

## **Presentation: Exploring what is common and public in teaching practices**

## **Presentación: Explorando lo común y lo público en las prácticas de enseñanza**

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The promise of quality education for all is a democratizing call, with which it is assumed that education is part of the common good. However, its conditions of possibility are precisely those that are being threatened. We are living in an era in which the principle of education as a public good is increasingly being questioned considering: (i) current trends in privatization and commodification, (ii) diversification of actors involved in schooling provision, and (iii) the incorporation of new patterns in the public management of education. On the one hand, the growth of school choice policies, the privatization of schools and the commercialization of education are eroding the democratic governance of public education, giving rise to new models of educational segregation and inequality. On the other hand, the successful increase in the number of schools supported, totally or partially, with private funds, which has brought about the diversification of actor involved in providing access to education, are challenging the idea that there is only one valid school education model, contributing to the redefinition of the meaning of what is public education. And, finally increasing practices of new public management in education are causing changes in the ways of assuming and exercising our shared responsibilities in educational matters, moving from democratic models to more technocratic ones, which are now strongly focused on meeting the needs of “customers” (students and families) rather than serving the common good. This is a situation that challenges the traditional role

of schools as democratic institutions and of public administrations as preeminent actors in the definition of education as a common good.

The purpose of this special issue is to create a space for theoretical discussion in which to better understand how teaching practices make up a substantial part of and contribution to the construction of common goods. In addition, it explores the extent to which these practices and the public dimension of education are linked to contemporary difficulties in creating common spaces in other areas of social life. It is essential that education be considered a public common good, that schools be held as the institutions best equipped to extend and guarantee rights and opportunities for everyone, and that teachers at such institutions be acknowledged as the ones responsible in the end for keeping alive the democratic promises of education for all learners. Indeed, at schools, democracy takes shape in a unique intergenerational movement that is both emancipating and liberating: the passing down of shared knowledge. In the current context of instability in democratic systems, schools and their teachers are undergoing new, heretofore unknown forms of pressure that struggle to set the meaning, direction and content of teachers' identities and roles. In recent years, the public sphere as a space for opportunity and quest for common goods has been undermined and eroded by the rise of modes of governance in which private interests jostle for representation and competence. Can teachers withstand this agenda? How should they go about it? Is there anything left of the hallmark of schools being the spreaders of our democracy? It is still worth striving for? Why? The ten contributions included in this special issue try to answer these questions.