



**Promoting Inclusive Collaboration Education Policy
Research: A Modest Step with a Joint-project
*‘Privatisations in Education: Exploratory Cases in
Australia, Greece and Hong Kong’***

Prof. Anna Tsatsaroni (University of the Peloponnese, Greece)

Dr. Choi Tae-Hee (Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong)

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History of Collaboration

- The ECER conferences, the topics specific to the NW and the Day Seminar at ECER2017, organised by EERA/NW23
- Group discussions on possible topics of interest for research collaborations
- The importance of familiarity with the ECER context

The Project

‘Privatisations in education: Exploratory cases in Australia, Greece and Hong Kong’

- Funder: The Education University of Hong Kong, International Grant, RG89/2017-2018R
- Duration: June 2018 - June 2019
- Lead Researchers: Choi, Tae Hee (P.I.), Lingard, Bob (Co-I) & Tsatsaroni, Anna (Co-I)
- Also one more researcher (Creagh, Sue) from the University of Queensland, 1 PhD student (Poudel, Prem) from HK and 2 PhD students (Vogopoulou, Areti & Koutsiouri, Sofia) from Greece





The Prospects of the Project

- The project was funded so it can be expanded for a Hong Kong-wide grant bid
- A research proposal of a wider scale is underway, with an international, comparative study involving four polities with Japan as a new addition and with more colleagues in each sub-team
- (Provisional) Title of the new proposal: **New Privatisation in and of English Education for Speakers of Other Languages: Global and local shapers, impacts, and quality education for *all***

* New Education Privatisation (Burch, 2009): Privatisation using public funds to support the participation of the private sector in public education

Back to the On-going Seed Project: Aim/Purpose

This is an exploratory study that falls within *policy sociology* and *comparative education*

Aim:

- ❖ To document and enhance understanding of the structural conditions that enable privatisations in education, as well as to develop an initial typology of privatisations in education
- ❖ The study will describe and help to deepen understanding of privatisations in different policy settings, document the implications of these changes for public schooling today and the work of schools, and of the complex interplay of global and path dependent factors in localised modes of privatisation

Methodology: Three sets of case studies in three national settings

- ❖ A critical analysis of existing literature & systemic and school policies
- ❖ Semi-structured interviews with a sample of school leaders, teachers and/or parents
- ❖ Cross-case comparisons

The National Case Studies

<p>Greece</p>	<p><i>Context and specific focus of case study:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Initiatives of “Open Schools” and “Designed for Better Learning”, representing the interventions in education of the “Athens Partnership”, an independent, non-profit entity, launched in 2015, designed to facilitate high-impact partnerships between the City of Athens and the private sector in order to support effective, priority public programs, including education, focusing on state secondary schools involved in these initiatives
<p>Australia</p>	<p><i>Context and specific focus of case study:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A restructured state, greater involvement of private sector players in all domains of schooling, and <i>inter alia</i> greater school autonomy, more discretion for school principals over budgets and staffing and a down-sizing of state support and provisions for schools, drawing upon research commissioned by the New South Wales Teachers’ Federation, the largest teacher union in Australia (Lingard, Sellar, Hogan, & Thompson, 2017) • The team will look at the changing provision of ESL teaching and support in 2 ‘independent public schools’ (a government school with a high degree of autonomy over staffing and budget) in a context where systemic support for ESL teachers and work has been considerably weakened
<p>Hong Kong</p>	<p><i>Context and specific focus of case study:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational outsourcing, a main strategy of educational privatisation in HK, focusing on the delivery of English curriculum and Teachers’ and schools’ responses to privatisation

Justification of the Project

Contribution to existing academic research:

- Interrogating the multiple factors **constituting the context** in each case and researching empirically the ways that context affects **practices of privatisation** and **the meaning of public in state education, e.g.:**

	Australia (Since 1980s)	Hong Kong (Since 1990s)	Greece (Since recently)
Socio-political contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A continent-based nation located in the Asia-Pacific region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special administrative zone of PR China 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of the EU
Privatisation-specific context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Came with political changes which brought economic rationalism into education • Considerable teacher union opposition to privatisations in public schooling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government initiated and well-articulated public discourse on privatisation in education • A wide range of privatisations are going on at school, independent to the official discourse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pushed by the EU's demand • Located in Southern Europe, suffered more from the economic crisis and the stark austerity measures imposed on education



Developing International Collaborations in Research: Challenges

- Varying supranational pressures (depending on the region) and different national policy priorities might be both challenges for advancement but also sources of problems for European/international teams of researchers when they attempt to identify and negotiate the topic and focus of research
- Differences in the body of existing empirical research on a given topic in each of the national contexts of researchers, seeking to work together, might lead to difficulties in the description of (common) research objectives
- Conditions set by funding agencies in different regions and/or at the national level might put barriers to the participation of different sub-teams in a research proposal on equal terms

Building trust, learning of work style of partners, and being patient!

Lessons from Cooperation of European Researchers with Researchers from Different Regions of the World In the Era of Globalisation and Europeanisation

- Researchers become more aware of how complex contexts affect research processes and outcomes
 - Help to tease out key contextual factors - that might be important in their interpretation of their findings and important to point to them in their publications
- Researchers realise in practice how the huge differences in the resources and in the institutional support provided in each national context (and the different material and non-material opportunities of researchers) affect their academic/research practice
 - Leading either to giving up the effort, or to inventing ways of achieving what is feasible
- Funding agencies' demand to describe the impact of research, in the global performative culture, is a really pressing issue that might affect the scope of the research and the scholarly ambitions of researchers (no risky research and no research that lacks direct and immediate impact is advisable)
 - Participants in a research proposal need to be very explicit and to negotiate in advance how far they can go with such exogenous criteria of quality of research proposals



Reference

- **Burch, P. (2009). *Hidden markets: The new education privatisation*. New York, NY: Routledge.**
- **Lingard, B., Sellar, S., Hogan, A., & Thompson, G. (2017). *Commercialisation in public schooling*. Sydney: New South Wales Teachers Federation.**