

# SOCIAL CLASS DIMENSIONS IN THE SELECTION OF A PRIVATE SCHOOL: A CROSS-NATIONAL ANALYSIS USING PISA

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the most hotly disputed debates in educational policy in the last twenty years has undoubtedly been the one centred on parental choice. Both its promoters and its critics have gone to great length to argue their point. In the Anglo-Saxon context, school choice has been pushed onto the reform agenda by the conservative administrations in the United Kingdom and the United States. It represented the educational sector equivalent of similar reforms aimed at introducing market-like mechanisms in the public sector, in an attempt to improve quality and reduce costs. By giving parents freedom to enrol their children at a school other than the designated one in their catchment area, supporters argued, schools would be forced to compete for students. In turn, competition would incentivize schools to be more responsive to parental demand and to improve their service or risk being closed (Chubb and Moe 1990; Hoxby 2002).

When the Thatcher government pushed through legislation to establish parental choice in the early 1980's, school choice had long been established in many countries of the continental Europe. However, in the European context, the school choice tradition was wholly independent of the attempts to increase effectiveness and efficiency in the public sector. The various arrangements that permitted parents to decide on the school of their children were the result of a long historical struggle and accommodation between the State and the (Catholic) Church. As such, school choice has been legitimated not as way to raise pupil achievement, but as the right of parents to have their children educated in a manner consistent with their values and beliefs (Glenn 1989; De Groof 2004; Dijkstra, Dronkers et al. 2004; Dronkers 2004; Meuret 2004; Reuter 2004; Vermeulen 2004).

School choice has been inextricably linked to private sector provision. In the Anglo-Saxon setting, choice has been predicated to a considerable extent on the assumed higher effectiveness of private schools to endow their students with the skills and competencies needed to succeed in the labour market. In the European context, choice has been closely associated with struggles to secure public funding for private/ religious schools. Thus, albeit for different reasons, choice has not been contained to the public sector but came to signify expanded access to private-sector provided schooling as well.

Despite the heated controversies, school choice has remained an elusive term. It covers a vast array of programs, initiatives and arrangements that, although basically aimed at enhancing parental choice, are very diverse in their details. Yet, the devil is in the details. Issues such as

provision of information to prospective parent-consumers, exact funding formulae (for example, whether students with special learning needs are awarded a higher sum), handling of oversubscription, providing transportation, national testing or additional regulations aimed at keeping the schools accountable can presumably have a huge impact on the results of a choice program. Nonetheless, relatively little attention has been devoted to this issues. Research on school choice has tended to be restricted to one country and often to one program/ locality. Comparative studies are almost non-existent. As a result, the fact that choice may be implemented through very different mechanisms and designs and in very different contexts, potentially leading to divergent outcomes, has been largely overlooked. This paper contributes to filling this gap. Using the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), a large cross-national database, we investigate whether and how patterns of parental choice of a private school differ among countries. The paper is divided in six sections. After the introduction, the second part reviews the evidence on school choice effects. The third part briefly looks at the functioning and the characteristics of the private sector. The fourth part introduces the data and methods. The fifth part presents the main results. Finally, a discussion follows in the last section.

## THE SCHOOL CHOICE DEBATE

Since Milton Friedman suggested the introduction of educational vouchers and parental choice as a way to improve (especially publicly provided) education overall and reduce costs to the public budget, the idea of offering parents freedom to choose where they want to school their children has been touted as a powerful tool of improving educational service. In the words of Friedman, “Choice produces competition. Competition produces quality” (citation). By introducing competition, proponents of choice argued, schools would be forced to be more responsive to parental demands. On the one hand, unpopular schools (assumed to be also the badly performing schools) would be forced to reorganize or would close down. On the other hand, such a system of choice would create more diversity in the supply of schooling and specialization, thus satisfying the demands of the various groups in society better than a uniform, comprehensive system (Jeynes 2000; Hoxby 2002). Minority and disadvantaged children stood to gain particularly, since a system of choice would enable them to escape poorly performing inner-city schools in their neighbourhoods (Godwin, Kemerer et al. 1998; Gorard 1999).

Yet, school choice might also bring along a series of undesirable effects. Indeed, some authors were quick to point out that the introduction of the market model might threaten traditional educational values and educational leadership (Ball 1993), that an inflation of information may disorient and confuse parents (Bowe, Ball et al. 1994), that public subsidies for private religious schools might contradict the state-church separation (Jeynes 2000), and that choice is simply a disguised way in which conservative governments attempt to reduce expenditure (Whitty 1997; Welch 1998). But perhaps the most important critique brought against school choice is that, far from helping minority and disadvantaged children, it reinforces existing inequalities and helps middle class families to preserve their social advantage (Ball 1993; Ball,

Bowe et al. 1996; Ball 1997; Whitty and Edwards 1998). Two processes are at work. On the one hand, the market presupposes the existence of knowledge, disposition and skills (broadly termed cultural capital), the distribution of which is skewed toward the middle-classes. On the other hand, it might foster increasing segregation and school polarization. In a system of choice, popular schools are able to select the most able students and avoid those with learning difficulties. As more able students leave, unpopular schools lose both funds as well as the benefits a more favourable composition brings to the schooling process.

Arguments on both sides are largely theoretical. Apart from numerous studies conducted in England, Wales and Scotland in the wake of the 1988 Thatcher reform, evidence is scarce. Especially outside the Anglo-Saxon world, very few authors have attempted to investigate how what type of students attend the private sector, reasons for their doing so and the impact that private schooling has on the distribution of students among schools.

Some studies of parental choice in England do find a significant relationship between school choice processes and social class (Ball, Bowe et al. 1995; Ball, Bowe et al. 1996; Ball 1997; Jarvis and Alvanides 2008). Qualitative studies of the choice process point to middle-class parents having more cultural and social capital to seek out and interpret information about schools, and determine the one that best matches the particular abilities and needs of their child. Not only information, but also school preferences have a class dimension, as working-class parents give more weight to practical considerations such as proximity or compatibility with employment hours, whereas better educated middle class parents are much more likely to be long-term oriented and to conceive education as a strategic advantage. Moreover, the social composition of the school has been found to play an important role in the parental decision making (Ball, Bowe et al. 1995; Ball, Bowe et al. 1996; Ball 1997; Gorard 1999; Jarvis and Alvanides 2008).

In Scotland too, existing studies have pointed to the role played by socio-economic status, both at the parent and at the school sides of the school selection process (Echols, McPherson et al. 1990; Echols and Willms 1995). Thus, parents of higher socio-economic status are more likely to be active choosers, as well as more likely to consider multiple (instead of just one) alternatives to their designated school. Likewise, chosen schools tend to be older ones, with a higher average socio-economic status and higher average attainment. Nevertheless, the strongest impact on choice was found to be exerted not by social class but by actual availability of alternatives.

However, on the aggregate level, there has been little evidence that unrestricted parental choice is generating increased school segregation, or that some schools are entering a 'spiral of decline' (Gorard and Fitz 2000; Gorard, Taylor et al. 2002; Jenkins, Micklewright et al. 2007)

The American system is certainly much more diverse than the European ones, with many different arrangements co-existing in the various states. Yet, some of the findings from British studies such as effective constraints on choice imposed by transportation, as well as the differences in the strategic use of schooling between middle and lower class parents have been echoed in the American research (Goyette 2008). Studies that have probed into the choice of a private school (Van Dunk 2003; Yang and Kayaardi 2004; Goldring and Phillips 2008), have

found income, education, religion, parental involvement and stronger social networks to be important determinants. An inquiry into the largest American choice program, the Milwaukee voucher program (Van Dunk 2003), while not directly addressing the social class dimension of choice, has found that popular private schools seemed to purposefully limit the availability of voucher places as well as information, and thus seriously constrain parental demand. Yet, another study (Schneider, Marschall et al. 1998) could not find any evidence that parents choose based on the school's racial composition. Similar findings have emerged in the Canadian context (Bosetti 2004). School choice has been found to be largely a middle-class phenomenon, with families with higher income preferring private non-religious schooling, while more educated parents that lack sufficient income choose within the public sector.

Research on the effects of school choice is much less developed in Europe, except perhaps for the Netherlands where fully subsidized school choice has been established already in 1920 (Sturm, Groenendijk et al. 1998). In general, school choice has been found to have much less adverse effects in the Netherlands compared to the UK and the US. On the contrary, 'voluntary segregation' has been hypothesised to be beneficial to minorities by allowing them to cultivate their own cadre and develop a more positive image (Sturm, Groenendijk et al. 1998). Social composition has been found to play little or no role in school-choice processes (Teelken 1999; Denessen, Driessena et al. 2005), albeit recent trends have indicated a potential segregation of Muslim immigrants into Islamic and inner-city public schools (Ambler 1994; Lutz 1996; Sturm, Groenendijk et al. 1998; Denessen, Driessena et al. 2005). Some evidence of social class playing a strong role in the choice process has also been found in the case Finland (Seppänen 2003) and France (Ambler 1994; Langouët and Léger 2000).

Little evidence exists on how school choice might operate outside the Western world. One country that has been looked at more often due to its national voucher program is Chile (Parry 1996; McEwan 2001; Torche 2005). Evidence is consistent that private voucher schools tend to draw but also to purposefully select lower-middle income and middle income groups, thus "creaming" the most resourceful students from the public sector. Socio-economic segregation and school polarization were found to be reinforced by choice in Argentina, despite the absence of formal choice programs (Narodowski 2002). Families who possessed sufficient economic and political capital made extensive use their resources to either opt into the private system (which is partly subsidized by the state) or to circumvent zoning regulations.

## PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL CHOICE

Private sector schooling offers an important avenue to investigating school choice processes, irrespective of the ability to choose within the public sector. The image of the private sector has often been that of an "elitist" milieu that attract only the wealthiest families and the

most endowed students. . However, it should be kept in mind that despite its usually small<sup>1</sup> size, the private sector tends to be very heterogeneous. One important distinction can be made between schools that receive public financing, and thus accept additional government control and those that have to rely mainly or exclusively on their own resources, but as a result, enjoy more autonomy. Furthermore, there are important differences in the way private schools, irrespective of their status, are regulated by the public authorities. These might alter the incentives that parents have to select certain schools, as well as the incentives schools have to select particular types of students.

Given that peer group effects have been shown to have the potential to boost or hinder achievement (Lutz 1996; Godwin, Kemerer et al. 1998; McEwan 2001), an important question is the extent to which both parental socio-economic status and school socio-economic composition play an important role in the selection of a private school. Previous research has shown that private school students tend to come from higher-income, better educated families, with more cultural resources, that impose higher expectation on their children (Coleman, Hoffer et al. 1982; Greeley 1982; Alexander and Pallas 1983; Falsey and Heyns 1984; Willms 1985; Coleman and Hoffer 1987; Chubb and Moe 1990; Bryk, Lee et al. 1993; Ambler 1994; Gamoran 1996; Hofman, Hofman et al. 1996; Neal 1997; Hoffer 1998; Goldhaber 1999; Jeynes 2000; Langouët and Léger 2000; Dronkers and Robert 2008). At the same time, private schools cater for less physically impaired students (Noell 1982) or students with special educational needs (Parry 1996).

Large-scale research looking at the reasoning behind parental choice has tended to rely on survey respondents rating a number of items according to perceived importance when selecting a school (Echols and Willms 1995; Gorard 1999; Bosetti 2004; Denessen, Driessena et al. 2005; Goldring and Phillips 2008). Yet, such a methodology may be shaky. Responses are heavily influenced on the items that are listed, and there are strong reasons to believe that they are affected by desirability issues<sup>2</sup>. More refined qualitative studies tend to confirm that prestigious public schools and private ones are explicitly chosen based on their intake (Ball, Bowe et al. 1996; Ball 1997). Moreover, a predominantly middle-class student body may be interpreted as a sign of an environment where students are well-behaved and academically proficient. Thus, although parents may underline explicitly academic quality, they might de facto select based on social class.

In addition, much of the existing evidence is derived from the experience of the United States and the United Kingdom. However, there is large variation in the way the private sector is organized and financed in the industrialized/ industrializing countries. Presumably, such variation should also be reflected in the private school choice processes, impact of socio-economic factors included. Given that public financing introduces an important distinction within the private

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<sup>1</sup> Some countries such as Netherlands or Belgium constitute clear exceptions;

<sup>2</sup> The role of social desirability when answering such questions is underlined by the fact that better educated parents tend more often to say they want a “socially diverse” environment for their children Ball, S. J. (1997). "On the cusp: parents choosing between state and private schools in the UK: action within an economy of symbolic goods." *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 1(1): 1-17, Denessen, E., G. Driessena, et al. (2005). "Segregation by choice? A study of group-specific reasons for school choice." *Journal of Education Policy* 20(3): 347-368.

sector by lowering or eliminating financial barriers to entry, a clear distinction should be made between private government-independent and private government-dependent schools.

## DATA AND METHODS

We investigate the impact of socio-economic factors on school choice in X countries, using a pooled PISA dataset that incorporates all of the three existing waves. We do so, in order to maximize the number of private schools in our sample, as the sector serves a small number of students in some countries. Since the information contained by PISA allows us to differentiate between government independent and government dependent private schools, separate analysis have been conducted for the two. In each case, only countries that had a minimum of ten private schools in the pooled dataset have been retained.

Logistic regressions have been used in order to predict enrolment in a private independent and private dependent school respectively, based on socio-economic characteristics of the student and the school, as well as a variety of student and school characteristics that might influence choice. The student's socio-economic background is denoted by educational level and occupational prestige of the mother and the father, as well as a proxy for family wealth. Additional controls on the student level include gender, immigrant status, use of a foreign language at home, and an index of cultural possessions. The school's average SES score is derived by computing the percentage of students who have at least one parent with higher education. Other school characteristics that are both visible and stable and thus may play a role in the school selection process have been included in the analysis: school size, school policy regarding admissions, i.e. whether parental endorsement of the school's philosophy or the student's participation in any of the school's special programs is considered in the admission process, the student-teacher ratio, the computer-student ratio and a composite index of educational resources. The latter two are designed to capture any material advantage of the school that might draw parents to make use of its services. Finally, the last variable captures potential financial barriers, by differentiating between schools that charge tuition fees and schools that do not, albeit this dimension is used only for the prediction of a private government dependent school. Lack of tuition fees is almost non-existent among private government independent schools, and therefore no school variation exists on this aspect.

Because school composition has been derived directly from the student level data and thus it could depress the impact of parental education, regressions have been carried out excluding the school's social composition. The results for parental education and occupational prestige were very similar to those obtained when the school composition variable is present in the analysis. Therefore, only results for the initial full regressions are reported. There are a few exceptions, and these are discussed below. The regressions use the final student weights given in PISA and SE robust to clustering of data.

## CHOICE OF A PRIVATE DEPENDENT SCHOOL

The private dependent school sector varies in size (see Table 1). It may serve a very small population of students (for example- 4% in Canada), or it may constitute the most used type of school serving a large majority of students (72% of students attend this type of school in the Netherlands). Government support available to the sector also varies substantially among countries from around 55% of school expenditure in Canada to over 95% in the Netherlands or Sweden<sup>3</sup>. Accordingly, student fees account, on average, for 36% of the school budget, while they cover less than 1% in Sweden.

[Table 1 around here]

When looking at social class determinants of private dependent school attendance, the first thing to be noted is the fact that no general trend emerges among countries (see Table 2). Parental occupation and education can have both a positive and a negative impact on the propensity to choose a private government dependent school for one's child. The picture is further muddled by the fact that the occupation and education of the two parents can have contradictory effects. In the Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg and Switzerland, a higher paternal occupational prestige increases the chances of attending a private dependent school, whereas the mother's education and occupation have no or negative effect. When eliminating school composition, the father's education has a significant positive effect on the likelihood of selecting a private school in Ireland. In Sweden, Canada and Hong-Kong, a higher occupational prestige of either of the two parents contributes to an increased probability of attending a private dependent school. When disregarding the school's composition, better educated parents are more likely to enrol their children in a private dependent school in Hungary and Canada, but less likely to use the private system in Norway. Denmark is the only country where only an increased maternal (and not also paternal) occupational prestige raises the prospects of attending a private dependent school. In all of the Asian countries included in the sample, having a more educated father and especially a more educated mother reduces the chances of attending a private dependent school. Although less prominent, family wealth also plays a role in at least seven countries. Better-off families tend to use the private government dependent system more in Germany, Ireland, Portugal and Chile. They tend to rely more on the public system in Sweden and Israel.

While less clearly connected to the family socio-economic background, the availability of cultural possessions may be an indicator of higher status and a different form of capital. Availability of more cultural resources brings about elevated odds of attending a private dependent school in Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Hong-Kong.

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<sup>3</sup> Figures are computed based on the student data; as a result, schools with less than 35 students are implicitly given a lower weight;

[Table 2 around here]

At the school level, the social class dimension of school choice is represented by parents flocking to schools with a higher average SES of their student intake. Indeed, the school composition variable has especially large values in some countries. In particular, in Hungary, Ireland, Slovakia, Sweden, Canada, Israel and Argentina, private dependent schools are more likely to have students from better educated families than public schools and be preferred by parents on that ground. A similar, but much weaker effect may be occurring in Germany and Chile. Finally, private dependent schools in Hong-Kong are less likely to contain students from more educated families.

In addition to the composition of the student body, the overlap between parental and school educational philosophies figures prominently in the decision to attend a private dependent school. This choice dimension is most conspicuous in Europe, where, out of 18 countries, 11 display a significantly higher propensity to opt for a private dependent school when the parents are required to endorse the school's values. Among non-European countries, only Canada fits the pattern. There is little evidence that private government financed schools are chosen as a result of a superior material endowment, except for two Latin American countries and Hong-Kong.

## CHOICE OF A PRIVATE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

Compared to government financed schooling, the private independent sector is much smaller. In a majority of countries, it serves under 10% of the student population (Table 1). It is most developed in Asian countries, i.e. Taipei, Japan and Korea, where it enrolls between 30-40% of the students. By definition, government support for the private independent sector is weak if not totally absent. Still, in a few countries-France, Japan, Korea and Thailand, the private sector receives considerable public financial support. In fact, in these countries, government subsidies cover on average around a third of a private independent school's expenditures. Tuition fees play a correspondingly larger role in financing this type of schooling. In fact, with the exception of Belgium and France, they represent the main source of school funding, providing from 55% of financial resources in Peru up to 99% in Uruguay.

In contrast to government dependent school choice processes, there is much less variation among countries in the patterns exhibited in the selection of a government independent private school (Table 3). In particular, wealth plays a much more important role in a large majority of countries, an expected finding since private independent schools usually charge hefty tuition fees. Simultaneously, the cultural resources play a lesser role compared to wealth. A noteworthy advantage in cultural possessions for private independent students can only be

observed in Canada, Portugal, United Kingdom, and in the United States. Private school students are also more likely to come from families where both parents, but especially the mother, are employed in more prestigious occupations. The exceptions are Albania, France, Portugal, Israel, Chile, Indonesia and Thailand, where the parental occupation does not make a difference when opting for a private independent school.

[Table 3 around here]

Coefficients for parental education are usually not significant, or negative. However, this may be an artificial result due to the way school composition is computed. Indeed, when repeating the regression without the school composition variable, any negative coefficients for mother's or father's educational level disappear, except for Albania where the coefficient for father's education becomes significantly negative at the 0.05 level. In a fairly large number of countries, i.e. Austria, Brazil, Canada, Greece, Israel, Mexico, Portugal, and Spain, maternal, paternal, or both parents' education shows a significant positive effect. Additionally, excluding the school composition variable lifts coefficients not only for parental education but also for occupational prestige in Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Chile, Portugal and Spain, and for wealth in Argentina and Columbia. Therefore, it can be concluded that existing evidence points to a consistent patterns of more privileged families opting for a private independent school, irrespective of country.

A quick review of the school level characteristics confirms the earlier results. Coefficients for the school composition are generally positive and much larger than in the case of private dependent school choice, pointing to the fact that private independent schools are more likely to have students from a better educated background. Yet, this is not a universal pattern. In Albania, Belgium, Israel, Peru, Taipei, Indonesia, and Thailand, the composition of the school's student body does not influence the decision to select between a public and a private independent school. The effect is also rather weak in France.

Available school material and educational as well as school size play an important role in a number of countries, especially Latin American and Asian countries, but also to some extent in Albania, Belgium, Greece, Switzerland, and New Zealand. Quite surprisingly though, parental endorsement of the school's core values significantly impacts not only the selection of a private dependent school, but also of a private independent one, particularly in Europe, Canada, and the US. The effect is less prevalent in Asia, where only Japan, Taipei and Indonesia exhibit the pattern and almost absent in Latin America.

## DISCUSSION

Numerous controversies about the benefits of parental choice, particularly when choice plans are extended beyond the public sector, exist both among education scholars and among policy-makers. Perhaps the most sensitive issue raised in this context is the one related to equity. Is public funding of private schools opening alternatives to the disadvantaged that previously have been accessible only to the better-off segments of society, or is it an instrument for reproducing class inequalities? Existing research has been so far unsuccessful in providing a definitive answer to this question. We argue that this is due to the fact that important differentiation between the design and context of choice programs has been simply assumed away.

An analysis of the probability of selection a private school reveals the fact that social class dimensions do play a role in some countries while they are absent in others. Thus, it is important to consider educational institutions and systems, and the way they serve various groups when looking at private-public variation in schooling.

Europe has had a longer and much more developed tradition of taxpayer funded private education. This tradition is clearly noticeable in the relatively large number of European countries with a private dependent sector sufficiently large to permit their inclusion in the analysis. Conversely, the number of European countries with a noteworthy private independent sector is much smaller. This might suggest that once public funding is made available to the private sector, schools that rely much more heavily on student fees and donations have a hard time competing.

Overall, the impact of social class factors in the selection of a private school depends on the type of the private sector. In the case of private independent schools, family characteristics such as parental occupation, wealth and education do raise the likelihood of attending this type of school. Moreover, the composition of the student body is clearly more favourable to private independent schools compared to public schools, in all but a few countries.

Results are much less consistent in the case of a private dependent school selection. Only in Ireland, Slovakia, Sweden, Canada and Hong Kong do social class variables consistently point towards a potential segregation of better off families in the private dependent sector. In the remaining countries, evidence of segregation along class lines is weak. In particular, in Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Italy, Netherlands, Indonesia, Korea and Thailand, none of the variables denoting family social class have a significant impact in raising the likelihood of attending a private but publicly funded school. With the exception of Finland, Thailand, and perhaps Indonesia, the remaining countries have a well developed private government dependent sector.

To sum up, school choice can be used by parents as a strategy to pass on their social advantage to their children. Most visibly, the imposition of financial barriers for attendance limits opportunities for families of lower financial means and blocks their children from having access to this type of education. However, there is no evidence that publicly funded choice of a private school, per se, causes an increase in educational opportunity. In a plurality of countries, social class variables cannot be shown to significantly impact on the process of opting for the private dependent sector rather than the public one. To be sure, it does not follow from this that overall

school segregation is absent or very low in such countries. Indeed, previous research has shown that countries such as Belgium and Austria have high school segregation levels among OECD countries (Jenkins, Micklewright et al. 2007). However, the main dividing line is not the private versus the public sector, but rather the various academic tracks existent in the school, be it public or private.

The variability in country outcomes points to the importance of structuring and organizing private but government financed education. Features such as the interdiction of asking tuition, accountability mechanisms, the existence of a national curriculum, information centres and transportation subsidies may all play a role in mitigating any negative effects that choice might have from an equity point of view (Ambler 1994; Gorard 1999; Van Dunk 2003). Further research is needed to shed light on which policy measures work best.

TABLES

Table 1: Private schools in the PISA data-share of students and funding mechanisms

| Country                   | Private dependent schools |                  |               | Private independent schools |                  |               |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------|
|                           | % of students             | % public funding | % fee funding | % of students               | % public funding | % fee funding |
| <b>EUROPEAN COUNTRIES</b> |                           |                  |               |                             |                  |               |
| Albania                   | -                         | -                | -             | 3.91                        | 2.23             | 56.51         |
| Austria                   | 7.34                      | 72.25            | 19.13         | 2.36                        | 5.64             | 80.00         |
| Belgium                   | 69.37                     | 85.16            | 10.16         | 4.17                        | 41.12            | 29.54         |
| Czech Republic            | 5.0                       | 74.04            | 18.34         | -                           | -                | -             |
| Denmark                   | 23.09                     | 74.70            | 23.57         | -                           | -                | -             |
| Finland                   | 3.88                      | 96.76            | 1.39          | -                           | -                | -             |
| France                    | 15.45                     | 87.89            | 6.68          | 9.25                        | 35.12            | 46.39         |
| Germany                   | 5.77                      | 80.64            | 9.10          | -                           | -                | -             |
| Greece                    | -                         | -                | -             | 3.92                        | 0                | 91.84         |
| Hungary                   | 9.22                      | 84.40            | 0.64          | -                           | -                | -             |
| Ireland                   | 58.09                     | 89.57            | 5.78          | -                           | -                | -             |
| Italy                     | 8.67                      | 91.43            | 6.81          | 3.65                        | 3.17             | 86.27         |
| Luxembourg                | 13.64                     | 93.55            | 4.63          | -                           | -                | -             |
| Netherlands               | 72.25                     | 95.61            | 3.16          | -                           | -                | -             |
| Norway                    | 1.44                      | 85.65            | 9.27          | -                           | -                | -             |
| Portugal                  | 5.74                      | 92.62            | 7.84          | 1.95                        | 0.34             | 96.83         |
| Slovak Republic           | 9.87                      | 93.69            | 2.76          | -                           | -                | -             |
| Spain                     | 29.84                     | 80.05            | 12.76         | 12.44                       | 24.12            | 58.60         |
| Sweden                    | 5.57                      | 99.04            | 0.25          | -                           | -                | -             |

| Country                       | Private dependent schools |                  |               | Private independent schools |                  |               |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------|
|                               | % of students             | % public funding | % fee funding | % of students               | % public funding | % fee funding |
| Switzerland                   | 1.01                      | 89.22            | 6.84          | 4.01                        | 12.28            | 79.41         |
| UK                            | -                         | -                | -             | 6.77                        | 1.66             | 94.15         |
| <b>NON-EUROPEAN COUNTRIES</b> |                           |                  |               |                             |                  |               |
| Canada                        | 4.17                      | 58.63            | 36.50         | 2.43                        | 23.07            | 66.86         |
| Israel                        | 21.50                     | 79.32            | 14.82         | 6.88                        | 22.57            | 41.04         |
| New Zealand                   | -                         | -                | -             | 4.58                        | 13.87            | 78.35         |
| US                            | -                         | -                | -             | 5.74                        | 3.26             | 71.61         |
| Argentina                     | 30.26                     | 73.32            | 27.40         | 9.88                        | 18.56            | 76.96         |
| Brazil                        | -                         | -                | -             | 10.24                       | 0.007            | 84.41         |
| Chile                         | 43.46                     | 77.31            | 19.47         | 17.21                       | 11.61            | 81.28         |
| Columbia                      | -                         | -                | -             | 12.91                       | 6.34             | 90.07         |
| Mexico                        | -                         | -                | -             | 12.55                       | 0.42             | 95.74         |
| Peru                          | -                         | -                | -             | 6.77                        | 19.88            | 55.98         |
| Uruguay                       | -                         | -                | -             | 14.60                       | 0                | 99.02         |
| Taiwan                        | -                         | -                | -             | 35.01                       | 4.08             | 90.21         |
| Hong-Kong                     | 63.48                     | 89.69            | 9.05          | -                           | -                | -             |
| Indonesia                     | 10.82                     | 77.78            | 18.51         | 40.37                       | 7.89             | 78.59         |
| Japan                         | -                         | -                | -             | 28.55                       | 33.74            | 58.85         |
| Korea                         | 36.05                     | 65.00            | 30.78         | 32.08                       | 36.45            | 54.60         |
| Thailand                      | 5.36                      | 70.72            | 22.27         | 11.48                       | 22.36            | 70.28         |

Source: Authors calculations based on PISA 2000, 2003 and 2006;

Table 2: Impact of socio-economic factors on the choice of a government dependent school

| Country                   | Father's education | Mother's education | Father's occup. score | Mother's occup. score | Wealth   | Sex (male) | Immigrant | Foreign language | Cultural possessions | School composition | School size | Student-teacher ratio | Computer-student ratio | Educational resources | Admission-parental endorsement | Admission-special program | Tuition   |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------|------------|-----------|------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| <b>EUROPEAN COUNTRIES</b> |                    |                    |                       |                       |          |            |           |                  |                      |                    |             |                       |                        |                       |                                |                           |           |
| Austria                   | -0.020             | -0.018             | 0.006*                | 0.008                 | -0.048   | -0.940***  | 0.351     | 0.383            | 0.026                | 1.544              | -0.001      | -0.160                | -4.253                 | 0.145                 | 2.323***                       | -0.477                    | 3.671***  |
| Belgium                   | 0.015              | 0.017              | 0.001                 | 0.001                 | 0.080    | -0.147     | -0.570*** | 0.488            | 0.032                | 1.077              | 0.001***    | 0.010                 | 0.782                  | 0.300**               | 1.245***                       | -0.098                    | 0.950***  |
| Czech Rep                 | -0.077             | -0.069             | 0.012***              | 0.005                 | 0.034    | -0.371     | 0.307     | 0.064            | 0.081                | -0.276             | -0.006***   | -0.073                | -2.072                 | 0.498                 | 1.049*                         | 0.094                     | 2.691***  |
| Denmark                   | -0.017             | -0.098             | -0.005                | 0.010***              | 0.007    | -0.166*    | 0.292     | -0.518           | 0.184***             | 0.427              | -0.001      | 0.019                 | 2.529                  | 0.216                 | 2.548***                       | -0.915                    | 5.319     |
| Finland                   | 0.017              | -0.083             | 0.003                 | 0.007*                | -0.015   | -0.092     | 0.269     | 1.505***         | 0.013                | 2.74               | 0.002       | -0.204                | -10.18***              | 0.349                 | -1.326**                       | 2.775***                  | 3.892***  |
| France                    | -0.006             | -0.038             | -0.002                | -0.0004               | -0.017   | 0.100      | -0.030    | 0.924**          | 0.122                | 0.329              | -0.000      | -0.324                | 1.083                  | 0.120                 | Dropped ‡                      | Dropped ‡                 | -0.409    |
| Germany                   | -0.071             | -0.093*            | 0.012***              | 0.004                 | 0.317**  | -0.731***  | 0.057     | -0.416           | 0.225**              | 2.408*             | -0.0004     | 0.061                 | 5.841*                 | 0.137                 | 3.892***                       | -1.090*                   | 2.215***  |
| Hungary                   | 0.076              | 0.090*             | -0.001                | -0.002                | -0.104   | -0.162     | 0.091     | -1.378           | 0.069                | 1.690**            | -0.002***   | 0.088*                | -1.012                 | 0.206                 | 1.650***                       | -0.317                    | -0.312    |
| Ireland                   | 0.018              | -0.106***          | 0.006**               | 0.012***              | 0.099    | -0.566***  | -0.007    | -0.225           | 0.061                | 3.315***           | -0.004***   | 0.089***              | -20.66***              | -0.304**              | 1.479***                       | -2.067***                 | 1.795***  |
| Italy                     | -0.171*            | 0.035              | 0.0002                | 0.008                 | -0.219   | -0.059     | -0.047    | -0.123           | 0.038                | -3.74              | -0.003      | -0.032                | 1.279                  | -0.075                | 0.582                          | 0.648                     | -3.085*** |
| Luxembourg                | -0.086**           | -0.013             | 0.016***              | 0.005                 | -0.150   | 1.794***   | 0.612*    | -0.311*          | -0.019               | 2.908              | -0.010***   | -0.0005               | -23.42**               | -0.914                | 7.541***                       | -8.049***                 | 5.662***  |
| Netherlands               | -0.009             | 0.0002             | -0.002                | -0.004*               | 0.065    | -0.111     | -0.460*** | -0.124           | 0.023                | -0.145             | 0.0001      | 0.001                 | 0.300                  | 0.137                 | 1.357***                       | -0.134                    | 0.161     |
| Norway                    | -0.126             | -0.075             | 0.034***              | 0.001                 | -0.393*  | 0.465*     | 1.355***  | -0.045           | 0.896***             | -7.446             | 0.005       | -0.220                | 3.703                  | -1.336***             | Dropped †                      | Dropped †                 | 3.328***  |
| Portugal                  | -0.038             | -0.109**           | -0.007                | -0.0001               | 0.208**  | 0.214**    | -0.048    | 0.169            | 0.026                | -2.895             | 0.001***    | 0.143***              | 0.543                  | 0.366                 | 2.640**                        | -2.723***                 | -1.797*** |
| Slovakia                  | -0.096             | -0.010             | 0.001                 | -0.002                | 0.434*** | 0.001      | -0.088    | -0.173           | -0.016               | 2.963***           | -0.004***   | -0.027                | -6.634                 | 0.550*                | 1.681***                       | -0.328                    | -0.086    |
| Spain                     | -0.072***          | 0.051              | -0.005                | 0.007**               | 0.239*   | 0.084      | -0.106    | 0.586            | -0.149**             | 1.477              | -0.003***   | 1.303***              | 8.624***               | 0.218                 | 2.579                          | -2.946*                   | 3.227***  |
| Sweden                    | 0.020              | -0.155***          | 0.014***              | 0.013**               | -0.205** | -0.151     | 0.822***  | 0.297            | 0.252***             | 3.414**            | -0.010***   | 0.199***              | 1.253                  | 0.513*                | -1.678***                      | 0.859                     | -0.003    |
| Switzerland               | 0.117**            | -0.268***          | -0.007*               | 0.008                 | -0.181   | -0.331     | -0.223    | 0.164            | 0.358***             | -0.090             | -0.0003     | 0.012                 | 0.083                  | -0.164                | 0.021                          | 1.677                     | 1.859***  |

| Country                       | Father's education | Mother's education | Father's occup. score | Mother's occup. score | Wealth    | Sex (male) | Immigrant | Foreign language | Cultural possessions | School composition | School size | Student-teacher ratio | Computer-student ratio | Educational resources | Admission-parental endorsement | Admission-special program | Tuition   |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| nd                            |                    |                    |                       |                       |           |            |           |                  |                      |                    |             |                       |                        |                       |                                |                           |           |
| <b>NON-EUROPEAN COUNTRIES</b> |                    |                    |                       |                       |           |            |           |                  |                      |                    |             |                       |                        |                       |                                |                           |           |
| Canada                        | 0.057              | -0.038             | 0.009***              | 0.013***              | -0.183    | -0.023     | -0.822*** | -0.493           | -0.095               | 5.838***           | -0.002***   | 0.141**               | -9.301***              | 0.903***              | 2.663***                       | -1.341**                  | Dropped † |
| Israel                        | 0.067              | -0.008             | -0.003                | -0.0007               | -0.503*** | -0.103     | 0.083     | -0.513           | 0.106                | 2.610**            | -0.0008     | -0.003                | 1.450                  | 0.273                 | 0.389                          | -0.128                    | 0.360     |
| Argentina                     | 0.099*             | 0.126*             | 0.002                 | -0.009                | 0.317*    | -0.854***  | 0.408     | 0.641            | -0.068               | 5.60***            | -0.007***   | 0.170                 | 33.820**               | 0.124                 | 1.628                          | -0.204                    | Dropped † |
| Chile                         | -0.029             | 0.037              | 0.005                 | 0.001                 | 0.207***  | 0.146      | 0.437     | -1.474**         | 0.076                | 2.398*             | -0.0004     | 0.065**               | 21.15***               | -0.205                | 0.743                          | -0.120                    | 1.759***  |
| Hong-Kong                     | -0.220***          | -0.307***          | 0.012***              | 0.020***              | -0.013    | -0.096     | -0.144**  | -0.097           | 0.322***             | -1.952*            | -0.0009     | -0.026                | 3.497*                 | 0.550***              | -0.220                         | -1.614***                 | 1.811***  |
| Indonesia                     | -0.065             | -0.154**           | -0.005                | 0.011                 | -0.218*   | -0.322*    | Dropped † | 1.370***         | 0.004                | 0.616              | -0.009***   | 0.090*                | 9.691                  | -0.275                | 0.063                          | 0.527                     | 2.172***  |
| Korea                         | -0.008             | 0.023              | -0.0005               | -0.008***             | 0.057     | -0.243     | -0.095    | -2.004*          | 0.044                | -1.338             | -0.001**    | 0.090                 | -1.059                 | 0.079                 | 0.777*                         | 0.239*                    | 3.684***  |
| Thailand                      | -0.174**           | 0.008              | -0.0006               | 0.006                 | 0.374*    | -0.295     | -0.731    | -0.065           | -0.037               | -3.154             | 0.0003      | -0.016                | 3.395                  | 0.047                 | 0.769                          | -0.117                    | 1.078**   |

Note: \* significant at the 0.1 level; \*\*significant at the 0.05 level; \*\*\*significant at the 0.01 level; † dropped due to perfect prediction of the negative selection outcome; ‡ dropped due to collinearity;

Table 2: Impact of socio-economic factors on the choice of a government independent school

| Country                       | Father's education | Mother's education | Father's occup. score | Mother's occup. score | Wealth   | Sex (male) | Immigrant | Foreign language | Cultural possessions | School composition | School size | Student-teacher ratio | Computer-student ratio | Educational resources | Admission-parental endorsement | Admission-special program |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------|------------|-----------|------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>EUROPEAN COUNTRIES</b>     |                    |                    |                       |                       |          |            |           |                  |                      |                    |             |                       |                        |                       |                                |                           |
| Albania                       | -0.159             | 0.328*             | 0.007                 | -0.002                | -0.231   | 0.053      | 0.353     | -0.484           | 0.086                | -3.627             | 0.000       | -0.279*               | 38.12*                 | 1.601**               | Dropped ‡                      | Dropped ‡                 |
| Austria                       | 0.041              | -0.167**           | 0.0005                | 0.014*                | 0.165    | 0.676*     | 0.098     | -0.573           | 0.045                | 6.219***           | -0.005**    | 0.068                 | 0.852                  | 0.159                 | 2.279*                         | -1.197                    |
| Belgium                       | -0.013             | -0.068             | 0.015***              | 0.018***              | 0.078    | 0.732**    | -1.464*** | 0.694            | 0.364***             | 1.121              | -0.001      | 0.073                 | 7.023***               | 0.409                 | 8.030***                       | -1.608*                   |
| France                        | -0.068             | 0.022              | -0.008                | 0.006                 | 0.278**  | 0.016      | -0.532*   | 0.487            | -0.014               | 4.541*             | -0.001*     | -0.006                | -5.712                 | 0.074                 | Dropped ‡                      | Dropped ‡                 |
| Greece                        | -0.283***          | -0.187***          | 0.029***              | 0.024***              | 0.513*** | -0.107     | -0.034    | -2.515           | 0.017                | 15.424***          | -0.002      | 0.170                 | 21.397***              | -0.147                | 0.820                          | 2.046                     |
| Italy                         | 0.008              | -0.082             | 0.003                 | 0.016***              | 0.087    | -0.204     | 0.087     | -0.507           | -0.014               | 5.306***           | -0.016***   | 0.059*                | -0.587                 | 0.424                 | 2.036**                        | 0.092                     |
| Portugal                      | 0.053              | 0.085              | -0.005                | -0.003                | -0.084   | 0.549      | 0.784**   | 1.965**          | 0.325**              | 13.538***          | -0.004***   | 0.582***              | 0.187                  | 0.828                 | 27.789***                      | -3.904**                  |
| Spain                         | -0.140***          | 0.060*             | 0.006                 | 0.013***              | 0.309    | 0.057      | -1.508*** | 2.998*           | -0.450***            | 14.623***          | -0.005***   | 1.652***              | 12.528***              | 0.123                 | 4.634***                       | -5.111**                  |
| Switzerland                   | -0.096*            | 0.021              | 0.016***              | 0.008                 | 0.284**  | -0.087     | 0.737***  | -0.121           | 0.037                | 5.689***           | -0.003*     | -0.121                | -2.792                 | 0.773***              | 2.804***                       | -0.103                    |
| UK                            | -0.252***          | -0.188***          | 0.039***              | 0.027***              | 0.456*** | 0.505      | 0.705***  | 1.117***         | 0.696***             | 13.468***          | -0.001      | -1.010***             | -3.954                 | 0.125                 | -0.185                         | -0.108                    |
| <b>NON-EUROPEAN COUNTRIES</b> |                    |                    |                       |                       |          |            |           |                  |                      |                    |             |                       |                        |                       |                                |                           |
| Canada                        | -0.121             | -0.058             | 0.020***              | -0.002                | 0.233    | 0.566***   | 0.509***  | -0.869*          | 0.387***             | 13.817***          | -0.007***   | 0.012                 | 3.906**                | 0.428                 | 3.300***                       | 0.352                     |
| Israel                        | 0.086              | 0.094              | 0.0009                | -0.003                | -0.550*  | -0.066     | -0.012    | 0.513            | 0.098                | 4.209              | -0.001      | 0.034                 | 0.833                  | 0.224                 | 1.612                          | -2.216                    |
| New Zealand                   | 0.054              | -0.110             | 0.017**               | 0.005                 | 0.375*** | 0.696      | 0.121     | -1.040**         | 0.043                | 6.452***           | -0.0003     | 0.330**               | 18.115***              | 0.756**               | Dropped †                      | 0.798                     |
| US                            | -0.263***          | -0.224**           | 0.018***              | 0.012***              | -0.156   | 0.178      | 0.651     | -0.073           | 0.212**              | 6.608***           | -0.004***   | -0.006                | -1.950                 | 0.663*                | 3.262**                        | 0.210                     |
| Argentina                     | 0.132**            | 0.155**            | -0.014**              | -0.016**              | 0.120    | 0.640***   | 1.002     | 1.833*           | -0.108               | 18.363***          | -0.001      | 0.332***              | 56.781**               | 0.849*                | 1.177                          | -1.306                    |
| Brazil                        | -0.019             | 0.055              | 0.010                 | 0.010**               | 0.579*** | -0.425**   | -0.092    | -1.522*          | 0.097                | 8.276***           | -0.001*     | 0.012                 | 3.957                  | 0.340                 | 0.750                          | 0.753                     |
| Chile                         | -0.063             | 0.126**            | 0.003                 | -0.006                | 0.362*** | 0.186      | -1.159**  | 0.957            | 0.180*               | 10.438***          | -0.001      | -0.006                | 32.877**               | 0.383                 | -0.460                         | -0.639                    |
| Columbia                      | -0.063             | 0.045              | -0.022                | 0.020***              | 0.117    | -0.679*    | 2.262***  | 0.922            | -0.017               | 9.058***           | -0.0004     | -0.213***             | -7.608***              | 1.895***              | -0.813                         | -0.553                    |
| Mexico                        | 0.027              | -0.055             | -0.005                | 0.017***              | 0.528*** | -0.494**   | 0.116     | -0.983           | 0.132                | 5.622***           | -0.002***   | 0.0009                | 7.072                  | 0.202                 | 0.925                          | 0.410                     |

|           |         |          |          |          |          |           |          |          |        |           |           |          |           |          |              |              |
|-----------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|--------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|--------------|--------------|
| Uruguay   | 0.090*  | -0.080   | 0.013**  | 0.014*** | 0.659*** | -0.356**  | 0.238    | -0.483   | -0.189 | 11.847*** | -0.004*** | 0.032    | -2.020    | 1.951*** | 3.865***     | 1.219        |
| Peru      | -0.237  | 0.043    | 0.028*** | 0.009    | 0.246*   | -0.772    | -1.215   | -2.919** | -0.123 | 2.514     | -0.001    | -0.003   | 51.576    | -1.452** | Dropped<br>‡ | Dropped<br>‡ |
| Taipei    | 0.010   | -0.088** | -0.001   | 0.014*** | 0.304*** | -0.244    | 0.300    | 0.776    | -0.077 | 1.375     | 0.0003    | 0.299*** | 5.953***  | 0.332**  | 1.707***     | 1.157**      |
| Indonesia | -0.028  | 0.007    | -0.007*  | 0.008    | 0.329*** | 0.317*    | 0.495    | 0.777*   | -0.092 | -2.297    | -0.003*** | 0.133*** | 22.445*** | 0.143    | 1.415***     | -0.047       |
| Japan     | -0.025  | 0.069    | 0.002    | 0.005**  | 0.041    | -0.613*** | 0.213    | 0.451    | 0.018  | 1.206     | 0.001***  | -0.123*  | 0.521     | 0.239    | 2.063***     | -0.049       |
| Korea     | -0.028  | -0.050   | 0.008**  | -0.004   | 0.227*   | -0.460    | -0.028   | -0.050   | 0.068  | 3.807***  | 0.001**   | -0.046   | -3.294    | 0.390*   | -0.330       | 0.479        |
| Thailand  | 0.118** | -0.069   | 0.002    | 0.0001   | 0.380**  | -0.018    | 1.204*** | -0.466   | -0.088 | 0.920     | -0.0005*  | 0.012    | 15.221*** | 0.597*** | -0.478       | Dropped<br>† |

Note: \* significant at the 0.1 level; \*\*significant at the 0.05 level; \*\*\*significant at the 0.01 level; † dropped due to perfect prediction of the negative selection outcome; ‡ dropped due to collinearity;

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