

# Privatization Research Institutions in Europe - First Results from a Survey

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## 1. Introduction

Everywhere in Europe we can observe an increasing importance of privatisation politics in the last decades. Privatisation is more or less one of the main targets of the neo-liberal politics. The academic research as well as social movements reacted to it and enforced the research of economic and social effects of privatisations in the last years. Although privatisation seems to be an international trend, many privatisation studies are so far limited to the national level.

An internationally oriented privatisation research should tie in with existing research approaches and networks. In the context of PRESOM project a first overview was compiled for the landscape of the privatisation research in Europe (Holm 2007). The overview contains the following information for each institutions, networks or research centres dealing with privatisation and the role of the public sector: the coordinates of institutions, a short description of size and character of the institution (foundation, university institute, grass-roots network), main focus(es) of the work, an overview of main publications or publication series and links to political organisations and social movements.

The Survey on Privatisation Research Institutions in Europe wants to provide an overview to as many networks and institutions as possible, which work to the privatisation issue. This is neither a systematical survey nor a theoretical analysis of the current stage of privatisation research. Focal point was the identification of relevant institutions and networks in the EU member states. All by-products such as the bibliographies for different countries und regions as well as for different sectors of privatisations are not resulted by systematically research. Nevertheless they offer some interesting perspectives on privatisation research in Europe.

The survey introduces more than 30 networks and institutions dealing with the privatisation issue, in 10 European Union member states or Regions. An additional chapter covers research institutions and networks operating on the European level. The selection was the result of internet based investigation and personal inquiries of academic researchers and doesn't claim completeness. The results rather serve

as introduction into the topic and offer perspectives for deepening studies. Another limitation of this survey results from language restrictions. The basic research was carried out in English; particularly networks and institutions without English language sections of their websites were only partially covered by this research. The lack on information on Greek and Portuguese networks is due to this language limitation.

## 2. Methodology and Resources of Survey Research

For the research on the Survey were used different methods and instruments:

1. Internet research (to find information on researchers, institutions, publications and networks). Therefore different search machines (google.com, wikipedia, scirus.com) were used. Through a combination of search words 'privatisation' OR 'privatization' AND 'NAME of the country' institutions, names and bibliographic references were registered. By reviewing the web pages of selected institutions site contents were searched for further information. Internet links of the respective projects and institutions and their official partners on national and international levels were of special interest thereby. Information, received in such a way became also registered.
2. Calls for information by email (to collect references for researchers, institutions and networks). The first sendout was directed at PRESOM project partners; the second sendout includes the findings from the first call. Unfortunately not all project partners responded imminently, so that only 5 or 6 research assistance could be used for further research. A similar number of replies were received from researches beyond the PRESOM network. Nevertheless the attained replies had a high quality and contained a lot of information. On the one hand unknown networks designated on the other hand helped the information to classify the well-known institutions.
3. (Data) Analysis of bibliographies on privatisation (to analyse key aspects and key persons of priva-

tisation research). A special database program for literature analysis was used for this research step. Around 300 (mostly English) articles dealing with the issue of privatisation in Europe or given a European country and written since 2000 were detected and admitted as datasets. Data interpretation occurred along the criteria publication year, country or region, sector of privatisation and kind/place of publication. On this basis it was possible to identify different focal points of privatisation research in Europe.

4. Study of literature and of internet research contents. The aim of this step was to receive an overview of the main publications of each institution or network. Against the background of the limited time for the work on the Survey I used a kind of one-day-analysis of all networks which appeared central. Therefore the web pages were inspected; research programs, seminars and conference documents were scanned and accessible articles and reports read. On basis of this one-day-analysis the parts for the country reports were written.

This way of research describes a central problem of the survey. The selection of the networks/institutions in the survey carried out by external references. But the reports on the networks and institutions predominantly based on self descriptions from web-pages and official documents.

### **3. Overview on Privatisation Research in Europe - first results**

#### **3.1 Privatisation Research around Europe - Geographical Focus of Privatisation Research in Europe**

Articles, texts, reports and other publications are valuable indicators for the research activities in certain regions and sectors. All together about 300 publications on the subject of privatisation in Europe could be identified by searching the internet. For 180 of the case studies geographical focus could be clearly assigned. For 193 publications a clear classification of sectors was possible. Additionally, 139 publications were found, by the analysis of the selected networks in the report. For 86 of these publications a clear classification of one or more sectors was conducted.

This overview on privatisation research shows that there are huge differences between countries and regions in Europe. Nearly one third of all identified

publications are dealing with the privatisation process in the UK. The next range of the most researched regions is occupied by the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEE) with around 20 percent of all publications. Privatisation research on Scandinavia, The Netherlands, Austria, Spain, Germany and France holds a share of 5 to 10 percent respectively of all publications. Only for Greece and Italy a few number of publications can be identified.

The proportion of publications dealing with privatisation seems to be a reflection of privatisation processes themselves. The UK count as the country with the most advanced privatisation policy in Western Europe. CEE as countries in transition is overcoming dramatic privatisation processes in the last decade. As a result it is not really surprising to find that privatisation research is more developed there.

But the relation between privatisation processes and the intensity of privatisation research is not inevitable. For example: the high values of privatisation research in Scandinavia or Austria are not only a reflection of privatisation politics but even more a result of a higher political sensitivity against privatisation efforts. This sensitivity resulted from the deep rooted beliefs on public regulation and social welfare in the traditionally political self-conception of these societies.

#### **3.2 Privatisation Research in selected European Countries and Regions**

Austria offers a widely ramified privatisation research. Many research projects are attached to administrative institutions like the Chamber for Labour or trade unions. One focus of the privatisation research is the effect of Europeanisation. A majority of the research work took place in international co-operations.

Privatisation research in Central and Eastern Europe is closely linked with transformation research. The majority of studies are dealing with the macro-privatisations in the beginning of the 1990s. While research work was strongly linked to the new or rebuild national institutions at the beginning of the 1990s, international institutions like the European Union, the UNECE and the World Bank are playing a larger role in the current research landscape. The fact that a lot of research is done within a framework of organisational dependency of the very institutions that carry out privatizations of course effects the results. Therefore, questions of feasibility and implementation of privatisations are valued higher than

Table 1: Structure of Publications on Privatisation in Europe

privatisation research. Examples of a more partial privatisation analysis are social movements like

<i>Country</i>	<i>Network Analysis</i>	<i>Internet-Research</i>	<i>total</i>	<i>Share</i>
<i>Austria</i>	10	24	34	10,2%
<i>Central Eastern Europe</i>	11	54	65	19,5%
<i>France</i>	3	15	18	5,4%
<i>Germany</i>	14	10	24	7,2%
<i>Greece</i>	2	3	5	1,5%
<i>Italy</i>	8	4	12	3,6%
<i>The Netherlands</i>	12	10	22	6,6%
<i>Scandinavia</i>	10	15	25	7,5%
<i>Spain</i>	15	9	24	7,2%
<i>UK</i>	43	56	99	29,6%
<i>EU</i>	6	0	6	1,8%
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b>139</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Holm 2007

questions of social effects of privatisations. A majority of privatisation research in Central and Eastern Europe took place in research projects of Western European and American universities and was accomplished predominantly by Western European and American researchers.

Privatisation research has a high value in France as well. In particular, the comparatively high portion of publicly/national enterprises play an important role. A part of this research work is accomplished directly through the "Agence participations de l'Etat (APE)". In addition privatisation and the perspective of public enterprises are a topic of great academic interest. With its prominent scientific board Attac France is an important institution for the privatisation research on a national as well as on the European level. The results of their studies are taken up - differently than in other European countries - in many scientific works.

Germany: Privatisation subject contained of the work and research of many institutions, networks and political initiatives. However, only few of them have developed privatisation to be an (independent) main focus of their work. The Survey identifies the Institute of Social and Economic Research in the Hans Böckler Foundation (WSI), European Network on Privatization, Public Goods, and Regulation (PPG) in the Rosa-Luxemburg Foundation and Research Group European Integration of Philipps-Universität Marburg as central of networks of the

Attac (<http://www.attac.de>), NGO's like WEED (<http://www.weed-online.org> and academic networks like the research group Public Health of the Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB). Privatisation is not located here in the center of the research approaches; however privatisation accompanies the institutions already for years as an important subfield of research.

Privatisation research has a marginal position in the research landscape of Greece. Only few institutions and networks concern themselves directly with the field. Often, however, the privatisation issue is affected in the context of general political strategy debates and research on the European integration. The left think tank (Nikos Poulantzas Institute) and the Centre of Planning and Economic Research (KEPE) which works in ministerial order are central for the privatisation research in Greece. Two further institutions of privatisation research are situated in the spectrum of trade unions. The range of their research work is the national level - and almost exclusively in Greek, so that limited language capabilities restricted deeper studies of these two institutions: The Labour Institute of the General Confederation of Workers (INE/GSEE, [www.inegsee.gr](http://www.inegsee.gr)) and the Labor Institute of the Federation of the Banking Sector employees (INE/OTOE, [www.ine.otoe.gr](http://www.ine.otoe.gr)). Both institutes don't specialise in the privatisation issues, but had to deal with effects of privatisation on the level of reorganisation the labor conditions in Greece. Another institute which carries out research on privatisation is IOBE-Institute for Economic and Industrial Research ([www.iobe.gr](http://www.iobe.gr)). The research centre of the Federation of Greek Industrialists more

or less supports privatization.

Privatisation is a politically controversial subject in Italy. Social movements like Attac (<http://italia.attac.org>) have organized in the past campaigns against the sales of public goods and services - e.g. the campaign "Campagna Acqua Pubblica" (<http://www.acquabenecomune.org/>). In the universities single researchers can be found who argue critically with privatisation policy. Economists like Nicola Acocella (<http://dep.eco.uniroma1.it/~acocella/>) stands for critical positions against the privatisation politic, but they don't have the capacities for a continuous empirical research on privatisation in Italy. However, the biggest share of the privatisation research is done by the Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei (FEEM). Formally an independent institute, the foundation is strongly promoted by the government and often works in government's order.

The privatisation research in Scandinavia is comparatively limited, which is related to the fact that so far also the privatisation politics move on a relatively low level. Privatisation research is embedded almost exclusively in a politically left environment and has a more or less critical connotation. Questions of reorganisation and improvement of the public enterprises and services are in the centre of the research work.

Although privatisation in Spain is one of the central political projects only few research networks could be identified. Besides, there are many investigations and publications on the privatisation issue. However, many of them appear as relatively isolated works of single researchers or temporary research groups. A big part of the studies are initiated by central, regional and local administrations. Besides the universities offer many possibilities for single research projects. Different from the systematic presentation of the other country reports for Spain single researchers and their works will also be introduced.

There is no explicit privatisation research in the Netherlands. Nevertheless a wide range of academic institutes is dealing with subjects of the privatisation and liberalisation. Especially in research projects on larger infrastructures or on reorganisation of public services, also questions of the privatisation are also analysed. When compared to other countries, the privatisation debate appears less ideologically loaded and follows rather pragmatic extensions. E.g. the advantages and disadvantages of public and private institutions are compared in many studies. One reason for these pragmatic research extensions can be found in fact that the projects founded by the govern-

ment. Many research projects on different sectors are commissioned by ministries. Many research institutions adjusted to this situation and emphasise the connection of theory and practice in their work.

The topic of privatisation of public goods and state owned enterprises lays an important role in almost all universities in the UK. As a reaction to the liberalisation politics starting in the 1980s strong privatisation research networks were developed in different sectors and different disciplines. British privatisation research is mostly embodied in academic institutions. Next to the broad range of the research work the situation of privatisation research in UK can be characterised by a polarisation of both content and politics. Privatisation-critical institutions such as the PSIRU (<http://www.psiru.org/>) compile a just as impressing empirical depth as the neo-liberal think tanks like the Adam Smith Institute (ASI) or the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA).

The privatisation is an international and European phenomenon. Therefore, privatisation research is also mostly oriented towards an international context. In this respect almost all networks and institutions of privatisation research are also European networks. Nevertheless, for these section specifically those institutions and networks were selected which are European institutions in the way they organised are. The research activities of the European trade union organisations and the research programmes of the European Committee exemplify this. The size and complexity of European privatisation processes require large and well established institutions to undertake comprehensive analysis. Hence, privatisation research at the European level is - stronger than the national discussions - determined by the interests and positions of its sponsors. Questions and selection of sectors to be researched are strongly determined by the political intentions of the instructing institutions.

### 3.2 Sectors of Privatisation Research in Europe

Privatisation research - following the privatisation processes - covers a wide range of sectors. From industry over infrastructure to public services many fields of economy and supply are in the researcher's focus. For the analysis of the database of publications on privatisation around ten sector categories were constituted. Privatisation of public services, industries, transportation and energy are the main topics of European privatisation research.

Table 2: Sectors of Privatisation Research in Europe (2000). Also studies to fiscal effects of the privatisation are so far an exception (Pankow 2000; Sawyer

<i>Country</i>	<i>Network Analysis</i>	<i>Internet-Research</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Share</i>
<i>Agriculture/Forrest</i>	0	2	2	0,7%
<i>Education</i>	1	10	11	3,8%
<i>Energy</i>	12	17	29	10.1%
<i>Finance</i>	8	9	17	5,9%
<i>Health/Pension</i>	9	18	27	9,4%
<i>Housing/real estate</i>	9	10	19	6,6%
<i>Industry</i>	27	18	45	15,6%
<i>Public/social services</i>	4	55	59	20,5%
<i>Telecommunication/postal services</i>	5	12	17	5,9%
<i>Transport</i>	1	38	39	13,5%
<i>Water</i>	10	13	23	8,0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Holm 2007

The emphasis of the PRESOM working groups (Education, Finance, Health/Pension) refers to research fields, which took no central role in the past privatisation research and feature a clear analysis need.

Education: The few works on privatisation within the field of education analyse privatisation as an aspect of the restructuring of the education systems in the context of comprehensive liberalisation politics (Anthofer 2005; Belfield 2003; Daun 2004; Whitty/Power 2000). Single studies concern themselves beyond that with special questions how privatisation of school meals (Gustaffson 2004), emergence of private schools in the counties in transition (Kraft 2003) and reorganisation of university libraries (Muhonen 2006).

Finance: The previous research developed different approaches to the connection of financial sector and privatisation. A set of studies examines the effects of privatisations in other sectors for financial and stock markets (Bosi/Girmens/Guillard 2001; Boutchkova/Meggison 2000a/200b; Nicodano/Chiesa 2003; Perotti/van Oijen 2003). Analyses to financial frameworks of privatisation form another focus of the current research (Canhoto/Dermine 2003; Earnhardt/Lizal 2002; Maskin 2000; Stelzer-O'Neill 2001)). Only a small group of research work concerns with privatisation processes in the financial sector (Patev/Lyroudi/Kanaryan 2000; Tykova

2007).

Health/Pension: The previous work within the field of Health ranges the privatisation issue mostly in the process of restructuring and liberalisation of health care (Becker 2004; Fernler 2002; Gerlinger 2004; Krohwinkel/Sjögren 2006; Lethbridge 2003, 2006; Rice et al. 2000; Robinson 2005; Withehead et al. 2000). Many case studies, in particular to the Scandinavian countries rank among this range (Andersson/Varde/Diderichsen 2000; Diederichsen 2000; Heinonen/MacKay/Metteri/Pajula 2001; Krasnik 2004a,b,c; Quaye 2001). Another range of case studies are deals with the emergence of a private pension and insurance sector (Booth/Arthur 2002; Ginn 2004; Jost 2001; Robinson 2005).

### 3.3 Classifying the research institutions and networks

All in all there are approximately 400 publications, working papers and articles in edited contributions. Half of them (195) were published in referenced and other journals - on the other side also one third of all publications (136) are unpublished working papers, conference presentations and institutional report without an official status.

Table 3: Ways of Publication of Privatisation Research in Europe

<i>Ways of Publication</i>	<i>Network Analysis</i>		<i>Internet-Research</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>number</i>	<i>share</i>	<i>number</i>	<i>share</i>	<i>number</i>	<i>Share</i>
<i>Book</i>	8	6,1%	36	13,7%	44	11,2%
<i>Article in edited books</i>	8	6,1%	11	4,2%	19	4,8%
<i>Article in academic journals</i>	17	13,0%	178	67,7%	195	49,5%
<i>Working papers, reports</i>	98	74,8%	38	14,4%	136	34,5%
<i>Total</i>	131	100%	295	100%	394	100

Source: Holm 2007

But this allocation differs in the two research paths which were used for this survey. The dominant form of publication identified by classical internet search with a range of two thirds is articles in academic journals (178). In contrast the majority of publications found in the web pages of the selected privatisation research networks (nearly 75%) are informal working and conference papers as well as institutional reports. An effect of this publication practice is that research networks (who directly deal with the privatisation issue) are present with only 33 (11 %) publications (books and articles) in the official academic debate on privatisation with a total of 288 publications. Privatisation research seems to be a more or less informal academic debate.

The institutional setting of the identified privatisation research networks serves as a possible explanation for this absence of public academic discourses. Only 13 of selected privatisation research networks are departments of universities - this a share of around 38% of all selected institutions. With 6 neo-liberal think tanks and research units of social movements and unions in each case the share in politically motivated privatisations research is as strong as the academic research. The other research institutions could be classified as independent research units of non profit organisations and administrative organisations or institutions mainly working in administrative order.

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