, and generating franchises and other arrangements that enable them to oversee, and benefit from, their expanded market. In comparative policy studies, we have become accustomed to 'seeing like a state' (see Scott, 1998) in order to explore the policy tools, used by the state, to regulate the education system. The last section of this article proposed that we should now start to 'calculate like a business' in order to fully capture, analyze, and interpret why education has become such a lucrative market, and how public education has been transformed as a result of it.

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Notes on contributor

Gita Steiner-Khamsi is a professor, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York. Research interests are policy borrowing and lending, globalization and education, comparative policy studies, public-private partnerships in education.

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