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## **In Contradiction: The Concept of Globalization in the Popular Discourse of Education Reform**

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Bradley Scott Ellison entitled "In Contradiction: The Concept of Globalization in the Popular Discourse of Education Reform." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Education.

Barbara J. Thayer-Bacon, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Harry F. Dahms, Diana Moyer, Jay Pfaffman

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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# **In Contradiction: The Concept of Globalization in the Popular Discourse of Education Reform**

A Dissertation Presented for  
Doctor of Philosophy Degree  
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Scott Ellison  
August 2009

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank R.J. and J.R. for encouraging me to question everything.

## ABSTRACT

In an era of education policy dominated by the specter of *No Child Left Behind*, the purpose of this research is to offer a critique of this current period of education reform through a synthetic analysis of one of its key conceptual frameworks. That concept is the discourse of globalization as it is used in the popular discursive practices of public school reform. Often presented as an ontological assumption or conceptual norm [common sense], globalization (or the global economy) is a conceptual framework that commands a significant presence in policy debates and the popular discourse of education reform. It is a concept that is frequently employed in print and broadcast media as a justification for a wide variety of policy proposals from an equally diverse range of political actors and groups seeking to influence policy. It is the frequency in which the concept of globalization is employed that makes it an excellent candidate for that most fundamental of philosophic tasks: clarification.

The aim of this work is to provide that critical read. This research will flesh out and bring philosophic clarity to the concept of globalization in the popular discourse of education reform as it is currently used in public debate. Employing a synthetic mode of analysis (or critical phenomenological method), I will clarify the concept of globalization as it is used in the popular discourse of education policy in order to accomplish two major tasks. First, this research will articulate the educational challenges constructed within this conceptual framework of 'globalization' as well as the structural, curricular, and pedagogical reforms linked to those challenges. The second major task for this research will be to examine those proposals through an inter-disciplinary analysis of empirical research in order to establish the internal consistency between the challenges articulated within the conceptual frame of globalization and the specific reform proposals constructed to meet those educational challenges. My goal in conducting this research is not to 'answer a question' but to create the necessary conditions for a reasoned debate over the educational challenges posed by globalization and how to meet those challenges in a manner that is practical and just.

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## INTRODUCTION

If there has been one consistent and pervasive dynamic at work in the complex social and political history of public schooling in the United States it has been the presence of political and social actors calling for its reform. Itself the product of a series of social reform movements, public schooling has been the subject of popular discourse and political reform since its founding as a public institution in the late nineteenth century. In a socio-political dynamic well documented in scholarship, such as Tyack and Cuban's aptly named *Tinkering Toward Utopia*,<sup>1</sup> education reform appears to be an almost permanent fixture of public schooling in the USA, and it is this dynamic that forms the backdrop for this work.

In an era of education policy dominated by the specter of *No Child Left Behind*, the purpose of this research is to offer a critique of this current period of education reform through a synthetic analysis of one of its key conceptual frameworks. That concept is the discourse of globalization as it is used in the popular discursive practices of public school reform. Often presented as an ontological assumption or conceptual norm [common sense], globalization (or the global economy) is a conceptual framework that commands a significant presence in policy debates and the popular discourse of education reform. It is a concept that is frequently employed in print and broadcast media as a justification for a wide variety of policy proposals from an equally diverse range of political actors and groups seeking to influence policy. It is the frequency in which the concept of globalization is employed that makes it an excellent candidate for that most fundamental of philosophic tasks: clarification. However, it is a task that requires some foundational work.

As a concept commonly employed in the popular discourse of education policy and reform, an analysis of globalization must begin with a discussion of education reform more generally and the centrality of conceptual frameworks to a successful push in reforming public schooling. Taking an historical perspective, I will begin with a general discussion on the organic relations between education reform and the conceptual frameworks employed in popular discourse in order to: *establish* an epistemic ground for teasing out globalization as a concept in need of academic scrutiny and as a subject of scholarly research; *identify* the resources I will use to isolate the concept of globalization from the myriad voices engaged in the popular discourse of education policy; and, finally, *map out* the structure of the research project to come. Let's begin with some introductory words on education reform.

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<sup>1</sup> David Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

## **Education Reform and Popular Discourse: The Concepts of Change**

The social actors and political agents at work during periods of education reform are not monolithic nor univocal, yet neither are they spontaneous or accidental. Reform movements<sup>2</sup> are composed of complex constellations of social groups and political actors in and out of government that seek to exert influence over education policy, curriculum, and teaching methods in order to advance specific ideological, economic, and political interests. The means by which different social agents and groups attempt to exert that influence, the motivations behind their activities, and the political weight carried by each of those social actors prove invaluable for researchers examining any one period of reform and in understanding the policy trajectories they take. However, the multiplicity of political actors and interests involved make it extremely easy to lose sight of the forest for the trees and the trees for the forest.

In any period of reform, there are key conceptual frameworks that political actors employ in their attempts to frame popular discourse and sway public opinion that provide a 'common language' unifying the disparate and often conflicting actors and interests engaged in policy debates under one broad discursive umbrella. Indeed, these 'common sense' ideas [or concepts] constitute one of the primary points of contention in public debate over schooling and education policy. For example, 'literacy' is an educational concept that is firmly situated within the popular discourse of American public schooling, but it also serves as a point of contestation between various social actors as to what constitutes a literate individual and the best practices to achieve those aims. These common sense ideas or concepts at work in the popular discourse of any one historical period, including the one we currently enjoy, are both a reflection and determinant of the larger social totalities in which they operate.

For educational researchers, the concepts at work in the popular discourse of public schooling provide an important heuristic tool for not only defining any one period of education reform as being distinct but also in gaining a unique perspective into the dynamic relations between popular discourse, social realities and education policy during any one historical moment. In order to illustrate the heuristic possibilities implicit in the conceptual frameworks employed in popular discourse, I will offer two examples of previous periods of reform<sup>3</sup> in order to establish the epistemic ground for teasing out the concept of globalization [the subject of this research] as a key conceptual frame in the popular discourse of this current period of education reform.

### ***Organic Connections: The Concept of Education Reform***

In the first three decades of the twentieth century, public schooling in the USA underwent a period of significant reform driven by what has come to be known as the

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<sup>2</sup> I am speaking here of periods of reform in the broadest sense.

<sup>3</sup> The Progressive Era and the post-Sputnik era.

Progressive Education Movement.<sup>4</sup> The rapid social transformations taking place due to immigration, industrialization, unionization, rural to urban migration and labor strife challenged the still relatively new institution of public education beyond what Horace Mann and public schoolings earliest advocates could have imagined. Public schools became one of the central arenas in which the social and political battles of the larger society were fought out as a general consensus began to form around the idea that American society faced a national crisis and that public schools could provide a unique instrument for dealing with the social ills of the larger society. As with all such broad categories, however, there existed a wide range of social actors involved in the Progressive Education Movement who held a wide array of beliefs as to what constituted a 'progressive education'.

Faith in scientific progress, classical liberal ideology and industrial development led some progressive reformers, such as Harvard president Charles W. Eliot, to advocate for the Taylorization of public schools structured according to scientific principles designed to identify the intellectual skills of individual students and prepare them for participation in the larger society. Eliot believed that public schooling should foster social stability by providing job skills, character development, and offering the equal education opportunities he saw as being necessary for a smooth functioning and efficient democracy. However, as Hugh Hawkins notes, his background among the Boston Brahmins of Harvard Square led him to embrace a hierarchically structured public school system of differentiated schools for different classes of students and an peculiarly aristocratic take on what constitutes a democratic society.<sup>5</sup> In his essay *The Function of Education in a Democratic Society* he states:

[C]hildren should learn that the democratic nobility exists, and must exist if democracy is to produce the highest types of character; but that it will consist of only men and women of noble character, produced under democratic conditions by the combined influences of fine inherited qualities, careful education, and rich experience. They should learn to admire and respect persons of this quality, and to support them, on occasion, to the preference of the ignoble.<sup>6</sup>

For Eliot and others, a progressive education was strictly tied to the economic and political needs of society at the moment as defined from a privileged perspective on the social ladder. In this sense, 'progressive' lost its connection to social change in order to fulfill the highest ideals of society and came to mean instead achieving the inherent potential of society as it was presently constituted. The free-wielding industrial capitalism of the day became for Eliot the model for a scientifically organized, merit-based and hierarchically structured system for public schooling. For the adherents to this

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<sup>4</sup> William Hayes, *The Progressive Education Movement*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2006), 160.

<sup>5</sup> Hugh Hawkins, *Between Harvard and America; The Educational Leadership of Charles W. Eliot*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 414.

<sup>6</sup> Charles W. Eliot, *Educational Reform: Essays and Addresses*, (New York: The Century Company, 1898), 418.

intellectual thread within the Progressive Education Movement, progress translated into social stability, and that was to be achieved by teaching each person their station in life and how to best function in it. Eliot himself was fond of quoting from Emerson: "Society can never prosper, but must always be bankrupt, until every man does that which he was created to do."<sup>7</sup>

While Eliot and others saw the industrial capitalist world of their time as an end-state in need of perfection and fulfillment, there was another thread of education progressivism that sought to address the social costs associated with the rapid transformation of a society viewed as being problematic and in conflict with itself.<sup>8</sup> For progressive reformers, such as John Dewey, much of the social strife and conflict taking place in society was the result of a failure on the part of the nation's democratic institutions, political culture and public discourse to keep pace with the rapid transformations taking place in the larger society. Deweyan progressivism held up the democratic process as the necessary model for addressing the social issues and conflicts of the day and for structuring a system of public education to foster its development, as this quote from the *Social Frontier* makes clear:

[U]nless education has some frame of reference it is bound to be aimless, lacking a unified objective. The necessity for a frame of reference must be admitted. There exists in this country such a unified frame. It is called democracy... [T]he democratic ideal, in its human significance, provides us with a frame of reference. The frame is not filled in, either in society at large or in its significance for education... Rather the point I would make is that the *problem* of education in its relation to direction of social change is all one with the *problem* of finding out what democracy means in its total range of concrete applications; economic, domestic, international, religious, cultural, *and* political.<sup>9</sup>

For Dewey, the ability of public schooling to act as an agent of social change and progress lies in its democratic potential. Schools are laboratories for democracy that should offer equal educational opportunity in teaching future generations the skills required to participate in democratic life. The educative ideal of this model was more that of an intellectual disposition or 'mode of life' than the mastering of a specific body of curricular knowledge to be tested. Deweyan progressivism saw schools as labs for testing out ideas through concrete experiences and organic, emergent learning in settings that mirror the real world beyond the classroom door. The skills and habits of democratic problem-solving and discourse [which Dewey associated with the scientific method] developed in these educative environments were one of the necessary elements in Deweyan progressivism for addressing the social ills of the early part of the

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<sup>7</sup> Henry James, *Charles W. Eliot, President of Harvard University, 1869-1909*, (Boston: Houghton & Mifflin, 1930), 347.

<sup>8</sup> John Dewey, *Public & Its Problems*, (Athens: Swallow Press, 1927), 242.

<sup>9</sup> John Dewey, *John Dewey: The Later Works Vol.II*, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1981), 672.

twentieth century. Indeed, Deweyan progressivism makes for a sharp distinction when compared to the progressive ideas of reformers such as Eliot.

Despite the profound differences among progressive education reformers, such as Eliot and Dewey, there were conceptual frameworks in the popular discourse of education reform that were shared by the majority of progressive reformers and, indeed, define this period of history as the progressive era. In a time of social instability and civil strife that challenged the still young democratic institutions of the country, it is no surprise that the concepts of social stability and democracy, for example, would command a significant presence on the discursive landscape. Nor is it surprising that a relatively new public institution with the reach of public schools would come to be seen as an unique tool for society to address its problems and conflicts. The concepts employed in the popular discourse of education reform during this era were organically connected to their historical moment.

As organic elements of the social realities in which they operated, concepts, such as 'democracy', served a dual function in the public discourse of the progressive era. They provided the common language for the popular discourse of education reform [the 'common sense' ideas of the era], but they also served as points of contention in public debate. 'Democracy' was widely discussed from the Hull House to Harvard Square, but what 'democracy' meant in those different social locations often meant dramatically different things. Both Eliot and Dewey argued strongly for creating a system of public education that promoted the normative ideals of democracy, progress, scientific rationality and equal opportunity, but those very concepts meant different things to the two men and those differences are reflective of the larger public debate in which they were engaged. From a Gramscian perspective, the ability to frame and define the 'meaning' of those concepts in popular discourse was the prize to be won in public debate.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, throughout the 1910's and 20's, these concepts framed the popular discourse on public schooling and education reform in the Progressive era, and they served as its ideological battleground until the upheavals of the Great Depression and World War II overshadowed all else.

By mid-century public schooling and education reform again commanded a significant presence on the popular discursive landscape. A growing post-World War II movement toward increasing standards in public schooling and higher education reached critical mass at one of the turning points in the history of the Cold War.<sup>11</sup> The launching of Sputnik I in 1957 led to widespread concern over the perceived superiority of Soviet technology with significant implications for public schooling and education policy. In a concept that could have only been created in the linguistic dance of Cold

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<sup>10</sup> Antonio Gramsci, "Cultural Themes: Ideological Material", *Selections from Cultural Writings*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985) 389-390.

Antonio Gramsci, "Relations Between Structure and Superstructures", *Prison Notebooks Vol. II*, (New York: Columbia Press, 1992), 179-180.

<sup>11</sup> Peter B. Dow, *Schoolhouse Politics: Lessons from the Sputnik Era*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 316.

War rhetoric, this 'technology gap' led to wide spread discussion and fear of a perceived 'education gap' that resulted in federal action.

The National Defense Education Act was signed into law by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in September of 1958. It provided \$1 billion of federal aid over a four year period for new school construction, increased resources for elementary and secondary math and science education, and increased funds for university research and scholarships to produce the next generation of scientists and engineers.<sup>12</sup> Taking place within the context of the Cold War, the concept of 'national defense' became a predominate discursive frame in the popular discourse of public schooling and education reform that again provided a *unifying* and *contested* common language employed by a wide range of social actors engaged in the debate. Although much of the scientific rationality of the Progressive era continued to play a significant role in the public debate over public schooling, Cold War politics introduced new concepts into public debate that re-framed the popular discourse of education reform in terms of an existential crisis as demonstrated by this call to action from the *New York Times* in 1959.

...The Soviet curriculum reform underlines the lack of vision of those who fail to take Russian education seriously... The hope that the Soviets will relax their [education] efforts seems a mirage. Perhaps more significant than any perceived gap in missiles or rocketry is the Russians' concentrated effort to close the gap between the traditional curriculum and the modern world. We may be able to choose our weapons but we cannot choose our world.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the profound differences among the various social actors involved in this era of reform, such as conservatives who balked at federal intrusions into public schooling as being the first step toward totalitarianism and those who advocated for further federal action to halt the potential of a totalitarian advance,<sup>14</sup> the concept of 'national defense' commanded a significant presence on the landscape of popular discourse, and it unified public debate over education reform within the dynamics of a contested common language. In this context, to play ball on the policy field meant that one had to demonstrate how his/her reform proposal or education model best achieved the larger goals of national security and technological development. The concept of an 'education gap' was an organic element of popular discourse during this period of the Cold War that provided both a need for reform and a conceptual framework through which actual policy proposals, such as the National Defense Education Act, were articulated.

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<sup>12</sup> "Summary of National Defense Education Act of 1958," *Higher Education*, October 1958, Volume 15, Number 2, 23-29.

<sup>13</sup> Fred M. Hedhinger, "Education in Review," *New York Times*, December 20, 1959, Section E7, accessed: ProQuest Database  
<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=89312321&Fmt=7&clientId=20270&RQT=309&VName=HNP>

<sup>14</sup> Peter Dow, *Schoolhouse Politics*, 316.

As these two historical examples demonstrate, the 'method' to any successful push toward reforming public education appears to require that advocates for reform re-frame the popular discourse of public schooling through the introduction into the specific language of public education concepts and issues faced by society. The use of these concepts in public debate serve two co-determinative functions in a movement toward education reform. These concepts first construct a need for reform and establish the relevancy of dry policy proposals to the everyday practices of schooling as a public institution serving the greater good. Successful reform requires of its advocates that they must first demonstrate that "the present system of schooling [is] inefficient, anachronistic, and irrational."<sup>15</sup> Most often couched in the language of a crisis, this first step is necessary in creating a rupture in the discursive practices of public schooling and in attaining the necessary presence in policy debates to effect change. However, a successful push toward reform requires more than the manufacture of a crisis and the introduction of conceptual frameworks into the popular discourse of education policy.

The concepts employed by reform advocates must also create a common language through which they can articulate solutions to the crisis they've created.<sup>16</sup> The concept of an 'education gap' spoke to the public concerns of Cold War America just as the concept of 'social stability' held particular sway during the upheavals of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. These concepts provided reformers of both eras with the conceptual frameworks they needed to frame popular discourse, articulate a series of education reforms, and to successfully push those reforms through legislative bodies. The specter of nuclear warheads raining down on American cities provided a powerful frame to justify a substantial increase of federal involvement in public schooling in order to increase the nation's pool of scientists and engineers just as the specter of a unionized rabble seizing control of the nation's economy and state institutions justified a dramatic expansion in education opportunities, vocational training, and in-school health services during the Progressive era. Beyond creating a need for reform, the conceptual frameworks employed by reform advocates must construct a common language of reform in popular discourse that lend themselves to specific policies and curricular decisions in the concrete. The degree to which advocates are successful in framing those concepts in public debate has a dramatic impact on their ability to influence policy. From this perspective, it appears that the prize to be won by would-be education reformers is the ability to frame and essentially define the common sense concepts employed in the popular discourse of education policy.

As such, the concepts employed in the popular discourse of education policy provide unique heuristic tools for analyzing the dynamics at work during any one period of reform. Looking across this current educational landscape dominated by the *No Child Left Behind Act*, it is readily apparent that the nation is once again in the process of working through another period of reform and that any dramatic change in policy is unlikely until there is a new occupant in the White House in 2009. However, with the

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<sup>15</sup> Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia*, 112.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.



possibility of a shift in education policy somewhat on the horizon, now is the time to carry out a thorough examination of the policies and discourses that dominate our current educational landscape in order to build the foundation required to make that change possible and productive. It is to this task that we now turn.

### ***The Concept of Globalization***

Although *No Child Left Behind* [NCLB] now dominates the popular discourse of education policy, it is important to note that NCLB is but the latest volley in a larger policy battle dating back to the Reagan administration and the publication of *A Nation at Risk*.<sup>17</sup> Shortly after taking office, the Reagan administration created the National Commission on Excellence in Education to evaluate the state of public schooling and the challenges facing the institution. In April of 1983 the commission published an open letter entitled *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. Advocating tougher academic standards, an emphasis on 'the New Basics', and increased teacher training and merit pay, *Risk* adopted many of the concepts from earlier periods of reform, such as the need for rigorous standards and the professionalization of teaching. However, what made *Risk* unique is to be found in how the commission chose to frame public debate and make its case for reform.

The world is indeed one global village. We live among determined, well-educated, and strongly motivated competitors. We compete with them for international standing and markets, not only with products but also with the ideas of our laboratories and neighborhood workshops... Knowledge, learning, information, and skilled intelligence are the raw materials of international commerce and are today spreading throughout the world as vigorously as miracle drugs, synthetic fertilizers, and blue jeans did earlier. If only to keep and improve on the slim competitive edge we still retain in world markets, we must dedicate ourselves to the reform of our educational system for the benefit of all...<sup>18</sup>

Published during the 1983 recession and coming on the heels of a decade of economic shocks, *Risk* successfully framed education reform within the larger public discourse on the economy and generated a wave of reform proposals and education reports across the nation. "In literally every major report, school reform [was] considered to be the key corrective to America's failing economy, and a more productive US worker [was] heralded as the 'missing link' in recouping our global domination and supremacy."<sup>19</sup> Couched in alarmist language, *Risk* introduced into popular discourse a relatively new conceptual frame that has since become a 'common sense' idea frequently employed in the public debate over schooling: globalization or 'the global economy'.

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<sup>17</sup> National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, (April 1983).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 6-7

<sup>19</sup> Christine M. Shea, Ernest Kahane, and Peter Sola, *The New Servants of Power: A Critique of the 1980's School Reform Movement*, (New York: Greenwood Press), 45.

The concept of globalization constructs conceptual linkages between the transformations taking place in the US and global economies with education policy, curriculum, and practice in order to establish the necessity for reform, the desired outcomes of reform, and the policy proposals required to fulfill those outcomes. This most recent wave of education reform that began with *Risk* finds in the broader public discourse of globalization one of its key conceptual frames. Throughout periods of both Republican and Democratic control of the White House and Congress, the policy proposals that followed *Risk* have all employed this conceptual framework. George H. W. Bush's doomed *America 2000* proposal frequently cited the demands of the "modern economy" as requiring a public school system geared toward the "knowledge and skills necessary to compete in the global economy."<sup>20</sup> Bill Clinton's more successful *Goals 2000* proposal echoed his predecessors exhortations over the demands of the "modern economy" and, again, the "knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy."<sup>21</sup> Not to be left out, George W. Bush's *No Child Left Behind* legislation was similarly framed as "ensuring our future competitiveness" in a "global economy."<sup>22</sup>

Beyond the dry language of legislative proposals, the concept of globalization is frequently employed by a wide array of social agents through an equally diverse range of media. In the twenty-five years since the publication of *Risk*, the concept of globalization has lost its novelty, so to speak, and has now receded into the shadows of common sense. From Op-Ed's to cable news, there is no shortage of experts, pundits, and politicians employing the concept of globalization in discussing the politics and policy of public schooling.

Often discussed in terms of a crisis and educational failure, 'globalization' constitutes an important frame, or narrative, in the popular discourse of education reform. It provides a tool for reform advocates to frame popular discourse and influence public opinion toward their specific policy proposals. In a Gramscian sense, the concept of globalization is an ideological front in the battle for establishing common sense understandings of the world that justify the need for education reform, the educative ideals to be achieved, and the specific policies and practices required to make those ideals a reality. The power of this concept in the popular discourse of education reform requires a critical read.

The aim of this work is to provide that critical read. This research will flesh out and bring philosophic clarity to the concept of globalization in the popular discourse of education reform as it is currently used in public debate. Employing a synthetic mode of analysis (or critical phenomenological method), I will clarify the concept of globalization as it is used in the popular discourse of education policy in order to accomplish two major tasks. First, this research will articulate the educational challenges constructed

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<sup>20</sup> US Department of Education, *America 2000: An Education Strategy*, (1991) 3, 6, 9.

<sup>21</sup> US Department of Education, *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*, (April 1996), Sec. 102.

<sup>22</sup> US Department of Education Budget Proposal 2008, *The Reauthorization of NCLB*, 83.

within this conceptual framework of 'globalization' as well as the structural, curricular, and pedagogical reforms linked to those challenges. The second major task for this research will be to examine those proposals through an inter-disciplinary analysis of empirical research in order to establish the internal consistency between the challenges articulated within the conceptual frame of globalization and the specific reform proposals constructed to meet those educational challenges. My goal in conducting this research is not to 'answer a question' but to create the necessary conditions for a reasoned debate over the educational challenges posed by globalization and how to meet those challenges in a manner that is practical and just.

However, accomplishing this task presents a unique challenge. Taking as one's subject a concept at work in the popular discourse of education reform requires that the researcher somehow isolate one discursive practice within the multiplicity of social mediations that influence education policy and popular opinion. As Tyack rightly notes, the education policy field is not level and not all players enjoy the same advantages.<sup>23</sup> To find the resources necessary to identify and isolate the concept of globalization in the popular discourse of public schooling, I will turn to a socio-political institution that has become an influential force in all aspects of government policy and, most importantly, in framing public debate. That institution is the modern political think tank.

## **Voices of Globalization**

In twenty-first century America, popular discourse is a mediated landscape populated by a wide-range of social and political actors each seeking to frame public debate and sway opinion toward specific ideological, economic and/or political goals. As I mentioned previously, Tyack notes that not all of the socio-political actors involved in education policy carry equal weight. Some actors command a larger presence on the mediated landscape of popular discourse in terms of not only their physical presence [appearing on television for example] but also in terms of the legitimacy their words carry and the political connections they possess. The voices that will be used in this research will come from individuals associated with institutions that, interestingly, have grown in prominence during the same time period in which the concept of globalization entered into the popular discourse of education policy and reform... the political think tank.<sup>24</sup>

### ***The Political Think Tank***

In the USA, the history of the think tank can be traced back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Reflecting the Progressive era's faith in expertise, these early think tanks were research institutions in the truest sense. Think tanks carved out a niche in the American political system between academic knowledge production and policy formation. Selling themselves as bridges between the academy and government, think tanks were to

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<sup>23</sup> Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering Toward Utopia*, 9.

<sup>24</sup> Organizations designed to engage research and advocacy on matters of public policy, dialog and governance.

provide the 'scientific knowledge' needed to make government more efficient and to formulate practical policy capable of achieving its intended purposes. These early institutions may have been funded by large endowments provided by the industrial philanthropists of the era, but their ability to gain access to both policy makers and continued sources of funding were closely linked to their perceived credibility and the neutrality of the research they produced.<sup>25</sup> Coming on the heels of industrial development and scientific progress, the Progressive era created a unique space for the think tank in the American political system and allowed these institutions to recede into the background of the policy formation process.

By mid-century, the repercussions of the Great Depression and the prospect of nuclear catastrophe had eroded public faith in scientific expertise, but the behind the scenes work of think tanks continued to grow. The expanding size and scope of the federal government created a growing demand for policy driven research, and it became a substantial source of funding for new research institutions. By the 1950's, the federal government had expanded its reach beyond the social safety net to literally managing the economy, and the need for a permanent army and its continued operations around the world only contributed to the size and scope of the national government. The growing complexities faced by the federal government created a pressing need for new institutions to provide rigorous research to inform policy, a task for which think tanks were uniquely suited.<sup>26</sup> The new institutions of this period, such as the RAND Corporation, became increasingly independent and specialized providing policy specific research for specific government agencies and evaluating the efficacy of current policies. However, a shift in federal budgetary priorities during the 1960's and an increased assertiveness by philanthropic foundations on the research they funded fostered a shift of think tanks away from the government model that characterized think tanks throughout the first half of the century toward a more politicized model where institutions developed identifiable ideologies and policy agendas.<sup>27</sup>

Throughout the 1970's and 80's, political polarization, the increasing assertiveness of the business community in the political sphere, the re-emergence of neo-liberal economic theory and shrinking government monies created the perfect storm for an explosion of politicized research institutions whose audience was no longer policy makers exclusively but the average voter. The corporations and individuals who provided huge sums of money to an ever increasing number of policy centers, research institutes, and advocacy groups did so with strings attached. Funding came with restrictions that were project specific, short term and examined issues that reflected the 'interests' of the donor[s] with the intent of advancing a specific political agenda.<sup>28</sup> With an increase in funds coming from corporate donors, think tanks adopted modern business practices to market their research to the larger public in order to achieve

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<sup>25</sup> Andrew Rich, *Think Tanks, Public Policy, and the Politics of Expertise*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 39-40

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 41-43.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 44-49.

<sup>28</sup> James G. McGann, *Think Tanks and Policy Advice in the United States*, (New York: Routledge, 2007), 58-59.

specific political goals that overwhelmingly reflect center-right and right political ideologies.<sup>29</sup> It is a thoroughly politicized model that remains with us today.

No longer populated exclusively by academics and PhD.'s, the modern political think that emerged after 1980 is now home to "governments in waiting"<sup>30</sup> as well as sophisticated marketing departments whose job it is to "get the message out."<sup>31</sup> Uniquely situated within the American political system as institutions populated with politically connected experts coupled with marketing departments that pump out briefs, Op-Ed.'s, books, television spots and magazines, the modern political think tank no longer wields its influence exclusively in conference halls and committee meetings. One of the primary tasks of today's think tank is to achieve specific political agendas through the mediations of popular discourse, and they do so with a great deal of success. As James McGann notes:

In general, American think tanks have a competitive advantage in the formation of public policy and public opinion because of their access to policymakers and the media, which increases the utilization of their research and analysis by high-level policymakers and the public.<sup>32</sup>

In the 100 years of the American political think tank, these institutions have emerged from the back rooms and conference halls of government to become one of the dominate forces in the dynamics of popular political discourse and with this visibility has come power.

### ***Visibility: Who Frames The Debate?***

The political power of modern think tanks is due in large part to their high degree of visibility on the mediated landscape of popular discourse. Think tanks essentially use three methods to 'get the message out'. The most traditional method think tanks use to float policy proposals or highlight specific issues is by staging seminars, conferences and briefings.<sup>33</sup> At these events one of the primary targets to whom the research or policy proposals are directed are journalists and opinion-makers with the intent of generating fodder for news media and framing public debate.<sup>34</sup> However, the modern think tank's ability to gain access to the mediations of popular discourse is not limited by what others write or say about the research it produces. Many, if not most, think tanks

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<sup>29</sup> Donald E. Adelson, "From Policy Research to Political Advocacy: The Changing Role of Think Tanks in American Politics", *Canadian Review of American Studies*, Winter 1995, Volume 25, Issue 1, 93-126.

<sup>30</sup> For example, it is entirely likely that any potential Democratic president in 2009 will populate his/her economic team from the Hamilton Project's roster just as a potential Republican would draw from the American Enterprise Institute or the Heritage Foundation.

<sup>31</sup> This latter role is of particular interest to this research.

<sup>32</sup> James G. McGann, *Think Tanks and Policy Advice in the United States*, 44.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>34</sup> As an example, I would point to the AEI's conference in January of 2007 focusing on the new 'Surge' strategy for the Iraq War that was later largely adopted by the Bush administration.

also publish books, magazines, weblogs, websites and newsletters authored by scholars employed by or affiliated with these institutions.<sup>35</sup> These publications are generally less than scholarly in tone and are primarily geared toward mass consumption and shaping popular opinion. Perhaps more importantly, the modern political think tank exerts its greatest influence over popular discourse by exploiting the peculiar needs of today's 24/7 news cycle.<sup>36</sup> Journalists and editors needing to fill up column inches or television news producers seeking out experts for a panel discussion find willing experts in the marketing and outreach departments of think tanks that are readily available for interviews, appearances, or even ready-made opinion pieces for publication in Op-Ed pages nationally.

Professionally packaged and aggressively marketed, the research and opinions produced in the modern political think tank, as well as the researchers who populate them, have achieved a high degree of visibility on the mediated landscape of popular discourse. As Andrew Rich points out:

For think tanks, their success as marketers of expertise reflects a capacity to make marketing a part of their organizational behavior rather than the responsibility of individual experts...[T]he good news for think tanks is that marketing along with other intentional behaviors by experts matters for the degree of exposure their research attracts in policy making. So long as these behaviors matter, think tanks have something of an advantage with policy makers. Think tanks can be sleekly styled marketing machines.<sup>37</sup>

The greater the exposure their 'experts' achieve in the mediations of popular discourse and public debate the greater the influence a think tank possesses in the formation of policy in the concrete.

Diane Stone makes the important point that knowledge and policy is a mutually constituted nexus.<sup>38</sup> Today's think tanks are by no means the simple bridges between scholarship and policy-making they still claim to be. The visibility of think tanks on the mediated landscape of popular discourse allow the politically powerful donors, founders and inhabitants of think tanks to frame public debate and exert political power from within the conceptual frameworks of common sense.

It is clear from previous studies that many think tanks help provide the conceptual language, the ruling paradigms, the empirical examples, that then become the accepted assumptions for those making policy... Far

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<sup>35</sup> James G. McGann, *Think Tanks and Policy Advice in the United States*, 37.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>37</sup> Andrew Rich, *Think Tanks, Public Policy, and the Politics of Expertise*, 207-208.

<sup>38</sup> Diane Stone, "Recycling Bins, Garbage Cans or Think Tanks? Three Myths Regarding Policy Analysis Institutes", *Public Administration*, 2007, Volume 85, Number 2, 276.

from standing between knowledge and power, think tanks are a manifestation of the knowledge/power nexus.<sup>39</sup>

Modern political think tanks are firmly situated within the political system of the American republic through their aggressive marketing of expertise to a mediated society. Populated by the politically and economically powerful, this narrow bloc of the American political system finds in the modern think tank “one way 'bridges' between themselves and the 'public'.”<sup>40</sup>

### ***Voices of Globalization: Resources for Inquiry***

Taking seriously Tyack's observation on the hierarchy of voices in education policy requires that this research into the popular discourse of education reform seek out voices that command a significant presence in the popular discourse of education policy and that have an impact on policy formation in the concrete. I will find these voices in the hallowed halls of the numerous policy centers, institutes and commissions that address education policy and reform. Their experts and the products of their public out-reach and marketing efforts will provide the voices for this research and the mediations through which they will be heard.

The expert voices used in this research will come from large national think tanks that operate sophisticated media centers, publishing organizations and public out-reach programs. Of the roughly 20 think tanks that meet these criteria, there are six that I've identified as addressing education policy and reform as being a significant subject for publication and outreach, and it is in these organizations that I will find my expert voices. [see Appendix I] These experts will include resident scholars, visiting scholars and/or regular and former expert participants in the events, publications and other media 'out-reach' venues sponsored by these organizations.

The mediated texts that will provide the 'data' for the synthetic analysis I propose will come from the popular literature published by these institutions. The primary resources for this work will come from the books and popular literature authored by our think tank experts over the past ten years [1998-2008] that address public schooling and education reform. [see Appendix I] Professionally packaged and often sold in big-box retailers nationally, these books provide an in-depth view into the tasks to which the concept of globalization is employed by public intellectuals and political agents to frame the popular discourse of public schooling and advocate education reform.

I have now addressed the first two tasks of this introductory work. I have established the subject matter of this research as the concept of globalization in the popular discourse of education policy and reform, and I have identified the resources [or voices] that I will use to tease out that concept from the myriad socio-political agents

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

engaged in this conversation. I will now turn to the final task of this introduction by mapping out the research project to come.

## **The Task at Hand**

This research project will consist of four chapters that will first lay out the philosophic method that I will employ in this positive critique followed by its execution in chapters two through four with some concluding remarks on the lessons learned and issues raised in the process.

### ***Chapter One: Toward a Synthetic Mode of Philosophic Inquiry***

Drawing from recent scholarship on the recovery of Hegelian philosophy<sup>41</sup> and the influence of Hegel's *Science of Logic* in the philosophical methods of John Dewey<sup>42</sup> and Karl Marx,<sup>43</sup> I will construct the synthetic method of philosophic inquiry that will be used in this research. The method that will emerge from this chapter consists of three 'moments' or modes of analysis: definition, division and synthesis. The first moment involves the clarification and definition of the concept under investigation through an analysis of the ways in which the concept is employed in its most immediate form within popular discourse. It establishes classifications and themes from the research data and establishes the foundation for the deductive analysis to follow.<sup>44</sup> "Definitions, 'general formulae,' classification, implication, and such are 'not ends in themselves'; rather, they are the form appropriate for empirical testing."<sup>45</sup> Through a process of definition and clarification, the concept or subject of inquiry is constructed as the object of investigation.

The second moment of analysis consists of a pulling apart of this conceptual framework into the dynamic processes and determinants that is its subject in the concrete. "Division consists in the isolation of those particular elements that constitute the conditions through which the [concept] is actualized."<sup>46</sup> Drawing upon empirical research,<sup>47</sup> this second mode of analysis seeks to establish the constellation of relations, activities, and phenomena that are the subject of the conceptual framework in the concrete in order to assess its epistemic validity and to demonstrate points of conceptual failure and contradiction. Through this deductive analysis, the concept is fleshed out into the multiplicity of dynamic social forces and behaviors that is its subject

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<sup>41</sup> Kimberly Hutchings, *Hegel and Feminist Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Polity, 2003).

<sup>42</sup> Jim Garrison, "The 'Permanent Deposit' of Hegelian Thought in Dewey's Theory of Inquiry", *Educational Theory*, 2006, Volume 56, Number 1, 1-37.

<sup>43</sup> Mark E. Meaney, *Capital as Organic Unity: The Role of Hegel's Science of Logic in Marx's Grundrisse*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002).

<sup>44</sup> Jim Garrison, "The 'Permanent Deposit' of Hegelian Thought in Dewey's Theory of Inquiry", 21.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>46</sup> Mark E. Meaney, *Capital as Organic Unity: The Role of Hegel's Science of Logic in Marx's Grundrisse*, 172.

<sup>47</sup> Academic and scholarly research produced within an university model.



and will, in turn, provide the raw material for a synthesis of the concept as “mediated moments of a single process”.<sup>48</sup>

This final movement toward a synthesis of the object of inquiry requires that the investigator retrace their foot steps from the concrete to the conceptual. Through an articulation of the multiplicity of determinants and social forces involved, the product of a synthetic analysis is a re-conceptualization of the object of investigation to a level of sophistication appropriate to its subject. It is a “working up of observation and conception into concepts” that seeks to establish the necessary preconditions required for the formulation of ideas, policies, or activities constructed within those conceptual frameworks without falling into performative contradiction.<sup>49</sup> Synthesis is a mode of analysis that “gathers up the threads” pulled from the fabric of a conceptual framework “into a central stream of tendency, to inquire what more fundamental and general attitudes of response the trend of knowledge exacts of us, to what new fields of action it calls.”<sup>50</sup>

## **Chapter Two: The Concept of Globalization**

In chapter two, I will begin my analysis of the concept of globalization by first defining it through the popular literature of education reform; I will define globalization in its most immediate form in popular discourse. Working through the popular texts that will provide the resources for this study, I will employ a thematic approach to tease out globalization as a dynamic concept that poses *unique educational challenges* requiring a re-thinking of the *educative ideals* of public schooling, the *curricular knowledge* assumed by those ideals, and the *pedagogical practices* required to make those ideals a reality. Moving from the educational challenges created by globalization to the normative ideal of a 'global' education to the prescriptives identified in the data, this first mode of analysis will establish the conceptual framework of globalization that will serve as the object of investigation in chapters three and four.

## **Chapter Three: Pulling the Threads**

Chapter three will consist of a pulling apart of the conceptual framework of globalization constructed in chapter two. Working my way back up from prescriptives to normative ideals to educational challenges, I will begin with an examination of the pedagogical practices and curricular knowledge identified in chapter two through the lens of the empirical research related to those prescriptives. Taking an interdisciplinary approach, I will examine the research literature on the educational practices identified in chapter two in order to establish their efficacy in fulfilling the educative ideals for which they are to be employed. In this pulling apart of the curricula and pedagogical practices

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<sup>48</sup> Mark E. Meaney, *Capital as Organic Unity: The Role of Hegel's Science of Logic in Marx's Grundrisse*, 174.

<sup>49</sup> Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, (London: Penguin Books, 1973), 108.

<sup>50</sup> John Dewey, “Philosophy and Democracy”, *John Dewey: The Middle Works Vol. IX*, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), 47-8.

associated with a 'global' education, points of conceptual failure and contradiction will emerge that will provide the foundation for an analysis of the educative ideals that inform these practices through an explication of the dynamic processes and determinants at work in the concrete realities of classrooms. Examining these normative ideals through the complexities to which they speak, points of contradiction and conceptual failure will again emerge. This setting of the normative ideal over and against its actualization will then create the foundation for a critique of the educational challenges that underlie these ideals and will again identify points conceptual failure and contradiction. Working through the conceptual framework established in chapter two, chapter three will offer a negative critique of globalization through the complexities that is its subject in the concrete, and in so doing, it will provide the raw material for the reformulation of globalization to a level of sophistication that is appropriate to its intended domain.

#### ***Chapter Four: Globalization Revisited***

As the final mode of analysis within this synthetic method, chapter four will offer a positive critique of globalization through an articulation of the dynamic social forces and issues identified in chapter three. Working through the conceptual framework constructed in chapter two for the final time, I will re-conceptualize globalization through the *educational challenges* it creates, the *normative ideals* appropriate to those challenges, and the *pedagogical practices* and *curricular knowledge* implicit in those ideals. This final mode of analysis will work through the conceptual failure and contradictions identified in chapter three in order to transform globalization to a level of sophistication that is appropriate to its intended domain.

#### ***Chapter Five: Conclusion & Notes***

The conclusion will offer an overview of the research project. I will re-examine the trajectory of the research from theory to practice in order to summarize its findings and to identify possible objections to both my methodology and findings. Further, the conclusion will provide me with the opportunity to discuss implications of this research for pedagogical practices and education policy as well as generating new research questions and issues in need of further study.

## CHAPTER I

In his political classic *The Public and Its Problems*, John Dewey offers up an observation that would surely resonate with contemporary readers.

The social situation has been so changed by the factors of an industrial age that traditional general principles have little practical meaning. They persist as emotional cries rather than as reasoned ideas... The developments of industry and commerce have so complicated affairs that a clear-cut, generally applicable, standard of judgment becomes practically impossible. The forest cannot be seen for the trees nor the trees for the forest.<sup>1</sup>

To clarify his point, Dewey continues with four examples<sup>2</sup> in which the concepts employed by situated social actors to grasp the increasing complexities of socio-political life fail to provide an adequate epistemic grounding for reasoned judgment and lead those actors toward performative contradiction. From the “reversal of the practical meaning of the term ‘liberalism’ in spite of a literal continuity of theory”<sup>3</sup> to the power of political speech to “galvanize [a voter] into a temporary notion that he has convictions on an important”<sup>4</sup> trade issue of which he has little knowledge, it is clear throughout *The Public and Its Problems* that Dewey recognized that our social locations provide conceptual frameworks rooted more in political ideologies, cultural practices, and historical precedents than in their ability to offer adequate explanations of empirical realities. This disjunction has real implications for the possibility of reasoned social activity in a democratic society.<sup>5</sup>

For contemporary observers, an excellent example of this problematic that so occupied Dewey can be found on display in the “Education” aisle at your local book retailer. Thumbing through the titles on display presents a dizzying array of educational and political terminology employed in such divergent and contradictory ways that it quickly becomes apparent that there is no general consensus as to what those concepts mean. Such terms as ‘liberal’, ‘conservative’, ‘basics’, ‘literacy’, ‘cultural capital’, ‘equity’, and ‘globalization’ [the subject of this inquiry] demonstrate a fluidity of meaning within and across texts that serves the interest of political expediency at the expense of intellectual rigor. For the interested political participant seeking information on current education policy and practices, the ambiguity of the concepts and common sense ideas used in these texts erects barriers to informed, ethical participation in the political processes and discursive practices influencing education policy. However, for

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<sup>1</sup> John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems*, (Athens: Swallow Press, 1927), p. 134-5.

<sup>2</sup> Tariff Policy – hollowness of political convictions as they relate to complex issues. Federal vs. States Rights – contradictions in belief and practice (Prohibition). Transportation Regulation – hollowness of political convictions. Liberalism – inversion of practical meaning [*Public and Prob.*, 132-4]

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 134.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 132.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 192-3.

philosophers, the ambiguity of meaning associated with the concepts of popular discourse and public debate has provided fertile ground for philosophic analysis.

Throughout the 20th century, analytic philosophy dominated the English speaking world as a school of philosophy that took the ambiguity of the concepts and terminology of discourse as its principle subject. Within this line of thought, the ambiguity of concepts is treated as a bug in the system to be worked out through philosophic analysis; a clarification most often accomplished through logical forms and propositions. However, the weakness of analytic philosophy is to be found in what it doesn't allow itself to 'see'. By focusing exclusively on language and logical forms, analytic philosophy subtly denies the dynamics in which concepts operate. It brackets out the contexts in which concepts are encoded and decoded with meaning in a dynamic society. This myopic view of the mechanics of language to the exclusion of the constellations of externalities acting upon it and being influenced by it leads analytic philosophy to focus on individual trees to the exclusion of the dynamic forests in which they live.

In avoiding the pitfalls of an analytic method, this research into the educational concept of 'globalization' will draw upon theories associated with continental philosophy and American pragmatism that trace their lineages to the works of G.W.F. Hegel. From this philosophic perspective, it will become apparent that the ambiguity of concepts is not a bug in the system but a feature. It is the product of a dynamic ontology that is fragmented and contradictory. In this chapter, I will draw upon these Hegelian influenced theoretical perspectives in order to construct a philosophic method for the clarification of terms and concepts of popular discourse and political speech that work within and through conceptual failure and contradiction. It is a philosophical method that is at once ontological, epistemological, and methodological; it is a method that views trees as constitutive elements of a dynamic forest or ecosystem... as an organic totality.

## **An Ontology of 'Modernity': A Problematic**

Continuing the Deweyan example, we see that at the core of Dewey's complaint lies a more fundamental observation into the ontological dynamics of Western modernity.<sup>6</sup> Dewey is pointing us toward the 'reality' that a modern society in constant transformation cannot find its ethical and epistemological grounding in historical precedent or tradition. Modern society must find this grounding through a continued and sustained inquiry into the dynamic processes, social relations and complex interactions that constitutes modern capitalist society, a process that is mediated and wrought with epistemic hurdles. As we shall see, hierarchically-structured and dynamic, modern

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<sup>6</sup> A note on terminology: I will adopt Western modernity or 'modernity' as a means of denoting our current historical moment from a sociological perspective. My intent is to open a conversation across this historical epoch from its founding in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries to contemporary thought. I would ask the reader to not interpret this use of terminology as an attempt to enter into the larger conversation between the 'modernist project' and 'post-modernity'.

society presents unique epistemological challenges requiring that individuals maintain an uneasy relationship with the conceptual knowledge and common sense ideas made available by their social locations.

### ***The Discourse of Modernity***

At the heart of Dewey's problematic are the challenges of living in transformation. It is a problematic that is fundamental to modern philosophy and is by no means unique to Deweyan pragmatism. As a subject for philosophic inquiry, modernity's peculiar relationship to history and time presents fundamental challenges to the possibility of reasoned social activity in an increasingly specialized and dynamic society that is simultaneously historically constructed and fractured.

Tracing the origins of this philosophical conversation of 'modernity' to the work of Hegel, Habermas identifies the core of this problematic as being located in modernity's time-consciousness of itself.<sup>7</sup> The societies that emerged in Western Europe during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries defined themselves in terms of progress, growth, self-determination and revolution. Decrying the predictability and oppression of previous epochs, these emerging societies defined themselves in relation to historical change and elevated transformation to a normative ideal. To the revolutionaries of Western, capitalist society continuous developments in technology, science and politics renders each historical moment unique and the dawn of a present-future.

[T]he secular concept of modernity expresses the conviction that the future has already begun: It is the epoch that lives for the future, that opens itself up to the novelty of the future... Because the new, the modern world is distinguished from the old by the fact that it opens itself to the future, the epochal new beginning is rendered constant with each moment that gives birth to the new. Thus, it is characteristic of the historical consciousness of modernity to set off "the most recent [*neuesten*] period" from the modern [*neu*] age: Within the horizon of the modern age, the present enjoys a prominent position as contemporary history.<sup>8</sup>

An important contribution that Habermas makes in his recovery of the *discourse of modernity* is this re-troubling of modernity's relation to historical time as a fundamental problematic of philosophic inquiry.

Living in a modern capitalist society there is no reason to assume that the technological, political and social dynamics of ones current social reality will continue unchanged into the future or that an historical past, viewed as being unique and never to replicated, can serve as justification for activities in the present or the future.

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<sup>7</sup> Jurgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), 1-22.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 5-6.

Modernity can and will no longer borrow the criteria by which it takes its orientation from the models supplied by another epoch; *it has to create its normativity out of itself*. Modernity sees itself cast back upon itself without any possibility of escape.<sup>9</sup>

The present-future cannot rely on the criteria of the past as justification for policies and social action. Simply put, there is no guarantee that what is “true” today [or yesterday] will be “true” tomorrow. In a self-changing totality, epistemic validity can only be established as working ideas or contingent truths that emerge from sustained inquiry into empirical realities and are validated by their ability to guide human practice and solve problems in the *here and now*. From political to social theory, Western modernity denies the possibility of universal claims to normative truth requiring instead a reflexive approach to ethical life and reasoned social activity.

The ethical, social and political norms necessary for the smooth functioning of society<sup>10</sup> must emerge from a sustained inquiry into the dynamic processes that make up that social reality. If modernity must create its normativity from within itself then it must do so conceptually, through a process of conceptualization. However, defined by its embrace of progress and transformation, modernity's uneasy relation to historical time stands in contradistinction to the historically-constructed empirical realities that is its subject in the concrete. As Marx correctly notes: “Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past.”<sup>11</sup>

Building off of Habermas' conversation with Hegel, it is clear that the process of conceptualization through which modern society must construct its own normativity takes place within the framework of a fragmented totality that is at once dynamic and changing while also being historically-constructed and, as we shall see, hierarchal. The specialization of material, cultural and intellectual production in modern capitalist society<sup>12</sup> takes place within narrow spheres of human activity that are hierarchically ordered and interdependent. With its roots in historical precedent and tradition [or historically received], this hierarchal ordering of activity and occupation assigns differing political, economic and social value to specific social activities along the fractures of class, gender and ethnicity. Thus the common sense ideas and concepts taken for granted by groups atop this hierarchal order carry disproportionate weight in the social construction of conceptual norms more generally. Yet, the narrowness of these concepts prove to be inadequate for providing an explanation of the dynamic whole to which they refer. For societies that must construct the norms and commonsense ideas

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>10</sup> A mode of social organization in which individuals successfully construct operational realities or meaningful life-worlds.

<sup>11</sup> Karl Marx, “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte”, Marx-Engels Reader, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1978) 594.

<sup>12</sup> In fact making modern capitalist society possible.

to guide reasoned, ethical life and social policy from within themselves, this one-sidedness leads to conflict and contradiction. It leads to what Hegel calls “the way of despair.”<sup>13</sup>

### ***The Way of Despair***

In his theories on 'hegemony', Antonio Gramsci's work points to the importance of the conceptual norms of 'common sense' as a subject of philosophic inquiry and political action. For Gramsci, 'hegemony' is the process by which the hierarchal organization of modern capitalist society is actively constructed and maintained through socio-political coalitions [or historic blocs] built around specific conceptual frameworks or “common sense” ideas.<sup>14</sup> Gramsci repeatedly referenced Marx's observation that individuals become conscious of their life-worlds on the ideological terrain of common sense to emphasize the power of the everyday and the taken-for-grantedness of practical life as a necessary element of a dynamic and fractured totality.<sup>15</sup> Gramsci's interests in popular culture, cultural production and the intellectual function of political parties reflects his understanding that the landscape on which hegemonic dominance is actively constructed is a mediated one.<sup>16</sup> Through popular mediations, dominant groups vie for social hegemony on the ideological front of 'common sense' by adopting, transforming or rejecting pre-existing [or historically-constructed] conceptual frameworks at work in popular discourse in order to advance specific socio-political goals.

Gramsci helps to advance our discussion on the ontological dynamics of Western modernity in two important ways. First, Gramsci demonstrates that the conceptual norms emerging from modernity's introspective gaze are contested frameworks that move within the tensions between the self-changing reality of modernity and its hierarchal structures constructed along the historically given and received. Yet, these conceptual frameworks are simultaneously capable of achieving systemic stability and are, indeed, necessary elements in creating an 'operative reality.'

“[I]deologies” are anything but appearances and illusions: they are an objective and operative reality; they just are not the mainspring of history, that's all. It is not ideologies that create social reality but social reality, in its productive structure, that creates ideologies... If humans become conscious of their tasks on the terrain of superstructures, it means that there is a necessary and vital connection between structure and superstructures, just as there is between the skin and the skeleton in the human body.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> GWF Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 49.

<sup>14</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Prinson Notebooks Vol. II*, 200-201.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 156-158.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 52-53.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 157.

For Gramsci, the conceptual frameworks of common sense are *dynamic structures* that are organically connected to the self-changing social realities of a modernity that is fragmented and historically constructed. Social hegemony is a “long war” for social, economic and political dominance between competing social groups that find in the conceptual norms of common sense one of their principle battlegrounds, a battle in which theorist and practitioner alike are a participant. It is a “war of position” to frame and define the conceptual norms that inform political life and public policy. From this perspective, the ambiguity of the conceptual norms employed by modern society to understand itself and formulate socio-political action and policy is a necessary element of modern society as it is presently constituted.<sup>18</sup> It isn't a bug in the system; it is a feature.

Second, Gramsci demonstrates that the contested conceptual norms emerging from a fractured totality will express the class interests, cultural values and political ideologies of those groups atop the social hierarchy as being universal norms. “As long as society is divided into groups, one cannot talk of the 'spirit' without necessarily concluding that one is dealing with the 'spirit' of a particular group.”<sup>19</sup> Gramsci clearly understood that there is no fixed relation between the interests of dominant groups and dominant ideologies, but the conceptual norms and ideologies held by those groups are over-represented in the production of cultural, political and intellectual knowledge. Thus those interests and ideologies will necessarily be reflected in the knowledge created. As Marx notes:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, ie. the class which is the ruling *material* force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force... For each new class which puts itself in the place of the one ruling before it, is compelled, merely in order to carry through its aim, to represent its interest as the common interest of all the members of society, that is, expressed in ideal form: it has to give its ideas the form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones.<sup>20</sup> [emphasis in original]

The conceptual norms that must emerge from the transformative “real” of Western modernity will necessarily reflect the ensemble of hierarchically structured socio-political, economic and cultural relations from which they emerge, and it is here that we encounter one of the central problematics of modern philosophy.

The transformative real of Western modernity requires that the conceptual norms necessary for the smooth functioning of society emerge from a sustained inquiry into the dynamic processes that make up that society. Yet, the hierarchal structuring of society along the historically constructed fractures of class, race and gender erect practical

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 196-197.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 188.

<sup>20</sup> Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*, (New York: Prometheus, 1998), 64-66.



epistemic barriers to this process of conceptualization. Reflecting the narrowly framed interests, ideologies and values of groups atop the social hierarchy, the conceptual norms emerging from this fragmented totality provide inadequate conceptual frameworks for reasoned social activity and ethical human practice, because *they conceal the larger totality of relations involved in their domain*. Tracing this line of thought from Hegel through Marx and on to Gramsci, Stuart Hall explains the epistemological hurdles created by using one moment of a dynamic process to understand that process in its totality.

If, in our explanation, we privilege one moment only, and do not take account of the differentiated whole or 'ensemble' of which it is a part; or if we use categories of thought, appropriate to one such moment alone, to explain the whole process; then we are in danger of giving what Marx would have called (after Hegel) a 'one-sided' account. One-sided explanations are always a distortion. Not in the sense that they are a lie about the system, but in the sense that a 'half-truth' cannot be the whole truth about anything. With those ideas, you will always represent a part of the whole. You will thereby produce an explanation which is only partially adequate -and in that sense, 'false.'<sup>21</sup>

The normativity emerging from modernity's introspective gaze suffers from a one-sidedness of perspective that limits modernity's collective ability to accurately conceptualize [or reflect back unto itself] the dynamics that is its subject in the concrete [self-knowledge]. Thus, social policy or activity formulated within the logic of those conceptual frameworks prove unlikely to succeed in fulfilling stated goals and often actively work to undermine them [undermining self-determinative action]. The movement from the particular to the universal is the path to abstraction, *the way of despair*.

Dynamic and internally contradictory, the ontology of Western modernity creates conceptual norms that are at once *dynamic* and *stable*, *particular* and *universal*. They are norms that are contested, indeterminate and necessarily suffering from an ambiguity of meaning that reflects the dynamics of the ideological landscape from which they emerge. Remarking on Hegel's influence on Marxian theory, Gramsci introduces the intellectual into this nexus of contradiction, normativity and political praxis.

It [Hegelian philosophy] is the full consciousness of contradictions, the consciousness wherein the philosopher himself, understood both as an individual and as a social group, not only understands contradictions but posits himself as an element of the contradiction and raises this element to a principle of politics and action.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Stuart Hall, "The Problem of Ideology: Marxism without guarantees", *The Journal of Communication*, Volume 10, Issue 28, 37.

<sup>22</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Vol. II*, 195.

The ambiguity of the concepts employed in popular discourse requires that we maintain an uneasy relationship with these conceptual norms, and it requires a reflexive approach in the formulation of public policy and social action within their conceptual frameworks. Fulfilling the organic role Gramsci envisioned for social theorists requires a dynamic epistemology that can be used to inform a reflexive methodology for working within and through conceptual failure and contradiction.

## **A Correspondence Theory of Knowledge**

Kimberly Hutchings identifies the outlines for just such a dynamic epistemic model in Hegelian philosophy. The dialectical method detailed in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* is an epistemic model that Hegel developed to reconcile conceptual knowledge to the empirical realities that are its subject and to establish the conditions for a self-knowledge [normativity] that is appropriate to “modernity”. Hegel considered the *Phenomenology* to be the “ladder” to his *Science of Logic* in that it both established the problematics of a self-changing real and a reflexive epistemological framework for living in transformation. From Hegel's perspective, the one-sidedness of the conceptual norms emerging from a fractured modernity cannot be transcended in pursuit of Truth. *The way out of despair is to work your way through it.*

## **A Critical Phenomenology**

One of Hegel's key contributions to philosophic discourse was his early troubling of the subject-object dualism of classical Western philosophy. In the dynamics of a transformative ontology, Hegel recognized that neither the subject/knower or object of knowledge were fixed essences. Conceiving of the subject and object of knowledge in mutually exclusive terms requires of a knowledge claim the privileging of one of these to the exclusion of the other as well as “explaining how the identity of these non-identical terms has been established.”<sup>23</sup> Rejecting the mechanistic relation of object-independent minds to mind-independent objects as being mediated by cognition or reason, Hegel conceived of the subject/knower and object of knowledge as inextricably linked by the social dynamics in which the knowing subject attains consciousness of both herself as a knowing subject and the object of knowledge as a subject of inquiry.

In particular, Hegel undermines the idea of the subject-knower as an abstract, individuated entity distinct from the object it is trying to grasp... [F]or Hegel unpacking the role of self-consciousness in conscious knowing involves unpacking the relation of 'I' to its natural condition, to other 'I's, to its social and historical context and to its historically shifting forms of self-understanding in common sense, religion, art and philosophy... [It is] an ontological claim about the co-anchoring of subject and object in a shared, material, self-changing reality, which is the medium through which claims

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<sup>23</sup> Kimberly Hutchings, *Hegel and Feminist Philosophy*, 35.

to knowledge and self-conscious action are possible. This reality is reducible neither to mind-independent objects nor to object-independent mind.<sup>24</sup>

The co-anchoring of subject and object in a transformative ontological “real” requires of an inquiring consciousness [individual or group] that an epistemic claim find its validation in the recognition of its truth by others, a recognition which depends “on the idea of the possibilities and constraints immanent in what it is to be where one is.”<sup>25</sup> The dynamic relationship between the subject/knower and an object of knowledge offers no privileged position [or position from nowhere] from which to justify an epistemic claim. Both the subject and object of knowledge are “immanently implicated in the same context which conditions the object of inquiry, its philosophical treatment and any meaning which will be generated in the encounter.”<sup>26</sup>

As Hutchings notes, the principle lesson of the *Phenomenology* is that conceiving of the subject and object of inquiry as being mutually exclusive and binary “results in one-sidedness and a consequent failure to comprehend not only the excluded or denigrated term, but the ground of the authority of the privileged one.”<sup>27</sup> A mutual exclusivity of subject and object places an inquirer in the position of requiring access to “nominal and transcendental realms from which human understanding was forever excluded.”<sup>28</sup> In order to work through this philosophic failure or problematic, the *Phenomenology* presents three “characters”: the knowing subject, the object of knowledge and observing reason [Hegel and the reader]. Its text traces the repeated attempts by the subject/knower to employ a conceptual framework in order to grasp the object of knowledge only to be met with repeated failure that returns the subject back to the initial question or issue from which the inquiry began. However, with each return to this point of departure, the knowing subject incorporates the lessons learned in its previous failures in order to develop more sophisticated concepts and modes of understanding. “The transformative dynamic of this learning process is presented by Hegel as an immanent dialectic in which a mode of understanding proves to be unsustainable in its own terms and has therefore to be re-conceptualized.”<sup>29</sup> Working through conceptual failure and contradiction, Hegel outlines an epistemological model appropriate to modernity, one that is historically contingent and provisional.

Hegel's dialectics involves a movement from the clarification and definition of a concept [subjectivity] to the division of the concept into its determinations within the social totality [particularity] to the transformation of the concept into a more sophisticated form through the articulation of the determinations and complexities involved in its subject [universality]. It is an epistemic model that is both deductive and

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 39-49.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 109-110.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 49.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

inductive. An inquirer begins with a conception that is defined in its most immediate form, as it is used most commonly. From there the concept is pulled apart into the relations, processes and complex determinations to which the concept makes reference. In so doing, the 'one-sidedness' of the concept becomes manifest at points in which it fails to adequately explain the phenomena its supposedly describes or points at which an activity contradicts the conceptual norm from which the activity finds its justification. Yet, in its division, the articulation of the determinations and dynamic processes subsumed by a concept provides the necessary pre-conditions for its transformation. Through conceptual failure and contradiction a concept is transformed into increasingly sophisticated conceptual frameworks of the phenomena to which it makes reference. It is, as Marx was to later observe, a "working up of observation and conception into concepts".<sup>30</sup>

The epistemic model that emerges from Hegelian dialectics is a correspondence theory of truth. Kenneth Westphal explains:

According to Hegel, our experience of the object is structured *both* by our conception of the object *and* through the object itself, which we endeavor to comprehend using that conception. Similarly our experience of ourselves as cognizant subjects is structured *both* through our cognitive self-conception *and* our actual cognitive constitution and engagements, which we endeavor to comprehend using that conception. Hegel's analysis implies directly that, on the one hand, we have no concept-free empirical knowledge or concept-free self-knowledge. On the other hand, neither are we trapped within our 'conceptual schemes'! Put positively, our experience of the object can only correspond with the object itself if our *conception* of the object also corresponds with the object itself.<sup>31</sup>

Beneath the metaphysical language of the *Phenomenology*, Hegel outlines a reflexive epistemic model that establishes the validity of a knowledge claim by its ability to offer answers in the concrete and by its recognition from the "others" always already implicated in both the subject and object of knowledge. In a dynamic ontology of self-changing subjects and objects, these claims are necessarily historically contingent and partial. "The partiality of any knowledge claim is guaranteed by the relative identity (the identity and non-identity) not simply of knower and truth, but of knower, the object of knowledge and the 'observing consciousness' from whom the knower claims, but may well not receive, recognition."<sup>32</sup>

Hutchings' recovery of Hegelian thought makes an important contribution to our larger discussion on the conceptual frameworks of the popular discourse on education in that it establishes 'the epistemic ladder' to the methodology that I will employ in this

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<sup>30</sup> Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, 101.

<sup>31</sup> Kenneth R. Westphal, *Hegel's Epistemology: A Philosophical Introduction to the Phenomenology of Spirit*, 40-41.

<sup>32</sup> Kimberly Hutchings, *Hegel and Feminist Philosophy*, 159.

research. Hutchings points us toward the conclusion that there is no way to *transcend* the ambiguity of meaning associated with the conceptual norms of popular discourse and political speech. “Normative judgment [is] necessarily grounded in the complexity of practice and context.”<sup>33</sup>

In contrast to an analytical model, the clarification of the conceptual frameworks of popular discourse requires of an inquirer a “this-worldly” engagement with these conceptual norms as they are used in the concrete processes of a fractured, self-changing “reality”. “Hegel offers an escape from the way of despair by following through the logic of despair itself, rather than identifying a transcendent path 'beyond'.”<sup>34</sup> The epistemic validity of any one conceptual framework is established in an emerging process of engagement with the dynamic structures, relations and historical precedents to which it refers. It finds its “truth” in its ability to answer questions, solve problems and guide human activity within those dynamics and in its recognition by the others always already implicated in an epistemic claim.

The product of this epistemic engagement is a necessarily historically contingent, provisional claim to *knowledge* and *action* inextricably linked to its context. It is an epistemic claim that seeks to not only re-conceptualize the subject of inquiry through an articulation of the complex determinants that is its subject in the concrete but to also construct the conditions of possibility for its recognition by 'others'. It must seek to establish the necessary pre-conditions for reasoned debate, ethical practice and constructive activity. It must establish the necessary pre-conditions for an ethical, emergent normativity. It is an epistemic model that is inherently implicated in political, social and cultural life.<sup>35</sup>

Hutchings notes that Hegel considered the *Phenomenology* to be “the ladder” to his *Science of Logic*. In turn, I hope to use Hutchings recovery as my 'ladder' but in a rather unique way. The dialectical movements of the *Phenomenology* became the synthetic method of the *Science of Logic*, a methodology that was to have a profound impact on two important thinkers in the history of Western modernity: John Dewey and Karl Marx. In order to offer a positive critique of the popular discourse of globalization,<sup>36</sup> I will construct a synthetic method of philosophic inquiry from a recovery of this philosophical influence in Dewey's and Marx's work so as to benefit from the accumulative contribution made by each of these significant and varied theorists. The product of this research will seek to trouble the concept of globalization in its most immediate form in order to establish the conditions of possibility for the very necessary public debate on the educational challenges posed by a rapidly globalizing society.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 152.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 110.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 152-154.

<sup>36</sup> And, indirectly, a critique of this current era more generally.

## Toward a Synthetic Mode of Inquiry

The synthetic method Hegel developed in the *Science of Logic* mirrored the three moments of his dialectical method in the *Phenomenology*. What was in the *Phenomenology* a movement from subjectivity to particularity to universality became in the *Science of Logic* a movement from definition [universality] to division [particularity] to synthesis [individuality]. [see Appendix II] Mirroring the dialectical movements in the *Phenomenology*, the movement from definition to division to synthesis constitutes a movement of expanding cognition from the abstract universality with which an inquirer begins to the complex determinants and contradictions conditioning its actualization to its re-conceptualization to a level of complexity that is appropriate to its subject. Constructed as a method for establishing the epistemic validity of conceptual norms employed by modern society to understand its own complexities [self-knowledge] and to formulate reasoned, ethical policy [self-determination], Hegel's *Logic* was to have a profound impact on Dewey and Marx. Building off of Jim Garrison's recovery of this influence on Dewey and Mark Meaney's recovery of its influence on Marx, I will construct a synthetic method for this research into the concept of globalization so as to benefit from each of the voices making a contribution to this conversation.<sup>37</sup> I will first outline the framework for this method through its three movements of definition, division and synthesis, and I will finish with a discussion of the specific insights that I will take away from each of the conversations presented in this chapter toward the larger task at hand.

### **Definition**

If there is an *a priori* at work in the synthetic method that emerges from this broad, far-reaching conversation on the influence of Hegel's *Logic*, it is an *a priori* of concepts; more specifically, an *a priori* of an inquirer[s] possessing conceptual norms that serve as both common sense knowledge informing practical life as well as an impetus for creative, constructive inquiry. Indeed, inquiry is predicated on the existence of an inquirer or inquirers possessing conceptual norms as practical tools for constructing their "life-worlds" who find themselves in a problematic situation in which a conceptual framework fails in its practical application. As Garrison notes:

[U]niversals [concepts, theories, and the like] are rules for carrying out operations; that is, they are norms of action... The purpose of inquiry is to transform an indeterminate situation wherein we have encountered an

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<sup>37</sup> It is important to note that this methodology is not specific to any one thinker, and it is not my intent to engage in an in-depth explication of the various similarities, differences and intellectual trajectories among their work. The basic outline of Hegel's method developed in *Logic* will indeed form the backbone for the synthetic method that will be used in this research, but it is not my purpose here to argue that this method is Hegelian, Deweyan, etc. My primary concern is to develop a synthetic mode of philosophic inquiry appropriate to both this historical moment and the task to which it will be employed.

obstacle to smooth functioning into an organically coordinated situation that allows us to restore smooth functioning.<sup>38</sup>

In Hegelian terms, concepts are not simply common sense norms of *self-knowledge*; they also guide and justify practices, beliefs, activities and modes of human association. Concepts become manifest in their practical applications in the concrete as *self-determinative*, productive action. Thus, inquiry finds its impetus in the contradictions and disjunctions that occur in the movement of conceptual norms from an abstract universality to the particular determinants that is its subject in the concrete. These disjunctions create an impetus for inquiry in their disruptions to the “smooth functioning” of practical, everyday life.

Hegel's observation that the *Begriff* [concept] contains within it moments of subjectivity, particularity and universality is at once an observation on the epistemic challenges presented by a transformative ontology<sup>39</sup> while also being a very *pragmatic approach to philosophic inquiry*. The disjunctions that emerge from practical activity and practice may provide the impetus for inquiry, but a synthetic method points toward the conceptual norms underpinning those activities and practices as the starting point for philosophic inquiry. “[F]or anything to have any meaning at all some consolidation of meaning with what is sensibly and physically present is always required...[A]ll data collection involves some universal, however restricted.”<sup>40</sup>

The first task of a synthetic advance is to define the concept or subject of inquiry into the moments of *Begriff* [concept]. “Hegel characterizes definition as the transformation of a given objectivity into the simple form of the concept, that is into universality, particularity, and individuality.”<sup>41</sup> In its simple individuality, the concept is presented as an abstract representation of the object of knowledge. In its simple universality, the concept is defined by its normative claims to the simple individual. In its simple particularity, the concept is defined in the actualization of the simple universal in the concrete. “[T]he moments of the concept govern” the initial definition of the concept as well as the “initial consideration of the relationship between [its] particularities.”<sup>42</sup> The first task of a synthetic advance is to define the concept in its most immediate form through its own conceptual logic; to define it as what Hegel called a logical universal.

Defining the concept of globalization in the popular discourse of education policy and reform as a logical universal will follow this method of definition.<sup>43</sup> Building from the popular texts that will serve as data for this research, the first task will be to

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<sup>38</sup> Jim Garrison, “The ‘Permanent Deposit’ of Hegelian Thought in Dewey’s Theory of Inquiry”, 27-28.

<sup>39</sup> See discussion above on Hutchings’ recovery of Hegel’s epistemology.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>41</sup> Mark E. Meaney, *Capital as Organic Unity: The Role of Hegel’s Science of Logic in Marx’s Grundrisse*, 171.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 173.

<sup>43</sup> I would remind the reader that the initial problematic at work in this research is the ambiguity of meaning in regard to the concept of globalization in the popular discursive practices on popular education policy and practice.

define globalization as a “simple form of the concept” through the moments of *Begriff*. Defining globalization in its simple individuality will require that I construct an abstract representation of globalization as a social phenomenon impacting the policies and practices of public schooling.<sup>44</sup> Defining it in its simple universality, globalization will be presented as normative claims in relation to its simple individuality. Defining it in its simple particularity, globalization will be presented as specific policy proposals constructed within the logic of the simple universal.

This initial movement toward definition will provide two essential elements for this research. First, it will present the subject of inquiry [globalization] in its most immediate form within popular discourse as a logical universal. Second, and just as important, the moments of the concept of globalization developed in definition will provide the “logic” for determining and isolating the data required to advance the inquiry process. “Once the logical universal has been isolated, the investigator then moves from universality to particularity and there isolates the particular determinations or conditions of the universal.”<sup>45</sup> The process of definition that begins the synthetic method will create a path to be re-traced in the second movement of a synthetic advance: division.

## ***Division***

The second moment of a synthetic analysis is a deductive movement of division. In division, the inquiry follows through the logic of the concept defined in the previous moment of definition. It requires that an inquirer[s] articulate the concrete conditions and processes that constitute the subject of the logical universal defined in the first moment of inquiry. “In division, the investigator no longer presents the universal in its abstract universality as a definition, but in ‘connection’ with its own conditions.”<sup>46</sup>

In division, the inquirer[s] develops and expands the moments of the concept [or logical universal] by re-tracing the path established in definition from particularity to universality to individuality. Division begins in the concrete processes in which the universal actualizes itself in an articulation of the phenomena it describes, the activities it prescribes and the conditions under which those actions are carried out. Division requires that an inquirer[s] sift through the empirical evidence related to the particular determinations of the logical universal in order to isolate and develop the processes and conditions of its realization in the concrete activities that is its subject. “The universal formulates symbolically possible operations leading to possible consequences that may not occur when the action is carried out. Only existential operations provide universals with actual consequences.”<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> If the historical pattern established in the introduction holds, this ‘abstract representation’ will most likely be presented as a national crisis threatening the economic and political standing of the USA internationally; as a national crisis that challenges a system of public education that is simultaneously the answer to that very crisis.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 175.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Jim Garrison, “The ‘Permanent Deposit’ of Hegelian Thought in Dewey’s Theory of Inquiry”, 27.



The moments of the logical universal provide a framework for the movement toward division, but it does not dictate the evidence or data that will be used to articulate the particularities generated by the subject of inquiry. "Stimuli, sensation, data, or facts are never given; rather, they depend on the inquirer's active processes of selection, discrimination, and coordination."<sup>48</sup> A synthetic method posits the inquirer[s] as an active participant in the process of inquiry and movement toward knowledge. An inquirer is required to not only identify and justify the empirical evidence related to the subject of inquiry but to also expand the investigation beyond the narrow strictures dictated by the logical universal to related phenomena, processes and activities of particular relevance to the larger inquiry. "The determinations of the data is an active constructive process guided, in part, by some universal idea of what is relevant to the larger problematic situation from whence the data are selected."<sup>49</sup>

Through empirical analysis of the particular determinations of the subject of inquiry, the inquirer articulates points of correspondence between the particular and the universal as well as points of disjunction in which the universal fails to offer an adequate explanation of the phenomena that is its subject or points of contradiction between its prescriptions and its normative justifications. Further, empirical analysis establishes points in which specific practices and processes not initially prescribed or articulated by the universal demonstrate a formal relationship to its determinants and is of particular relevance to the larger inquiry. The articulation of the particular determinants that are the subject of the logical universal defined in the first moment of a synthetic analysis will thus produce an expansive and inchoate mass of empirical data and determinants related to the subject of inquiry that must be classified according to their relations one to another and to an *expanded universal* in the form of regular syllogisms, or 'if-then' propositions. This expanded universal is then set over and against<sup>50</sup> the simple universality articulated in definition and in its relations with an *expanded individual representation* of the subject of inquiry, again in the form of regular syllogisms.

As a logical universal, the division of globalization will begin with an examination of the empirical research on the curricular, pedagogical and policy proposals articulated in the simple particularity defined in the first moment of inquiry. In this examination of the empirical evidence, this research will flesh out the educational outcomes of these proposals in relation to the intellectual skills and dispositions these practices foster; identifying performative contradiction and disjunction when and where it emerges. Doing so will create moments for expanding the examination beyond the specific proposals and practices identified in definition to a broader range of curricular, pedagogical and policy proposals of relevance to the larger inquiry. Again, this broader range of proposals are examined in relation to their educational outcomes and the intellectual skills they foster. The result will be a wide array of educational practices and outcomes that form an *expanded particularity* of educational practices and proposals to be

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 22-23.

<sup>50</sup> Compare and contrast with an eye toward revealing points of contradiction and correspondence.

classified in relation to one another by form and genus and by their relations to an *expanded universal*, in the form of regular syllogisms. [eg. If these educational practices produce these outcomes, then these ideals are understood as implicitly informing those practices.] This expanded universal of educational ideals will then be set over and against the simple universal with which we began and to an *expanded individuality* developed through a broader examination of empirical research relevant to globalization, again in the form of regular syllogisms. [eg. If this educative ideal is implicit in an educational practice, then these educational challenges are implicitly understood as informing that ideal.]

The result of this working back through the moments of the logical universal is an expanded presentation of the universal as a practical unity of formal relationships that are not necessarily interdependent or organically connected. “In division, one merely presents the relationship of universality, particularity and individuality as an immediate unity. Division does not consist in a proof that the moments are essentially related as an organic unity.”<sup>51</sup> The deductive movement of division presents the universal through its particular determinations and the conditions of its actualization in concrete operations. However, in so doing, it creates the empirical ground for an inductive analysis that synthesizes the particular determinants of the universal into a re-conceptualized form more appropriate to its subject. “The way down and the way up are the same since concrete operations may suggest symbolization into universal 'it-then' formulations of symbolic operations, which is why the relation of the two forms of operation [deductive and inductive analysis] form a hermeneutic helix.”<sup>52</sup>

## Synthesis

Dewey described a synthetic mode of analysis as a “double movement”. Using the moments of the logical universal identified in definition as a framework, synthetic inquiry moves deductively toward the particular conditions and complex determinations that are the concrete conditions in which the universal becomes actualized. From this grounding, synthetic inquiry then moves by inference and induction to a re-conceptualized universal. For Dewey, this 'double movement' is a process of going 'to and from meaning.' Garrison explains:

[W]e move from facts [data, kinds, and so on] discriminated and fixed by analysis, through inference, to a suggested meaning ['an idea'] that synthetically unifies the initial facts and additional facts that the idea [hypothesis, theory] calls to the inquirer's attention... The relation between inference and implication, like that of induction and deduction as well as analysis and synthesis to which they closely conjoin, is that... [t]hey are

<sup>51</sup> Mark E. Meaney, *Capital as Organic Unity: The Role of Hegel's Science of Logic in Marx's Grundrisse*, 174.

<sup>52</sup> Jim Garrison, “The 'Permanent Deposit' of Hegelian Thought in Dewey's Theory of Inquiry”, 27.

subfunctions of a single organic function; in Hegel, they are dialectical unity.<sup>53</sup>

The third and final moment of the synthetic method that will be used in this research project is this inductive movement toward meaning. Benefiting from the pulling apart of the subject of inquiry into its complex processes, conditions and determinations in division, the final product of synthetic inquiry is a transformed universal [concept] developed to a level of sophistication that is appropriate to its dynamic subject.

In synthesis, the subject of inquiry [logical universal] is re-defined as an organic whole in which its particular determinations are "mediated moments of a single process."<sup>54</sup> The final movement of synthesis works through the complex determinants developed in division in order to re-conceptualize the initial subject of inquiry into a more sophisticated framework that escapes the one-sidedness that was Hegel's nemesis while also acting on the world, Dewey's and Marx's concern. Following Hegel's *Logic*, synthesis re-defines the subject of inquiry as a single process mediated by the moments of Begriff, as an organic unity. In its demonstration, the inquirer presents the re-conceptualized universal through its moments of individuality, universality, and particularity as 'if-then' propositions that establishes the newly constructed framework as a dynamic unity. It is after this working through the moments of the Begriff that synthesis reaches its conclusion in a formal definition of the transformed universal.

The demonstration of the transformed universal begins by moving through the 'expanded moments' of division. Through a process of inference, implication, classification and abstraction, the complexities of the expanded individuality developed in division are presented as a *transformed individuality* or representation of the object of inquiry. The empirical grounding from which the transformed individuality is constructed provides for a more sophisticated presentation of the subject of inquiry and expands the range of possibilities available for the development of its other moments. Once presented, the transformed individuality is set over and against the expanded universality developed in division in the presentation of a *transformed universality* as regular syllogisms. Drawing from the expanded universality, the inquirer makes a series of judgments that adopt, transform or reject the possible normativities made available by the expanded universality in correspondence to its transformed individuality. Continuing, the transformed universality is then set over and against the expanded particularity established in division in the presentation of a *transformed particularity* as regular syllogisms. Again, the inquirer is required to make a series of judgments that adopt, transform or reject the possible practices and determinants made available by the expanded particularity in correspondence to its transformed universality. The product of this working back through the moments of the concept is a conceptual framework that presents the subject of inquiry as mediated moments in dynamic relations; inter-dependent and mutually constituted. Meaney explains:

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>54</sup> Mark E. Meaney, *Capital as Organic Unity: The Role of Hegel's Science of Logic in Marx's Grundrisse*, 174.

[B]ecause the relationship between the many determinations is a mediated one, the investigator must... demonstrate that the object [of knowledge] is in fact a concrete unity of distinct moments. Then, once the process of proof is complete, the investigator concludes the inquiry with a second or real definition that displays the object as a concrete, organic whole.<sup>55</sup>

Through induction, implication, classification and inference, the final movement of a synthetic analysis is a re-conceptualized *individual object of knowledge* defined through the mediated moments always already imminent in a conceptual norm or universal. Synthesis finds its conclusion in the formal definition of the subject of inquiry as “symbolic, relational possibilities” that prescribe “existential operations” or modes of action as both the concrete actualization of the re-defined concept into the concrete and the means by which its epistemic validity can be established.<sup>56</sup>

In the synthesis of globalization into a re-conceptualized universal, the process of definition begins with an examination of the expanded individuality developed in division. Through induction, inference, classification and abstraction, this research will present globalization as a *transformed individuality* that benefits from the broader perspective and depth provided by division. Drawing from a wider perspective than our initial treatment of the subject of inquiry, the transformed individuality will provide a more sophisticated presentation of globalization as a social phenomenon impacting education practices and policies and will establish the grounding for developing its other moments. After its presentation, this transformed individuality is set over and against the expanded universality developed in division in the presentation of a *transformed universality* in relational correspondence to its transformed individuality as regular syllogisms. [eg. If globalization presents this challenge to public schooling, then this is the educative ideal required to address that challenge.] It will be a working up of educative ideals in correspondence to the educational challenges of globalization as a transformed individuality. After its presentation, the transformed universal is set over and against the expanded particularities developed in division in order to construct the specific curricula, practices and policies, or *transformed particularity*, that correspond to its transformed universal. [eg. If this educative ideal is seen as being necessary in addressing an educational challenge posed by globalization, then these curricula, practices and policies constitute the necessary pre-conditions for the fulfillment of this ideal.] It is at this point that this inquiry into the concept of globalization will be drawn to a conclusion with a second definition of globalization as a conceptual framework in relational unity. Globalization will be defined as symbolic relations that constitute a dynamic unity which prescribe existential operations and possible modes of action to address the educational challenges posed by globalization as well as the means by which the epistemic validity of those symbolic relations are to be established.

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 175.

<sup>56</sup> Jim Garrison, “The ‘Permanent Deposit’ of Hegelian Thought in Dewey’s Theory of Inquiry”, 26-27.

We have now constructed the framework of the synthetic method that will be used in this research into the concept of globalization as it is used in the popular discourse of education policy and reform. It is now time to gather up the threads developed in this chapter in order to map the road ahead. I will now retrace our steps from ontology to epistemology to methodology in order to develop the contributions made by each of the voices presented in this chapter to the overall research project.

### ***Synthesis as a Transformative Project***

I began this chapter with Dewey's observation about the relative vacuity of public debate in order to open a discussion on the ambiguity of meaning associated with the conceptual frameworks of "common sense". Using Dewey's observation to set the stage, I brought Habermas and Gramsci into conversation with Hegel in order to demonstrate that this ambiguity of meaning isn't a bug; it's a feature. It isn't a question of logic; it's an ontological perspective.

The conversation between Habermas and Gramsci demonstrates that this ambiguity of meaning is a product of a dynamic ontology that is simultaneously historically constructed and fractured along the lines of class, gender and race. The concepts of modern society are at once dynamic and stable. In necessary tension with a transformative "real", these concepts are simultaneously contested by competing social actors and agents seeking to frame and re-frame their normative claims as well as the activities and policies to which these concepts speak. Yet, despite these tensions, the concepts are also capable of creating operative realities and achieving systemic stability in the realm of "common sense"; the normativity necessary to the smooth functioning of human society. As products of a contested socio-political landscape, the principle lesson to be learned in this conversation is that modern society needs to maintain an uneasy relationship with the conceptual norms of common sense through which society actualizes itself in self-determinative action. For philosophic inquiry, this requires a dynamic approach to epistemology in which the validity of a normative claim is to be established in relational correspondence to the concrete realities to which it refers, or the conditions of its actualization.

Hutchings teases out just such an epistemic model through her recovery of Hegel's *Phenomenology*. The epistemic model she details is a double movement of deductive and inductive cognition in which the inquirer becomes an active participant in an expanding comprehension of a concept through an articulation of the complex determinants that are its subject in the concrete. The important lesson we take away from Hutchings' conversation with Hegel is that there is no way to transcend the contradictions and ambiguity of conceptual norms. Philosophic inquiry must work through those ambiguities and contradictions in order to re-conceptualize norms to the level of sophistication necessary to inform self-determinative action without falling prey to performative contradiction.

The product of philosophic inquiry is a necessarily provisional, historically contingent conceptual framework. The epistemic validity of this conceptual framework is established in the relational correspondence between its normative claims and the existential outcomes they generate in their actualization in the concrete. Far from the “view from no-where” associated with classical Western philosophy, Hutchings' conversation with Hegel posits philosophic inquiry and inquirer in a “this-worldly” engagement that seeks to establish the necessary pre-conditions for the transformation of conceptual norms to the level of sophistication appropriate to their existential realities.

Bringing Garrison and Meaney into conversation with Hegel provides a formal method for accomplishing this philosophic task. Tracing Hegel's influence in Dewey and Marx, the synthetic method of philosophic inquiry that emerges from this far-reaching conversation mirrors the epistemic model Hutchings recovered from Hegel. Moving from an indeterminate situation of conceptual failure and contradiction, inquiry begins with a definition of a concept in its most immediate form. From definition, inquiry moves through the logic of this conceptual framework in a deductive movement that articulates the complex determinants and processes conditioning its actualization in the concrete [division]. Moving inductively from this empirical base, the concept is then synthesized into a conceptual framework through which the indeterminate situation from which inquiry began is resolved and through which the epistemic validity of its normative claims are to be established. The product of a synthetic method is the re-conceptualization or re-definition of a concept as an organic system of normativity and action; more specifically, normative claims that prescribe modes of action through which their epistemic validity is to be established and recognized by others.

In the introduction to this work, I established the central task of this research as being that of bringing philosophic clarity to a widely used conceptual norm at work in popular discourse. That norm is the conceptual framework of 'globalization' as it is used in the popular discourse of education policy and reform. In this chapter, I have set about constructing the philosophical method that I will use in that clarification. Itself a synthesis of a broad philosophical conversation, what has emerged is a philosophic method for working through the necessary ambiguities and contradictions immanent in the concept of globalization through its own logic. Our synthetic inquiry will begin with globalization in its most immediate form from which we must move by deduction and induction toward its re-conceptualization through an articulation of the educational practices, policies and outcomes that are its subject in the concrete. However, first things first. We now turn to the first task of this inquiry into the concept of globalization: definition.

## CHAPTER II

From even a cursory glance at the mediated texts<sup>1</sup> produced by our think tank experts, it is clear that globalization is a peculiar economic phenomenon with implications extending well beyond the economic sphere, including public education. What emerges from these texts is a conceptualization of globalization as a dynamic economic reality that, on the one hand, poses an existential threat to the American way of life as a global power while also providing a unique opportunity for its perpetuation. For American society and its institutions of public learning, globalization is both a challenge and opportunity.

The first task of the synthetic mode of inquiry developed in chapter one is to define globalization in its most immediate form, as it emerges from the research data. In this chapter, I will define globalization in its *universality* by tracing this epistemic arc from globalization as an economic reality to the educational challenges it creates. From this initial definition of globalization as an educational challenge [*simple individuality*], the analysis will continue with a fleshing out of the structural and individual norms appropriate to those challenges [*simple universality*] and the practices and policies required to make them a “reality” [*simple particularity*]. Using these mediated texts as an epistemic guide, the task of this chapter is to present globalization within the logical framework in which it is often discussed in public discourse and debate; to meet it on its own terms.

### The Crisis of Globalization

Defining globalization in its universality requires that our inquiry begin with the concept as it emerges from research data in its most immediate form. Thus, the first task of this process is to define the concept in its simple individuality as an abstract representation of globalization as a social phenomenon impacting the policies and practices of public schooling. What emerges here is not an unified, easily explained concept but is, instead, a nexus of dynamic processes that present both a challenge and opportunity to the nation's system of public education with dire consequences for failure. In order to articulate this “nexus,” I will lay out three themes that emerge from the research data: globalization as an *economic reality*; globalization as an *educational challenge*; and the *systemic failure of public education*. Taken together these three themes set the stage, so to speak, for the inquiry that follows and require an honest look at what this particular thread of thought at work in popular discourse has to say on the subject. Let's begin with globalization as an economic reality.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I

## ***A Globalized World***

Walberg and Bast define globalization as a new economic reality of rapidly integrating national markets brought about by major advances in communication technology and travel, the spread of capitalist institutions, international trade agreements, and the development of international regulatory organizations.<sup>2</sup> Dynamic and expanding, globalization is here a tale of two complementary social forces: 1. the development of a political and legal structure for the opening and regulation of the global trade of goods and services and 2. the rapid developments taking place in information and communication technology. Under the auspices of institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, etc., the institutional and legal framework for an expanding global trade of goods and services has been created in the last thirty years in order to ensure the smooth flow of capital and goods across international borders, to stabilize national markets, and to provide an acceptable level of safety for potential investors in national and regional economies. In concert with these developments in the institutions of international trade, rapid advancements in information technology and data sharing has made possible the almost instantaneous movement of capital, information, and ideas across the globe. It is a dynamic that has fundamentally changed the way corporations and nations do business.

To remain competitive in a global marketplace corporations are now forced to maximize costs through the specialization of labor and the modularization of production<sup>3</sup> and services. The high labor costs in developed economies has forced industries to move low-skill, labor intensive production to developing nations with large pools of cheap labor while leaving developed economies, such as the US, in the position of competing for “creative, high-value added” business and innovative industries.<sup>4</sup> Looking forward, the National Center on Education and the Economy [NCEE] states that this dynamic will only continue to accelerate. It envisions an increasingly specialized world in which “large firms and industry... will be organized on a global scale. They will not simply be collections of national entities nor will they manufacture or generate services in one place to be sold in many others. They will be truly integrated at the same time that they will be completely modularized.”<sup>5</sup> From the automobile industry to medical services, the location of jobs and industry will be determined on a value-added basis that balances labor costs with the quality of labor and the value specific labor markets bring to the goods and services being produced. Within a globalized economy,

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<sup>2</sup> Hebert J. Walberg & Joseph L. Bast, *Education and Capitalism*, (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2003), 124-125.

<sup>3</sup> The globalization of production chains in which any one consumer good is assembled from individual parts produced around the world.

<sup>4</sup> National Center on Education and the Economy, *Tough Choices or Tough Times: The Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce*, (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2007), 27

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 26.



prosperity is linked more closely with 'I.Q. points and the free flow of ideas' than natural resources.<sup>6</sup> It is the era of *human capital*. "The economic successes of individuals, and also of whole economies, depends on how extensively and effectively people invest in themselves... While all forms of capital are important, including machinery, factories, and financial capital, human capital is the most significant."<sup>7</sup>

The international division of labor and specialization of production has loosened the hold economically developed nations possess over not only low-skill, labor intensive production. In an era of instantaneous communication and data sharing, a growing number of information and knowledge intensive industries, from medicine to software, are becoming increasingly open to global competition. Thus far, the economically-developed nations have been able to utilize its competitive advantage in technological infrastructure and its educated labor force to specialize in knowledge production, information services, and technology development, while the Global South continues to absorb the low-skill, labor intensive industries fleeing economically-developed nations in search of cheaper labor and natural resources.<sup>8</sup> However, this is by no means a fixed relation.

In a globalized world, economic prosperity is inextricably linked to the information economy and the development of human capital. Presented in almost reverential tone, globalization is here conceptualized as the ontological "real" of a new era/epoch of human history.

The "information age" is more than a cliché; it reflects the fact that increasingly high-quality electronic information interchange has changed the fundamental character as well as the pace of technology dissemination, market development, and cultural identity formation... With the incorporation of information technologies into machine control, financial transaction processing, government planning, and regulation enforcement, it [is] clear that flexible and rapid response techniques are much more important than brute force technologies for successful participation in the new world order. Knowledge, even more than material wealth, is now the key to future development.<sup>9</sup>

For economically developed nations, such as the US, knowledge production and technological innovation are the driving forces for their continuing economic success, and these forces point toward the conclusion that the education of their labor force is a vital part of their economic systems. From this liberal perspective, "[s]chooling is as much a part of the information industry as are biotechnology, computer software

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<sup>6</sup> Todd G. Buchholz, *Bringing the Jobs Home*, (New York: Sentinel, 2004), 7.

<sup>7</sup> Gary S. Becker, "The Age of Human Capital", *Education in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Edward P. Lazear (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2002), 3.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 5-8.

<sup>9</sup> William Lowe Boyd & Douglas E. Mitchell, "The Politics of the Reading Wars", Tom Loveless (ed.) *The Great Curriculum Debate* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2001), 327-328.

production, law, and other information-focused services.”<sup>10</sup> The modularization of economic production and the increasing specialization of national economies within a globalized framework is forcing economically developed nations to re-examine and re-tool their public education systems in order to prepare students for the new “reality” of an information based economy. A recurrent theme that emerges from the research data is that economic success in a globalized world is linked to a knowledge and information based economy that places large demands on systems of public schooling, and in this most imperative of tasks, our think tank experts emphatically argue that the United States' system of public education is failing.

### ***The Challenges of Globalization and Educational Failure***

Economic success in the new global “reality” of a knowledge economy follows a straightforward logic: For an individual, high skills equals high wages. For national economies, a high skill labor force equals economic growth and development. From the research data, it is clear that there is a wide spread belief among our think tank experts that US economic success in a globalized world is inextricably linked to its ability to stay at the forefront of technological development. Designing new production methods or developing innovative services will provide opportunities for creating new markets and entirely new industries to replace the loss of low-skill, labor intensive jobs to the Global South. Scientific and technological development of new processes and synthetic materials, likewise, offers the promise of transforming markets in favor of the US and in maintaining its competitive advantage through technological development. From nano-technology to supercomputing and automation, economic success for the US is tied to the production of high-value, specialized goods and services. Echoing the sense of crisis in *A Nation at Risk*, the NCEE points toward these new technologies and economic innovation as both an opportunity and challenge to the American way of life.

The point in the context of this report is that these technologies have the potential to destroy not just existing products and services but entire industries. If those new industries are first developed in the United States, then Americans will reap the enormous rewards that come with being a leader in a new field. If they are not first developed here, we will have to settle for a lot less in terms of our standard of living.<sup>11</sup>

From this straightforward formula for economic success, the logic continues that the peculiar demands of this new global “reality” place specific demands on the United States' public education system to produce the kind of innovative, technologically savvy individuals capable of excelling in a knowledge or information based economy.

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<sup>10</sup> Walberg & Bast, *Education and Capitalism*, 211.

<sup>11</sup> National Center on Education and the Economy, *Tough Choices or Tough Times: The Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce*, 21-22.

A theme that recurrently emerges from the research data is that globalization, as an economic “reality”, demands of the United States' public education system that it train a high-skill labor force and build the foundation for the next generation of engineers, scientists and programmers. Todd Buchholz puts forth the educational challenges of a globalization in no uncertain terms.

Compared with the early twentieth century, the American economy needs more scientists, engineers and financial experts, not more forklift drivers. Anybody left driving a forklift must be very familiar with logistical software.<sup>12</sup>

The outline of such a work force appears to require of public education that it accomplish three tasks. First, American public schools need to produce large numbers of high school graduates with a solid grounding in the core subjects of reading, math and science. Second, beyond these basic skills, public schools need to produce students comfortable with computer and information technology, scientific inquiry and abstract mathematics. And, finally, the United States system of public education as a whole must produce a large number of scientists, engineers and programmers with university and graduate degrees to drive the engine of economic innovation. Yet, as many of the authors in my research data go to great pains to point out, American public education is failing in each of these vital tasks.

Pointing toward trends in aptitude assessments taken by high school juniors and seniors, such as the ACT and SAT, Kevin Kosar's discussion on the readiness of high school graduates, like many others in my sampling, points toward a grim conclusion. For the ACT, scores have remained essentially flat since 1967, while the SAT demonstrates a downward trend in verbal scores with math scores remaining little changed over the same time period.<sup>13</sup> In the basic skills of reading, math and science, long term trends in national assessments also appear to be essentially flat<sup>14</sup>, yet a more detailed analysis provides a rather disturbing picture. Looking at scores from the National Assessment of Educational Progress [NAEP], significant percentages of fourth [69%], eighth [67%] and twelfth [60%] grade students are unable to read at or above a level rated as “proficient”.<sup>15</sup> In math, “[m]ore than 70 percent of examinees at all three grade levels failed to perform proficiently. Nearly three-fourths of all eighth-graders struggled with basic arithmetic. Only 16 percent of high school seniors performed at or above a proficient level, meaning they could 'analyze and interpret data in tabular and graphical form'.”<sup>16</sup> In science, the scores are equally grim. “Less than one-fifth of twelfth-graders scored proficiently, and about one-third of eighth- and fourth-graders did.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Todd G. Buchholz, *Bringing the Jobs Home*, 9.

<sup>13</sup> Kevin Kosar, *Failing Grades: The Federal Politics of Education Standards*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005), 10-18.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 23.

Citing international comparisons between American students and their counterparts conducted by National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], Kearnes and Harvey paint an equally grim picture of the American education system. While the United States excels in early education in comparison to other countries, those gains are quickly lost as students progress on to middle and high school.

Specifically, in fourth grade the performance of American students exceeds that of about 90 percent of the students in participating countries in two key subjects, reading and science. By the end of secondary school, the picture is reversed: students in 95 percent of participating countries outperform those in the United States in the two subjects assessed, science and mathematics.<sup>18</sup>

The unpleasant conclusion that emerges from my research data is that not only are our public schools failing to produce students with the skills necessary to excel in science, technology and engineering in the university and beyond. They are also failing to provide large numbers of students with the very basics of reading, math and science required to become active participants in a globalized knowledge economy.

At the heart of this educational failure lies four recurrent themes in my research data that address the fundamental problems with the United States' education system: bureaucratic inefficiency and systemic failure, political and union interference, a culture of incompetence, and a distorted educational market. Government run schools<sup>19</sup> create environments in which the perceived needs of the bureaucracy take precedence to its fundamental purpose: to educate children. School superintendents “face powerful incentives to set low academic standards to make them easier to reach, to raise the budget to avoid difficult negotiations with teachers unions, to defer maintenance of facilities because this will be little noticed during their brief tenures, and to make countless other decisions that contradict the goals of efficiency and excellence.”<sup>20</sup> Noting that school boards represent a quaint experiment in the democratic process, Walberg and Bast argue that school board members often lack the expertise required to properly supervise and set education policy.

Many school board members are honest, intelligent individuals who devote countless hours to public service. Nothing said here is intended to cast doubt on their dedication or integrity. Yet few have extensive board, business, or education experience.<sup>21</sup>

Indeed, the majority of public officials charged with running public school systems are judged by their ability to “martial votes and win elections. Their present effectiveness

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<sup>18</sup> David T. Kearns & James Harvey, *A Legacy of Learning: Your Stakes in Standards and New Kinds of Public Schools*, (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), 31.

<sup>19</sup> The terminology “government run schools” is a recurring theme in several of the texts.

<sup>20</sup> Walberg & Bast, *Education and Capitalism*, 40-41.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, 35.

and future prospects turn on their public backing and on their ability to cultivate... influential, organized, and attentive constituencies.”<sup>22</sup> Likewise, leadership within both the bureaucracy and individual schools suffers from a lack of qualified individuals to fill important management positions.

The reality is that schools and school systems are led by former teachers who typically have little experience managing adults, are unfamiliar with how organizations other than public K-12 schools operate, possess slapdash training in management, and are discouraged from thinking creatively about education management.<sup>23</sup>

Run by bureaucrats and supervised by unqualified public servants, the image of the United States' public education system that emerges from the popular texts that make up my research data is a tragically broken bureaucracy suffering from wide-spread inefficiency and systemic failure.

The teaching force is presented in the research data as being in equally dire straits and a prime contributor to this failure. The best and brightest of today's university students eschew the teaching profession choosing instead to enter more lucrative fields. The result is a continuing decline in the quality of the teaching corps. Hess explains:

Academically stronger students tend to shun the teaching profession. Undergraduate education majors typically have SAT and ACT scores lower than those of other students and those teachers who have the lowest scores are the most likely to remain in the profession. The lower the quality of the undergraduate institution a person attends, the more likely they are to wind up in the teaching profession.<sup>24</sup>

With only 5% of the teachers holding a Master's degree in their subject areas, the teaching force demonstrates a “shocking” lack of qualifications for the important positions they hold. “The number of teachers with relatively low academic skills is high, and a significant number of teachers have neither a major or minor in the subject area that they teach.”<sup>25</sup> With their mastery of the subject matter that they will teach assessed by a single exam of little value that eliminates “only the weakest of the weak,”<sup>26</sup> new

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<sup>22</sup> Frederick M. Hess, *Revolution at the Margins: The Impact of Competition on Urban School Systems*, (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institute Press, 2002), 12.

<sup>23</sup> Frederick M. Hess, *Common Sense School Reform* (New York: Palgrave 2004), 142.

<sup>24</sup> Frederick M. Hess, *Common Sense School Reform* (New York: Palgrave 2004), 103.

<sup>25</sup> Jane Hannaway and Kendra Bischoff, “Philanthropy and Labor Market Reform”, ed. Frederick M. Hess, *With the Best Intentions: How Philanthropy Is Reshaping K-12 Education*, (Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2005), 158.

<sup>26</sup> Frederick M. Hess, *Common Sense School Reform*, 103.

teachers are often hired “sight unseen” and all too often are lacking the proper qualifications for the job.<sup>27</sup>

The professional training that teachers receive in colleges of education only compound the problems facing the teacher corps. Reviewing university course syllabi from highly ranked education programs across the country, Steiner and Rozen note that general teaching methods courses required for licensure offer very little training in actual teaching methods or preparation in how “to maximize student performance on standardized tests.”<sup>28</sup> While the nation's students demonstrate continued weakness in basic reading skills, future teachers receive very little training in how to work with middle and high school students with reading problems or how to teach elementary students the foundational skills of reading. In many colleges of education, “[s]tudents are given only a cursory knowledge of how to teach reading skills, and are given too little instruction in teaching phonics in a sequential manner with requirements that would include demonstrations of competency.”<sup>29</sup>

The education foundation courses future teachers are required to take for licensure present an un-balanced, multi-cultural view of the history and philosophy of education leaving future teachers un-prepared to think critically about their chosen profession.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, what is taught in these courses demonstrates an open hostility to the realities of today's classrooms.

Instead of focusing on how teachers can best prepare students to learn in the current real world of performance-based assessment and content-rich curricula, a number of syllabi we reviewed suggest that the professors in these schools select readings that teach resistance to that world.<sup>31</sup>

Requiring students to read books by noted radicals such as William Ayers, these foundation courses provide an ideological training that is largely detached from the realities new teachers will face in their careers thus leaving them even more unqualified to enter the education profession.<sup>32</sup> From governance to administration to teachers, the institution of public education is presented as an inefficient bureaucracy staffed by unqualified administrators and teachers caught in a spiral of institutional failure.

This systemic failure of public education is only compounded further by what many of our think tank experts consider to be political interference from the federal

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<sup>27</sup> David T. Kearns & James Harvey, *A Legacy of Learning: Your Stakes in Standards and New Kinds of Public Schools*, 124.

<sup>28</sup> David M. Steiner & Susan D. Rozen, “Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers: An Analysis of Syllabi from a Sample of America's Schools of Education”, ed. Frederick M. Hess, Andrew J. Rotherham, & Kate Walsh, *A Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom?: Appraising Old Answers and New Ideas*, (Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2004), 140.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 136.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 128-132.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 142.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 140-142.

government, teachers unions and colleges of education. Throughout the twentieth century, the role of the federal government in public education [a responsibility traditionally left to state and local government] increased exponentially. Usually tied to a national issue perceived to impact public education, federal politicians and judges have advocated policies and programs to address a wide array of issues from civil rights to Sputnik. “All politicians, for instance, benefit when they appear to “do something” about a problem, even if what they do is support programs that spend a lot of money but produce no discernible improvements.”<sup>33</sup> According to Walberg and Bast, increasing interference on the part of the federal government in education policy to address “social ills” has created a maze of bureaucracy, “organized interests” and political machinations that retards growth, innovation, high standards and quality instruction.<sup>34</sup> “Rules, procedures, and collective bargaining agreements have rendered public school systems heavy-footed and sluggish. Federal laws and court decisions governing special education, student discipline, and disadvantaged students have resulted in the creation of paper-heavy bureaucracies.”<sup>35</sup> “Organized around narrow interests, competing to influence policy, intent on deflecting initiatives adverse to their own particular interests, [organized interest] groups are in a never-ending tug-of-war over education policy.”<sup>36</sup> The result is a nexus of bureaucratic inefficiency and political in-fighting that places the needs of the bureaucracy ahead of the public it serves. Hess sums it up this way:

[O]rganized interests – especially public employee unions and civil rights organizations seeking government protection – are invested in the rules that protect employees and that ensure equitable service provision... Such constituencies use their resources and influence with legislators to help craft policies and rules to their liking. Officials who seek to alter these rules or strictures risk offending these constituencies or their legislative allies in the name of an amorphous, fragmented, and inattentive public.<sup>37</sup>

However, not all of these “organized interests” are cut from the same cloth. Most notably, teachers unions and colleges of education are specifically singled out as political players that utilize their financial resources<sup>38</sup> and their power as gate-keepers<sup>39</sup> to stifle reform, discourage an entrepreneurial spirit<sup>40</sup>, and promote mediocrity. Moe describes the dynamic this way:

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<sup>33</sup> Neal P. McCluskey, *Feds in the Classroom: How Big Government Corrupts, Cripples, and Compromises American Education*, (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2007) 69.

<sup>34</sup> Walberg & Bast, *Education and Capitalism*, 42-44.

<sup>35</sup> Frederick M. Hess, *Common Sense School Reform*, 6.

<sup>36</sup> David T. Kearns & James Harvey, *A Legacy of Learning: Your Stakes in Standards and New Kinds of Public Schools*, 58.

<sup>37</sup> Frederick M. Hess, *Revolution at the Margins: The Impact of Competition on Urban School Systems*, 12-14.

<sup>38</sup> John E. Chubb, “Saving No Child Left Behind”, John E. Chubb (ed.), *Within Our Reach: How America Can Educate Every Child* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), 20.

<sup>39</sup> Frederick M. Hess, *Common Sense School Reform*, 6.

<sup>40</sup> Frederick M. Hess, *Revolution at the Margins: The Impact of Competition on Urban School Systems*, 66-68.

Teachers unions are in the business of protecting member jobs, and they would like to ensure that all of their members are deemed highly qualified - and remain employed. The education schools stay in business by certifying teachers, so they oppose policies by which teachers could become certified without graduating from an ed school, and they oppose rigorous tests that large numbers of their graduates might fail.<sup>41</sup>

More concerned with protecting their turf than educating children, teacher unions reward mediocrity by killing attempts to reform teaching practices and education policies<sup>42</sup>, blocking attempts to hold teachers accountable for student learning<sup>43</sup>, and by keeping bad teachers on the job<sup>44</sup> while colleges of education “provide mandated training of little value” and block attempts at creating alternate means of obtaining teacher accreditation.<sup>45</sup> The progressive education reformers<sup>46</sup> inhabiting teaching colleges have constructed a “thought world of education” that stymies institutional reform and only contributes to increasing layers of bureaucracy that ensure their continued influence over education policy and practice.<sup>47</sup>

The result of these bureaucratic inefficiencies and political machinations is that public schools suffer from what Hess deems a “culture of incompetence”. In contradistinction to the efficiency and accountability associated with the business community and the entrepreneurial spirit of capitalism, the failure of the American education system to keep pace of its international competition in preparing students for the socio-economic reality of 'globalization' is explained by our think tank experts by articulating all of the ways in which public education differs from business practices.<sup>48</sup> Lacking the tough accountability enforced by market forces, public schools exist in a nether world of complacency and mediocrity where poorly qualified teachers are essentially hired for life, there is little to no accountability for performance, academic standards are low, and there is little systemic recognition of excellence.<sup>49</sup> “The result is

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<sup>41</sup> Terry M. Moe, “A Highly Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom”, John E. Chubb (ed.), *Within Our Reach: How America Can Educate Every Child* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), 180.

<sup>42</sup> Frederick M. Hess, *Common Sense School Reform*, 206-211.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 50-52

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 124-127.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 5-6.

<sup>46</sup> Often referred to as “Status Quo Reformers” in the research data.

<sup>47</sup> Neal P. McCluskey, *Feds in the Classroom: How Big Government Corrupts, Cripples, and Compromises American Education*, (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2007), 167-168.

<sup>48</sup> David T. Kearns & James Harvey, *A Legacy of Learning: Your Stakes in Standards and New Kinds of Public Schools*, 62-89.

Walberg & Bast, *Education and Capitalism*, 33-52.

Frederick M. Hess, *Common Sense School Reform*, 69-101.

Todd G. Buchholz, *Bringing the Jobs Home*, 64-69.

<sup>49</sup> This juxtaposition of public education against the entrepreneurial spirit of capitalism is a powerful theme that emerges [both implicitly and explicitly] from the research data that specifically addresses the institutional failure of public schools. As we shall see, this business mindset provides the foundation for the structural ideal of an efficient and successful system of public education that informs the specific education reforms offered by our think tank experts.



a stagnant bureaucratic system that delivers less than mediocre results at high and rising costs and that is dissatisfying to the public, legislators, parents, and students.”<sup>50</sup>

Although the bureaucratic failures of public schooling are described by our think tank experts in juxtaposition to the efficiency of the marketplace, the current system of public education already operates under market forces to some degree. However, it is a market that is circumscribed by the heavy hand of governance and regulation. “Even government schools compete with other industries for inputs and ultimately, in only in an attenuated way, for students and parental support.”<sup>51</sup> Public education is a government monopoly that dictates that students attend specific schools based on geography and create the framework for a hierarchy of educational opportunities based on neighborhood segregation by race and class. Coulson states:

There is no dispute that the quality of education provided by central city districts is generally inferior to that provided by their suburban counterparts. In fact, the evidence shows that economic and racial achievement gaps are larger within the public school system than they are within the private sector.<sup>52</sup>

For parents, choosing where to live or buy a home is influenced by the quality of the schools that serve different geographic areas of a city or county school system. Indeed, one of the elements that factor into what constitutes a “good neighborhood” is the quality of its schools. Since the vast majority of “good schools” are mostly closely associated with the socio-economic status of the student populations they serve, the educational marketplace, as it is currently constituted, denies lower-income and minority parents the opportunity to provide their children with one of the necessary tools for upward mobility: a quality education. The current educational market is a distorted marketplace that not only encourages mediocrity and inefficiency; it is a market that also breeds social inequality.<sup>53</sup>

Thus we see that, in its simple individuality, globalization is a concept signifying an economic reality that constitutes an existential challenge to the American way of life that, in turn, places specific demands on the nation's education system that it has thus far failed to meet. Echoing the sense of crisis that marked *A Nation at Risk*, the NCEE's summation of the educational challenge of globalization points us toward the need for a dramatic transformation of public schooling into efficient, business-like institutions geared toward preparing students to become successful participants in the information economy of this new global reality.

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<sup>50</sup> Walberg & Bast, *Education and Capitalism*, 52.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 217.

<sup>52</sup> Andrew J. Coulson, “Delivering Education”, ed. Edward P. Lazear (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2002), 131.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 131.

So now we can see the full scope of the challenge ahead. If we do not prepare to succeed in a highly competitive, knowledge-based, technology-driven global economy, we can expect the long-term decline in the earning power of our workers to continue and accelerate until we join the ranks of the second-rate powers. To avoid such an outcome, our whole population needs to be much better educated and very differently educated. We need to figure out how to accomplish that without greatly increasing our budget for education, because we do not have the money and it would not work anyway. So we must redesign our system to get vastly more from the money we do spend. **We do not have a choice.**<sup>54</sup> [emphasis in original]

From this initial treatment of globalization as an impending educational crisis, the texts which make up my research data expend a great deal of energy outlining the ideal educational system needed to answer this challenge as well as the ideal students/workers required to answer this national call to economic arms. It is to these ideals that we now turn.

## **The Educative Ideals of a Globalized World**

The second task in defining globalization in its universality requires that our inquiry now turn to the normative claims made by our think tank experts in relation to globalization in its simple individuality. This requires that I articulate the ideal system of public education offered by our think tank experts as being appropriate to the demands of a globalized world as well as the kind of students that this system would produce. Envisioning an educational crisis posed by the dynamics of globalization, our think tank experts embrace those very dynamics as the foundation for a system of public education capable of meeting the demands of this new global era. In order to articulate the ideals appropriate to the challenges posed by globalization, I will first lay out the structural ideal of a system of public schooling capable of meeting the challenges of a globalized world. What emerges here are four themes that encapsulate the ideal system of public education: an *educational marketplace*; *performance-based accountability*; *competent educators and leadership*; and *efficiency*. Second, I will articulate the human ideal that would emerge from this system as individuals well prepared to succeed in this global economic reality. Three broad themes capture this human ideal: *mathematical-scientific knowledge*; *literacy*; and *intellectual skills*. Let's begin with the structural ideal appropriate to the educational challenges posed by globalization.

### ***The Structural Ideal***

The ideal system of public education that emerges from my research data can best be described as a very liberal conception of an *educational marketplace*. Within this framework, education [or schooling] is treated as any other commodity ruled by the

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<sup>54</sup> National Center on Education and the Economy, *Tough Choices or Tough Times: The Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce*, 46.

laws of scarcity, thus “[s]chooling... is a commodity bought by consumers and sold by producers.”<sup>55</sup> Embracing the ideals of competition, parental choice, and the “bottom-up accountability” associated with an ideal marketplace, “[c]ommon sense reform requires unleashing and then harnessing elemental impulses and entrepreneurial energy.”<sup>56</sup>

Instead of placing limits on what schools parents can send their children to based on simple geography, our authors argue that the ideal public school system would first and foremost embrace and foster an educational marketplace in which parents are free to choose from a wide variety of different schools operated by an equally diverse range of education providers, from religious schools to publicly run schools to for-profit capital ventures.<sup>57</sup> In contrast to the bureaucratic inefficiencies and failure of leadership in today's public schools, Walberg sketches the outline of the kind of accountability markets can provide.

Because elected officials use the perks of their offices to win re-election, they face little pressure to keep campaign promises or to ensure the public gets its money's worth. In the private sector, no one stands between the producers and consumers, so consumers “vote” each time they buy from one provider rather than another...[S]chool administrators are rewarded if they satisfy the demands of parents by providing the best educational services at a given tuition price.<sup>58</sup>

By fostering competition among a wide array of competitors in an open market, the inefficiencies and culture of incompetence associated with public schools will be replaced by the bottom-up accountability provided by parents/consumers making rational economic choices based on their own self-interest. “This 'rational actor' assumption, which underlies economic theories of market effects, holds that individuals will act when they believe that the benefits will outweigh the costs, [and] how individuals think about cost and benefits depends in large part on whether these are experienced collectively or individually.”<sup>59</sup> The key to this market-based accountability is direct

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<sup>55</sup> Walberg & Bast, *Education and Capitalism*, 217.

<sup>56</sup> Frederick M. Hess, *Common Sense School Reform*, 194.

<sup>57</sup> The majority of the texts in my research data want to maintain this openness by placing very few limits on the types of organizations that can open and operate schools. However, I would make note that the more recent texts go to great lengths to argue that entrepreneurial spirit of for-profit ventures possess systemic advantages in terms of capital investment and efficiency that make it the preferable model with which to proceed in reforming public education.

Frederick M. Hess, *Tough Love for Schools: Essays on Competition, Accountability, and Excellence*, (Washington: AEI Press, 2006), 105-110.

Frederick M. Hess, *Educational Entrepreneurship: Realities, Challenges, Possibilities*, (Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2006).

<sup>58</sup> Walberg & Bast, *Education and Capitalism*, 221-222.

<sup>59</sup> Frederick M. Hess, *Revolution at the Margins: The Impact of Competition on Urban School Systems*, 53-54.

parental involvement in schools, a principle best achieved by linking education to parent's everyday economic decisions.<sup>60</sup>

As any parent knows, responsibilities breed responsibility. Unless parents have the power to make the important decisions regarding their children's education, they will inevitably become marginalized. Historically, the only way that parents consistently retained that power was by directly paying for their children's education.<sup>61</sup>

Wielding the power of the purse, parents/consumers form the foundation for the ideal system of public schooling as an educational marketplace. From this well-spring flows a system of public education characterized by *innovation and specialization, performance-based accountability, well-qualified educators and administrators, and increased efficiency*.

As a structural ideal, the marketplace framework that emerges from the research data envisions innovative schools testing new approaches to pedagogy, curricula and school organization with the market acting as the ultimate arbitrator of success. Letting loose the entrepreneurial spirit of modern capitalism into the realm of public education would lead to heterogeneous school systems composed of specialized schools catering to the specific educational needs of different student populations.<sup>62</sup> The NCEE envisions a marketplace of schools that act as “beehives of innovation and creativity, places where people with ideas who love children [can] flourish” and that are “good destinations for bright and able people with drive and ambition.”<sup>63</sup> Chubb describes the benefits of the marketplace this way:

The competitive pressures of the marketplace, where families can take or leave a school, lead schools to organize in whatever ways are conducive to getting results for families. Intentionally or unintentionally, schools subject to market pressures tend to develop clear missions (parents know what the school stands for), focus on academics (parents want to see their children learn), encourage strong site-based leadership (great schools are headed by principles who take charge of student achievement), and build collaborative faculties (great schools make achievement a team effort).<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> There is some variation within the research data on the best means for achieving this direct parental involvement with some advocating publicly financed voucher programs while other argue for direct tuition payments. However, the majority of the texts [either explicitly and implicitly] seek to create market incentives for parental involvement in education decision making as economic actors.

<sup>61</sup> Andrew J. Coulson, “Delivering Education”, ed. Edward P. Lazear (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2002), 134.

<sup>62</sup> Walberg & Bast, *Education and Capitalism*, 222.

<sup>63</sup> National Center on Education and the Economy, *Tough Choices or Tough Times: The Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce*, 75.

<sup>64</sup> John E. Chubb, “Real Choice”, ed. Paul E. Peterson, *Our Schools & Our Future: are we still at risk?*, (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2003), 333.

From religious schools that focus on the basics of reading, writing, mathematics, and moral instruction to wired schools that employ computers to “analyze students' learning styles” in order to tailor make instruction to their “specific needs, abilities, and learning,”<sup>65</sup> the structural ideal of an educational marketplace is characterized by a diversity of specialized education providers that are responsive to “a dynamic, ever-changing world”, customer oriented, performance driven, innovative, and that foster a meritocratic culture in which “the fastest learner wins – whether an individual or team – and others use that success to inform their own practice.”<sup>66</sup>

To ensure that students, administrators, and schools maintain this high level of achievement, this ideal system of public education requires a rigorous regime of performance based accountability. Such a regime begins with the necessary “mission, values and guiding principles” required to create a broad framework of academic and performance standards for students, administrators, and schools.<sup>67</sup> These standards would form the foundation for the design of instruction, curricula and high-stakes assessments<sup>68</sup> “that have real consequences for professionals in the schools.”<sup>69</sup> Hess observes: “Performance information is meaningful only when it is backed by real incentives; when principles and superintendents use it to reward or penalize teachers based on how well they are serving their students.”<sup>70</sup> While there is some variation within the research data on which level of governance should be responsible for creating these “rigorous standards”, “high stakes assessments”, and the meting out of positive and negative “incentives” [ie. local, state or federal], there is a general consensus that the ideal system of public education requires some level of government regulation, however the role that emerges from the texts is envisaged as more of a referee than an engaged participant. The role of the government would be limited to establish academic standards, construct the proper metrics to measure academic success or failure, establish the necessary qualifications to enter the teaching profession, and to “make tough decisions to ensure that mediocrity has consequences, excellence is rewarded, poor-performing schools are shuttered, and competition rewards the winners while punishing the losers.”<sup>71</sup>

Such an ideal educational marketplace would create environments in which the economic incentives for entering the education profession would attract the nation's best and brightest and harness their creativity and knowledge. Within a market model,

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<sup>65</sup> William D. Eggers, *Government 2.0: Using Technology to Improve Education, Cut Red Tape, Reduce Gridlock, and Enhance Democracy*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005) 68.

<sup>66</sup> Kim Smith & Julie Landry Peterson, “What is Educational Entrepreneurship?”, ed. Frederick M. Hess, *Educational Entrepreneurship: Realities, Challenges, Possibilities*, (Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2006), 43.

<sup>67</sup> David T. Kearns & James Harvey, *A Legacy of Learning: Your Stakes in Standards and New Kinds of Public Schools*, 139.

<sup>68</sup> Kevin Kosar, *Failing Grades: The Federal Politics of Education Standards*, 68.

<sup>69</sup> Herbert J. Walberg, “Standards, Testing, and Accountability”, ed. John E. Chubb, *Within Our Reach: How America Can Educate Every Child*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 55.

<sup>70</sup> Frederick M. Hess, *Common Sense School Reform*, 51.

<sup>71</sup> Frederick M. Hess, *Tough Love for Schools: Essays on Competition, Accountability, and Excellence*, 75.

capable teachers and administrators would be much sought after commodities for which education providers must compete. In order to attract the best and brightest, compensation packages and work-conditions would be formulated correspondingly, while the laws of the market would eliminate the under-performers and dead weight.<sup>72</sup> Hess paints a rather idyllic image of the outcomes from market-based reform.

It is in the most troubled systems that commonsense workforce reforms will have dramatic effects... It is in these districts, with their large numbers of long-term substitutes, burned-out veterans, and unqualified teachers, that new applicants will be welcome, that offering generous compensation for effective teachers or those with critical skills will have the largest impact, and that explicit pressure and individual-level incentives will make a huge difference... A culture of competence will summon and energize the kinds of adults we want in classrooms: impassioned, hard-working, and effective teachers and communicators who know the content they are teaching.<sup>73</sup>

Stiff competition among education providers would provide for a high degree of flexibility in staffing and collective bargaining agreements, because unions will “make painful concessions or watch jobs vanish.”<sup>74</sup> However, it is this flexibility that would free up the positions and resources required to compete with the private sector and recruit new crops of better qualified teaching candidates and leadership. The economic incentives created by an educational marketplace would reverse current trends of top colleges graduates choosing to enter better paying fields and would attract the nation's top performers in critical subjects, such as math and science, into the teaching field and increase the overall quality of the education workforce.

Finally, an ideal system of public education would utilize the entrepreneurial spirit of capitalism and the demands of the marketplace to bring about large increases in efficiency and productivity while squeezing the most out of every education dollar. An educational marketplace would open the door to entrepreneurship and badly needed capital investment that would allow for rapid reform and development of the nation's education resources and to sustain that level of funding into the future.<sup>75</sup> Competition for the best and brightest teachers and administrators would force schools to allocate resources efficiently and keep auxiliary costs in check. The schools that will remain competitive in an educational marketplace will be the ones “that most accurately anticipate and most efficiently meet consumer wants.”<sup>76</sup> Facing stiff competition within the marketplace, educational entrepreneurs “have cause to continuously seek ways to

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<sup>72</sup> Walberg & Bast, *Education and Capitalism*, 90.

<sup>73</sup> Frederick M. Hess, *Common Sense School Reform*, 132.

<sup>74</sup> Frederick M. Hess, *Tough Love for Schools: Essays on Competition, Accountability, and Excellence*, 106.

<sup>75</sup> Kim Smith and Julie Landry Peterson, “What Is Educational Entrepreneurship?”, Frederick M. Hess, *Educational Entrepreneurship: Realities, Challenges, Possibilities*, (Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2006), 34-37.

<sup>76</sup> Walberg & Bast, *Education and Capitalism*, 89.

improve effectiveness and efficiency because their investors self-interestedly demand it.”<sup>77</sup> Letting loose the dynamics of competition and entrepreneurship in the educational sector will bring vast increases in efficiency that will streamline operations and bring the educational sector within the institutional norms of business standards.

Thus we see that from a structural perspective the normative ideal that emerges from the research data is an *educational marketplace model* ideologically grounded in a variant of *classical or neo-liberalism*.<sup>78</sup> Envisioning a limited role for government in public education, the ideal of a competitive marketplace and educational freedom [ie. parental choice] is juxtaposed against the structural failures and crisis facing public education as the only viable solution.<sup>79</sup> Against the backdrop of educational failure and global competition, the marketplace is presented as the key to raising student achievement. As we shall see, the ideal student that emerges from this educational marketplace model reflects the classically liberal values upon which this model is constructed.

### ***The Human Ideal***

The ideal student that emerges from my research data can be best described as one who possesses a firm grasp of two kinds of foundational knowledges and the intellectual skills to put that knowledge to work.<sup>80</sup> The first foundational knowledge is the *mathematical-scientific*. As a competitive participant in a globalized world, the ideal student that emerges from an ideal public school system would possess a deep understanding of and familiarity with mathematics, science, and technology.<sup>81</sup> As the foundation for both science and technology, the ideal student would be well skilled with numeracy, mathematical reasoning, and “higher math,” such as calculus and trigonometry. Built upon this foundation, the ideal student would also possess a broad understanding of the sciences [biology, chemistry, & physics], a firm grasp of the principles of engineering, and a skilled proficiency with a wide range of technology. The mathematical-scientific knowledge that emerges from my research data envisions a kind of “brainpower that discovers, creates and refines algorithms, pharmaceutical formulae, and entertainment media.”<sup>82</sup> The second foundational knowledge is *literacy*. Although little effort is spent on laying out the specificities of what constitutes a literate individual,

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<sup>77</sup> Frederick M. Hess, *Common Sense School Reform*, 96.

<sup>78</sup> The ideological commitments of an educational marketplace model is a topic that is taken up more rigorously in chapter three.

<sup>79</sup> Considerable energy is spent on debunking “progressive” and “status quo” reforms as being contributors to the current educational crisis we now face.

<sup>80</sup> It is important to note that, with the exception of the NCEE, the texts that make up my research data devote little energy toward describing the educative ideal that would emerge from their conceptualizations of a structural ideal. It is very much a “top-down” approach that focuses on structural reforms. The themes that I develop here are constructed from the NCEE text, the other texts descriptions of the “new workers” required for a global economy, and as implied by the texts descriptions of educational failure.

<sup>81</sup> National Center on Education and the Economy, *Tough Choices or Tough Times: The Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce*, 28-32.

<sup>82</sup> Todd G. Buchholz, *Bringing the Jobs Home*, 10.

the picture that emerges from my research data is a classical view of literacy as reading, writing, and careful listening.<sup>83</sup> In short, the ideal student emerging from an ideal system of public education would necessarily possess the skills to “read and write” and the ability to use mathematical reasoning to “frame a problem on their own and have the self-discipline to see a complex undertaking through to a successful conclusion.”<sup>84</sup>

Beyond this foundational knowledge, the ideal student would possess the necessary intellectual skills required to make full use of their knowledge in the dynamic landscape of a globalized world.<sup>85</sup> From the research data, two intellectual skills sets emerge: *creative-innovative* and *intellectual flexibility*. Using such terms as “out-of-the-box” and “breakthrough thinking”, the creative-innovative component of these intellectual skills are closely linked to reasoning.<sup>86</sup> The ideal student would possess the critical thinking skills to extend their understanding beyond the confines of a finite knowledge base into new areas of thought and innovation. Investigative and curious, this ideal student would embody the entrepreneurial spirit of an innovator making new uses out of the everyday and creating altogether new ideas, technologies, and consumer goods. As a complement to this innovative spirit, the ideal student would possess an intellectual flexibility allowing him/her to move easily between a large number of projects and even jobs over a relatively short time-span.<sup>87</sup> “[Intellectual flexibility] depends on being able to combine disparate elements in new ways that are appropriate for the task or challenge at hand.”<sup>88</sup> It requires that a student possess explicit learning strategies in order to master new skills and ideas, the social skills to work collaboratively on several projects at one time, and the intellectual autonomy to self-monitor her or his own learning.

Articulated within the framework of the new economy, the NCEE sums up the ideal student [worker] in this way.

We have known for some time that processing skills that contribute to the more rapid acquisition of knowledge and skills are ever more important... Complexity of many different kinds will be a hallmark of the future workplace, as will swift change, driven by rapid advances in technology and changes in consumer tastes. So workers will need to be flexible, constantly drawing on different knowledge and skills to solve different

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<sup>83</sup> National Center on Education and the Economy, *Tough Choices or Tough Times: The Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce*, 29.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>85</sup> It is important to note that the texts that make up my research data spend very little time talking about these skills sets. More often, it is treated as an assumption built into their explanations of educational failure.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 30-31.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 31-32.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 30.



problems, moving in a supple way between occupations and employers, the range and depth of their skills their only security.<sup>89</sup>

Thus we see that, in reference to both structural and human ideals, the simple universality that emerges from my research data reflects the conceptualization of globalization in its simple individuality as an economic reality and [to a lesser extent] the failures of public education to adequately address the challenges it presents. Conceptualized as an economic dynamic with implications extending well beyond the purely economic sphere, the texts that make up my research data offer an approach that embraces the economic dynamics of globalization by re-aligning the structure of public education to produce the type of individuals that would ultimately be successful within this dynamic. Thus far, we have examined the concept of globalization as it is used by our think tank experts in terms of an economic reality and educational crisis juxtaposed against the structural and human ideal appropriate to this new reality. We now turn to the next task of defining the concept of globalization by laying out the specific prescriptives necessary to make these structural and human ideals a reality.

### **Education Policy for a Globalized World**

The final task in defining globalization in its universality is to now articulate the recommendations made by our think tank experts. This requires that I present the specific policy proposals constructed within the logic of globalization in its simple universality. The texts that make up my research data generally eschew specific pedagogical and curricular recommendations choosing instead broad policy recommendations designed to foster a healthy educational marketplace. Rotherham sums up the logic of a policy approach this way:

Despite many promising practices and ideas, the actual habits and organization of schooling are deeply ingrained and buttressed by public policies,” which means for “educational changes to take hold they must be codified in national, state, and local policies.<sup>90</sup>

What emerges here are three themes that encapsulate the structural prescriptives offered by our think tank experts: *construct a regulated educational marketplace*; *create a performance-based environment*; and *cultivate a professional labor force*. Envisioning globalization as an economic reality, our think tank experts adopted a “liberal” approach to the structural and human ideals appropriate to the educational challenges created by

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 31.

<sup>90</sup> Andrew J. Rotherham, “Teaching Fishing or Giving Away Fish? Grantmaking for Research, Policy, and Advocacy”, ed. Frederick M. Hess, *With the Best Intentions: How Philanthropy Is Reshaping K-12 Education*, (Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2005), 223.

globalization, and, as we shall see, it is this “liberal” perspective that informs their approach to educational policy reform.<sup>91</sup>

### ***Structural Prescriptives***

The structural reforms that emerge from my research data can be categorized under three broad recommendations: construct a regulated educational marketplace; create a performance-based environment; and cultivate a professional labor force. *Constructing a regulated educational marketplace* requires that federal policy makers take a regulatory approach that “leaves more room for state and local policy entrepreneurs to devise creative solutions” to the existential threats faced by public schooling.<sup>92</sup> Hess lays out the system of public education envisioned by our experts this way:

[T]he system must be dynamic, agile, and responsive to the challenges presented by a changing world. This requires the dissolution of familiar monopolies and a movement toward systems that are flexible and that do not erect exhausting barriers in the way of new providers. A dynamic system demands new knowledge, produced by rigorous models of research and development and supported by public and private capital markets.<sup>93</sup>

Drawing in the capital investment necessary for such a dynamic system<sup>94</sup> demands that federal policy makers require states to increase the educational choices available to parents by contracting out educational services to qualified entrepreneurs and for-profit and non-profit organizations in order to provide a wide range of schooling and tutoring options.<sup>95</sup> Chubb offers two straightforward recommendations shared by the majority of our think tank experts:

States should take all necessary steps to enable charter schools to compete vigorously and fairly with the public schools run by school districts. States should remove all limits on the number of charter schools that may operate in a state or locale. Let families and the marketplace decide what the right number of charters should be... To enable traditional

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<sup>91</sup> By liberalism I am referencing the political philosophies associated with Locke's and Rousseau's classical liberalism as well as the neo-liberalism of Rawls. Again, liberalism and neo-liberalism are taken up in a more rigorous manner in chapter three.

<sup>92</sup> Frederick M. Hess & Chester E. Finn Jr., “Can This Law Be Fixed? A Hard Look at the NCLB Remedies”, ed. Frederick M. Hess & Chester E. Finn Jr., *No Remedy Left Behind: Lessons From A Half-Decade of NCLB*, (Washington: AEI Press, 2007), 319.

<sup>93</sup> Frederick M. Hess, “Politics, Policy, and the Promise of Entrepreneurship”, ed. Frederick M. Hess, *Educational Entrepreneurship: Realities, Challenges, Possibilities*, (Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2006), 247.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 252.

<sup>95</sup> Frederick M. Hess & Chester E. Finn Jr., “Can This Law Be Fixed? A Hard Look at the NCLB Remedies”, ed. Frederick M. Hess & Chester E. Finn Jr., *No Remedy Left Behind: Lessons From A Half-Decade of NCLB*, 322-327.

public schools to compete effectively with charter schools, states should relax the regulations governing curriculum, textbooks, teacher certification, staffing, minutes of instruction, and anything else that is substantially relaxed for charter schools. In the end, health and safety regulations, nondiscrimination requirements, and academic standards should comprise most of the state regulatory regime.<sup>96</sup>

This requires that states re-configure school funding so as to create competition among licensed providers and to encourage specialization and innovation among providers catering to the specialized needs of differing student populations. “Education finance should be configured to accommodate nonprofit and for-profit providers of niche instructional services, enable all providers to compete for capital and operational funding, and reward cost-effective performance.”<sup>97</sup> For the majority of our think tank experts, this requires that funding follow students to which ever school they attend in the form of a voucher so that schools are competing for students (and therefore funding) within a market dynamic. In this model, it is also important to note that the role of state governance is limited to that of an educational contractor that certifies the credentials of potential education providers, negotiates contracts with those institutions and entities deemed qualified, and ensures that those providers are performing adequately.

However, the marketplace envisioned here is by no means limited to schools alone. Many of the authors take time to make an argument for expanding the use of what they see as the under-utilized Secondary Educational Service [SES] providers available across the country as a means of addressing educational inequality.<sup>98</sup> Acting as an educational contractor, state and local policy makers should make SES providers an integral part of parental choice.<sup>99</sup> Local policy makers should be required to provide access to secondary services to students attending schools that show the first signs of failure.<sup>100</sup> Policy makers should encourage the development of this growing sector of the educational marketplace in order to attend to the specialized needs of students in failing schools, and they should encourage entrepreneurial innovation by allowing these providers to experiment with new services and delivery mechanisms, such as online and e-tutoring.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> John E. Chubb, “Real Choice”, ed. Paul E. Peterson, *Our Schools & Our Future: are we still at risk?*, 355.

<sup>97</sup> Steven F. Wilson, “Opportunities, but a Resistant Culture”, ed. Frederick M. Hess, *Educational Entrepreneurship: Realities, Challenges, Possibilities*, (Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2006), 247-248.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 184. Secondary Educational Services are for- and non-profit entities that provide remedial education in foundational skills such as literacy, composition, and mathematics. They generally have rigid curricula closely linked to standardized assessments and small student-teacher ratios.

<sup>99</sup> Frederick M. Hess & Chester E. Finn Jr., “Can This Law Be Fixed? A Hard Look at the NCLB Remedies”, ed. Frederick M. Hess & Chester E. Finn Jr., *No Remedy Left Behind: Lessons From A Half-Decade of NCLB*, 323-324.

<sup>100</sup> Frederick M. Hess, *Tough Love for Schools: Essays on Competition, Accountability, and Excellence*, 240.

<sup>101</sup> Steven F. Wilson, “Opportunities, but a Resistant Culture”, ed. Frederick M. Hess, *Educational Entrepreneurship: Realities, Challenges, Possibilities*, 187.

*Creating a performance-based environment* requires that federal policy makers construct national standards that set the regulatory bar for the educational marketplace.<sup>102</sup> While there is some variance among the research data as to whether this should entail a federal mandate or the use of economic incentives to force states into compliance,<sup>103</sup> there is a general consensus that a dynamic, regulated marketplace requires a rigorous set of academic performance standards coupled with high stakes assessments aligned to those criteria.<sup>104</sup> Linking performance on these tests to economic incentives in the educational marketplace will set the bar for success and failure for individual students, schools, and districts, and the wealth of data produced by these assessments “would permit parents, educators, and officials to see clearly how their school, district, and state is doing.”<sup>105</sup> Using reforms instituted by North Carolina and Texas as examples, Walberg offers up a simple formula:

- Grade-by-grade standards with aligned curricula and textbooks
- Expect... that students meet the standards
- Statewide assessments linked to the standards
- Accountability for results, with rewards and sanctions for performance<sup>106</sup>

What emerges from the research data is a standards-based approach to fostering a performance-based environment. The key to ensuring that students are taught the necessary foundations of reading, writing, and arithmetic is to create a set of rigorous academic standards for those subjects.<sup>107</sup> Kosar makes the case for standards-based approach to reforming educational practices this way:

[T]here is a powerful [behaviorist] logic to standards-based reform: children will not learn to high levels unless they are taught challenging curricula... [T]o raise achievement, the level of skills and knowledge students are taught must be raised, and this can be done through establishing challenging education standards. Doing this will maximize the probability of good teaching or worthwhile content to all students. And the children will respond.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Frederick M. Hess & Chester E. Finn Jr., “Can This Law Be Fixed? A Hard Look at the NCLB Remedies”, ed. Frederick M. Hess & Chester E. Finn Jr., *No Remedy Left Behind: Lessons From A Half-Decade of NCLB*, 320.

<sup>103</sup> A good example of such an enticement is the way in which the federal government has used highway funds to force states into compliance.

<sup>104</sup> Kevin Kosar, *Failing Grades: The Federal Politics of Education Standards*, 208-210.

<sup>105</sup> Frederick M. Hess & Chester E. Finn Jr., “Can This Law Be Fixed? A Hard Look at the NCLB Remedies”, ed. Frederick M. Hess & Chester E. Finn Jr., *No Remedy Left Behind: Lessons From A Half-Decade of NCLB*, 320.

<sup>106</sup> Herbert J. Walberg, “Real Accountability”, ed. Paul E. Peterson, *Our Schools & Our Future: are we still at risk?*, 317.

<sup>107</sup> The overwhelming majority of the texts recommend [explicitly or implicitly] for high standards in the three R's, however only a few [Kosar for example] include science as being necessary. Technology receives little mention beyond its importance in a globalized world.

<sup>108</sup> Kevin Kosar, *Failing Grades: The Federal Politics of Education Standards*, 47-48.

The working assumption of this approach is that creating clearly defined, rigorous academic standards aligned to high-stakes assessments will push schools toward sound curricular and pedagogical practices that will then lead to higher student achievement. If the nation's system of public education is to meet the challenges of globalization then federal and state policy makers should set high standards for achievement to ensure that students are taught the foundational knowledge they will need to compete in an information-based economy.

Coupled to this system of rigorous standards and assessments, federal policy makers should require that states set up regulatory regimes that hold individual schools and school districts accountable for academic failure as well as providing incentives for success. This requires that states “[d]esign and implement an accountability system that provides for positive and negative consequences for school teams and the central office (including the superintendent) that are rooted in student performance.”<sup>109</sup> States should be required to sanction, re-constitute, and close failing schools, and they should be empowered to exercise flexible interventions in failing schools and school district administrations. “Washington should insist that states label schools that need help; that they act to strengthen such schools; and that they shut, replace, or turn inside out those schools that resist improvement.”<sup>110</sup> This requires that states provide a transparent system of straightforward, easily accessible performance data. It is instructive here to quote Hess at length:

[A] healthy entrepreneurial environment is highly transparent, with readily available performance data that compel providers to compete on cost and quality, while expanding access to the data needed to make sensible decisions. Student performance data should not only be readily accessible, but they must be usable by policymakers, educators, entrepreneurs, and parents. The various inputs into the system – money, people, and other resources – must be tracked and aligned toward services, permitting the cost-effectiveness of competing providers to be gauged in various ways. Parents must have the tools and information that permit them to make good choices and communicate their needs, and they must be encouraged to take responsibility for doing so.<sup>111</sup>

We see that the performance-based environment envisioned by our think tank experts is the necessary element in constructing a regulated educational marketplace that provides all of the actors involved with the necessary ground rules for what constitutes educational success, how that success is to be measured, and the data required to make informed economic/educational decisions. For state and local policy makers,

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<sup>109</sup> David T. Kearns & James Harvey, *A Legacy of Learning: Your Stakes in Standards and New Kinds of Public Schools*, 187.

<sup>110</sup> Frederick M. Hess & Chester E. Finn Jr., “Can This Law Be Fixed? A Hard Look at the NCLB Remedies”, ed. Frederick M. Hess & Chester E. Finn Jr., *No Remedy Left Behind: Lessons From A Half-Decade of NCLB*, 319.

<sup>111</sup> Steven F. Wilson, “Opportunities, but a Resistant Culture”, ed. Frederick M. Hess, *Educational Entrepreneurship: Realities, Challenges, Possibilities*, 248.

these ground rules create efficient mechanisms to make decisions and carry out policy based on solid data. For education entrepreneurs, these ground rules allow potential providers and investors to make informed decisions on potential risks and rewards involved in entering the educational marketplace. For parents, these ground rules provide them with the information they need in order to make informed, rational decisions as economic/educational actors.

The *cultivation of a professional labor force* to animate this educational marketplace requires that federal and state policy makers provide robust economic incentives to attract the best and brightest minds into the education field, such as debt forgiveness programs for college loans awarded to university students who agree to work in the most challenging work environments, and to restructure teacher training in line with a performance based schooling environment. In government schools, state and local policy makers must increase teacher pay and rework their inflexible pay structures toward flexible compensation packages based on teacher performance.<sup>112</sup> Strengthening the educational labor market requires that schools become competitive with other industries in attracting promising minds and innovative entrepreneurs into education. “Reforms necessary to foster more entrepreneur-friendly environs include loosening certification barriers, basing compensation and working conditions more on performance than on seniority, and creating opportunities for growth and advancement.”<sup>113</sup>

Improving the teacher training pipeline begins with federal and state policy makers creating a national set of professional standards that sets a high academic bar for potential teachers while “authorizing alternate routes into teaching for nontraditional candidates.”<sup>114</sup> These professional standards should be aligned with national education standards,<sup>115</sup> and “teachers colleges need to be pushed into training their students to the standards.”<sup>116</sup> Future teachers should be required to have the deep knowledge of their content area afforded by a bachelor's degree in that subject as well as a basic knowledge of a wide range of academic disciplines, and they should possess an in-depth understanding of current educational research on best practices. Potential teachers should be required to have:

- achieved a bachelor's degree in their subject-area,
- successfully completed a wide array of liberal arts courses,

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<sup>112</sup> Frederick M. Hess, “Politics, Policy, and the Promise of Entrepreneurship”, ed. Frederick M. Hess, *Educational Entrepreneurship: Realities, Challenges, Possibilities*, 254.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 254.

<sup>114</sup> Gary Sykes w/ Marissa Burian-Fitzgerald, “Cultivating Quality in Teaching: A Brief for Professional Standards”, ed. Frederick M. Hess, Andrew J. Rotherham, & Kate Walsh, *A Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom?: Appraising Old Answers and New Ideas*, 180-189.

<sup>115</sup> Again, there is some disagreement among the texts as to whether these standards should be set at the federal or state level, but there is general agreement that there is a role for both federal and state policy makers in setting those standards.

<sup>116</sup> Kevin Kosar, *Failing Grades: The Federal Politics of Education Standards*, 211.

- achieved high scores on a verbal ability assessment,
- demonstrated professional and subject-area knowledge on rigorous examinations,
- and have successfully demonstrated their ability to produce high student success using a sound instructional methodology.<sup>117</sup>

“Any teacher who is highly qualified by the above standards should automatically be granted certification. This means, among other things, that graduation from an education school should not be necessary for certification.”<sup>118</sup> Steiner and Rozen sum it up this way:

In our view, fine teaching must involve more than following a recipe. Locking teachers into a script the way Direct Instruction does for its participating teachers often works better than the status quo... Student teachers should be taught about the methods and successes of such programs precisely because of their track record in raising the performance of disadvantaged children. At the same time, mastery of the art of teaching cannot be reached by rote recitation of packaged scripts... We need teachers who are themselves educated, who have read deeply, and who will hone the discipline and imagination that only real literacy can bring. Each should have dug deeply into his or her chosen discipline, grappling with its language and history.<sup>119</sup>

The role for policy makers that emerges from the popular texts that make up my research data is to create a broad framework of professional standards by which professional success is to be measured and to which teacher training is to be aligned.

The teacher training model that emerges from these recommendations “is characterized by a *low* level of regulatory oversight of the institutions that prepare teachers in concert with a *high* bar for entry into the profession.”<sup>120</sup> “Rather than dictate strict requirements for certification, this approach delegates the authority to license teachers to a diverse portfolio of approved providers of teacher preparation.”<sup>121</sup> Just as with K-12 schooling, states should foster the development of an educational marketplace for teacher preparation by authorizing a diverse range of qualified institutions each catering to specific pools of teacher candidates, from recent university

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<sup>117</sup> These are the points of general agreement among our experts.

<sup>118</sup> Terry M. Moe, “A Highly Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom”, ed. John E. Chubb, *Within Our Reach: How America Can Educate Every Child*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 195.

<sup>119</sup> David M. Steiner & Susan D. Rozen, “Preparing Tomorrow’s Teachers: An Analysis of Syllabi from a Sample of America’s Schools of Education”, ed. Frederick M. Hess, Andrew J. Rotherham, & Kate Walsh, *A Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom?: Appraising Old Answers and New Ideas*, 143-144.

<sup>120</sup> Kate Walsh, “A Candidate-Centered Model for Teacher Preparation and Licensure”, ed. Frederick M. Hess, Andrew J. Rotherham, & Kate Walsh, *A Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom?: Appraising Old Answers and New Ideas*, 224.

<sup>121</sup> Cultivating Success through Multiple Providers: A New State Strategy for Improving the Quality of Teacher Preparation”, ed. Frederick M. Hess, Andrew J. Rotherham, & Kate Walsh, *A Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom?: Appraising Old Answers and New Ideas*, 202.

graduates to seasoned professionals who want to bring their “real-world” experience and talents to the classroom. States should be required to authorize providers, measure their performance, remove providers that fail to meet up to expectations, and encourage the expansion of techniques and programs used by the most successful authorized providers. “[I]t should even be possible to authorize programs that do not offer “preparation” at all... Such a program would, in effect, warrant to employers that its “graduates” were ready to teach and would serve as a monitor and guarantor of their ability, but would not itself have devoted much time or many resources to instructing its “graduates”.”<sup>122</sup> Entry into the teaching profession should be determined by a candidate having met the professional standards set by policy makers, and their success or failure as teachers should be determined by a regulated educational marketplace.

Thus we see that the structural prescriptives that emerge from the research data adopt a “liberal” approach to reform. The role of policy makers is to encourage the development of a dynamic educational marketplace for K-12 schooling and teacher preparation and to ensure academic and professional achievement by establishing broad yet rigorous standards for both. Responding to the dynamics of a rapidly globalizing world requires that American public schooling adopt the economic dynamism of globalization as a model for preparing future students to succeed within it.

### **Globalization as a Logical Universal**

So we have now completed the first task of a synthetic mode of inquiry which is to define the concept or subject of inquiry into the moments of Begriff [concept]. In its simple individuality, globalization is an economic reality that poses specific educational challenges to our system of public education that we have thus far failed to address. The information-based economy of a globalized world requires that the students graduating from our schools have a solid foundation in reading, math, and science, and they must be well versed in information technology, scientific inquiry, and abstract mathematics. To be successful in the new global economy, the US must produce large numbers of scientists, engineers, and programmers to keep the nation's economy at the cutting edge of producing specialized, high-value goods and services, and it is the task of public education to produce a well prepared pool of candidates to fill these ranks. However, in this most vital tasks, our current system of education is failing. Burdened by the heavy hand of government and staffed by ill-prepared teachers and administrators, the current system of public schooling that emerges from the research data is a slow-footed bureaucratic nightmare doing a disservice to students, parents, their communities, and the nation.

In contrast to the bureaucratic failings of today's public schools, our think tank experts juxtapose a model system of public schooling capable of answering the challenges of a globalized world and overcoming the culture of incompetence now dominating our schools. In its simple universality, the ideal system of public education

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 210.



for a globalized world that emerges from the research data could be best described as a robust marketplace of specialized educational providers each offering niche services to fulfill the nation's educational needs. Dynamic and flexible, an educational marketplace envisages a welcoming environment for education entrepreneurs to open a wide variety of innovative schools built upon a meritocratic ethic of high standards and accountability. Such schools would be staffed by competent professionals dedicated to being customer oriented and responsive to changes in the education market, and leadership positions would be filled by proven professionals accountable for the success and failure of the schools under their watch. The students that would emerge from this ideal system of public education would be well prepared to meet the demands of an information-based economy. With a solid foundation in the three R's and well versed in the ways of science, technology, and the principles of engineering, these students would possess the creative-innovative thinking skills and intellectual flexibility required to participate in the knowledge economy of a globalized world.

Making this ideal a “reality” requires that policy makers construct a regulated educational marketplace through a series of structural reforms. In its simple particularity, globalization requires that our system of public education adopt the market dynamics of a global economy in order to restructure how our schools are to be operated and how we are to train the workforce to fill their ranks. First, federal policy makers should construct an educational marketplace by requiring states to offer parents more educational choices. This will require states to license and expand the number of charter schools available, local districts to expand access to secondary educational services to struggling students, and states to re-configure school funding so as to encourage competition between all education providers, public and private. To ensure a performance-based marketplace that offers potential investors and education providers a stable market environment, federal and state policy makers should create rigorous academic standards coupled to high stakes assessments that set a high bar for academic achievement for students as well as setting a regulatory bar for evaluating school success or failure. To provide the necessary incentives and disincentives for educational excellence, states need to construct around these standards and assessments rigorous accountability regimes that set clear goals for success, economic incentives for high achievement, and clear mechanisms for eliminating failure.

Second, federal and state policy makers should provide robust economic incentives to enter the teaching profession and reward effective teaching based on student performance. This requires that states create professional standards that set a high bar for entering the teaching profession and evaluating teacher performance while opening the door to alternative means of receiving teaching licensure. As with primary education, states should foster an educational marketplace of teacher educators each catering to a specific pool of potential teacher candidates with the educational marketplace acting as the ultimate arbitrator of success.

We can now see that the way in which our think tank experts conceptualize globalization as an economic reality colors both the normative claims appropriate to this

new social reality as well as the specific reforms they advocate in making those norms a reality. Viewing globalization through the prism of economics and global competition creates the logical framework through which norms are constructed and policy recommendations are formulated. Indeed, in its universality, the concept of globalization developed here presents a coherent logical framework with which to proceed in our inquiry into this particular concept at work in popular discourse. Moving forward, the next task in this synthetic inquiry is to turn the concept of globalization, in its universality, inside out by first examining the research literature relevant to the prescriptives generated by the research data in order to expand and develop an empirical base from which to re-examine those policy recommendations, the normative ideals informing those prescriptives and our initial description of globalization as an economic reality. It is to this task we now turn.

## CHAPTER III

In chapter two, we worked through my research data in order to define the concept of globalization in the popular discourse of education reform in its universality. In so doing, we developed a conceptual framework with which to accomplish the second task of this synthetic mode of inquiry. In this chapter, I will present the concept of globalization and education reform in its particularity by working through the conceptual framework developed in chapter two, however I will do so from the “bottom up.” The starting point for the presentation of globalization in its *particularity* begins with an examination of the policy reforms that emerged from chapter two through the lens of the academic literature relevant to those policies in order to present an expanded particularity with which to proceed. This will accomplish two tasks: first, it will allow us to assess the validity of the reforms that emerged from chapter two and second, it will establish an empirical base with which to re-examine both the normative grounding of those reform policies and the initial presentation of globalization giving impetus to reform. Working through the research literature will allow this inquiry to construct an *expanded universality* and an *expanded individuality* of globalization that will enrich our perspective of a powerful concept at work in the popular discourse of education reform. The result is a long, arduous journey that both troubles the initial conception of globalization that emerged in chapter two while also providing the necessary elements for its reconceptualization to a level of sophistication appropriate to the complex realities to which it speaks. I caution the reader to consider that, while this chapter may prove to be expansive in scope, it is a necessary exercise for addressing the complexities at issue.

### Pulling the Threads

The first task in this second movement of a synthetic method is twofold. First, it is necessary to assess the epistemic validity and practical efficacy of the reform proposals, or prescriptives, that emerged from chapter two. Viewed in their relation to the normative understandings in which they find justification, the reform proposals demonstrate an overall concern with raising student achievement, fostering educational innovation, and increasing the efficiency of the education sector. Therefore, we will begin by examining the research literature addressing the reform proposals offered by our think-tank experts in order to assess their ability to raise student achievement, foster educational innovation, and increase efficiency. Second, it is equally necessary to provide a negative critique when and where appropriate in order to extend the process of inquiry beyond the narrow strictures created by our initial conceptualization of the educational challenges associated with globalization in chapter two. Within a negative critique lies the foundation for a positive re-construction that is of equal importance to our task here. Points of epistemic failure, when and where they occur, provide openings and opportunities to posit formal syllogisms [if not x then what of y] that create moments of possibility to extend our understanding of current debates in educational policy and practice.

In the pursuit of raising academic achievement, fostering innovation, and increasing efficiency, three themes emerged from chapter two: *construct a regulated educational marketplace*, *create a performance-based environment*, and *cultivate a professional labor force*. These themes are broad and operate at a high level of abstraction, however they still present an impressive array of reforms in need of scrutiny.<sup>1</sup> To get a handle on all of the prescriptives that emerged from chapter two, I will use the underlying assumptions of each of those three themes in order to assess their internal logic, ie. the ability of the reforms associated with those themes to fulfill their own epistemic test of raising student achievement, fostering innovation, and increasing efficiency.

### ***The Educational Marketplace***

At the core of the market-based reforms offered by our think tank experts lie two key assumptions: first, the peculiar demands of an educational marketplace will raise average academic achievement, particularly in areas that are currently being underserved such as urban school districts; and second, the competitive forces of an educational marketplace will encourage innovation in the delivery of educational services that will bring about significant gains in efficiency as well as achievement. I will use these assumptions as a framework to evaluate the efficacy of the educational marketplace identified in chapter two based on my reading of the research literature currently addressing market-based reforms in education. These readings encompass a wide array of studies looking at school choice and competition in the United States and internationally, and the complexity of these issues render definitive conclusions problematic. However, as we shall see, the research literature calls into question the validity of the assumptions justifying a marketplace approach to education reform.

### **The educational marketplace & achievement.**

In the United States, public schools are subject to three sources of competitive pressure: *schools of choice* are public schools operating within intradistrict school choice programs;<sup>2</sup> *charter schools* are privately operated schools receiving public funds to operate schools on a contractual basis; *private schools* are privately operated schools that do not receive public funding. Although competition from these different school types vary, they all compete with traditional public schools for students, and, in the case of some school choice and charter programs such as in Chicago, they also compete for funding. These distinctions certainly suffer from leaky boundaries<sup>3</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> I would remind the reader that our initial presentation of the educational challenges of globalization sets that stage for the inquiry that follows, thus I will largely adopt this *macro* perspective while also providing a more expansive presentation of the relationship between public education and globalization.

<sup>2</sup> This are often magnet schools.

<sup>3</sup> For example, Milwaukee's school choice program allows targeted students to use school vouchers to attend both private schools [secular and religious] as well as charters.

issues of definition,<sup>4</sup> however the research literature examining these school types is instructive in illuminating important issues associated with market-based reforms more generally.

Looking first at *schools of choice*, Okpala et al. note that for such a wide spread approach to education reform relatively little is known about the efficacy of intradistrict school choice programs, and this absence in the research literature will certainly limit our treatment here to a brief discussion of what appears to be emerging thus far.<sup>5</sup> Using data from North Carolina, Okpala et al. find significant differences in student achievement between schools of choice and regular public schools, however they also encounter one of the key problematics in comparing different schools within the context of parental choice and competition.

The findings in this study suggest that there are statistical differences in the achievement scores of students in schools of choice compared with those of students in traditional schools. However, it is not clear whether the achievement scores of students were higher because of the large population of students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds.<sup>6</sup>

While schools of choice in North Carolina appear to be more effective than regular public schools in the aggregate, the demographic make-up of the student's that attend these schools appear to be stratified along class lines. Therefore, it is difficult to assess whether the achievement gains can be attributed to educational practices taking place in schools of choice or are simply the result of demographic characteristics of the students who attend them. Similarly, looking at student data in Philadelphia, Neild's study of the effects of magnet schools on neighborhood high schools found little evidence that surrounding neighborhood schools benefit from the institution of magnet programs but did find significant evidence of sorting by socioeconomic status.<sup>7</sup> Despite the differences in context, these two studies point toward an issue that will arise repeatedly in the research literature on school choice and market-based reform in general: stratification or student sorting.

Indeed, Cullen et al. examines what is perhaps one of the most ambitious and large scale experiments in intradistrict school choice and offers us some insight into the issue of academic achievement and student sorting.<sup>8</sup> Chicago Public School's open

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<sup>4</sup> For example, magnet school programs vary widely across the country and offer differing degrees of choice to parents and exert varying degrees of competitive pressure on traditional public schools.

<sup>5</sup> Comfort O. Okpala, Genniver C. Bell & Kwami Tuprah, "A Comparative Study of Student Achievement in Traditional Schools and Schools of Choice in North Carolina", *Urban Education*, 2007, volume 42, number 4, 315.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 322.

<sup>7</sup> Ruth Curren Neild, "The Effects of Magnet Schools on Neighborhood High Schools: An Examination of Achievement Among Entering Freshman", *Journal of Education for Students Place at Risk*, 2004, Volume 9, Issue 1, 1-21.

<sup>8</sup> Julie Berry Cullen, Brian A. Jacob & Steven D. Levitt, "The impact of school choice on student outcomes: an analysis of the Chicago Public Schools", *Journal of Public Economics*, 2005, volume 89, issues 5-6, 729-760.

enrollment program offers students the chance to attend the public school of their choice with roughly half of its students choosing to opt out of the schools to which they are zoned. While Cullen et al. find that students who do opt out exhibit greater academic achievement as measured by high school graduation rates, they note that there are significant differences between those students who opt-out and those who do not.

Those [students] who opt out self-report that they are better prepared for high school, have higher expectations for graduation and the future more generally, have better junior-high school grades, are less likely to have failed a grade or been suspended, and are absent fewer days. The degree of positive selection of these forms is greatest at high-achieving schools. Also, students attending high achieving schools (but not other students who opt out) have better educated parents and greater parental involvement.<sup>9</sup>

Cullen et al. point out that even in a context in which student populations appear to be similar in relation to socioeconomic and racial characteristics there is significant evidence of student sorting along unobservable characteristics, such as parental involvement, cultural capital and motivation, that may explain any achievement gains associated with schools of choice.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, what emerges from the research literature on schools of choice in general is an absence of consensus on the question as to whether, taking account of variation in student characteristics, these schools produce higher achievement. There is little evidence that intradistrict competition has a positive impact on achievement in traditional public schools; and significant evidence of student sorting along the intersecting lines of class, race, and cultural capital.

*Charter Schools* constitute one of the fastest growing and most hotly contested areas of market-based reforms and, not surprisingly, is the subject of a growing body of research. Tim Sass' examination of Florida's charter schools looks at student achievement in charters and the effects of school competition on public school achievement.<sup>11</sup> His findings offer us a mixed picture. First, new charters have lower student achievement, however, by their fifth year of operation, they are on par with public schools in math and produce higher achievement in reading. Second, "[m]anagement structure appears to have no impact on student achievement in charter schools; charters managed by for-profit firms perform the same as those operated by nonprofit entities."<sup>12</sup> And, third, competition from charters schools appear to have a modest "net positive" effect on traditional public schools. Hanushek et al report similar though less positive results.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 745.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 730.

<sup>11</sup> Tim R. Sass, "Charter Schools And Student Achievement in Florida", *Education Finance and Policy*, 2006, Volume 1, Issue 1, 91-122.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 119.

<sup>13</sup> Eric A. Hanushek, John F. Kain, Steven G. Rivkin & Gregory F. Branch, "Charter school quality and parental decision making with school choice", *Journal of Public Economics*, 2007, Volume 91, Issues 5-6, 823-848.

Looking at charter schools in Texas, Hanushek et al find that new charter schools exhibit lower achievement but after four years are not significantly different from public schools.<sup>14</sup> Interestingly, Hanushek et al point to evidence of a correlation between exit rates from charter schools and measures of school quality as indicating signs of market forces at work. However, as Cullen et al found in Chicago and as hinted at by Okpala et al. and Neild, this mobility may tell us more about the parents who choose to opt out of public schools than the health of the educational marketplace as a whole.

Bifulco and Ladd use data from North Carolina to examine whether students who attend charter schools make larger achievement gains than they would have if they'd attended public schools and if students attending public schools subject to competitive pressure from charters make larger achievement gains than they would in the absence of charters.<sup>15</sup> Examining the demographic make-up of students attending charter schools in North Carolina, they first note that there are considerable differences in the student mix of charters and traditional public schools.

Compared to traditional public schools, charter schools have a larger percentage of black students and lower percentages of Hispanic and white students. At the same time, charter schools serve a higher percentage of students whose parents are college educated and a lower percentage of students whose parents are high school dropouts. Despite the higher education level of their parents, these students exhibit lower levels of performance on both end-of-grade reading and math tests.<sup>16</sup>

Their findings on student achievement suggest that charter schools under-perform as compared to public schools; the “negative effects of attending a charter school are large;” and that this pattern holds over time.<sup>17</sup> Responding to Hanushek et al and Sass, Bifulco and Ladd state:

In contrast to the findings from comparable studies of charter school systems in Texas and in Florida, negative effects of charter schools hold even for charter schools that have been operating for several years... Although negative impacts for charter school students who choose to remain in charter schools do not continue to accumulate after the first year, even this group of students shows lower achievement levels as a result of transferring into charter schools.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> I would point out to the reader that Eric A. Hanushek is a resident scholar at the Hoover Institution.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Bifulco & Helen F. Ladd, “The Impacts of Charter Schools on Student Achievement: Evidence from North Carolina”, *Education Finance and Policy*, 2006, Volume 1, Issue 1, 50-90.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 57.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 68.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 88.

Further, they find little evidence that competitive pressures from charters raise achievement in public schools, however they note that “North Carolina charter schools provide only a limited amount of competition for traditional public schools.”<sup>19</sup>

One of the most permissive charter school laws in the nation can be found in Michigan, and not surprisingly there are relatively significant numbers of charter schools located there. Measuring “the effects of charter schools on the students who attend them and neighboring public schools,” Bettinger's investigation of data from Michigan produce findings similar to Bifulco and Ladd.<sup>20</sup> He finds that students attending charter schools have lower “pre-charter” test scores than students attending traditional public schools leading to a mechanical gain in achievement for public schools attributable to the loss of the lowest performing students. However, in comparing charter school and public school students with similar “pre-charter” test scores, he finds that “the estimated effects of charter schools on fourth grade charter students are negative for both math and reading” as well as finding little evidence of achievement gains associated with the competitive pressures of charter schools.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the fact that public school test scores mechanically increase as charter schools draw away underperforming public school students, there is no robust, significant evidence that test scores increase or decrease in neighboring public schools as the number of charters increase.<sup>22</sup>

Interestingly, Bettinger also notes that, within a school district, charter schools are more likely to establish themselves near schools that exhibit both higher test scores, lower levels of diversity, and lower levels of students participating in free and reduced lunch programs.

In sum, the research literature on charter schools produces little evidence that charter school competition significantly raises average student achievement.<sup>23</sup> While Sass provides mixed findings that note small gains in student achievement, Hanushek et al finds that charter schools are no better [or worse] than traditional public schools, and both Bifulco and Ladd, and Bettinger provide evidence that charter schools may be underperforming in comparison to traditional public schools. Further, as with schools of choice, these studies offer hints that some process of student sorting is taking place in the competitive environments generated by charter schools.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Eric P. Bettinger, “The effect of charter schools on charter students and public schools”, *Economics of Education Review*, 2005, Volume 24, Issue 2, 133-147.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 140.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 145.

<sup>23</sup> The examples of the research literature presented here are representative of the broader body of research that also include studies of charter school programs in Arizona, California and Washington DC. In general, the studies that find a positive effect of charter school competition demonstrate only small achievement gains, and there are an equal number of studies that present negative or no effect of charter school competition on academic achievement.



Within the US context, the degree of competition exerted by *private schools* is small. However, looking at the research on comparisons between private and public school achievement is instructive for our purposes here, because one of the key arguments made by our think tank experts relates to the inherent inefficiencies associated with the public sector. Freed of the bureaucratic trappings of government as well as being almost solely dependent on pleasing its customers in order to remain viable, it would stand to reason that private schools should exhibit higher academic achievement than comparable public schools. While the research literature comparing private and public school achievement is limited,<sup>24</sup> little evidence emerges that private schools produce higher achievement than do traditional public schools nor that competition from private schools, however small, has a positive effect on public school achievement.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress [NAEP] provides a national picture of private school achievement. At first glance, it presents a rather positive image of academic achievement in private schools. In grades 4, 8, and 12, all types of private schools [religious and secular] produced higher reading, math, science, and writing scores on standardized examinations.<sup>25</sup> However, if we scratch beneath the surface of this general trend we will begin to see a familiar pattern. Private schools have a larger percentage of white students than do public schools while public schools service much larger percentages of Hispanic and African-American students. Parental education figures also demonstrate that the parents of private school students are more likely to be college graduates than are the parents of public school students. Indeed, when these differences in student demographics are accounted for, the achievement gap between private and public schools appears to dissipate. Looking at NAEP scores for mathematics, Lubienski and Lubienski argue that student demographics more than account for the differences in achievement.

After demographic differences had been controlled, no charter or private school means were higher than public school means to any statistically significant degree; moreover, particularly at Grade 4, public schools actually scored significantly higher than did private and charter schools.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> There were a large number of studies conducted in the 1980's and 1990's into the "Catholic School Effect", however, even when accounting for socioeconomic and racial characteristics, these studies fail to overcome the selection bias associated with parents who send their children to Catholic schools and more recent studies have called into question the validity of this "effect" altogether. In my review here, I will examine the more recent literature that examines private schooling in general, religious and secular. See: Mikyong Minsun Kim & Margaret Placier, "Comparison of Academic Development in Catholic versus Non-Catholic Private Secondary Schools", *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 2004, Volume 12 Issue 5, Retrieved 07/24/08, <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v12n5/>.

<sup>25</sup> Student Achievement in Private Schools: Results From NAEP 2000– 2005 (NCES 2006-459). US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

<sup>26</sup> Sarah Theule Lubienski and Christopher Lubienski, "School Sector and Academic Achievement: A Multilevel Analysis of NAEP Mathematics Data", *American Educational Research Journal*, Winter 2006, Vol. 43, No. 4, pp. 680..

Indeed, Lubienski and Lubienski argue against reading too much into cross sector comparisons in general, pointing out that student characteristics impact achievement far more significantly than public or private schooling.

Comparing achievement among public and both secular and religious private schools, William Carbonaro provides insight into potential sector differences by studying kindergarten students.<sup>27</sup> The benefits of studying this grade level is that kindergarten students typically take two skill assessments, one upon entering school during the fall and another at the end of the year. What he finds is revealing.

Private, secular school students gain significantly less than public school students in all three subjects [reading, math & general knowledge] during kindergarten. Catholic school students gain less than public school students in reading, but math and reading differences are nonsignificant. Learning rates for public and private, religious school students are roughly comparable in all three subjects. In short, when students with similar background characteristics and a similar likelihood of attending private school are compared, private, secular school students (and Catholic school students in reading) perform slightly less well than expected when compared with public school students.<sup>28</sup>

Interestingly, Carbonaro found that students in both secular and religious private schools enjoy structural advantages in learning opportunities in that they are more likely to attend an all-day kindergarten and work in smaller classes. However, in a rather surprising finding, he also finds that public school students actually receive more instruction time in reading and mathematics than do their counterparts in both secular and religious schools.<sup>29</sup> As with schools of choice and charter schools, the research literature on potential sector differences between public and private schooling is far from conclusive. However, when all three bodies of research are examined as a collective whole, one of the key assumptions of market-based education reform is certainly brought into question.

An assumption of the market-based school reforms offered by our think tank experts is that the competitive pressures of the marketplace would raise academic achievement across sectors and would especially benefit student populations currently underserved by public education. The evidence that emerges from the research literature on the relationship between competition and achievement is ambiguous at best with little evidence that competition provides a “rising tide of learning that raises all boats.” Even where evidence of achievement gains in competitive environments is demonstrated, it is difficult to discern whether any potential success is due to school or

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<sup>27</sup> William Carbonaro, “Public-Private Differences in Achievement among Kindergarten Students: Differences in Learning Opportunities and Student Outcomes”, *American Journal of Education*, 2006, Volume 113, Number 1, 31-67.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 49-50.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 47.

sector differences or are a reflection of the student characteristics of those successful schools. Indeed, what has emerged from my reading of the research literature has not only brought into question the “liberal” assumption of competition and educational quality, but it has also raised the serious issue of school choice and student sorting along socioeconomic and racial lines. This issue warrants further consideration.

### **The educational marketplace & stratification.**

Within the research literature on charter schools in the US, there is growing evidence that market-based education reforms that are often justified as a means of providing equal educational opportunities to working class and minority student populations are instead encouraging the sorting of student population along racial and class lines. In a national study of charter schools, Renzulli and Evans present evidence that the relative integration of a school district is a significant determinate of white enrollment in charter schools.<sup>30</sup> As relative integration increases within a district, white enrollment in charter schools increases correspondingly.

As three generations of research on white flight shows, residential mobility allows whites to avoid nonwhites in their schools. We find that in the current era of school choice, charter schools are also a white flight option.<sup>31</sup>

Indeed, despite stated parental concern for academic quality, Renzulli and Evans found that “the racial distribution of charter school enrollment does not depend on the academic quality of school districts (i.e., district-wide test scores).”<sup>32</sup> Likewise, Bifulco and Ladd examine data from North Carolina that provide significant and troubling evidence that differences in parental choices lead to student sorting and stratification.

Black students move to charter schools in which close to 70 percent of the students are black, only 30 percent have college educated parents and the average student test scores (lagged one year) are almost half a standard deviation below the average. In contrast, white students move to charter schools that are more than 80 percent non-black, in which 47 percent of the students have college educated parents and in which average student test scores (lagged one year) are well above average.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Linda A. Renzulli & Lorraine Evans, “School Choice, Charter Schools, and White Flight”, *Social Problems*, 2005, Volume 52, Issue 3, 398-418.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 410.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 412.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Bifulco & Helen Ladd, “School Choice, Racial Segregation and Test-Score Gaps: Evidence from North Carolina’s Charter School Program”, presented at the Annual Meeting of Allied Social Science Association, Boston Massachusetts January 8, 2006.

In light of the continued re-segregation of public schooling over the past thirty years, it would appear as though charter schools and school choice may provide yet another mechanism for educational stratification and racial separation in schooling.<sup>34</sup>

Looking at Arizona charter schools, Garcia found that for both primary and secondary levels, parents enrolled students into charter schools that were more racially segregated than the districts they left, and that academic achievement is a weak predictor for charter school attendance.<sup>35</sup> Noting that charter school advocates argue that self-segregation may, in fact, be the result of school specialization, Garcia presents evidence to the contrary.

In other contexts where school choice has resulted in more racial segregation, school choice advocates have retorted with the charter school specialization theory and argued that racially segregated schools are the result of parental preferences to attend specialized schools. According to the Arizona results, the weak and, at times, inconsistent relationship between academic and racial segregation and charter school type is not compelling evidence to support the charter school specialization theory uncritically.<sup>36</sup>

What Garcia found is that parents choose schools for their children based on the characteristics of the student body more so than school type or academic achievement. Also looking at Arizona charter schools, Dee and Fu produced similar findings that charter schools were skimming “white non-Hispanic students from conventional public schools.”<sup>37</sup> Interestingly, they also found evidence that this movement of students into charter schools drained resources from traditional public schools. Since charter schools in Arizona receive their funding directly from the state, acting in effect as a mini-school district, critics have argued that local districts with significant numbers of charter schools may seek to reduce their tax effort for traditional public schools. Dee and Fu attempt to measure for this effect by looking at changes in student-teacher ratios and find evidence that this incentive structure may, indeed, be operative. “The results suggest that the introduction of charter schools increased pupil-teacher ratios in conventional public schools by roughly 1.2, an average increase of roughly 6 percent.”<sup>38</sup>

Schneider and Buckley use some rather unique data from internet search queries on Washington, D.C. charter schools to compare what parents say they look for in choosing schools and the information they actually access in researching and accessing

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<sup>34</sup> Jonathon Kozol, *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*, (New York: Crown, 2005).

<sup>35</sup> David R. Garcia, “Academic and Racial Segregation in Charter Schools: Do Parents Sort Students into Specialized Charter Schools?”, *Education and Urban Society*, 2008, Volume 40, Number 5, 590-612.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 609.

<sup>37</sup> Thomas S. Dee & Helen Fu, “Do Charter Schools Skim Students or Drain Resources?”, *Economics of Education Review*, 2004, Volume 23, 267.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

information on specific schools.<sup>39</sup> Polling data consistently show that parents overwhelmingly cite academic achievement as being the biggest consideration in school choice. However, judging by their internet search queries, parents seeking school information demonstrate a “strong bias toward accessing the demographic characteristics of the student population.”<sup>40</sup> Beyond student characteristics, parents also demonstrate a strong bias toward accessing information on school location. “[I]n a highly segregated and stratified city such as Washington, D.C., school location also conveys a considerable amount of information about the student body.”<sup>41</sup> In short, Schneider and Buckley provide evidence that there is a disconnect between stated and actual parental preferences that point toward student sorting along racial and socioeconomic lines.

Taken together, the lack of evidence of achievement gains associated with competitive markets and school choice and the growing evidence of student sorting and stratification raises some serious questions over the efficacy and desirability of an educational marketplace. Thus far, the research literature not only provides little evidence of educational benefits associated with school competition and market-based reforms, but it also raises at least the potential for some serious social costs that require a cautious approach to these reforms. However, there is another potential benefit assumed by market-based reforms that could offer some justification for an educational marketplace.

### **The educational marketplace & innovation.**

Turning now to the second assumption of market-based education reforms, the research literature on educational innovation taking place as a result of school choice and competition is relatively underdeveloped and limited. However, the evidence that is available provides a mixed picture. Lubienski's review of the literature on charter schools found that while charters do offer parents alternatives in such areas as class size or programatic focus they aren't engaging in classroom practices that are new or even different from what's already taking place in traditional public schools.<sup>42</sup> “Indeed, a substantial plurality of charter schools employ a traditional “basics” approach to instruction.”<sup>43</sup> In contradistinction to an innovative educational marketplace, Lubienski notes a standardization of educational practices in a process called mimetic isomorphism.

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<sup>39</sup> Mark Schneider and Jack Buckley, “What Do Parents Want From Schools? Evidence from the Internet”, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 2002, Volume 24, Number 2, 133-144.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 138.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Christopher Lubienski, “Innovation in Education Markets: Theory and Evidence on the Impact of Competition and Choice in Charter Schools”, *American Educational Research Journal*, 2003, Volume 40, Number 2, 395-443.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. 418.

[P]ertinent here... is the concept of mimetic isomorphism, wherein institutions employ a constricted set of responses to uncertainty. Particularly when facing a precarious environment or when operating on ambiguous goals, organizations are more likely to emulate similar organizations in their field that they perceive to be more legitimate or successful.<sup>44</sup>

Thus the uncertainties created by competitive markets can actually work to undermine the research and development component of market-based education reforms leading instead to risk aversion.

In this regard, the paucity of classroom innovations emerges not simply in spite of the market forces that have been brought to bear through the changes in school governance. Instead, curricular conformity and standardization may be encouraged by the very market forces that were unleashed to address those ills.<sup>45</sup>

However, there are some areas in which charter schools appear to be innovating and that is in administrative functions, such as merit-pay and soliciting private capital. Yet, it is important to note that these “administrative innovations are an immediate result of the structural changes fashioned as policy *inputs* for charter schools, not an end to themselves.”<sup>46</sup> It would be a stretch to attribute these kind of administrative innovations to any inherent characteristic of an educational marketplace as opposed to the result of the policy decisions that lead to the creation of charter school programs in the first place. For example, freeing charter schools of collective bargaining is an intentional policy input that is intended to not simply hold down education costs but to also free up funding for developing innovative pay and incentive structures.

Perhaps one area of administrative innovation that can be attributed to the creation of a competitive educational marketplace is in educational marketing. Looking at data from the Washington, D.C. charter program, Lacireno-Paquet and Henig find that even though both non- and for-profit charters were created to target high poverty, predominantly minority students there are significant differences in the students these charters serve.

While nonmarket-oriented charter schools are serving equal or higher proportions of needy populations than the traditional public school system, those with more entrepreneurial aspirations are not. The percentage of special education students served is nearly twice as high in nonmarket-oriented charters than in market-oriented ones. The overall

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 423-424.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 423.

<sup>46</sup> Christopher Lubienksi, “Charter School Innovation in Theory and Practice: Autonomy, R&D, and Curricular Conformity”, ed. Katrina E. Bulkley & Priscilla Wohlstetter, *Taking Account of Charter Schools: What's Happened and What's Next*, (New York: Teachers College Press, 2004), 82.

responsiveness of Washington, DC charter schools to the special needs of Latino students, who constitute the overwhelming majority of those with special language needs, appears to be entirely attributable to the targeted efforts of a few of the nonmarket-oriented charter schools.<sup>47</sup>

The charter schools most sensitive to market forces [i.e. those charters that answer to investors] appear to avoid servicing those students that require the most resources and somehow “shape” their student bodies. In a study on the informational material provided by traditional public, charter and private schools in competitive environments, Lubienski offers us a glimpse into what might be taking place in these competitive school environments. He found that schools operating in programs targeting disadvantaged students have strong incentives to avoid servicing the neediest students within those populations and target the highest academic performers available in order to improve their market position. The result he argues is the development of educational marketing.<sup>48</sup> While the information generally provided by public schools center on organizational outputs required by states in annual reports both private schools and charters provide marketing materials that place emphasis elsewhere.

[P]rivate schools employ a relatively strong emphasis on more emotional themes such as community, religious values, and patriotism. Charter schools offer more commercialized materials in which they choose not to employ the information required of public schools in their annual reports. They are more likely to stress academic programs and themes, often in differentiating themselves from (perceptions of) public schools or equating themselves with private schools: character education and morality, safety, uniforms, patriotism, and their tuition-free nature.<sup>49</sup>

Indeed, it appears as though the evidence available thus far in the research literature, limited as it may be, points to what should be a somewhat obvious conclusion. A competitive educational marketplace would appear to provide strong incentives for education providers to “shape” their consumers and attract the highest performers in order to maintain market position and [ultimately] viability. The high costs of educating the lowest performers and the unpredictability of the many externalities that can effect their academic achievement create strong disincentives to service those students. The primary innovation in administrative functions appears to be the development of educational marketing practices. In contradistinction to the R&D laboratory of educational innovation envisaged by our think-tank experts, schools operating in competitive environments face strong incentives to eschew innovative [risky] classroom practices focusing instead on symbolic representation and marketing to shape their

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<sup>47</sup> Natalie Lacireno-Paquet & Jeffrey R. Henig, “Creaming vs. Cropping: Charter School Enrollment Practices in Response to Market Incentives”, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 2002, Volume 24, Number 2, 155.

<sup>48</sup> Christopher Lubienski, “Marketing Schools: Consumer Goods and Competitive Incentives for Consumer Information”, *Education and Urban Society*, 2007, Volume 40, Number 1, 118-141.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 130.

student bodies. This calls into question the second assumption underlying market-based education reforms.

Thus far we've encountered little empirical evidence from the research literature to substantiate the validity of the two key assumptions underlying the market-based reforms offered by our think tank experts. However, the relative newness of school choice programs in the U.S. and their limited impact in creating substantial competition thus far makes it difficult to reach a firm conclusion as to the efficacy of these reforms in fulfilling the ideals to which they speak. As many of the researchers presented here repeatedly state, the research literature is simply too incomplete to render judgment, but the questions raised by this review of the research literature are indeed serious and warrant further exploration. Do competitive educational markets raise academic achievement across sectors, or do they sort students into an even more stratified education system than we currently have? Do market forces foster research and development of new educational practices and curricular approaches in which schools specialize in order to serve a wide variety of student needs, or do they encourage standardization in education practices and the use of marketing to shape consumers? In order to expand our empirical base, it is instructive to look at international examples of competitive market models with more extensive track records such as Denmark, Chile, and New Zealand. While the comparisons are not perfect, they do offer us some insight into the questions raised by the research literature on the U.S. experience with school competition and choice.

### **The educational marketplace: International examples.**

In the research literature from the U.S., we found little evidence of achievement gains as a result of school competition; significant evidence of student sorting along socioeconomic and racial lines; little evidence of innovation in educational practices; and a growing body of evidence of educational marketing being employed to shape consumers. Going forward, I will look at three international examples of school choice and competition. The intent of this broader examination of the research literature is to see whether the dynamics that emerged from the U.S. context have been observed in nations with extensive choice programs that have been in existence for at least a decade.

Denmark has a one-hundred year history with school choice in which parents are free to choose between public and both religious and secular private schools. It is a de facto voucher system in which the funding follows the child and state funding covers the majority of the costs for attending a private school. As a result, Denmark has a well-developed private sector that currently services 12% of the nation's students, and the long standing practice of national assessments provide a wealth of data for research. However, it appears as though the literature on competitive forces and their impact on achievement in Denmark is relatively limited. In one extensive study on the Danish experience that is currently drawing a great deal of attention, Anderson and Serritzlew



examine the impact of competition on public school achievement using “data comprising detailed background information on more than 4,500 students in 1,321 public and private schools.”<sup>50</sup> Their findings suggest that school competition does not enhance academic achievement in public schools.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, what they found is that many of the socioeconomic and structural factors long associated with academic achievement played a far more significant role than did sector competition for educational funding.

The student-level control variables behave in general as expected in all models. Girls do better than boys. First- and second-generation immigrants perform more poorly than ethnic Danes do. Parental education, income, and savings are all positively correlated to the performance of the children and so is size and ownership of residence. Students living with both of their parents do better than those who live with their mother or father alone or in a blended family. Turning to the school-level variables, the SES of schoolmates contributes positively to the performance of the individual students and so does school size.”<sup>52</sup>

Interestingly, they also found a strong correlation between school competition and higher spending. “It seems to be more expensive to educate children in municipalities with a high degree of competition from private schools.”<sup>53</sup> Indeed, it appears to be the case that market forces raise total education expenditures by fostering uncertainty in the public sector.

If the municipal authorities are the only providers of school education, the number of students is typically very predictable, even in the long run... The existence of private alternatives increases uncertainty. The forecasts of future student enrollment are less reliable when private schools compete for the pool of students. The public schools must provide education for the residual. The fact that competition is more detrimental to expenditures when budgets are directly linked to the number of students is consistent with this explanation. In such schools, competition creates even more uncertainty, and this seems to decrease efficiency.”<sup>54</sup>

Serving the role as “educators of last resort”, public schools must be prepared for whatever unseen events the future may hold and this leads to inefficiencies in funding.

Comparisons of the Danish experience with the American context are difficult. Although Denmark has a long history with school choice, there is relatively little research literature available on the relationship between school competition and

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<sup>50</sup> Simon Calmar Anderson & Soren Serritzlew, “The Unintended Effects of Private School Competition”, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 2007, Volume 17, Number 2, 336.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 348.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 349.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 352.

academic achievement across sectors, and it is important to note that private schools in Denmark are non-profits run by an elected board. There is also the problem of demographics. While by no means a classless society, Denmark's long history with social democracy has created a society that bears little resemblance to the highly polarized social structure present in the United States. However, the significant time frame associated with the Danish experience, the wealth of student data available, and the familiarity of the conclusions reached by Anderson and Serritzlew do provide some depth to the issues that emerged from the review of the research literature from the U.S. presented here. Similar to the U.S. context, Anderson and Serritzlew find no measurable gains in achievement associated with school competition and note that student demographics provide a far more accurate predictor of academic success than does school choice. As with Dee and Fu's findings from Arizona, Anderson and Serritzlew demonstrate that school competition can have a serious impact on public school funding. It could very well be the case that once expanded to a national level that school choice and competition could increase educational funding in the aggregate.

Our second international example offers a far more well developed body of research literature to examine. In 1981, the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet implemented a series of policy reforms at the advice of a group of economists trained by Milton Friedman at the University of Chicago that dramatically liberalized the Chilean economy and restructured its public education system. Instituting a national voucher program, parents in Chile were allowed to choose between secular private, religious private, and public schools, and public school funding was linked to student enrollment.

Hsieh and Urquiola examine data from Chile in order to assess the effects of competition on academic achievement in both private and public schools while also looking for evidence of student sorting.<sup>55</sup> As for the first question, they found little evidence that school competition raised average academic achievement. "In fact, when one introduces controls for per capita income growth, and changes in enrollment rates and school spending, the performance of the median Chilean student appears to have slightly worsened."<sup>56</sup> They also found significant evidence of student sorting along socioeconomic lines that make it extremely problematic to assess whether the competitive pressures exerted by private schools helped to raise achievement in the public school sector.

In sum, there are two points we take away from the evidence. First, private schools attracted students from families with higher levels of income and schooling. Second, because these characteristics are important determinants of educational outcomes, it will be virtually impossible to isolate whether public schools improved in response to the competitive forces unleashed by the private sector. As our estimates show, the relative

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<sup>55</sup> Chang-Tai Hsieh & Miguel Urquiola, "The effects of generalized school choice on achievement and stratification: Evidence from Chile's voucher program", *Journal of Public Economics*, 2006, Volume 90, Issue 8-9, 1477-1503.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 1493.

grades of public school students fell by more in communes with a larger increase in private enrollment. This does not necessarily imply that public school did not improve – it simply indicates that if a productivity effect is present, it is overwhelmed by the sorting effect.<sup>57</sup>

Likewise, Gauri's research into student sorting in Chile found a high degree of stratification among education sectors that reflect the larger social divisions that characterize Chilean society.<sup>58</sup> In Chile, "equal per-student payments provide a compelling incentive for schools to cut their costs by selecting the students that are easiest to educate. Like private health insurers, they find it cheaper to compete by enrolling most of the best students, or "creaming," than by improving the skills of the less gifted."<sup>59</sup>

Looking at the decision-making process of Chilean parents in choosing the schools their children will attend, Elacqua et al produce evidence of a disconnect between parents stated preferences and their actual behavior.<sup>60</sup>

Analysis of the data suggests that, despite the fact that parents in Santiago say they are seeking strong academic programs in their children's schools, they actually shop for schools that are widely different on academic quality but similar on socioeconomic dimensions. In short, as parents choose school in Chile, class – not the classroom – may matter more.<sup>61</sup>

Similar to Schneider and Buckley's findings in the Washington, D.C. charter program, there is little evidence of a link between academic achievement and the parental decision-making process. It appears as though the demographic profile of the student body at a particular school is a significant determinant in school choice.

As with Denmark, any attempt at making a comparison between Chile and the U.S. must include some important caveats. First, there is a significant disparity of wealth between the two nations that may speak to how effectively each could implement such a large scale education reform project. However, I would note that both nations are similar in that they can both be characterized as being highly stratified with a persistent, multi-generational underclass plaguing both societies. Second, in contrast to the reforms offered by our think-tank experts, over-subscribed schools in Chile may institute selective admission policies that allow them more freedom in shaping their student bodies. Nevertheless, as with Denmark and the U.S., there is little evidence that large-scale school competition raises average student achievement across sectors, and, as

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 1496.

<sup>58</sup> Varun Gauri, *School Choice in Chile*, (Pittsburg: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), 50-72.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 45.

<sup>60</sup> Gregory Elacqua, Mark Schneider & Jack Buckley, "School Choice in Chile: Is It Class or the Classroom?", *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 2006, Volume 25, Number 3, 577-601.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 578.

with the U.S., Chile provides evidence that market forces create strong incentives for schools to shape their student bodies by targeting wealthier, easier to educate students and avoiding those students whose demographic profiles make them more costly [risky] to service.

Our third international example is New Zealand's decade long experiment with a school voucher program. What is perhaps most instructive about the New Zealand experience is that it offers us a glimpse of market-based education reforms to a stratified system of public education situated within an economically developed nation.<sup>62</sup> The drastic nature of the reforms and the significant research literature on public education in New Zealand before, during, and after this experiment provide us with an unique perspective. Looking first at academic achievement, Ladd and Fiske reach two disturbing conclusions on the efficacy of school choice in raising student achievement.<sup>63</sup> First, school competition had a negative impact on both student learning and teacher job satisfaction. Second, "enrollment declines [in public schools] are associated with a relative decline in the quality of student learning."<sup>64</sup> Taking seriously the "all boats rise with the tide" assumption of market-based reforms one would expect to see a reduction of educational inequality with implementation of school choice. However, looking at changes in educational inequality after these reforms, Ladd and Fiske found just the opposite.

The evidence reported here documents that schools with large initial proportions of minorities (Maori and Pacific Island students in the New Zealand context) were at a clear disadvantage in the educational market place relative to other schools and that the effect was to generate a system in which gaps between the "successful" and the "unsuccessful" schools became wider and in which minority and low SES students were disproportionately concentrated in the "unsuccessful" schools.<sup>65</sup>

It appears as though market-based reforms of a highly stratified public school system yielded a stratified system that skimmed off high SES students of European descent into the private sector and high achieving public schools. Indeed, Thrupp's review of the research literature on polarization in New Zealand prior to, during, and after the roll-back of these reforms found that across time the urban middle classes have been consistently successful in educating their children in socially advantaged schools.<sup>66</sup> In

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<sup>62</sup> As with the U.S., New Zealand's system of public education has been historically characterized as being stratified along both socioeconomic and racial lines. For example, Maori and Pacific Islander minorities constitute an over-represented grouping within a multi-generational underclass that live in segregated areas and generally attend more segregated schools.

<sup>63</sup> Helen F. Ladd & Edward B. Fiske, "Does Competition Improve Teaching and Learning? Evidence from New Zealand", *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 2003, Volume 25, Number 1, 97-112.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 107.

<sup>65</sup> Helen F. Ladd & Edward B. Fiske, "The Uneven Playing Field of School Choice: Evidence from New Zealand", *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 2001, Volume 20, Number 1, 107.

<sup>66</sup> Martin Thrupp, "School Admissions and the Segregation of School Intakes in New Zealand Cities", *Urban Studies*, 2007, Volume 44, Number 7, 1393-1404.

short, the research literature from New Zealand fails to demonstrate that school choice and competition raised academic achievement or eliminated [or even alleviated] educational inequality.

Making a comparison between New Zealand and the U.S. is much easier than with our other international examples, however there is one important caveat. Like Chile, over-subscribed schools in New Zealand were allowed to institute admissions policies that gave them more power to shape their student bodies. Nevertheless, comparisons among all three of the international examples with the U.S. experience does raise red flags in regard to the key assumption that market-based reforms will raise average academic achievement and especially benefit low SES and minority students. Like the research literature on Denmark, Chile, and the U.S., the evidence from New Zealand does not support the achievement claims made by our think-tank reformers. Further, as with the research literature from Chile and the U.S., the data from New Zealand points toward significant market incentives to shape consumers and significant evidence of student sorting along socioeconomic and racial lines. In sum, the research literature examining three nations with at least a decade of experience with school choice provides little evidence that the economic incentives created by school competition and school choice raises average student achievement across sectors, but it does provide weight to concerns over student sorting.

Turning now to the second key assumption of market-based education reforms, the research literature available on the relationship between school competition and educational innovation internationally, although limited in scope, points toward similar conclusions to the research literature on the U.S. experience. Lubienski's review of the research literature from the U.S., the U.K., Chile, and New Zealand finds that competitive pressures lead to a standardization of classroom practices toward traditional teaching and curricular practices.<sup>67</sup> Looking at the U.K.'s limited experiments with school choice that began in the 1980's, Woods et al. find that there is significant pressure on schools to conform to traditional ideas on what constitutes a quality education.

Indeed, there are indications of innovation being curbed sometimes because of a reluctance to appear to step outside the dominant model of the high status school, and/or for fear that certain forms of diversity (such as too much emphasis on vocational education) might worsen a school's position in the local status hierarchy.<sup>68</sup>

Widely held perceptions of what constitutes high-quality, innovative teaching trend toward traditional educational practices thus creating strong incentives for educational providers in a competitive environment to adopt those practices. Noting a lack of

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<sup>67</sup> Christopher Lubienski, "School Diversification in Second-Best Education Markets: International Evidence and Conflicting Theories of Change", *Educational Policy*, 2006, Volume 20, Number 2, 323-344.

<sup>68</sup> Philip A. Woods, Carl Bagley & Ron Glatter, *School Choice and Competition: Markets in the Public Interest?*, (London: Routledge, 1998) 211.

educational innovation in the Chilean voucher system, Gauri attributes this standardization to the parental decision-making process.

Simply put, parents often do not seek educational innovation. Education serves a variety of functions, only one of which is academic achievement. Although nearly all parents send their children to school in order that they learn, they assign varying importance to other priorities, such as safety, convenience, day care, familiarity with the values and social codes of their children's peers, and agreement with religious and moral teachings. In specific settings, parents willingly trade academic achievement or educational innovation for those other priorities.<sup>69</sup>

Lubienski concludes that three major patterns emerge from a broad international examination on school competition and innovation:

- Schools are adopting innovations in administrative areas such as marketing and employment.
- The expected innovations and consequent diversification of classroom practices do not appear to be emerging; indeed, many schools often used their autonomy to embrace traditional or basics instructional strategies.
- Where educational innovations are occurring, they are often the result of bureaucratic or public-policy interventions, not market forces – contrary to the logic of public choice.<sup>70</sup>

Looking at the evidence thus far, it appears as though market incentives do indeed lead to innovation. However, it is not the kind of innovations envisioned by our think tank experts. As opposed to creating incentives for developing innovative teaching and curricular practices, school competition and market forces appear to create incentives for developing marketing strategies to shape consumers while adopting traditional instructional practices. Indeed, evidence that public-policy interventions are more effective in generating educational innovation may in fact stem from public institutions relative insulation from competitive forces. As Lubienski notes: “Where innovation is important, as with pharmaceuticals and aerospace engineering, there typically is some degree of imperfect competition to allow firms the rents – the space and resources – to support long-term R&D.”<sup>71</sup>

Taken in the aggregate, the research literature we've examined here fails to substantiate the key assumptions of market-driven education reforms. We cannot say with any certainty that school choice and competition improve average academic achievement nor does it appear to raise student achievement in struggling schools.

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<sup>69</sup> Varun Gauri, *School Choice in Chile: Two Decades of Educational Reform*, 105.

<sup>70</sup> Christopher Lubienski, “School Diversification in Second-Best Education Markets: International Evidence and Conflicting Theories of Change”, 333.

<sup>71</sup> Christopher Lubienski, “School Diversification in Second-Best Education Markets: International Evidence and Conflicting Theories of Change”, 338.

Indeed, we can say that there is ample evidence that competitive pressures create disincentives to serve difficult student populations in high poverty areas. Low SES and minority students often require more inputs than lower potential profits, and the numerous externalities associated with these student populations [parental education level, nutrition, etc.] all impact educational outcomes and increase the economic risks associated with servicing these students. Further, we cannot say with any certainty that school choice and competition leads to greater efficiency in educational funding. Dee and Fu found evidence that charter schools in Arizona drained resources from public schools, while Anderson found evidence that, when implemented on a national level, school choice may actually increase educational spending by creating uncertainties in the public sector's budgeting process. The public sector's role as educator of last resort requires that it be prepared for fluctuations in the private sector.<sup>72</sup> Finally, we cannot say with any certainty that school choice and competition push educational innovation in respect to teaching and curricular practices. Indeed, it may be that competition retards innovation. In sum, I find little concrete evidence to justify the reforms offered by our think tank experts intended to foster an educational marketplace.

### ***Performance-Based Environment: Standards, High-Stakes Assessment & Accountability***

Turning now to the second theme that emerged from the structural prescriptives developed in chapter two, the performance-based environment of a regulated educational marketplace is built upon a foundation of high standards, rigorous assessments and tough accountability measures for students, teachers, schools, and administrators.<sup>73</sup> Beneath the veneer of these standards-based reforms lie an assumption of a functional reflexivity. Clear, measurable academic standards provide the foundation for the construction of rigorous curricula, sound instructional models, and assessments that will challenge students to achieve at high levels. Standardized assessments measure students' achievement in reaching the prescribed academic standards, measure teacher and school effectiveness, and provide the necessary data for realigning curricular and pedagogical practices in order to address students' academic needs. In turn, the tough accountability measures attached to performance on those assessments provide incentives for students, teachers, and administrators alike in ensuring student achievement. Put more simply, the assumption here is that standards-based reform will foster a rational organization of schooling that will increase student achievement. It is an assumption of reinforcing incentives where standards are the carrot accompanying the accountability stick and rational education decisions are made possible by the empirical data provided by objective assessments. However, a review of the research literature offers little to support these assumptions.

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<sup>72</sup> I would argue that the US government's continuing intervention in the financial sector beginning in August of 2007 and continuing until this writing should offer a cautionary tale on how the private sector can create systemic risks that require substantial public action and expenditure.

<sup>73</sup> For the sake of brevity, I will subsume this dynamic of standards, assessment and accountability under the terminology of "Standards-based reform."

Sloan and Kelly identify two controversial issues involved with standards-based reforms and high-stakes assessments.<sup>74</sup> The first of these issues lie with the desirability [or even possibility] of developing clear, simple standards as the foundation of instruction, assessment, and accountability.

Content mastery at some level is a *cognitive* event: the understanding of powerful, complex, and sometimes fuzzy ideas. For that reason, at least for challenging content, it may be difficult to write clear and simple standards, thereby making their operationalization for curriculum development, test construction (of any genre, objective or authentic), and alignment between the two problematic.<sup>75</sup>

On the one hand, the logic of a standards-based framework requires challenging academic content as an incentive for high academic achievement, yet, on the other hand, standardized assessments require clear, easily measured criteria by which to judge student success. Indeed, *prima facie*, it stands to reason that in the process of articulating challenging academic content into clear, easily-measured standards a good deal of the complexity, ambiguity, and contradictions that make content challenging to begin with would be lost.<sup>76</sup> More importantly, even assuming the desirability of constructing clear, easily- measured academic standards, the types of assessment most often associated with standards-based reforms raise issues that call into question the assumption of reflexivity between these assessments and educational decision-making processes.

Sloan and Kelly point out that different types of assessments test different skills and serve different purposes. The multiple choice assessments associated with standards-based reforms in the U.S. are most often constructed within a psychometric framework designed to produce “economically tractable and defensible reliability indices” for ranking and norming purposes.<sup>77</sup> Constructed along a “Bell Curve,” it would appear that these types of assessments are far better suited to scaling students than providing useful information capable of improving student learning. Yet, a key assumption of standards-based reform is that these “scientifically” constructed assessments must do exactly that, ie. improve student learning.

At the district and state level, standardized assessments are being increasingly used to differentiate between effective and ineffective schools. While this may seem a rather straightforward and intuitive means of measuring school effectiveness, it is far from rigorous. Measuring school proficiency/deficiency based on standardized assessments assumes a causal relationship between differences in student test

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<sup>74</sup> Finbarr C. Sloan & Anthony E. Kelly, “Issues in High-Stakes Testing Programs”, *Theory Into Practice*, 2003, Volume 42, Number 1, 12-17.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>76</sup> See also: N.E. Grunland, *Assessment of student achievement* (6<sup>th</sup> edition), (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1998).

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 13.



performance and differences in the effectiveness of instruction. A school accountability framework based on standardized test scores alone fails to recognize other academic inputs, such as student – teacher characteristics, instructional practices, resources, curriculum, etc., involved in academic achievement and test performance. Robert Linn notes that, despite the rhetoric of many reformers, using standardized test scores to distinguish between effective and ineffective schools is decidedly *un*-scientific.

Valid inferences about school effectiveness require more than student achievement test results. At a minimum, information is also needed about student and teacher characteristics and about instructional practices and uses of instructional materials... Even with such additional information, causal interpretations would be difficult to defend and subject to challenge. [Policy-makers] would be on much firmer ground, however, than is possible without the additional information about school organization and instructional practice in the schools being held accountable.<sup>78</sup>

Further, in a more general sense, determining proficiency – deficiency using data from standardized assessments must involve some sort of ranking process that requires a determination of “cut points” in the distribution of student scores that is, as Andrew Ho notes, necessarily “judgmental.”<sup>79</sup> In short, it appears as though on both the student and school levels that standardized assessments are being put to tasks for which they are not designed nor well-suited.

In order to pull back the layers of any assumption of reflexivity between assessments and educational decision-making in standards-based reforms even further, it is instructive to narrow one's perspective a bit. To get a hold of the extensive literature dealing with standardized assessments, it is useful to narrow our focus to the research literature that deals with an academic skill that is at once foundational to the educational process as well as being cognitively complex: literacy. In their review of research literature on reading and literacy education, Alexander and Fox speak to the complexity of reading as a skill not easily pinned down into simplistic learning models.

Because reading is multidimensional in character, with significant relations among readers' knowledge, strategic processing, and motivation, simple models or theories based on a “learning to read” and “reading to learn” distinction need to be supplanted with more complex, reciprocal models of reading development.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Robert L. Linn, “Validity of Inferences from Test-Based Educational Accountability Systems”, *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education*, 2006, Volume 19, Number 1-2, 14.

<sup>79</sup> Andrew Dean Ho, “The Problem With “Proficiency”: Limitations of Statistics and Policy Under No Child Left Behind”, *Educational Researcher*, 2008, Volume 37, Number 6, 351-360.

<sup>80</sup> Patricia A. Alexander & Emily Fox, “A Historical Perspective on Reading Research and Practice”, *Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading* (5<sup>th</sup> edition), ed. Norman J. Unrau & Robert B. Ruddell, (International Reading Association, 2004), 54.

This multidimensionality of reading makes it an excellent candidate for testing the efficacy of high-stakes, standardized assessments in measuring student knowledge and in producing useful information on which to base instructional, curricular, and policy decisions. Reading assessments command a significant presence in standards-based reforms, and there is a rich body of research that examines their efficacy. If there is indeed a reflexive relation between these two “moments” of a standards-based model then the research literature should demonstrate that 1) the information generated by standardized assessments provide rich, actionable data on student achievement; and 2) the implementation of standards-based reforms improve student achievement.

Rupp et al. examine the common approach of standardized assessment designed to measure reading comprehension skills, which is to ask students to respond to a text passage with multiple-choice questions. Their findings suggest that students approach these questions as problem solving tasks and that these assessments actually test a rather limited range of reading skills. “[D]ifferent [multiple choice] questions do not merely tap but, indeed, create very particular comprehension and response processes. Therefore, a blanket statement such as '[multiple choice] questions assess reading comprehension' is nonsensical for any test.”<sup>81</sup>

Rupp and Lesaux compared measures of reading achievement produced by standardized assessments and the component skills of literacy as identified by a “diagnostic battery of standardized and experimental tasks.”<sup>82</sup> Their findings suggest that the proficiency classifications of standardized assessments mask a great deal of heterogeneity of reading skills at all levels. This raises two serious issues. First, it questions whether standardized assessments provide adequate measures of student reading comprehension skills, and second, it calls into question whether standardized assessments provide actionable information for improving student achievement. “Given the reliance on standards-based assessments to guide educational decision-making... there is a need to seriously consider whether the properties of these tests support any interpretation at the level of the individual and similarly whether there is any instructional information to be gleaned from the results.”<sup>83</sup>

Looking at the component reading comprehension skills of students identified as failing by standardized assessments, Bully and Valencia also find that standardized assessments mask variations in the component skills of reading.

We found that simple percentages of students failing the test masked empirically derived components of reading ability: meaning, fluency, and

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<sup>81</sup> Andre A. Rupp, Tracy Ferne & Hyeran Choi “How assessing reading comprehension with multiple choice questions shapes the construct: a cognitive processing perspective”, *Language Testing*, 2006, Volume 23, Number 4, 470.

<sup>82</sup> Andre A. Rupp & Nonie K. Lesaux, “Meeting Expectations? An Empirical Investigation of a Standards-Based Assessment of Reading Comprehension”, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 2006, Volume 28, Number 4, 319.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 331.

word identification... [W]e found that students exhibited several distinctive patterns of performance that contributed to their poor showing on the state reading assessment. Reading failure is multifaceted and it is individual. In short, beneath each failing score is a pattern of performance that holds the key to improved reading instruction and, consequently, improved reading ability.<sup>84</sup>

By masking the considerable heterogeneity of student reading skills, standardized assessments appear to not only provide a limited picture of students' reading comprehension, but they also fail to provide the necessary data for tailoring instruction to students' specific needs and contribute to student achievement. Further, Bully and Valencia question the utility of policy decisions mandating specific instructional strategies and curricular programs for failing schools, such as Reading First, that are becoming increasingly common in standards-based reforms. "Our data suggest that such policies aimed at specific, predetermined, instructional approaches cannot possibly fit the various needs of at-risk children."<sup>85</sup>

Indeed, the research literature fails to substantiate the efficacy of standardized assessments in either measuring student reading comprehension or in providing educators and policy-makers with the information necessary to improve student learning. Yet, all may not be lost for standards-based reforms. If it can be demonstrated that the tough accountability measures associated with standards-based reform lead to higher student achievement on average, then a case can still be made that the incentives associated with these reforms justify their implementation.

Examining state-level data, Nichols et al. investigate the relationship between high-stakes assessments and student achievement. They find that assessment pressures have a positive impact on 4<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics but no impact on 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading or 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading and math suggesting that accountability pressure may only impact skills that can be effectively taught in a direct instructional approach.<sup>86</sup>

[O]ur findings (and lack of findings) lead us to the conclusion that high-stakes testing pressure might produce effects only at the simplest level of the school curriculum: Primary school arithmetic where achievement is most susceptible to being increased by drill and practice and teaching to the test.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Marsha Riddle Bully & Sheila W. Valencia, "Below the Bar: Profiles of Students who Fail State Reading Assessments", *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 2002, Volume 24, Number 3, 232.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 233.

<sup>86</sup> These kind of direct instructional approaches are commonly referred to as the "drill and kill" method.

<sup>87</sup> Sharon L. Nichols, Gene V. Glass & David C. Berliner, "High-Stakes Testing and Student Achievement: Does Accountability Pressure Increase Student Learning?", *Educational Policy Analysis Archives*, 2006, Volume 14, Number 1, 51.

Similarly, Marchant et al. find limited evidence that high-stakes assessment policies raise achievement only in the most basic skills but no evidence that tough accountability policies raise achievement in more advanced subject areas.<sup>88</sup> Lee and Wang find no evidence of achievement gains associated with high-stakes assessments nor a significant change in the distribution of achievement across student groupings.<sup>89</sup> Overall, results from my review of research literature examining state-level data do not support “any argument that high-stakes testing is necessary to raise student achievement.”<sup>90</sup>

Interestingly, studies that examine student-level data suggest that not only do high-stakes assessments have little impact on gains in student achievement overall but that implementation of these policies lead to strategic responses by educational players that generate significant social costs. Examining data from a large urban school district in Texas, Heilig and Darling-Hammond find that what appears on paper to be a successful example of high-stakes assessment and accountability measures in raising student achievement can be attributed to student retention and disappearance.<sup>91</sup> A key element of Texas' statewide accountability reforms are the TAAS tests in reading, writing, and mathematics administered in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade as a requirement for high school graduation that are also intended to provide policy-makers with a broad measure of school success. However, the incentives created by these reforms lead to perverse outcomes and gaming strategies.

A major strategy for avoiding the TAAS tests at the high school level was 9<sup>th</sup> grade retention. At its peak, more than 30% of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students were retained for 1 or more years. Of those who were retained, only 12% ever took the TAAS, and only 8% passed it. A majority of retained students left school as dropouts or disappearances.<sup>92</sup>

Through grade retention and inadequate reporting of graduation rates, high schools serving even the most challenging student bodies were able to raise average student achievement, but it is a success that appears to come at the cost of the lowest performing students who eventually disappear or drop-out. In short, Texas' apparent success is a hollow victory that comes with a significant social cost.

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<sup>88</sup> Gregory J. Merchant, Sharon E. Paulson & Adam Shunk, “Relationships between High-Stakes Testing Policies and Student Achievement after Controlling for Demographic Factors in Aggregated Data”, *Educational Policy Analysis Archives*, 2006, Volume 14, Number 30, 1-31.

<sup>89</sup> Jaekyung Lee & Kenneth K. Wong, “The Impact of Accountability on Racial and Socioeconomic Equity: Considering Both School Resources and Achievement Outcomes”, *American Educational Research Journal*, 2004, Volume 41, Number 4, 797-832.

<sup>90</sup> Gregory J. Merchant, Sharon E. Paulson & Adam Shunk, “Relationships between High-Stakes Testing Policies and Student Achievement after Controlling for Demographic Factors in Aggregated Data”, 23.

<sup>91</sup> Juilian Vasquez Heilig & Linda Darling-Hammond, “Accountability Texas-Style: The Progress and Learning of Urban Minority Students in a High-Stakes Testing Context”, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 2008, Volume 30, Number 2, 75-110.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 106.

Examining student-level data from Chicago, Jacob found similar strategic responses to incentives created by accountability measures implemented in 1997 that, in effect, exclude struggling students from taking assessments and narrows instruction to the subject areas that are being measured by the assessments.

[R]esults suggest that teachers responded strategically to the incentives along a variety of dimensions – by increasing special education placements, preemptively retaining students and substituting away from low-stakes subjects like science and social studies.<sup>93</sup>

As in Texas, Jacob found evidence of strategic responses that remove the lowest performing students from the assessment pool while also finding evidence that the threat posed by high stakes assessments and accountability measures lead to a narrowing of instruction to those subject areas being assessed.

Reback examines resource allocation within schools in Texas and finds that the incentives created by high-stakes assessments and accountability measures lead to a perverse calculus of resource allocation toward specific student populations in response to the short-run incentives facing a school at any one time.

Schools respond to math performance incentives both by targeting math resources towards specific students and by making broad changes which also help very low achieving students. These responses tend to sacrifice the targeted students' reading performance and to sacrifice relatively high achieving students' performance in both math and reading. Schools respond to reading performance incentives by targeting resources towards the reading performance of particular students, sacrificing these students' math performance and sacrificing most other students' performance in reading. Finally, schools devote fewer resources toward students in the terminal grades during years when short-run incentives are low than during years when incentives are high.<sup>94</sup>

Again, it appears as though the incentives created by high-stakes assessment and accountability measures lead to strategic responses that sacrifice the achievement of particular student groups, especially low SES and minority students, in the race to increase overall achievement.

In sum, the research literature fails to provide compelling evidence that the high-stakes tests and tough accountability measures associated with standards-based reform increase student achievement. Even assuming the desirability of constructing

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<sup>93</sup> Brain A. Jacob, "Accountability, incentives and behavior: the impact of high-stakes testing in the Chicago Public Schools", *Journal of Public Economics*, 2005, Volume 89, 763.

<sup>94</sup> Randall Reback, "Teaching to the rating: School accountability and the distribution of student achievement", *Journal of Public Economics*, 2008, Volume 92, 1412.

clear, easily measured standards,<sup>95</sup> the assessments aligned to those standards fail to provide the rich data educators require to raise the achievement of struggling students. More troubling, the incentives created by the accountability measures associated with standards-based reforms appear to generate significant social costs in the form of higher retention rates, increases in the number of drop-outs, and a narrowing of instruction to high-stakes subjects. Thus, the functional reflexivity assumed by the standards-based reforms that emerged from the research data in chapter two is fractured at each point in its logical chain.

### ***A Professional Labor Force***

Turning now to the third theme that emerged from the prescriptives developed in chapter two, the cultivation of a professional labor force in the education field is envisioned within the framework of a regulated educational marketplace for teacher education. Built upon a framework of high professional standards and market incentives, the recommendations offered by our think-tank experts seek to work around what they see as the un-necessary barriers created by teacher colleges in order to fulfill the nation's pressing need for quality educators. The professional standards that emerged from my research data as the foundation of an educational marketplace for teacher education demonstrate that these market-based reforms place greater value on teacher candidates' content knowledge than specific training in education theory and practice.<sup>96</sup> The assumption underlying these recommendations is that teacher content knowledge constitutes the most significant indicator of the quality of a potential teacher rather than the completion of a traditional teacher education program at a college or university. In order to assess the efficacy of the prescriptives for increasing teacher quality developed in chapter two, I will interrogate the validity of this assumption.

Reading through the research literature on teacher quality and student achievement, there is a wide spread consensus that teachers do matter. As Rockoff notes, the evidence suggests that “raising teacher quality may be a key instrument in improving student outcomes.”<sup>97</sup> However, the issue that concerns many researchers is what characteristics are associated with teacher quality and how these characteristics can be accurately measured.<sup>98</sup> In results that largely mirror Rockoff's, Aaronson et al. find that characteristics that are “not easily observable” appear to be driving the wide range of teacher quality observed in their data.<sup>99</sup> They note that “[t]raditional human capital measures [experience, certification, college degree, etc.] have few robust associations with teacher quality and explain a very small fraction of the dispersion in

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<sup>95</sup> This is not an assumption that I am advocating. Rather, I posit this assumption for the sake of argument.

<sup>96</sup> See page 58.

<sup>97</sup> Jonah E. Rockoff, “The Impact of Individual Teachers on Student Achievement: Evidence from Panel Data”, *The American Economic Review*, 2004, Volume 94, Number 2, 251.

<sup>98</sup> In the research literature, “teacher quality” is defined by student performance on standardized test scores.

<sup>99</sup> Daniel Aaronson, Lisa Barrow & William Sanders, “Teachers and Student Achievement in Chicago Public High Schools”, *Journal of Labor Economics*, 2007, 95-135.

teacher quality.”<sup>100</sup> However, Aaronson et al.'s findings represent an exception in the research literature as opposed to the norm. A wide range of studies find that “traditional human capital measures,” such as experience and certification, are associated with student achievement. Individually, the research literature present a complex and somewhat contradictory perspective on the subject, however, in the aggregate, common threads emerge that will provide us with a path to move forward.

Clotfelter et al. use student-level data from North Carolina to examine the relationship between elementary student achievement and “traditional human capital measures” associated with teacher quality, and their findings produce a far more nuanced picture than Aaronson et al.<sup>101</sup> They find “clear evidence that teachers with more experience are more effective in raising student achievement than those with less experience,” however teachers possessing graduate degrees “exert no statistically significant effect on student achievement.”<sup>102</sup> Since it is assumed that the majority of these graduate degrees are in education and teaching, this finding could be seen as lending credence to an emphasis on content knowledge and on-the-job training over pedagogical training in a teacher's college, but their other findings do not back up this interpretation. Looking at teachers with alternative licensure, Clotfelter et al. find that “[t]eachers operating under a lateral entry licensure exhibit a statistically significant negative average effect on student achievement,”<sup>103</sup> a finding consistent with those of Boyd et al.<sup>104</sup> Also, looking at teachers' scores on exams covering both pedagogical practice<sup>105</sup> and subject content,<sup>106</sup> they find that “higher average test scores are associated with higher math and reading achievement.”<sup>107</sup>

Croninger et al. present an equally complicated picture.<sup>108</sup> They find that experienced elementary teachers with degrees in elementary education are positively associated with student achievement in reading, however they found no relationship between teacher certification or an advanced degree with student achievement in either reading or mathematics.<sup>109</sup> Interestingly, Croninger et al. find a contextual effect of teacher training in subject specific coursework operating at the school level.

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 132.

<sup>101</sup> Charles T. Clotfelter, Helen F. Ladd & Jacob L. Vigdor, “Teacher credentials and student achievement: Longitudinal analysis with student fixed effects”, *Economics of Education Review*, 2007, Volume 26, 673-682.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 675-677.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 678.

<sup>104</sup> Donald Boyd, Pamela Grossman, Hamilton Lankford, Susanna Loeb & James Wycoff, “How Changes in Entry Requirements Alter the Teacher Workforce and Affect Student Achievement”, *Education Finance and Policy*, 2006, Volume 1, Number 2, 176-216.

<sup>105</sup> Instruction, curriculum and assessment.

<sup>106</sup> Reading and mathematics.

<sup>107</sup> Charles T. Clotfelter, Helen F. Ladd & Jacob L. Vigdor, “Teacher credentials and student achievement: Longitudinal analysis with student fixed effects”, 679.

<sup>108</sup> Robert G. Croninger, Jennifer King Rice, Amy Rathbun & Masako Nishio, “Teacher qualifications and early learning: Effects of certification, degree, and experience on first-grade student achievement,” *Economics of Education Review*, 2007, Volume 26, 312-324.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 321-322.

While we found some evidence that individual teacher characteristics [experience and elementary education degree] predict student achievement in reading, the effect of coursework emphasis in reading and mathematics is detectable at the school level. The implication is that it is the collective effect of this dimension of teacher qualifications that is important.<sup>110</sup>

Indeed, Croninger et al. posit that school faculty with greater expertise in subject specific content [reading and mathematics] “may be able to develop stronger curricular programs and provide pedagogical support to less qualified colleagues.”<sup>111</sup>

Darling-Hammond et al. examines student-level data from Texas in order to explore the issue of teacher certification and student achievement.<sup>112</sup> Their findings suggest that certified teachers produce stronger student achievement than do teachers entering the field via alternate routes, and their data suggest that teachers with alternative licensure, especially those participating in the Teach for America program, have much higher turnover.

We find that 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers in Houston who hold full certification – the professional or standard certificate Texas awards to recruits who have graduated from an approved teacher education program – are more effective than other teachers in stimulating student achievement gains in both reading and mathematics on three different test batteries over a multi-year period. This relationship holds whether the teachers are recruited through Teach for America or through other pathways. Those who have completed the training that leads to certification are more effective than those who are not.<sup>113</sup>

Interestingly, teachers with alternative licensure who then go on to complete the necessary training and coursework to attain full licensure do as well as other fully certified teachers.

Ronald Heck examines data from Hawaii to investigate whether school-level differences in teacher quality impact student achievement.<sup>114</sup> His results suggest that “higher school-level professional standards (ie. certification, content knowledge, and performance criteria) are positively associated with elementary students' achievement

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 322.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond, Deborah J. Holtzman, Su Jin Gatlin & Julian Vasquez Helig, “Does Teacher Preparation Matter? Evidence about Teacher Certification, Teach for America, and Teacher Effectiveness,” *Education Policy Analysis*, 2005, Volume 13, Number 42, 1-48.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>114</sup> Ronald H. Heck, “Examining the Relationship Between Teacher Quality as an Organizational Property of Schools and Students' Achievement and Growth Rates,” *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 2007, Volume 43, Number 4, 399-432.



levels in reading and math.”<sup>115</sup> In contradistinction to Aaronson et al., Heck finds that “traditional human capital measures” are positively related to student achievement. Further, Heck’s findings suggest that increases in collective teacher quality has a mediating effect on the relationship between school composition [socioeconomic status, ethnicity, etc.] and student achievement in both reading and math, a finding that corroborates Nye et al.<sup>116</sup> “This provides evidence that collective staff quality represents another promising path to reduce the social distribution of learning within schools.”<sup>117</sup>

Sharon Kukla-Acevedo examines student-level data from Kentucky to investigate the impact of teachers’ content knowledge and education training on student achievement.<sup>118</sup> Her findings suggest that it is problematic to place too much emphasis on either content knowledge or teacher training.

The findings of this study inform the current policy debate regarding traditional and alternative paths to teacher certification. Advocates for the traditional pathway argue that education school coursework provides important pedagogical and classroom management skills that are integral to teaching success, while supporters of alternative programs assert that content knowledge is the most important attribute of a quality teacher. These data do not allow the direct test of the pathway effects, but they do provide support that both content and pedagogical knowledge are important to effective teaching.<sup>119</sup>

Indeed, it would appear as though Kukla-Acevedo provides an accurate summation of the larger question with which we began. The assumption on which our think-tank experts base their recommendations for reforming the nation’s teacher corps is that teacher content knowledge is the primary indicator of teacher quality, making the professional training programs offered by teaching colleges and universities an unnecessary obstacle to recruiting skilled teachers. However, what emerges from the research literature offers no justification for the privileging of either teacher content knowledge nor pedagogical training. Put positively, what does emerge is that it isn’t a question of an “either/or;” it is most likely an “both/and” situation.

The research literature suggests that teacher experience, content knowledge, and professional training are all positive factors in student achievement. Clotfelter et al. find that experience and scores on teacher exams covering both pedagogy and content knowledge are strong predictors of student achievement while alternative licensure

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 421.

<sup>116</sup> Barbara Nye, Spyros Konstantopoulos, & Larry V. Hedges, “How Large Are Teacher Effects?”, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 2004, Volume 26, Number 3, 237-257.

<sup>117</sup> Ronald H. Heck, “Examining the Relationship Between Teacher Quality as an Organizational Property of Schools and Students’ Achievement and Growth Rates,” 422.

<sup>118</sup> Sharon Kukla-Acevedo, “Do teacher characteristics matter? New results on the effects of teacher preparation on student achievement”, *Economics of Education Review*, 2008, doi:10.1016/j.econedrev.2007.10.007

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 7.

produces negative results. While Croniger et al. find no relationship between certification and student achievement, they suggest that experience and teacher training are positively associated with student achievement. Darling-Hammond et al. suggest that teachers with traditional licensure that emphasize content knowledge and professional training foster larger achievement gains than do teachers with alternative licensure. Heck suggests that at the institutional level certification, content knowledge, and traditional performance measures are all positively associated with student achievement. And Kukla-Acevedo suggests that both a teachers pedagogical training and mastery of content knowledge are important indicators of teacher quality and student achievement.

Traditional teacher education programs require that candidates demonstrate a mastery of specific content knowledge, complete a specified course load of professional training classes, and demonstrate professional competency in an internship experience prior to receiving certification. This would appear to be the correct formula. The research literature offers no justification for privileging any one of the three in the recruitment and training of teachers. Teacher content knowledge and professional training are both important elements in raising student achievement. Indeed, attempts by our think-tank experts to work around the perceived barriers created by traditional teacher education programs may ultimately work to undermine their stated goal: to foster the development of a well-qualified, professional teacher corps.

### ***Reflection and Extension***

To this point, my review of the research literature has failed to offer validity to or justification for the policy recommendations that emerged from my research data in chapter two. The *market-based reforms* designed to foster an educational marketplace are predicated on the idea that school competition will raise student achievement and foster educational innovation. However, the research literature does not suggest that competition raises achievement nor that it benefits students currently under-served by public education, a specific claim of market-based reformers. Of particular concern is that the research literature provides ample evidence of student sorting along the lines of social class and ethnicity, and the research literature suggests that school competition actually creates disincentives to serve these student populations. School competition does appear to be driving innovation in public education, just not the type envisioned by our think-tank experts. Instead of creating incentives for developing innovative pedagogical practices and curricular programs, market-based reforms encourage schools to adopt traditional educational practices and implement innovative marketing techniques to shape the characteristics of their student bodies.

The *standards-based reforms* that emerged from my research data in chapter two are problematic as well. Assuming the possibility of reducing complex intellectual skills and knowledge into simple, easily measured academic standards, an assumption that is indeed open to question, the research literature fails to demonstrate that standards-based reforms raise student achievement. The standardized assessments

used to measure student mastery appear to be inappropriate tools for providing educators and policymakers with the necessary information for raising student achievement. Perhaps more importantly, the tough accountability measures associated with standards-based reforms appear to generate high social costs in the form of increased retention and higher student drop-out rates. As with market-based reforms, the research literature suggests that the accountability measures associated with standards-based reforms create perverse incentives that disadvantage low-income and minority student populations.

The policy recommendations for fostering the development of a *professional labor force* are a combination of a market-based and standards-based reforms. In order to circumvent the perceived barriers created by university-based teacher education programs, our think-tank experts advocate reforms for expanding the range of pathways into teaching built upon a foundation of professional standards that emphasize content knowledge over pedagogical training. However, the research literature offers no justification for this privileging of content knowledge. Both teacher knowledge and professional training appear to be relevant to teacher efficacy.

In each case, the recommendations that emerged from the research data fail their own epistemic tests and generate negative effects that, if implemented as advocated by our think-tank experts, could seriously undermine attempts to raise student achievement at the national level and maintain global competitiveness. However, concluding this critique in the negative would render our inquiry into the concept of globalization as it is used in the popular discourse of education reform incomplete. The failure of these policy reforms beg the question: If the education reforms examined here fail to contribute to academic achievement, educational innovation, and efficiency then what education policy reforms do? To begin the process of answering that question, it is instructive to again look at evidence from outside the United States. I will begin by looking at a nation that specifically rejected the market- and standards-based reforms now common throughout the world and have done so with a great deal of success.

### **Lessons from the 'Finnish Miracle'.**

Prior to the 2000's, Finland's education system had been considered average by Western, post-industrial standards. In terms of literacy, mathematics, and scientific reasoning, there was little that distinguished Finland from other Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] nations in academic performance. However, in the past decade, Finland has excelled in international comparisons in all three of these measures. In reading, math, and science, Finland now outperforms not only the OECD average but also much larger and wealthier nations that have long histories with public education, such as Australia, Canada, France, Germany, the United

Kingdom, and the United States.<sup>120</sup> Interestingly, Finland has been able to accomplish these academic gains while its education expenditures for primary and secondary education remain below the OECD average as measured by percentage of GDP.<sup>121</sup> Deemed by many the “Finnish Miracle,” this dramatic surge in academic achievement emerged from a series of reforms implemented during a financial crisis in the 1990's in which Finland forged an alternate path to international trends in educational reform. Like other nations, Finland sought to realign its education system to the demands of a globalizing world so as to build a foundation for a vibrant information- and technology-based economy. However, the Finnish approach to this problem provides us with an alternative, and thus far successful model of policy and reform.

Sahlberg notes that while trends in international education reform can be characterized as embracing standardization, a focus on literacy and numeracy, and consequential accountability,<sup>122</sup> Finland embarked on a reform movement that emphasized flexible standards, a focus on deep and broad learning coupled with creativity, and “intelligent” accountability that trusts the professionalism of teachers and local administrators.<sup>123</sup> Eschewing the ideals of competition and accountability common throughout the world, including the U.S., education policy and reform in Finland is rooted in a philosophy of equity and comprehensiveness. As national policy, Finland focuses its resources on primary education.<sup>124</sup> It is a policy decision based on rich bodies of research suggesting that “investment in primary education as children learn basic knowledge and skills and adopt attitudes of lifelong learning pays off in later grades.”<sup>125</sup>

Beginning at age seven, children complete six years of primary schooling that emphasizes foundational knowledge, intellectual skills, and life-long learning. Primary and secondary schools in Finland are generally small, well-equipped, staffed by well-educated and well-respected teachers, and geared toward a whole child approach to education. Students generally have the same teacher through their first years of schooling and relations between students and teachers are often characterized as being close and caring.

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<sup>120</sup> OECD, *Program for International Student Assessment*, 2003, [http://www.oecd.org/document/50/0,3343,en\\_32252351\\_32236173\\_37627442\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/50/0,3343,en_32252351_32236173_37627442_1_1_1_1,00.html) [accessed 10/21/08].

<sup>121</sup> OECD, *Briefing Note for Finland*, September 9, 2008, [www.oecd.org/dataoecd/31/46/41277828.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/31/46/41277828.pdf) [accessed 10/21/08].

<sup>122</sup> I would point out to the reader that these characteristics largely mirror the policy reforms that emerged from my research data in chapter two. While a focus on standards and accountability are readily apparent, a focus on literacy and numeracy may not be as apparent. In developing the “crisis of globalization,” our think-tank experts make frequent remarks about the need for students well versed in science, technology and engineering, but in developing both the educative ideals and policy reforms appropriate to this “crisis” their focus is clearly on literacy and numeracy. Science and technology are notable in their absence from these discussions.

<sup>123</sup> Pasi Sahlberg, “Education policies for raising student learning: the Finnish approach”, *Journal of Education Policy*, 2007, Volume 22, Number 2, 147-171.

<sup>124</sup> Comprehensive schooling in Finland is divided into six years of primary and three years of secondary instruction.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid*, 153.

In 2004, more than one third of Finnish comprehensive schools had fewer than 50 pupils, just 4% of all schools had 500 or more pupils. Many primary schools therefore have become learning and caring communities rather than merely instructional institutions that prepare pupils for the next level of schooling. The fact that all children enroll in identical comprehensive schools regardless of their socioeconomic background or personal abilities and characteristics has resulted in a system where schools and classrooms are heterogeneous in terms of pupil profiles and diverse in terms of educational needs and expectations. Comprehensiveness, the leading idea in implementing the basic values of equity in education, also means that all students receive a free two-course warm meal daily, free health care, transportation, learning materials, and counseling in their own schools.<sup>126</sup>

From this foundation of equity, or comprehensiveness, Finland has implemented a series of reforms to strengthen its teacher corps, introduce flexibility into its education sector, and encourage intelligent accountability. Examining these reforms within a framework of educational equity offers us insights into a radically different and perhaps more efficacious approach to reforming public schooling here in the United States.

Over the past two decades, the idea of research-based teaching has been the organizing concept of teacher-education reform policies in Finland. This organizing principle is itself built upon the idea of a *teacher as an autonomous professional* responsible for making theoretically- and research-based educational decisions in his or her own classroom, including teaching methods, textbooks, and materials.<sup>127</sup> Thus, teacher education in Finland employs a vertically integrated curriculum in which research methods courses are integrated into the three foundational threads of subject didactics, educational theory, and teaching practice.

The aim of such a pre-service teacher education... is to prepare teachers who are aware of the effects of their actions and factors around their work, thus equipping them to control their own activity and, perhaps, these factors. The goal is to develop teachers who will base their education decisions on rational arguments *in addition to* experiential arguments; or, to put this another way, to develop teachers who have the capacity to use research and research-derived competencies in their on-going teaching and decision-making.<sup>128</sup> [emphasis in original]

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid, 153-154.

<sup>127</sup> Martha A. Brueggeman, "An Outsider's View of Beginning Literacy in Finland: Assumptions, Lessons Learned, and Sisu", *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 2008, Volume 47, Number 1, 4.

<sup>128</sup> Ian Westbury, Sven-Erik Hansen, Pertti Kansanen and Ole Bjorkvist, "Teacher Education for Research-based Practice in Expanded Roles: Finland's experience", *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 2005, Volume 49, Number 5, 477.

In order to foster professionalism in its teacher corps, teacher education has been consolidated within Finland's universities, and all teachers [primary and secondary] are required to complete a four-year program comprised of a 55 credit hour major in education, 35 credit hours of multidisciplinary studies, and 35 credit hours of a subject-area minor that, ultimately, leads toward the attainment of a Master's degree and the completion of a Master's thesis, both of which are requirements for attaining permanent employment. Beginning their practice teaching experience in training and field schools early on in their programs, pre-service teachers engage educational theory [such as psychological and philosophical theory], subject didactics, and educational research contextually, that is, within the process of teaching. "Thus there is practice teaching in every year and every study period, and every practice teaching period is combined with theoretical and research studies related to the topic of the practice period."<sup>129</sup> Teachers emerging from Finland's teacher education programs must demonstrate a mastery of their subject areas, theoretically- and research-based teaching practices, and the ability to employ research methodologies to address educational issues that emerge in their classrooms. As a result, public perceptions of teachers are favorable.

Today the Finnish teaching profession is on a par with other professional workers; teachers can diagnose problems in their classrooms and schools, apply evidence-based and often alternative solutions to them and evaluate and analyze the impact of implemented procedures. Parents trust teachers as professionals who know what is best for their children.<sup>130</sup>

Grounded in a commitment to equity, teacher education reform in Finland has sought to provide every classroom with a teacher not only well versed in their subject area and in instructional methods but also a teacher capable of engaging in practice-based research grounded in educational theory. It reflects a commitment to the ideal of providing all students with capable, autonomous professionals.<sup>131</sup>

Indeed, the professionalism of Finland's teachers and educational leaders is the key to other reforms designed to introduce *institutional flexibility* into its public education system. Education is a national initiative in Finland based on national goals and a national curriculum.<sup>132</sup> Up until the reforms of the 1990's, public education was highly centralized with little local control, however, in the midst of a financial crisis, Finland transitioned from a bureaucratic central control education model to what Sahlberg calls a "culture of trust" in which national goals and curriculum constitute the framework for local, autonomous decision-making.

The culture of trust simply means that education authorities and political leaders believe that teachers, together with principals, parents and their

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 478.

<sup>130</sup> Pasi Sahlberg, "Education policies for raising student learning: the Finnish approach", 155.

<sup>131</sup> Autonomy in the sense of professional decision-making.

<sup>132</sup> Tiina Ikonen & Markku Jahnukainen, "An Analysis of Accountability Policies in Finland and the United States", *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 2007, Volume 54, Number 1, 5-23.

communities, know how to provide the best possible education for their children and youth... Inviting teachers and principals to participate in school development had an enormously positive impact on the Finnish school sector since the 1990's... Teachers, with their high professional and moral qualifications, mostly welcomed this new responsibility. Also, schools very quickly embraced their new roles in leading change within the culture of trust... Each school, at least in theory, could design its own change strategy with mission statements, vision and implementation methodologies, and schedules.<sup>133</sup>

Concomitant with efforts to foster a research-based approach to teaching, Finland has sought to benefit from its professional development efforts by encouraging teachers and schools to continually adjust instructional practices and curricula to the changing needs of students and, ultimately, society. Teachers are encouraged to test out new strategies and conduct practical research in their classrooms so that instruction is geared toward the specific needs of their students. Political and educational leaders encourage school- and district-based research programs and professional development opportunities to ensure that innovative practices developed in individual schools and classrooms are widely shared and adopted where applicable. Innovation is hard-wired into the institutional framework of public education. In short, Finland is attempting to institutionalize educational research and development by taking a clever “bottom-up” approach to continuous reform that benefits from its significant investment in teacher education.

This bottom-up approach to institutional organization is also reflected in Finland's attempt to construct a system of *intelligent accountability*, an accountability framework centered around the ballot box. Finland's move toward de-centralization and greater school autonomy has led to a sharing of accountability pressures between national leadership and local schools. The high degree of autonomy given to local districts and schools carries with it a direct accountability to the local community to ensure academic success. “This has created a practice of reciprocal, intelligent accountability in education system management where schools are increasingly accountable for learning outcomes and education authorities are held accountable to schools for making expected outcomes possible.”<sup>134</sup> The means by which Finland assesses the academic success of its students further reflects Sahlberg's “culture of trust.” While the Finnish National Board of Education provides teachers with assessment guidelines to measure student mastery of national curricular goals, assessment of student achievement is the responsibility of teachers and schools. The only national high-stakes assessment taken by Finnish students is the Matriculation Exam taken prior to entering the tertiary sector.

All assessment of student learning is based on teacher-made tests, rather than standardized external tests. By fifth grade, Finnish pupils no longer

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<sup>133</sup> Pasi Sahlberg, “Education policies for raising student learning: the Finnish approach”, 157.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, 155.

receive numerical grades that would enable directly comparing pupils with one another. In fact, grades are prohibited by law. Only descriptive assessments and feedback are employed.<sup>135</sup>

The Finnish approach to assessment seeks to advance student learning by providing teachers with descriptive information for evaluating student progress toward mastery of national curricular goals, tailoring instruction to student needs, and by providing students with both the knowledge and skills for engaging in self-assessment. The primary function of student assessment is to advance student learning. In addition to Matriculation Exam scores, external evaluations designed to provide political leaders with the necessary information to make policy decisions is the responsibility of the Education Evaluation Council attached to the Ministry of Education.<sup>136</sup> The Education Evaluation Council conducts national evaluations using sampling methodologies in conjunction with Finnish universities and coordinates Finland's participation in international assessments such as PISA in order to generate national level data. In short, Finland has eschewed international trends toward standardized assessments and consequential accountability measures based on comparisons of student performance. Finland is attempting to seek a balance between policy-makers need for generalized data and teachers flexibility in tailoring instruction and curricular materials to specific student needs based on feedback provided by descriptive assessments.<sup>137</sup>

Taken together, Finland's approach to education policy and reform offers U.S. policymakers an alternative model of reform that is compelling. As opposed to international trends in policy reform grounded in assumptions of competition and market-based incentives, such as the reforms offered by our think-tank experts, Finland's approach to education policy and reform is built upon a commitment to equity and comprehensiveness. Instead of using "market forces" to drive educational change and foster academic achievement, Finland invests heavily in building teacher and school capacity while providing teachers and schools the institutional flexibility to develop their own curricula and pedagogies based on national standards, develop and employ descriptive assessments based on student need, engage in practical research projects, and drive educational innovation at the classroom level without the immediate "risk" of high-stakes assessments. It is a balanced approach to education policy that targets national resources toward building the professional capacity of educators, decentralizes decision-making authority, and relies on political accountability at the national, district, and school levels to ensure academic success.

Indeed, the Finnish model to education policy **is** compelling. However, as noted previously, it is wise to demonstrate caution in making international comparisons between nations such as Finland and the United States. For example, Finland has a national passion for reading that is simply not present in the United States, and the

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> *Basic Education Act of 1998*, Chapter 5, Section 21.

<http://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/1998/en19980628.pdf> [Accessed 10/23/08]

<sup>137</sup> Pasi Sahlberg, "Education policies for raising student learning: the Finnish approach", 155-156.



social status of American teachers pales in comparison to the educational professional held in high regard by Finns.<sup>138</sup> Further, the high degree of economic, racial, and cultural polarization present in the U.S. bears little resemblance to Finland. Nevertheless, there are lessons to be learned from the Finnish experience.

### **From Finland to the United States.**

What is of interest to our inquiry here is how the themes of equity, professional teacher capacity, institutional flexibility, and intelligent accountability are not without precedent in the research literature on this side of the Atlantic. Indeed, those themes largely mirror the features of successful standards-based reform projects Darling-Hammond identifies in the United States.<sup>139</sup> A common characteristic of successful reform in the U.S. is a commitment to providing the educational resources, such as teachers and learning material, necessary for student learning. Differential access to educational resources is a well-documented and persistent phenomenon in the United States' public schools, and research continues to identify those disparities as being a significant determinant in student achievement.<sup>140</sup> Conversely, research continues to suggest that well-planned and targeted funding increases have a significant positive impact on student learning, especially benefiting students in previously under-funded schools.<sup>141</sup> Setting high academic standards coupled with high-stakes assessments without providing the resources required to reach those standards is both counter-productive for society and violates even the most basic tenets of fairness and justice. If all students are to be held accountable to the same high standards then equal access to the necessary pre-conditions for learning is required.

Darling-Hammond identifies investment in teacher knowledge and skill as critical to increasing student learning and considers it a prime target for reform efforts.<sup>142</sup> Investments in the recruitment, hiring, and support of highly-qualified teachers help to build stable communities of teachers that make significant contributions to student achievement. Reforms that set high standards for teacher qualifications are certainly necessary, however it is just as important to provide financial and professional incentives for attracting and keeping qualified candidates. Darling-Hammond places particular emphasis on providing structural supports for continued teacher learning and professional development as a key area for targeted investment.

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<sup>138</sup> The teaching profession is held in such high regard that acceptance rates into teacher education programs are low with the majority of applicants being turned away.

<sup>139</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond, "Standards, Accountability, and School Reform", *Teachers College Record*, 2004, Volume 106, Number 6, 1047-1085.

<sup>140</sup> Russell W. Rumberger & Gregory J. Palardy, "Does Segregation Still Matter? The Impact of Student Composition on Academic Achievement in High School", *Teachers College Record*, 2005, Volume 107, Number 9, 1999-2045.

<sup>141</sup> Leslie E. Papke, "The Effects of Changes in Michigan's School Finance System", 2008, Volume 36, Number 4, 456-474.

<sup>142</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond, "Standards, Accountability, and School Reform", 1078-1079.

[S]chools and districts need to provide systematic supports for ongoing teacher learning in the form of time for shared teacher planning, opportunities for assessing teaching and learning, more exposure to technical expertise and resources, and opportunities for networking with other colleagues.<sup>143</sup>

Investments in continuous teacher learning and capacity building requires structural supports that are now largely absent in the United States, however there is ample evidence suggesting that on-going, school-based, collaborative professional development projects make significant contributions to student achievement<sup>144</sup> and teacher learning.<sup>145</sup> Inclusion of such supports suggests a structuring of schools as learning communities for students **and** teachers.

Indeed, Darling-Hammond identifies a commitment to organizing schools as learning communities for both students and teachers as a common element of successful reform that lends itself to several practical policy proposals that bear a marked resemblance to the Finnish experience.<sup>146</sup> First, smaller schools and class sizes that allow for more direct and intensive teacher-student relationships has been demonstrated to both contribute to student learning<sup>147</sup> and generate positive long-term effects on achievement.<sup>148</sup> Second, policies designed to keep the same teachers working with the same students for multiple years is well documented as being successful in fostering student achievement as well as being a common policy throughout the world, including Finland. “Teachers are more effective when they know students well, when they understand how their students learn, and when they have more time with students to accomplish their goals.”<sup>149</sup> Third, re-structuring school schedules and resources to provide more opportunities for shared planning among teachers and building the professional capacity of school staff has been demonstrated to have positive impacts on teacher efficacy and is a common facet of public schooling in nations with successful education systems, such as Japan and Finland. “[W]hereas teachers in many other countries have as much as 15 to 20 hours per week for joint planning and learning, U.S. teachers have only 3 to 5 hours weekly for class

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid, 1079.

<sup>144</sup> Carla C. Johnson, Jane Butler Kahle & Jamison D. Fargo, “A Study of the Effect of Sustained, Whole-School Professional Development on Student Achievement in Science”, *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 2007, Volume 44, Number 6, 775-786.

<sup>145</sup> Milbrey W. McLaughlin & Joan E. Talbert, *Building School-Based Teacher Learner Communities: Professional Strategies to Improve Student Achievement*, (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006).

<sup>146</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond, “Standards, Accountability, and School Reform”, 1079-1080.

<sup>147</sup> Barbara Nye, Larry V. Hedges & Spyros Konstantopoulos, “The Effects of Small Classes on Academic Achievement: The Results of the Tennessee Class Size Experiment”, *American Educational Research Journal*, 2000, Volume 37, Number 1, 123-151.

<sup>148</sup> Jeremy D. Finn, Susan B. Gerber & Jayne Boyd-Zaharias, “Small Classes in the Early Grades, Academic Achievement, and Graduating from High School”, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 2005, Volume 97, Number 2, 214-223.

<sup>149</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond, “Standards, Accountability, and School Reform”, 1079.

preparation, usually spent alone.”<sup>150</sup> In short, community building policies designed to foster professional relationships among teachers and build personal relationships between teachers and students present clear avenues for would-be reformers to proceed. They also point toward a different approach to issues of student assessment and accountability.

Darling-Hammond notes that successful standards-based reform projects do not take a simplistic approach to assessment and accountability. Setting high academic standards requires authentic assessments to accurately gauge student learning and provide actionable information for teachers and policymakers, and it requires accountability systems that provide the resources and supports needed for educational change when and where appropriate.

Assessment data are helpful for creating more accountable systems to the extent that they provide relevant, valid, timely, and useful information about how individual students are doing and how schools are serving them. However, indicators such as test scores are information for the accountability system; they are not the system itself. Accountability occurs only when a useful set of processes exists for interpreting and acting on the information in educationally productive ways.<sup>151</sup>

Effective standards-based reforms are not punitive; they are productive and supportive. Student assessments are necessary tools for tracking student progress toward achieving the academic standards societies deem necessary for its citizens, but they are tools nonetheless. Assessments are tools that are only effective when they provide the knowledge and understanding required for educators and policymakers to effectively provide the supports and resources needed to reach academic goals.

Effective assessments provide teachers with rich data on student learning that allow for pedagogical and curricular adjustments according to student needs. Termed “formative assessment,” this model shifts the locus of student assessment away from large-scale standardized assessments toward classroom assessments developed by teachers in conjunction with their students. Stiggins and Chappuis identify four conditions of effective assessment:

- The information needs of the intended users must be considered in designing, developing, and using the assessment. [This] calls on educators to understand students' information needs and to plan assessments purposefully to meet those needs along with the information needs of adult instructional decision makers.
- Assessments must arise from and accurately reflect clearly specified and appropriate achievement expectations. [This] requires that teachers

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid, 1080.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, 1081.

become clear themselves about the intended learning, intentionally teach to it, and let students in on the secret up front.

- Accurate assessments are dependent upon the selection or development of the proper assessment tools. The challenge in all contexts is to match an assessment method with an intended achievement target. The teaching challenge is to use the assessment as a vehicle to deepen learning and to reveal to students their developing proficiencies.
- In order to contribute to student learning, assessments must provide information in a timely manner, preferably during the learning process so as to provide regular diagnostic information for the teacher and frequent descriptive feedback for the learner.<sup>152</sup>

Thus effective assessment is a continuous process of gauging student success in reaching clearly communicated standards so educators can tailor instruction to student needs, allocate resources accordingly, and provide students with timely and descriptive feedback on their progress in reaching those academic standards. This kind of formative assessment is a context-based model that creates a feedback loop between teachers and students.

It is the feedback information and interpretations from assessments, not the numbers or grades, that matter. In too many cases, testing is used as the measure to judge whether change has occurred rather than as a mechanism to further enhance and consolidate learning by teachers or students. The costs of these thermometer-related accountability tests are high, and the feedback returns are minimal.<sup>153</sup>

Moving away from this “thermometer-related accountability” toward formative assessments designed to advance student learning lends itself toward some practical policy recommendations that largely mirror those that emerged from our look at the Finnish experience. Reforms should seek to establish a middle ground that provides political leaders and policymakers with the requisite knowledge for the decision making process while also creating a system of assessment and accountability geared toward making a contribution to student learning. On the political level, policymakers' need for information on general trends at work in public schools can be fulfilled by low-stakes, authentic assessments of small numbers of students using random sampling techniques to ensure the accuracy of the data produced. On the school level, pre-service and practicing teachers require training in formative assessment methods, and teachers require school-level supports to collaborate with colleagues in developing assessments appropriate to specific academic goals and to engage in class-based research projects in formative assessment methodologies. Classroom teachers need the flexibility to interpret academic standards, work with students in establishing academic goals,

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<sup>152</sup> Rick Stiggins & Jan Chappuis, “Using Student Involved Classroom Assessment to Close Achievement Gaps”, *Theory into Practice*, 2005, Volume 44, Number 1, 11-18.

<sup>153</sup> John Hattie & Helen Timperly, “The Power of Feedback”, *Review of Educational Research*, 2007, Volume 77, Number 1, 104.

develop instructional plans to reach those goals, and construct the proper mode of assessment to gauge academic progress toward those goals. In short, shifting the locus of standards-based accountability toward formative assessments requires rethinking national assessment strategies, making investments in teacher capacity, re-structuring schools to allow for more professional collaboration, and introducing flexibility in interpreting academic standards and the means to assess student proficiency in achieving those standards.

Taken as a whole, Darling-Hammond articulates a model of education reform that finds justification in research literature emerging from the United States and that largely mirrors the themes of equity, professional teacher capacity, institutional flexibility, and intelligent accountability that characterize Finland's successful approach to education reform. However, and perhaps most importantly to this inquiry into the popular discourse of education reform, these characteristics of successful education reform stand in stark relief to the reforms that emerged from my research data in chapter two. In chapter two, the reforms proposed can best be characterized as a market-based approach to education reform for both P-12 schooling and teacher education. Unleashing market forces in an educational marketplace is seen as being the key to raising student achievement, driving educational innovation, and increase efficiency in the education sector while standards-based accountability systems are seen as a mechanism for the proper regulation of all education sectors, P-12 and teacher education. Yet, as we have seen thus far in chapter three, a review of a wide range of research literature offers little justification to those claims and, of particular importance, also point to the potential for significant social costs being associated with these approaches to education reform. On the other hand, a review of the research data also reveals an alternative model for education reform built around a commitment to equity and shared responsibility that offers significant promise in raising student achievement, driving innovation, and increasing efficiency. This apparent contradiction points us toward the next step in this inquiry in that it begs for an examination of the normative ideals underpinning both approaches to education reform. To state in more formal language, two propositions emerge: First, if a market-based approach to education reform fails to satisfy its own epistemic test of raising achievement, driving innovation, and increasing efficiency then the normative ideals offering justification to those reforms are certainly called into question and demands further inquiry. Second, if education reforms based on equity and shared responsibility do raise achievement, drive innovation, and provide a model for increasing efficiency then it is necessary to make explicit the normative understandings implicit in those reforms.

### **In Contradiction**

As we have seen, the market-based reforms that emerged from chapter two failed their own epistemic test of raising student achievement, fostering educational innovation, and increasing efficiency in the education sector while, on the other hand, reforms based on equity and shared responsibility positively contribute to achieving those goals. Moving forward in this synthetic advance two tasks now emerge. First, it is

necessary to revisit the normative understandings of the structural ideal that emerged from chapter two offering justification to the reform policies advocated by our think-tank experts. To understand the nature of the epistemic failure of those prescriptives it is necessary to interrogate the ideological commitments implicit in their domain. Second, it is necessary to flesh out the normativities and ideological commitments that emerge from the Finnish model of education reform in order to make a positive contribution in advancing the inquiry process and expanding our perspective on education reform and globalization.

### ***Revisiting the Educative Ideals of a Globalized World***

In chapter two, we saw that the educative ideal that emerged from my research data envisions an educational marketplace grounded in a variant of liberalism, however it was not an appropriate point in the inquiry to flesh out those ideological commitments. It is to this task we must now turn. On the surface, an educational marketplace establishes a limited role for the state in public education by shifting responsibility toward individual market actors. However, while espousing a limited role for government in education, the prescriptives that emerged from that normative understanding maps out a very active role for the state in both P-12 schooling and teacher education. First, the state is tasked with actively creating education markets, determining which actors will be market participants, and providing the vast majority of capital flow into the marketplace. Second, the state is given the task of creating clear, easily-measured academic standards and establishing, or at least mandating, standardized assessments to track student progress in achieving those standards. And, third, the state is tasked with monitoring student achievement and ensuring that punitive accountability measures are implemented at the individual and school level when standards are not met. Contrary to much of the rhetoric employed by the think-tank experts from my research data, the articulation of an educational marketplace into actual policy proposals establishes an education model in which the state takes a very active role at every level of public education. In light of those policies' inability to satisfy their own epistemic criteria of raising student achievement, driving educational innovation, and increasing efficiency, it is clear that this disjunction between normative understandings of a limited role for government in public schooling and teacher education and the very active role for the state that emerges from the articulation of that normativity into social policy begs for further scrutiny.

Apple notes that reforms couched in the language of the market, such as those that emerged in chapter two, are the product of two mutually reinforcing political strategies: neo-liberalism and managerialism.<sup>154</sup> Thus far, I've used liberalism and neo-liberalism almost inter-changeably in describing the normative ideals of an educational

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<sup>154</sup> Michael Apple, "Creating Difference: Neo-Liberalism, Neo-Conservatism and the Politics of Educational Reform", *Educational Policy*, 2004, Volume 18, Number 1, 12-44. See also: Michael Apple, "Between Neoliberalism and Neoconservatism: Education and Conservatism in a Global Context", ed. Nicholas C. Burbules & Carlos Alberto Torres, *Globalization and Education: Critical Perspectives*, (New York: Routledge, 2000).

marketplace, but there are important differences. Neo-liberalism can be differentiated from its classical predecessor in its conception of the role of government in society and its close linkages to modern discourses on globalization. Neo-liberalism is often defined as a re-emergence of liberal policies during the 1970's in relation to international trade, economic policy and development, and global competition that shifts the locus of social action and policy away from political formations to "free markets." "Under neo-liberalism, the role of the government shifts from regulating markets to enabling them, and replacing public services with private enterprise, in the process, weakening the nation-state and public political participation. The state becomes a handmaiden to the creation and defense of markets and the monetary system on which they are based."<sup>155</sup> However, these markets are not the "free" or "natural" markets of classical liberalism.

The "free markets" associated with classical liberalism are predicated on the dictum that the government that governs least governs best. The role of the nation-state within the classical model is to establish the conditions necessary for markets to function, such as enforcing the sanctity of the contract, and to regulate excess and corruption when and where appropriate. Thus, the role of the nation-state is to establish legal and political frameworks to enable the operation of relatively "free" markets while maintaining a "hands-off" approach to the operation and outcomes of the marketplace.

The "free markets" envisioned by neo-liberalism are *politicized markets* in which the state apparatus acts as an enabler and resource to the marketplace as well as being an overseer and "force" of market discipline. Neo-liberalism holds a positive conception on the role of the state in markets. While classical liberalism constructs a small state that has a limited footprint in the public sphere, neo-liberalism constructs a small, strong state that takes a proactive interventionist approach to market-based policies. It is important to note that neo-liberalism is not simply a theory of political economy; it is a theoretical understanding of the world that actively seeks to bring about the realization of that understanding in the concrete. "Put crudely, neo-liberalism tells stories about the world, the future and how they will develop – and tries to make them come true."<sup>156</sup>

One of those narratives has played a particularly important role in the political rise of neo-liberal politics. The primacy of the private individual, conceptualized as both an individual economic actor and a corporation, constitutes the core of modern neo-liberal politics by constructing narratives of the free individual as an entrepreneurial citizen thwarted by the heavy hand of the state. "Both types of individual (economic man and the corporation) suffer the burdens of taxation, the excesses of regulation, the interference with their freedom and shackling of the 'entrepreneurial spirit' by 'big government.'"<sup>157</sup> As an ideology built around the narrative made popular by Ronald

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<sup>155</sup> Christine Sleeter, "Equity, democracy, and neoliberal assaults on teacher education", 2008, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, Volume 24, 1947-1957.

<sup>156</sup> John Clarke, "Dissolving the Public Realm? The Logics and Limits of Neo-liberalism", *Journal of Social Policy*, Volume 33, Number 1, 30.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, 31.

Reagan's statement that government is the problem not the solution, neo-liberalism seeks to de-center the provision of state services, and with it political responsibility, to the private sphere through a populist call to individual freedoms and market choices. Thus, political freedom is translated into a narrative of consumer "choice" in the private marketplace. However, this shift to the private sphere envisions an active role for the state.

Of course, this 'privatisation' is not merely a process of transfer to an unchanged private space. The private is re-worked in the process – subject to processes of responsibilisation and regulation; and opened to new forms of surveillance and scrutiny. Both corporate and state processes aim to 'liberate' the private – but expect the liberated subjects to behave responsibly (as consumers, as parents, as citizen-consumers).<sup>158</sup>

The private sphere to which neo-liberalism seeks to shift the responsibilities of the state apparatus is one that is actively created by the state. Neo-liberalism tasks the state with creating the markets that will deliver social services by determining which organizations are allowed to "compete" in newly constituted marketplaces and by establishing the roles and responsibilities of individual economic/political actors, both as an individual consumer-citizen and corporation, in those "markets." Behind the populist rhetoric of ensuring individual freedom from the heavy hand of governance there is a perhaps smaller but intrusive government envisioned by neo-liberalism that differentiates it from its classical predecessor.

Essential to the success of neo-liberalism as a political strategy is the reinforcing ideology of *managerialism* that works to mask the politics of neo-liberalism beneath the veneer of corporate rationality. Managerialism is an ideology and discourse of state regulation and policy formation that is closely linked to current economic discourse. It is an ideology that locates the core of rationality and social progress in the everyday demands and peculiar calculus of market competition.

Indeed, managerialism embodies this decision-making calculus in its commitment to a rational, ruthless, business-like view of organizational and policy choices. 'Managers' are the bearers of 'real-world' wisdom of how to be 'business-like.' They embody the generic 'corporate' ethos of transformation, innovation, efficiency and flexibility.<sup>159</sup>

Seeking to maximize gain and minimize loss, the everyday decision-making processes of corporate economic actors in the marketplace provides managerialism with a model for rational decision-making based on empirical analysis of the "real-world." The de-centering of state action and the provision of state services to the private sector, in

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid, 36.



effect, seeks to de-politicize state policy by locating the decision-making processes of public policy within an economic calculus of corporate rationality.

Where managers are pragmatic, politicians are dogmatic. Where managers are rational, politicians are partisan. Where managers are rooted in the 'real world', politicians are either rooted in ideology or rootless, tossed in the winds of public opinion. In these ways, managerialism not only embodies the economic calculus, it also tries to dissolve the competing claims of organizational and policy-making power.<sup>160</sup>

Framing business decisions as being based on rational, scientific metrics operating independently of political ideology works to immunize neo-liberal policies from charges of partisanship while also situating all other approaches to policy-making as inherently politicized and therefore less factually based. Due to its apparent apolitical rationality, managerialism offers a powerful logic for shifting the locus of public policy to private markets where possible and adopting corporate practices into the state apparatus in cases where privatization is impossible, undesirable, or not politically expedient. Thus, managerialism complements neo-liberal policies by offering justification for de-centering the provision of public services to the private sector and positioning the state as both an economic actor and “market force” while also masking the politics of those policies within the language of economic [and hence scientific] rationality.

Taken together neo-liberalism and managerialism constitute two complementary political strategies built around an “odd combination of marketized individualism and control through constant and comparative public assessment.”<sup>161</sup> Yet, it is an odd combination that has constructed an operative reality within the political landscape of the United States by establishing a political bloc out of disparate and often contradictory political groupings. Looking specifically at neo-liberal educational policies, Apple outlines the structure of the neo-liberal political coalition in the United States.

This power bloc combines multiple fractions of capital who are committed to neo-liberal marketized solutions to educational problems, neo-conservative intellectuals who want a “return” to higher standards and a “common culture,” authoritarian populist religious conservatives who are deeply worried about secularity and the preservation of their own traditions, and particular fractions of the professionally oriented new middle class who are committed to the new ideology and techniques of accountability, measurement, and “management.”<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid, 37.

<sup>161</sup> Michael Apple, “Creating Difference: Neo-Liberalism, Neo-Conservatism and the Politics of Educational Reform”, 21.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid, 15.

In its fusion of market ideologies, conservative politics, and corporate culture, neo-liberalism has become a naturalized aspect of the political landscape in the United States constructed on several ideological commitments.

They include the dramatic expansion of that eloquent fiction, the free market; the drastic reduction of government responsibility for social needs; the reinforcement of intensely competitive structures of mobility both inside and outside the school; the lowering of people's expectations for economic security; the “disciplining” of culture and the body; and the popularization of what is clearly a form of social-Darwinist thinking...<sup>163</sup>

Indeed, these ideological commitments are strikingly evident in the structural ideals that emerged from my research data in chapter two. The *regulated educational marketplace* envisioned by our think tank experts demonstrates their ideological commitment to both the narrative of the “free market” and the reduction of government responsibility for social needs while the *performance-based environment* envisioned for the education sector demonstrates a commitment to competitive structures of social mobility, disciplining of educational actors, and a social-Darwinist world-view. The structural ideal of a *professional labor force* bares witness to these ideological commitments by turning over teacher recruitment, education, and professional evaluation to a performance-based, regulated marketplace. It is clear that the structural ideals that emerged from the research data in chapter two are built upon a neo-liberal political ideology that has emerged as a significant force in the national politics of the United States over the past twenty-five years.<sup>164</sup>

Likewise, the human ideal that emerged from my research data reflects a commitment to neo-liberal political ideology. The human ideal of an individual possessing a mastery of *foundational knowledge*, an ability to engage in *creative-innovative thinking*, and *intellectual flexibility* constitutes the characteristics of an idealized person capable of succeeding in a neo-liberal social ontology of dynamic instability, market competition, and individual responsibility. Developed in an era of growing international trade and global competition, this neo-liberal social ontology is closely linked with modern discourses of globalization as a primarily economic phenomenon generating significant and constant social change. Thus, it is little surprise that the human ideal that would emerge from a neo-liberal perspective is characterized by having the foundational knowledge and creativity to work in a dynamic global marketplace and the intellectual ability to adapt to technological change and economic instability. In contrast to the classical liberal ideal of *homo economicus*, the neo-liberal ideal is perhaps best described as *homo economicus globalis*, or global economic man.

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> See also: Michael W. Apple, “Between Neoliberalism and Neoconservatism: Education and Conservatism in a Global Context”, ed. Nicholas C. Burbules & Carlos Alberto Torres, *Globalization and Education: Critical Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 57-78.

Bringing the normative ideals informing the reform policies offered by our think-tank experts under further scrutiny, it becomes apparent that the educational model that emerged from chapter two can be best characterized as being informed by a neo-liberal political ideology. It is an ideology committed to de-centering the provision of state services to politicized marketplaces in which the state is both a market participant and overseer, and it is justified by a complementary belief in managerial efficiency and corporatist ideology. Indeed, this economism coupled to state interventionism is evident not only in the reform policies and normative ideals that emerged from chapter two but also the way in which our think-tank experts characterize globalization as an economic reality. Our think-tank experts not only characterize globalization as a primarily economic phenomenon with significant social costs, they also embrace a decidedly economistic approach to develop an educational reform model to address the challenges globalization presents. The logic appears to be that if globalization is an economic phenomenon radically transforming modern societies under a new socio-economic paradigm, then it is necessary for the state to adopt that paradigm by actively creating and participating in politicized marketplaces as a means of delivering government services. Yet, as we have seen, the reform policies generated by these neo-liberal ideals fail to meet the tests of their own epistemic validity, i.e. increase student achievement, drive educational innovation, and increase efficiency. This calls into question not only the reform policies themselves but also the neo-liberal political ideology informing those policies and thus begs for another ideological perspective to inform an educational reform model appropriate to a globalized world.

### ***Equity and the Competitive State***

The outlines for just such an ideological perspective emerges from the Finnish model of education reform. Sahlberg notes that Finland's education reforms are one element in an integrated approach to national policy. In Finland, "education system performance has to be seen in the context of other systems in the society, e.g. health, environment, rule of law, governance, economy and technology. It is not only that education functions well in Finland but it is a part of a well-functioning democratic welfare state."<sup>165</sup> Like neo-liberal reform advocates in the United States and across the globe, Finland's approach to reform is motivated by perceived concerns with its role in an increasingly globalized world in which knowledge generation and innovation are seen as the keys to economic success. Indeed, Sahlberg identifies four conditions necessary for a knowledge-based economy largely adopted by Finnish policy makers that are remarkably similar in tone to the rhetoric of neo-liberal education reformers.<sup>166</sup>

The first of these conditions is the need to *re-think innovation*. In a globalized and technologically integrated world, innovation is most often seen as the result of a non-linear, collaborative process requiring individuals capable of working with ambiguity,

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<sup>165</sup> Pasi Sahlberg, "Education Reform For Raising Economic Competitiveness", *Journal of Educational Change*, 2006, Volume 7, Number 4, 279.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, 269-272.

learning through trial-and-error, and applying those skills in collaborative settings. This requires an approach to public education that emphasizes the active construction of knowledge rather than direct instruction of fixed content. It requires a focus on teaching students the skill sets of learning how to learn in an inquiry-based environment and to understand the process of how they learn best [meta-cognition] and it also requires a focus on teaching students how to learn and work productively in collaborative settings.

The second condition is a *new conception of knowledge*. Well-established critiques of positivist understandings of knowledge have yielded new conceptualizations of knowledge as being dynamic, contingent understandings of natural and human phenomena created through multiple processes of inquiry.<sup>167</sup> This more relativistic approach to epistemology places different demands on public education than does more traditional understandings of knowledge creation. What is important is not what students know, ie. what bits of data, information, or ideas they can store in their memory and recall when required; what is important relates to students' ability to acquire, utilize, and actively create knowledge in ambiguous and somewhat chaotic settings. This new conception of knowledge demands a public education geared toward the active construction and transformation of knowledge.

The third condition of a knowledge economy is a focus on the *development of interpersonal skills* and *changing habits of mind*. In innovation-rich environments in which knowledge creation is the result of dynamic, collaborative processes, successful individuals must have the habits of mind and interpersonal skills that are necessary to work in productive group processes. "Initiating and managing productive teamwork, problem-solving and continuous learning in schools and workplaces alike requires what is known as emotional intelligence."<sup>168</sup> This requires that schools prepare students to work collaboratively in problem-solving exercises and to acknowledge shared-responsibility for both success and failure.

The fourth condition is perhaps the most important. Success in a knowledge economy is conditioned on fostering individuals with *a will to learn* and *the skills to change*. "The knowledge society is a learning society in which economic development and competitiveness depend on the will and skill of workers to keep on learning alone and from one another."<sup>169</sup> This requires that public education not only foster the skills of continuous, life-long learning but also the desire to do so. "Lifelong learning requires students to leave school with the desire to learn more about themselves, other people and the world around them."<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Sahlberg deems these development as the result of a "breakthrough of new scientific paradigms" in areas such as economics, neuroscience, etc. As the reader would no doubt suspect, I would argue that such an epistemic approach can be traced to Hegel's work at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid, 271.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid, 272.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

What is interesting about the four conditions Sahlberg identifies is the degree to which they mirror the concerns of neo-liberal reform advocates in their understandings of the peculiar demands of a globalized, knowledge-based economy. The human ideal envisioned by these conditions for success in a knowledge-based economy are much the same as that which emerged from my research data in chapter two, although it is notable that the neo-liberal perspective envisions a far more individualistic ideal that largely omits the more collaborative themes developed by Sahlberg. Nevertheless, the innovative-creative individual characterized has having a solid grounding in foundational knowledge and intellectual flexibility that emerged from chapter two bares a marked resemblance to the ideal informing Sahlberg's conditions. Further, much like neo-liberal reformers, Finland has sought to "hard-wire" innovation, academic growth, and professional leadership into its educational sector, but, as we have seen in the preceding pages, Finland's approach to fostering this human ideal and constructing a structural framework for its realization differs dramatically to the structural ideal that emerged in chapter two. While Finland may share a similar vision of the human ideal in common with neo-liberal reform advocates, the structural ideal that emerges from a Finnish model points toward another set of ideological commitments. The path taken by Finland speaks to an altogether different normative understanding of the role of public education in society.<sup>171</sup>

Finland's approach to education reform is built upon a commitment to educational equity and a strong belief in public schooling as a national institution vital to the continuation of the nation's social democratic values in which all share responsibility. "Attaining the goal of offering equal opportunities to a quality education for all... require[s] creating and maintaining a socially just school network consisting of uniformly excellent schools."<sup>172</sup> From this foundational understanding emerges an approach to introducing educational innovation, academic growth, and professional leadership into the educational sector that is informed by the ideal of a *flexible public institution* that fosters innovation and experimentation from the ground up. At the system level, the flexible public institution that emerges from the Finnish model is built on national education goals and local autonomy in determining the best approach in reaching them. It is a balanced approach that addresses national concerns that future generations receive the proper education and training to ensure the future functioning and success of society while also guarding against a top-down approach of standardization that stifles risk-taking and experimentation. The de-centering of decision-making processes to the school and classroom level is the key to introducing flexibility into public schooling as a national institution, and this de-centering places the onus of accountability on political participation and good governance to ensure success.

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<sup>171</sup> This dramatically different approach to a similar concept of globalization may have a sociological explanation. It would appear to be quite logical that a society with a long history with social democracy and a well-developed sense of social solidarity would adopt a national approach to education reform that demonstrates trust in the nation's democratic institutions.

<sup>172</sup> Pasi Sahlberg, "Education policies for raising student learning: the Finnish approach, 166-167.

In the Finnish model, individual schools are the primary engine of educational innovation. The de-centering of decision-making processes to the school level allows for “flexibility in the curriculum, in the organization of work in schools, in using various teaching and learning arrangements and in reporting on progress and achievements.”<sup>173</sup> Creating and protecting a space for experimentation, research and risk-taking in schools fosters educational innovation in teaching practices, curricula, and administration. Thus, at the classroom level, the de-centering of decision-making processes to the school level empowers teachers as being change agents, and it positions their classrooms as laboratories for educational development. “Teachers who are catalysts of learning in the knowledge society... [are] provided with incentives and encouraged to make their work place and classrooms creative learning organizations where openness to new ideas and approaches flourish,” and the dispersion of those ideas between classrooms and schools is encouraged by creating a space for teacher collaboration and professional development.<sup>174</sup>

Indeed, what emerges from the Finnish model is an ideal of a dynamic system of public education that fosters creativity and innovation by encouraging risk-taking by educational actors. “There is no creativity in schools without flexibility in the education system and no creativity without risk - the risk of trying a new idea, experimenting with an unfamiliar practice, being prepared to fail or look silly when trying something new, not taking setbacks to heart, being responsive rather than overly sensitive to critical feedback and so on.”<sup>175</sup> This normative understanding of a flexible public institution that emerges from the Finnish experience is one in which experimentation and reflexivity are prized, and it is built upon three supporting structural ideals operating at the local school level that demonstrate a national commitment to innovation and learning. The structural ideals implicit in the over-arching ideal of a flexible public institution can best be articulated through the use of three themes: *schools as networks*, *schools as professional communities*, and *schools as learning communities*.

The theme of an education system composed of *networks of schools* is built upon an understanding that many of the educational innovations and ideas required by an educational system will often already exist in the system. Networking schools allows for the utilization of the resources already present in the institutional framework as the foundation of generating educational development, but it also demonstrates a commitment to the conservation of proven techniques and practices, ie. avoiding a constant rotation of practices built around educational fads. It is an ideal that envisions strategic partnerships of schools working collaboratively to resolve issues and answer educational questions as they arise. It envisions an institutional framework that carves out and protects a space for collaborative research projects generated at the school and classroom levels and that encourages the free flow of ideas within the system through information networks. The theme of schools as networks denotes a research-based

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<sup>173</sup> Pasi Sahlberg, “Education Reform For Raising Economic Competitiveness”, 273.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

system of public education built around inquiry, information networks, and schools employing a highly-trained professional staff.

The theme of *schools as professional communities* is built on the understanding that a dynamic system of public education requires highly trained, skilled professionals. A professional education community is composed of individuals possessing a breadth of general knowledge and an extensive knowledge of their subject area who have received extensive training in pedagogical methods, educational theory [psychology, sociology and philosophy] and research methodologies. A professional education community demands that teachers acquire professional credentials that come with the professional authority and responsibility that denotes “professionalism.” Professionalism in education invests in teachers the authority to make pedagogical and curricular decisions for their students within the framework of a professional community, and it places the onus of accountability on that professional community to ensure the academic success of students. It is an ideal that envisions groups of professional educators working collaboratively to identify and articulate educational issues as they arise, formulate methods to address those issues, develop research projects to judge the efficacy of those methods, and communicate the results to the larger community of their peers. It is an ideal that envisions a professional community geared toward finding the best educational methods and policies for achieving national goals for student learning and achievement.

The theme of *schools as learning communities* is built on the understanding that a world of dynamic knowledge requires that education place an equal emphasis on the development of intellectual skills and the transmission of foundational knowledge while fostering an ability to work with others in the construction of new knowledge. First and foremost, this requires that schooling be interesting to students. Developing habits of life-long learning requires a love of learning that comes from finding intrinsic motivation in the subject matter of schooling, and it requires that students develop the skills of learning how to learn. The ideal of a learning community envisions classrooms as relying on inquiry-based instruction that actively engages students in collaborative research and investigation. It “requires teachers and students work together in safe and stimulating learning environments that focus on broad learning objectives, encourage everyone to participate and use alternative [pedagogical and curricular] approaches to achieve goals.”<sup>176</sup> It envisions students working together in formulating questions, developing research projects, carrying out research, and communicating their findings to their peers. It envisions students learning the intellectual skills of innovation and creativity through study of the arts, humanities and philosophy. “Changing societies and complex knowledge economies require that students are educated equally for the artistic, social and critical lifeworld as much as for the rational systemworld of numeracy, literacy, scientific and technological competencies.”<sup>177</sup> As learning communities, schools become sites for inquiry, collaboration, and communication that teach students not only

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid, 275.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid, 276.

foundational knowledge but the active skills of knowledge creation and intellectual growth.

Thus, we see that while Finland may share with neo-liberal reformers concerns over economic competitiveness in a globalizing world. its approach to education policy and reform is constructed upon a set of ideological commitments that bear little resemblance to neo-liberal political ideology. Neo-liberal reformers see the key to economic competitiveness as adopting a competitive paradigm into state structures by de-centralizing the operation of the state to private participants in a marketized model in which the state is both a market participant and overseer. Finland sees the key to economic competitiveness as requiring a national approach to education policy built on an ethic of equity and democratic governance. These different approaches to a similar dynamic speak to different normative understandings of an ideal educational structure that generate dramatically different education policies and, as we have seen in this chapter, dramatically different outcomes. The educational successes of Finland's approach to education policy and the questionable track record of neo-liberal, market-based reforms calls into question not only neo-liberal education reforms and the normative understandings informing those policies but also neo-liberal reformers' initial conception of the problematic to which those policies are directed. If, as we have seen, neo-liberal reform policies fail to satisfy their own epistemic test of fostering innovation, academic growth and efficiency then it is also likely that neo-liberal framing of globalization and its relation to public education as being primarily economic is equally problematic. As opposed to globalization being framed as an economic phenomenon with social consequences it would perhaps be more appropriate to characterize globalization as a social reality, one with a long history.

## **Whither Global?**

Constructing a conceptual framework of globalization is a source of contention in the academic world that presents this synthetic process of inquiry with a challenging task not to be taken lightly. Fiss and Hirsch note that the term globalization itself emerged from the United States' increased involvement with the international economy, however later attempts at framing the concept of globalization have most often reflected the interests of the actors doing the framing.<sup>178</sup> Indeed, the politics of creating a conceptual framework of globalization as a social phenomenon speak to a Gramscian perspective on ideology as a 'long war' for constructing common sense understandings of social reality.<sup>179</sup> Thus far in this chapter, we have seen that the policy reforms that emerged from chapter two have failed to achieve their own epistemic tests of fostering academic achievement, innovation, and efficiency, and we have also seen that these reforms are grounded in a neo-liberal political ideology. The epistemic failure of those prescriptives justified by a neo-liberal political ideology leads us to question the validity,

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<sup>178</sup> Peer C. Fiss & Paul M. Hirsch, "The Discourse of Globalization: Framing and Sensemaking of an Emerging Concept", *American Sociological Review*, 2005, Volume 70, 29-52.

<sup>179</sup> See chapter one.



or perhaps utility, of this ideological framework. Further, it begs the question as to whether the initial presentation of globalization that emerged from chapter two is framed by a similar commitment to neo-liberal political ideology and, if so, whether or not this ideological framework provides an adequate conceptualization of the social phenomena to which it speaks. Moving forward in this synthetic inquiry, again, two tasks emerge. First, it is necessary to offer a positive critique of the educational challenges of a globalizing world that emerged from chapter two by, first, developing an expansive presentation of globalization as a social phenomenon that benefits from a variety of theoretical perspectives and, then, articulating the educational challenges appropriate to that expanded presentation. Second, it is necessary to retrace the critique that has emerged in this chapter in order to set the stage for the final movement in this synthetic inquiry into the concept of globalization at work in the popular discourse of education reform.

### ***Revisiting the Educational Challenges of a Globalized World***

Offering a positive critique of the educational challenges of a globalizing world that emerged from chapter two will be accomplished in three steps. The first step is to establish the epistemic grounding for an expanded perspective of globalization by examining three different theoretical approaches to globalization research.<sup>180</sup> Taken as a whole, these theoretical perspectives on globalization will then provide the necessary depth and sophistication to offer an expanded presentation of globalization as a dynamic social phenomenon, step two, in order to then articulate the educational challenges appropriate to its domain, step three. In so doing, the expanded presentation of globalization and the educational challenges appropriate to it will provide opportunities to both critique the presentation of globalization that emerged from chapter two and contribute to the development of a more sophisticated conceptualization of globalization and the educational challenges it presents.

### **Theoretical approaches to globalization.**

*World-System Analysis* denotes a significant line of research in sociology and political economy that takes an extremely systematic approach to understanding current discourses on globalization. World-system analysis conceptualizes globalization as an unified global capitalist system composed of variable and impermanent nation-states as its unit of analysis. The world-system is the product of the development and spread of modern global capitalism characterized by an international division of labor between three broad classifications: core, semi-periphery, and periphery nations.

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<sup>180</sup> I've borrowed the general outline of these theoretical perspectives from Leslie Sklair's categorization of globalization research into four research clusters: world-systems approach, global culture and society approaches [which I combine], and global capitalism approach. These theoretical perspectives are by no means perfect and certainly mask a great deal of heterogeneity. However, for our purposes here, they provide a useful framework for expanding our perspective on globalization that does justice to the complexities implicit to conceptualizing globalization. Leslie Sklair, "Competing Conceptions of Globalization", *Journal of World-Systems Research*, 1999, Volume 2, 143-163.

Core nations maintain a monopoly over the most profitable activities within the international division of labor and seek to maintain those monopolies through trans-national institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank, and conventional militarism. At the other end of the spectrum, peripheral nations are dependent on low value production, such as resource extraction and agriculture, as their principal economic activity. Consequently, peripheral nations exert very little influence over the global economic system either through military power or in negotiations with trans-national institutions. In between these two economic and political extremes, semi-peripheral nations engage in both relatively high-value production, although not to the degree or technological sophistication of core nations, as well as relatively low-value, labor intensive resource extraction and agriculture. The relative significance of semi-peripheral nations in the world-system affords them more political influence on the international stage, but they remain in an uneven power relationship with core nations politically and economically.

The key to understanding the world-system perspective is in its relation to history. This trichotomous organization of the world system into core, semi-periphery and periphery is a historically-constructed reality that defines Western modernity. The roots of the current world-system can be traced back to what Wallerstein refers to as the “long sixteenth century.” In the sixteenth century, Western European powers sent out explorers and conquerors across the globe that expanded global trade networks to sub-Saharan Africa, the Americas and across Asia and the Pacific islands. In this “Age of Discovery”, Western European powers developed a global cash-crop trade that constructed an international division of labor built upon large-scale agricultural development in their new-found colonies powered by a global slave trade. From a world-system perspective, the framework of a trichotomous world-system was firmly established prior to the Industrial Revolution.<sup>181</sup>

However, it would be a mistake to characterize world-system analysis as being overly deterministic. The trichotomous nature of the world system is neither fixed nor geographically contiguous. Since the sixteenth century, the core has shifted from the Iberian peninsula to the British empire to the United States while the semi-periphery has shifted from Central and Eastern Europe and North America to regions of Asia and Latin America. The insight that world-system analysis brings to current issues related to globalization is that it situates the discourse of globalization within the historical framework of modern capitalist development since its inception circa 1450 and in fluctuations in capital growth across time. It seeks to understand the transformations of economic and political power in the world-system, in its historicity, in order to establish the necessary conditions for reasoned political action in the present.

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<sup>181</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, (New York: Academic Press, 1974).

A conceptual tool world-system analysis uses to understand these transformations is Kondratieff waves that measure variations in the rate of capital accumulation over time.<sup>182</sup> Kondratieff waves generally operate on 50-year cycles marked by an A-phase of economic expansion and growth in capital accumulation interrupted by a crisis, or tipping point, in which the organizing structure of the world-system reaches its limit leading to a B-phase of economic contraction and political conflict. Using K-waves as a conceptual tool, Wallerstein situates current discourses on globalization within the framework of a Kondratieff cycle.

The period of 1945 to today is that of a typical Kondratieff cycle of the capitalist world-economy, which has had as always two parts: an A-phase or upward swing or economic expansion that went from 1945 to 1967-73, and a B-phase or downward swing or economic contraction that has been going from 1967-73 to today and will probably continue on for several more years.<sup>183</sup>

The general economic expansion following World War II under the bi-polar paradigm of Pax Americana and the Soviet Sphere reached its pinnacle by 1970 when the reemergence of Western European economies and the “Asian Tigers” created a glut of production in the world-market and drove down overall profitability. This drop in profitability has led to three consequences that mirror characteristics often associated with current discourses of globalization.

Persons with capital shift their primary locus of seeking profit from the productive sphere to the financial sphere. Second, there is significantly increased unemployment worldwide. Third, there occur significant shifts of loci of production from higher-wage areas to lower-wage areas (what used to be called the phenomenon of 'runaway factories'). This trio of consequences can be seen to have occurred worldwide since circa 1970.<sup>184</sup>

Thus, from a world-system perspective, current discourses of globalization are a product of the B-phase of a Kondratieff cycle that began in 1945 and reached its tipping point in 1970. Following much the same logic as Schumpeter's 'creative destruction,' the world-system perspective seeks to demonstrate how the various successes of economic actors in counteracting downturns in the world-economy, such as outsourcing and financial speculation, create “structural limits to the very accumulation of capital they were intended to ensure.”<sup>185</sup> The dynamic processes by which economic actors

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<sup>182</sup> Nikolai Kondratieff, translated by Guy Daniels, *The Long Wave Cycles*, (New York: Richardson & Snyder, 1984).

Ernest Mandel, *Long Waves of Capitalist Development: A Marxist Interpretation*, (New York: Verso, 1995).

<sup>183</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, “Globalization or the Age of Transition? A Long-Term View of the Trajectory of the World-System”, *International Sociology*, 2000, Volume 15, Number 2, 250.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid, 253.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid, 264.

work through the mechanisms of nation-states and trans-national institutions to gain comparative advantage in the global capitalist system and maintain capital growth in the face of increasing competition and declining profitability constitutes the nature of modern discourses of globalization as a period of global transformation. However, each short-term success in maintaining capital growth creates structural limits to that growth and, ultimately, undermines the functioning of the global capitalist system as a whole. This current period of globalization can be conceptualized as being a crisis of global capitalism in which the structure of the world-system is being undermined and dismantled, yet it can also be conceptualized as a period of transition, potentially lasting decades, in which the structure of a new world-system is simultaneously being established.

Indeed, proponents of the world-system perspective situate current discourses of 'globalization' within the overall life cycle of global capitalism arguing that many of the issues commonly associated with globalization are a consequence of a larger crisis within global capitalism, what Marx referred to as the crisis of overproduction. Much like Schumpeter's later work, Marx argued that modern capitalism would not be undone by its failures but, instead, by its successes. Tracing the "long waves" of capitalist development since 1450 details the overcoming of structural limits to capital growth through the inclusion of new areas into the world-system, the opening of new markets, and technological development. The success of economic actors in opening new markets during the A-phase of a Kondratieff cycle created structural limits to the capital growth necessary for the continuation of a specific articulation of global capitalism leading to a B-phase in which the framework for a new A-phase ultimately emerged. However, continuation of the world-system as it is presently constituted requires the opening of new markets and avenues for capital growth, a requirement many proponents of world-system analysis believe to be no longer viable. Thus, from this "long wave" perspective, the crisis of capital growth in the world-system since 1970 denotes not only the B-phase of a Kondratieff wave but also the terminal crisis of the modern global capitalist system in which the nature of a new, emerging world-system is beginning to take shape. Wallerstein argues that the manner in which economic and political actors respond to issues of globalization in this current period will establish the structural framework for an emerging world-system.

We do indeed stand at a moment of transformation. But this is not that of an already established, newly globalized world with clear rules. Rather we are located in an age of transition, transition not merely of a few backward countries who need to catch up with the spirit of globalization, but a transition in which the entire capitalist world-system will be transformed into something else. The future, far from being inevitable and one to which there is no alternative, is being determined in this transition that has an extremely uncertain outcome... The processes that are usually meant when we speak of globalization are not in fact new at all. They have existed for some 500 years. The choice we have to make today is not

whether or not to submit to these processes but, rather, what to do when these processes crumble, as they are presently crumbling.<sup>186</sup>

The key to understanding the world-system perspective on current discourses of globalization is that it views the dynamic processes associated with globalization as being a period of transition in which the nature of a new global order, or world-system, is being constructed.

In assessing the contribution of world-system analysis to contemporary discourses on globalization, two overall contributions stand out and both of these relate to the time-consciousness of the world-system perspective. First, world-system analysis firmly situates globalization within the historical development and spread of Western modernity and capitalism. Although the pace and degree of these transformations certainly differ from previous historical periods, world-system analysis effectively demonstrates that many of the processes associated with globalization are not necessarily new. World-system analysis demonstrates that a proper understanding of globalization demands a conceptualization that does due diligence to the historicity implicit in its domain. The second contribution that world-system analysis brings to the conversation on globalization deals with its relation to the future. World-system analysis defines this era of globalization as being an era of political possibility in which the framework for a more ethical and sustainable global reality can be constructed. The structural framework of the emerging world-system is necessarily uncertain, but it is this contingency in outcome that creates possibility. "Precisely because its outcome is unpredictable, and precisely because its fluctuations are so wild, it will be true that even the slightest political action will have great consequences."<sup>187</sup> World system analysis rightly points out that the social transformations attributed to globalization afford a moment of opportunity for political actors to effect change.

However, world-system analysis does suffer some limitations. World-system analysis provides rich conceptual tools for examining issues of political economy within an historical context, but the world-system perspective has a culture problem. World-system analysis demonstrates its Trotskyite roots in its treatment of culture as being the handmaiden of political economy, if not a direct product. Wallerstein has attempted to rebut the charge of economism in world-system analysis by arguing that the world-system perspective rejects the ontological autonomy of the economic, political, and cultural "spheres" thus culture is conceptualized as but one process, along side the economic and political, at work in the world-system.<sup>188</sup> However, the notable absence of cultural analyses in the research literature speaks volumes as to the degree to which the world-system perspective takes seriously cultural and social forces. The role of culture in the global capitalist system is most often assumed by world-system analysis

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<sup>186</sup> Ibid, 250.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid, 265.

<sup>188</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, "Culture as the Ideological Battleground of the World-System", *Theory, Culture and Society*, 1990, Volume 7, 31-55. Immanuel Wallerstein, "Culture is the World-System: A Reply to Boyne", *Theory, Culture and Society*, 1990, Volume 7, 63-65.

as its primary loci of research deals almost exclusively with issues of political economy and capital accumulation. This silence in the research belies an assumption of a mechanistic relationship between an economic “base” and cultural “super-structure.” In assuming a mechanistic relationship between political economy and culture, world-system analysis limits its ability to adequately address the role of social and cultural processes at work in the totality of the global capitalist system that is its primary unit of analysis. Indeed, it is this limitation, or blind-spot, in the world system perspective that the next theoretical approach to globalization brings to the forefront.

The *global cultural approach* defines globalization in terms of a transnational movement of ideas, people, communication, culture, technology and capital; a movement Appadurai conceptualizes as global cultural flows.<sup>189</sup>

Appadurai introduced the language of global flows of ideas, practices, institutions and people, such as *ethnoscapes*, the movement of the world's peoples; *financescapes*, the movement of trade, money, and capital; *technoscapes*, the movement of technology; *mediascapes*, the movement of images and ideas in popular culture; and *ideoscapes*, the movement of ideas and practices concerning government and other institutional policies.<sup>190</sup>

However, the global cultural approach to globalization does not simply concern itself with examining cultures in motion. The global cultural approach attempts to flesh out the ways in which globalization creates “relations of disjunctures (and conjunctures) that are produced by unequal transnational flows of capital and culture that precipitate new problems and planes of inequality.”<sup>191</sup>

The global cultural approach conceptualizes globalization as cemented patterns of global connections and disconnections brought about by the increasing movement of people, ideas, capital, etc. across national and cultural borders that articulate definite power relations among individuals, nations, and cultures. Asymmetric cultural and capital flows create spatial landscapes of conjuncture and disjuncture that at once bind different nations in constellations of cultural and economic relations while also generating normative representations that privilege dominant cultural groups and naturalize oppression. For example, capital flows between the United States and India have connected the two nations in complex webs of political, social, and economic relations, however the unequal flows of culture and capital between the two nations ensure a relationship marked by inequality. From the global cultural perspective, the key to understanding the means by which these relations of inequality are constructed can

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<sup>189</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at large: cultural dimensions of globalization*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

<sup>190</sup> Joel Spring, “Research on Globalization and Education”, 2008, *Review of Educational Research*, Volume 78, Number 2, 333.

<sup>191</sup> Raka Shome & Radha S. Hegde, “Culture, Communication, and the Challenge of Globalization”, *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 2002, Volume 19, Number 2, 174.

be located in the ways in which the cultural dominance of the United States crafts hegemonic representations of those relations that normalize their inequality on the normative [and hence political] landscapes of both nations. In a critical read of Thomas Friedman's documentary *The other side of outsourcing*, Parameswaran notes that the Orientalist representations in media depictions of Indian workers in Bangalore's call centers create a disjuncture between normative understandings of outsourced jobs in India and their concrete realities that constructs unequal power relations by both normalizing and masking their inequality.<sup>192</sup>

The task of the global cultural approach is to flesh out the ways in which hegemonic discourses situate individuals and nations in global relations of inequality and oppression. Shome and Hedge note:

The challenge... is to understand the productions and constitutions of empowerment and disempowerment, marginality and subalternity, in relations to larger processes of global capitalism... in order to see how similar and dissimilar contexts of domination and marginality are being enabled across spaces and places that are not necessarily nationally or racially continuous... [T]he task is to recognize that the cultural logics of maneuvers of capital, and economic logics of maneuvers of culture, produce new subject positions, new forms of oppression (and resistance), and new instruments of power/knowledge in transnationality that cut across political, national and racial boundaries in unexpected ways.<sup>193</sup>

The global cultural approach to globalization addresses issues of the social construction of knowledge in a global ontology. More specifically, it examines the social construction of a global reality constituted by unequal cultural and capital flow and asymmetrical power relations. From this perspective, the movement of global cultural flows situate individuals, cultures, and nations within spatial landscapes of power experienced by individuals in unequal and often contradictory ways that work to naturalize hegemonic discourses of Western capitalism. Globalization is thus a dynamic social phenomenon actively constructing new forms and configurations of power that cut across national borders leading toward the emergence of a global culture that normalizes the consumerist logic of Western capitalism. However, from the global cultural perspective, it would be a mistake to view globalization in terms of a linear diffusion of Western capitalist modernity.

The global cultural approach emphasizes the role of cultural politics in the social construction of a global reality as the discursive battleground on which new configurations of power are both constructed and contested. Cultural politics points to processes by which power is negotiated through cultural diffusion and transformation. A

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<sup>192</sup> Radhika Parameswaran, "The Other Sides of Globalization: Communication, Culture, and Postcolonial Critique", *Communication, Culture & Critique*, 2008, Volume 1, 116-125.

<sup>193</sup> Raka Shome & Radha S. Hegde, "Culture, Communication, and the Challenge of Globalization", 176.

key concept of the global cultural approach is drawn from Bhabha's idea of hybridization.<sup>194</sup> In a naïve cultural sense, globalization would appear to denote the increasing homogenization of global culture within the logic of Western capitalism, however the concept of hybridity contests the kind of cultural essentialism assumed in the idea of a linear diffusion of Western culture. In the movement of global cultural flows, the encounter between two cultures, cultural practices or cultural artifacts (experienced at either the individual or national level) opens up what Bhabha calls a "third space" of "interstitial conditionality" and indeterminacy in which each element in the encounter is transformed by the other.<sup>195</sup> A third space is a point of contingency, contestation, and negotiation, a point of disjuncture, from which new cultural articulations emerge and spatial landscapes of power are produced. As such, the "hybrid moment" represents the possibility of political change and resistance.

Hybridity, in this sense, involves the generation of new ways in which to understand and to generate possible new cultures. The birth of a 'third space', therefore, requires a process of dialectical discourse and reflective interaction through which ideas, values, and meaning clash and are negotiated and regenerated.<sup>196</sup>

Thus, from the global cultural perspective, the birth of a third space creates an opening for disempowered individuals, cultures, and nations to resist domination and challenge the inequalities produced by the asymmetrical cultural and capital flows of globalization. Globalization is at once a socially-constructed idea or discourse and an empirical reality that is necessarily contingent, contested, and dynamic.

In assessing the contribution made by the global cultural approach to understanding globalization, two points stand out. First, the inclusion of cultural processes as being an integral element of globalization avoids the systemic rigidity of world-system analysis by bringing to the forefront issues of power. The global cultural approach effectively demonstrates that the concept of globalization denotes the social construction of a global reality characterized by unequal movements of ideas, culture, and capital. It points to the ways in which global cultural flows construct and normalize inequality by inscribing and situating individuals, cultures, and nations within spatial landscapes of power that blur cultural and national boundaries. The second contribution the global cultural approach makes is that it contests the image of a linear diffusion of Western capitalist modernity often associated with discourses of globalization by pointing toward the contingency and indeterminacy inherent in the transnational movement of cultural beliefs, practices, and artifacts. At the meeting points of these global cultural flows, the social construction of power relations creates space for new cultural understandings and articulations to emerge while also creating space for the

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<sup>194</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (New York: Routledge, 1994).

<sup>195</sup> W.J.T. Mitchell, "Interview with cultural theorist Homi Bhabha", *Artforum*, 1995, Volume 33, Number 7, 80-84.

<sup>196</sup> Georgette Wang & Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh, "Globalization and hybridization in cultural products: The cases of Mulan and Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon", *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 2005, Volume 8, Number 2, 188.



disempowered to challenge and resist domination. Global cultural flows denote a multi-dimensional movement that allows for unique articulations of transnational political action that challenges inequality, such as the global political movement that emerged in support of the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, Mexico in 1994.<sup>197</sup>

However, while it can be said that world-system analysis has a culture problem, it is equally true that the global cultural approach has a problem with political economy. The global cultural approach offers an inadequate treatment of structural issues that point to the limitations of cultural politics. The global cultural approach effectively illuminates points of resistance and possibilities for transformative political action, however it fails to address the limits of cultural politics operating within the structures of political economy. To return to the previous example, news of the Zapatista uprising in the Chiapas on the day in which the North American Free Trade Agreement went into effect quickly spread across the globe spawning an international political movement in support of the Zapatista. Fueled by the almost instantaneous movement of images provided by global news media, such as the BBC and CNN international, and the popularization of the Zapatista cause in popular music by artists such as the American rock band Rage Against the Machine, a global movement emerged that brought to bare intense political pressure on the Mexican government to address the poverty, lack of opportunity, and inadequacy of social services afflicting the largely indigenous peoples in Chiapas. However, the disappearance of the Zapatista and the Chiapas from the news media and popular culture, as both are predicated on being “new”, led to the unraveling of this global movement and, in the end, left the Chiapas little changed and under a quasi-military occupation that continues to this day. The commodification of the Zapatista movement by news and entertainment media created a moment of opportunity in the Chiapas for effecting change while also placing a structural limitation on how deep and lasting that change would be. The global movement of images, ideas, and cultural products, indeed, create opportunities for the emergence of a multiplicity of political actions and possibilities, but it is equally important to note that political actors/agents operate within structural limitations largely defined by political economy.

The global capitalism approach to globalization research is, in many ways, similar to world-system analysis. However, it differs from world-system in analysis in that it is not as structurally rigid nor is it as concerned with history. The global capitalism approach views globalization as a qualitatively new social phenomenon that marks this current period as being historically unique. While the global capitalism approach acknowledges the historicity of globalization, the emergence of transnational corporations, political institutions and communication networks operating at a global level clearly distinguishes the period of the 1960's to the present from previous historical periods.

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<sup>197</sup> Thomas Olesen, *International Zapatismo: The Construction of Solidarity in the Age of Globalization*, (New York: Zed Books, 2005).

The global capitalism approach associates globalization with the structures of an ever-expanding global capitalism. Sklair conceptualizes globalization as “transnational practices” operating in three analytical spheres [economic, political and cultural-ideological] each characterized by a major institution.

The *transnational corporation* [TNC] is the most important institution for economic transnational practices; the *transnational capitalist class* [TCC] for political transnational practices; and the *culture-ideology of consumerism* for transnational cultural-ideological practices. The research agenda of this theory is concerned with how TNC's, transnational capitalist classes and the culture-ideology of consumerism operate to transform the world in terms of the global capitalist project.<sup>198</sup>

The economic sphere is characterized by the globalization of production and the international division of labor dominated by transnational corporations owned and operated by a transnational capitalist class [or the Global Business Elite]. TNC's are corporations that operate owned or partially-owned subsidiaries in multiple nations in order to open new markets for goods and services, exploit cheap labor in production, avoid environmental and labor regulations common in advanced economies, and lower tax burdens. TNC's are reliant on the continuing expansion of global capitalism to ensure the continuation of capital growth and accumulation, thus, unlike other historical periods, the interests of TNC's are not necessarily tied to the national interests of the states in which they operate.<sup>199</sup> Indeed, the growing strength of TNC's leads many theorists to the conclusion that globalization has led to the erosion of the power of the nation-state.<sup>200</sup>

The majority of TNC's are publicly traded companies owned and operated by a transnational capitalist class [TCC] whose economic and political interests, like that of the transnational corporation, operate independently of national and local interests. The primary concern of the TCC is the continuation of capital growth and reaping returns on their investments in TNC's. From the global capitalism perspective, the domination of the TNC's over the economic sphere requires political force to construct and maintain relations of economic exclusion, and it is in this task for which the TCC is uniquely suited.

The political sphere is dominated by a TCC comprised of corporate executives, politicians, economic development specialists, and media personalities, to name but a few entities, that make up a Global Political Elite. Working through global economic institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and global political institutions, such as the G-7 and the World Trade Organization, the TCC

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<sup>198</sup> Leslie Sklair, “Competing Conceptions of Globalization”, 157.

<sup>199</sup> A world-system perspective would posit the East India Company as a transnational corporation, however its interests were in line with the British crown.

<sup>200</sup> Habermas offers an excellent summation of this perspective: Jurgen Habermas, “The post-national constellation and the future of democracy”, *The Postnational Constellation*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001).

construct global political policies that ensure the continuation of the global capitalist project and with it patterns of economic exclusion. Sklair explains the dynamic among these groups this way:

While various entities have different functions for the global capitalist system, the people in them often move from one category to another, creating a revolving door between, for example, government and business. This class seeks to create ideal global and local conditions not only for their own interests, but also for the interests of the capitalist system as a whole. Under this concept, the TCC makes system-wide decisions and connects with members in each locality, city, region, country, etc.<sup>201</sup>

The TCC is unified by more than simple business linkages. Members of the TCC lead similar lifestyles, attend the same universities, live and vacation in exclusive segregated locales, and hold seats on charitable organizations, think-tanks, political parties, and business associations. It is not so much that members of the TCC represent an univocal political bloc as much as that its members identify their individual, long-term interests as being tied to the needs of a global capitalist system built on economic exclusion. In the short run, conflict among the various entities and members of the TCC is inevitable. The mitigating factor between the short-run and long-run, so to speak, is the culture-ideology of consumerism. It is the “glue” that holds together not only the TCC but the global system as a whole.

Whereas the economic and political spheres are predicated on patterns of exclusion benefiting TNC's and the TCC, the cultural-ideological sphere is predicated on the inclusion of all classes within a framework of normative understandings that naturalize the organizational requirements of global capitalism.

The cultural-ideological project of global capitalism is to persuade people to consume above their biological needs in order to perpetuate the accumulation of capital for private profit; in other words, to ensure that the global capitalist system endures. The culture-ideology of consumerism proclaims, literally, that the meaning of life is to found in the things that we possess. To consume, therefore, is to be fully alive, and to remain fully alive we must continuously consume.<sup>202</sup>

The culture-ideology of consumerism binds together differing social classes into patterns of activity and social relations that ensure the continuation of the global capitalist project. To borrow a term from Gramsci,<sup>203</sup> the perspective that emerges from the global capitalism approach to globalization is that of a 'passive revolution' in which

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<sup>201</sup> Leslie Sklair, “Capitalist Globalization: Fatal Flaws and Necessity for Alternatives”, *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, 2006, Volume 8, Issue 1, 32.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid, 31-32.

<sup>203</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Vol. II*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992) 232.

the TCC actively constructs hegemonic dominance by subsuming the economic and political spheres within the logic of consumer culture. It is a dominance built on the commonsensical ideals that “[t]he point of economic activity in the global system is to provide the resources for consumption, and the point of political activity is to ensure that the conditions for consuming are maintained.”<sup>204</sup>

The global capitalism approach to globalization research makes two important contributions to the discussion at hand. First, its specific focus on the role of transnational corporations, institutions and capitalist class constructs a research agenda that addresses the structural dynamics that, in part, make this current period of globalization historically unique. It provides a theoretical tool for research operating at the macro-level that takes seriously the global corporate structures that have emerged over the past 40 years. It brings into focus the tensions between national policies and a globalizing economy dominated by transnational corporations, a transnational capitalist class and the global institutions that are increasingly responsible for constructing economic and political policy. Indeed, Habermas looks beyond the nation-state to consider possibilities for maintaining the democratic gains in the Western world and expanding democratic processes to the Global South.<sup>205</sup> For Habermas, democratic possibilities in a globalizing world are unlikely to be secured through national policies. They require a “post-national” political framework similar to the welfare-states and Bretton Woods Agreement that emerged from the Great Depression and World War II.

Second, the global capitalism perspective introduces the culture-ideology of consumerism as a structural element of globalization. Whereas world-system analysis treats culture and ideology as a handmaiden to a world capitalist system, the global capitalism perspective posits the culture-ideology of consumerism as a key structural element denoting a transactional relationship among consumer culture, the economic sphere, and the political sphere. For example, Varman and Belk examine the role of television in naturalizing the discourse of consumer culture in India. They note that the representations of the conspicuous consumption of India's emerging leisure class on television channel the political and economic aspirations of subaltern classes into attempts at increasing their own consumption.

The result of this discourse has been greater systemic tranquility resulting from withdrawal of subaltern groups from collective forms of political activism and domestication of unrest, as they attempt to match the elite. With emulation and economism, subaltern consumers are systematically drawn into individual struggles of social mobility. The depoliticization enhances the legitimacy of the system as Habermas has observed and is characterized as 'civic privatism.'<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Jurgen Habermas, “The post-national constellation and the future of democracy”.

<sup>206</sup> Rohit Varman & Russell W. Belk, “Weaving a web: subaltern consumers, rising consumer culture, and television”, *Marketing Theory*, 2008, Volume 8, Number 3, 243.

The global capitalism approach posits the culture-ideology of consumerism as an elemental structure of the global capitalist project. It is not a product of capitalism but a determinant; it is a necessary process of global capitalism.

However, the global capitalism perspective is plagued by limitations similar to those suffered by world-system analysis. Although the global capitalism approach is built on a transactional model, it is still very rigid. What emerges from this approach is a very top-down perspective in which TNC's and the TCC dictate economic and political relations to the subaltern classes via the cultural representations and ideology of consumerism. In so doing, it masks the negotiation process taking place at the micro-level, a key insight provided by the global cultural approach. Thus, an important limitation of the global capitalism approach to globalization research is that it has the potential to negate individual and localized agency within rigid macro-structures. Perhaps more importantly, the global capitalism approach suffers from a uni-dimensional perspective of culture and ideology. Political ideologies and hegemony denote constellations of normative ideals operating at national and global levels. "[T]he global capitalism model, by prioritizing the global capitalist system and paying less attention to other global forces, runs the risk of appearing one-sided."<sup>207</sup> For example, nationalist ideologies, such as American exceptionalism, and ethnic ideologies, such as Orientalism, play important roles in shaping economic and political structures at both the global and national levels. Limiting itself to examining consumerism, the global capitalism approach masks a great deal of heterogeneity within the cultural-ideological sphere, thus it requires that research into globalization issues operate at a high degree of abstraction.

The task here has been to offer a more expansive perspective on globalization through an examination of three different theoretical perspectives at work in research literature. Each one of these approaches demonstrate particular strengths and limitations in their ability to articulate globalization as a social phenomenon. In a practical sense, theories are 'tools' designed for specific empirical tasks; no one theoretical approach has an authoritative or privileged epistemic perspective into the dynamics of modern, capitalist societies. Each of the theoretical approaches discussed here examines one moment of globalization, thus each offers a limited perspective on globalization in its totality. Each one demonstrates a one-sidedness in perspective. However, taken in the aggregate, these theoretical perspectives provide the necessary elements for an expanded presentation of globalization as a social phenomenon. If we pull back our perspective, it is possible to establish points of intersection and commonality that allow for a more sophisticated presentation of globalization as dynamic human phenomenon.

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<sup>207</sup> Leslie Sklair, "Competing Conceptions of Globalization", 159.

## **[Re]defining globalization.**

Taking a survey of the three theoretical approaches to globalization research described above, two propositions emerge that outline the structural framework of globalization as a human phenomenon. We can begin with the proposition that globalization denotes an operative reality that demarcates this current period of 1970 to the present as being an historically unique moment in the development and spread of Western capitalist modernity. World-system analysis points to the historicity of globalization as a moment in the development of a global capitalist system that is entering a period of transition and change. The global cultural approach to globalization research points toward the movement of global cultural flows that situate individuals in dynamic power relations that ensure the continuation of economic, political and cultural domination. The global capitalism approach takes a structural perspective that points toward the recent emergence of global corporate and political structures [transnational corporations, intergovernmental organizations, transnational capitalist classes] and the expansion of consumerist culture as the framework for the continuation of a global capitalist system. Taken together, a more refined proposition emerges that provides an analytical framework for expanding upon this initial proposition.

Globalization can be understood as a dynamic totality composed of three co-determinative spheres. In the economic sphere, globalization denotes an international division of labor made possible by advances in communication technology, science, engineering, and transportation that enable the movement of global capital flows [finance, products, media, etc.]. The historical development of the international division of labor from the colonial and imperial periods ensures that the economic sphere is marked by an asymmetrical movement of global capital flows benefiting former colonial powers at the expense of the formerly colonized regions. Indeed, globalization denotes an expansion of economic polarization at both the global and national levels enabled by the relatively recent emergence of global regulatory and corporate structures that work to ensure the continuation and expansion of these asymmetries. Intergovernmental organizations, such as the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund, provide the regulatory structure of a global capitalist system marked by the expanding influence of transnational corporations, such as Cargill, Halliburton and General Electric, that, in turn, wield disproportionate influence over those intergovernmental organizations and regulatory structures.

Thus, in the political sphere, globalization denotes increasing limitations on the power of individual nation-states and the expansion of global political power. The ability of individual nation-states to project military, political, and economic power beyond their borders continues to exert significant influence over political and economic systems at the global level, as does the historical legacies of previous militarism and colonial conquest. What denotes this current era of globalization as being unique is the

emergence of a global political bloc made up of corporate managers, bureaucrats, politicians, investors, and corporate board members that exerts influence over political and economic structures at both the global and national levels. The “revolving door” between government and business empowers this global political bloc to employ intergovernmental organizations in the establishment of a global framework for the expansion and continuation of capitalist development and profitability through the alignment of the political and economic structures of individual nation-states within global structures. The 'structural adjustments' forced on debtor nations during the 1990's by intergovernmental organizations operating under the rubric of the Washington Consensus provide an excellent example of the emergence of a global political bloc actively working to both establish a global economic and political framework and to enforce the compliance of individual nation-states. Composed of individuals and groups who often hold very different and conflicting economic and political agendas, the individual interests and machinations of this emerging global political bloc is disciplined, in the Foucaultian sense, by the strictures of a global framework of which it is both a product and agent.

In the cultural-ideological sphere, it is on the cultural terrain of 'common sense' that ideological structures naturalize the asymmetric power relations of the economic and political spheres. It is a contingent and dynamic terrain of cultural migration and hybridization that produces constellations of cultural identities and political formations, yet it is also a cultural terrain capable of achieving systemic stability and continuity. Global media, communication technology, and global migration fuels the spread of ideological formations that are both a reflection and determinant of the asymmetrical structures of the economic and political spheres. Neo-liberal and consumerist ideologies, for example, certainly reflect an economic character, but they also denote political norms that establish very definite social relations as well as cultural norms with which individuals, groups, and societies construct operative life-worlds. Indeed, the concept of globalization itself demonstrates its ideological character as a normative understanding of economic and social realities informing political norms that, in turn, actualize those normative understandings into the concrete. Rosamond notes:

Of crucial importance here is the extent to which commonplace policy conceptions of globalization are themselves constitutive of reality; the extent to which they have so-called 'truth effects'. Thus if governments act in ways that are consistent with the tenets of the 'hyperglobalization' hypothesis, then the net effect of those actions may be the creation of a world that operates precisely in that way.<sup>208</sup>

Globalization is an idea about the nature of social reality that works to ensure the realization of that idea. It is an operative reality. It is not historically necessary nor predetermined; it simply is.

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<sup>208</sup> Ben Rosamond, “Babylon and on? Globalization and international political economy”, 2003, Volume 10, Issue 4, 666.

Among the three theoretical approaches to globalization developed here, there exists a tension between structure and agency shared by all three with each approach leaning in one direction or the other, ie. world-system analysis and the global capitalism approaches emphasize the structural make up of globalization while the global cultural approach focuses attention on the agency of individuals and groups operating within global structures. However, taken in the aggregate, this apparent dichotomy between structure and agency is by no means necessary. As an operative reality, globalization is at once a systemically stable structural framework that is simultaneously a dynamic social process of contestation, contingency, and transformation. Globalization is the product of human activity which creates economic, political, and cultural-ideological frameworks that appear to individuals acting within those structures as an objective reality. Globalization points to both the limits and possibilities of human agency. Put negatively, changes to any one sphere requires changes of the structural framework in its totality; put positively, changes implemented in any one sphere will generate changes throughout the structural framework, ie. changes in the political sphere produce changes in the economic and cultural-ideological spheres, cultural-ideological change produces change in the economic and political spheres, etc..

This expanded presentation of globalization as an operative reality bears little resemblance to the presentation of globalization that emerged from my research data in chapter two. What emerged from chapter two is a presentation of globalization as an economic reality. For our think-tank experts, globalization is a purely economic phenomenon of global market competition and human capital built on technology and knowledge production. The simplicity of this straightforward discourse of globalization offers a compelling narrative about the nature of contemporary realities, but it is also its simplicity that renders it inadequate. An examination of three different theoretical approaches to globalization research points us toward a dynamic human phenomenon of chaotic movement within structural frameworks that the simplistic narrative offered by our think-tank experts *simply fails to capture*. Perhaps what is most telling about this presentation of globalization is what is absent from the discussion. Issues of social class and economic exclusion are not present in my research data, with the exception of an occasional bromide offered up in relation to groups [usually minorities] under-served by public schooling. Likewise, issues of political power and cultural domination are noticeably absent from our initial dealing with globalization. The inadequacies of the initial presentation of globalization that emerged in chapter two leads us to question the adequacy with which the texts that make up my research data articulate the educational challenges of globalization. If the initial presentation of globalization offered by our think-tank experts fails to grasp the dynamic and expansive characteristics of globalization as an operative reality, then it is highly likely that the educational challenges they articulate will suffer from a similar lack of perspective, or one-sidedness, that contributes to the inadequacies of both the normative understandings and policy prescriptions offered by our think-tank experts.



## **[Re]thinking the educational challenges of a globalized world.**

The expanded presentation of globalization that emerged from our previous examination of three theoretical approaches to globalization research is that of a dynamic operative reality that, as we shall see, presents a daunting series of educational challenges. Burbules and Torres offer a tentative description of the characteristics of globalization most relevant to education that reflects the dynamic complexity of the expanded presentation of globalization developed above and will serve here as a means for articulating a broad, general description of the challenges they pose to education.<sup>209</sup> Burbules and Torres frame their description of these characteristics in terms of their relevance to the economic, political, and culture spheres.

In the *economic sphere*, three characteristics of globalization are particularly relevant: the transition of workplace organization from a Fordist to post-Fordist framework; the emergence of international advertising and consumption patterns; and the reduction in barriers to goods, workers, investments, and their ramifications for the worker/consumer. The movement toward post-Fordist forms of workplace organization reflects the international division of labor. The compartmentalization of global production creates complex chains of production in which low-skill, low-value manufacturing and resource extraction is located in under-developed regions with abundant supplies of cheap labor while high-skill, high-value manufacturing, research, and development is located in developed regions possessing more technical skills and infrastructural advantages. Global production requires that nation-states must, to some degree, specialize their national economies to the demands of global production chains, and changes to those production chains require a re-tooling of national economies to meet constantly shifting sets of demands. For advanced economies such as the United States, it would appear that it is imperative for their national economies to specialize in what is now commonly referred to as being a “knowledge economy.” Scientific, technological, and engineering advances and development are needed to fuel high-skill, high-value production sectors, and information sharing and communication technology are required for the analysis of data and the alignment of complex production chains with the shifting demands of a global marketplace.

The educational challenges posed by a post-Fordist framework reflect the challenges of providing students with the skills they will need to participate in a global workplace and, interestingly, these challenges bear a marked resemblance to the ones that emerged from my research data in chapter two. The challenge for nations, such as the United States, is to prepare students for a marketplace of technical specialization and transformation. Public education must produce students with solid backgrounds in science, engineering, computer technology, and critical thinking skills. They must be

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<sup>209</sup> Nicholas C. Burbules & Carlos Alberto Torres, “Globalization and Education: An Introduction”, ed. Nicholas C. Burbules & Carlos Alberto Torres, *Globalization and Education: Critical Perspectives*, (New York: Routledge, 2000), 14.

prepared to work in a high-skill workplace as a high value-added input into knowledge production and technological development. Students must leave schools well versed in computer technology such as networking, information sharing, and statistical modeling software to coordinate dispersed production and carry out complex data analysis and modeling. Students must leave school with what our think-tank experts call an “intellectual flexibility.” As future workers, students must be capable of continually adapting their skills, gaining new knowledge, and generating new ideas to meet the demands of a constantly shifting global marketplace. What is of particular importance is that, in regard to the educational challenges that emerged from my research data in chapter two, this is where the similarities end. Our think-tank experts articulate the educational challenges of a globalizing world from the narrow perspective of the needs of the global workplace. However, as we have seen, globalization is a far more complex social phenomenon than our think-tank experts conceptualize, and the educational challenges it brings to bear are far more expansive and demanding.

The internationalization of advertising and consumption patterns constitutes an integral element of globalization in the economic sphere. The rise of global media and multi-national media corporations has led to the spread of sophisticated marketing techniques that work to link individual identity with consumption patterns, what Aiken calls “unified messaging systems” that links an individual to groups of other like-minded individuals.<sup>210</sup> Corporate branding now operates on a global scale with some once uniquely Western brands, such as McDonald's and Louis Vuitton, now becoming common place from Southern Africa to the Indian sub-continent to South America. Indeed, the spread of media and advertising fulfills a specific need of the global marketplace. As a global operative reality, globalization requires a sufficient degree of standardization across the globe in order to ensure the movement and continual growth of capital.<sup>211</sup> An emerging global culture unified by similar consumption practices and economic aspirations serves a vital function in the globalization dynamic, and it is the task of marketing and advertising professionals to utilize global media outlets to actively construct the characteristics of such a global culture in the regional markets in which they operate.

The educational challenges posed by the internationalization of advertising and consumption practices point toward the need of a global media literacy. The challenge here is to empower students with the skills needed to interpret and critique media messages in film, television programming, traditional print outlets, and the internet. Students must be able to recognize the methods in which advertising, entertainment, and information media construct normative understandings of social realities and the ways in which those normative understandings simultaneously condition the operation of those realities. Students need to be able to recognize the ways in which specific media messages and outlets target specific demographic groupings with targeted

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<sup>210</sup> Douglas Aiken, *The Culting of Brands*, (New York: Portfolio, 2004).

<sup>211</sup> This is not to be mistaken with cultural uniformity that eliminates difference among cultural groups all together. It denotes only the degree of standardization among different cultures necessary for the smooth functioning of global capitalism.

messages that, on the one hand, speak to the normative characteristics of those groups while, on the other hand, attempt to construct conceptual linkages between those characteristics to a specific product or consumptive practice. Further, students need to be able to situate themselves within a demographic grouping by mapping out their own class, cultural, and political positionalities in order to gain a perspective on how advertising messages and consumptive practices actively construct economic, cultural, and political relations. Indeed, the internationalization of advertising and consumption practices requires that future citizens/consumers/workers be able to interpret and critique the ways in which media images and discursive practices represent relations that bind viewers/consumers to generalized 'others' across the globe and to understand the power dynamics implicit in those relations.

The reduction of barriers to the movement of goods, workers, and investment has led to the globalization of material culture, labor, and financial capital with significant ramifications for workers/consumers.<sup>212</sup> Reductions in trade barriers to the movement of commodities has fueled the emergence of transnational corporations geared toward the production of consumer goods for the global marketplace. A standardization of material culture is emerging from these increases in global trade in that the same consumer goods, products, and services provided by an increasingly small number of multinational corporations dominate individual national markets across the globe.<sup>213</sup> For workers, the comparative advantages and efficiency enjoyed by transnational corporations limit the competitiveness of locally produced goods and services and therefore limit job creation and employment opportunities. For consumers, the standardization of material culture has not only led to a reduction in the amount of choice available in the marketplace but also to the homogenization of material culture within the rubric of Western consumer culture.<sup>214</sup> The globalization of labor denotes not only the international division of labor but also the increasing ease with which people move across national boundaries in search of employment. In developed economies, the inflow of low wage workers has helped the business community to reduce labor costs and has led to an overall suppression of domestic wages. The result is increasing competition in the labor market and increasing conflict between domestic and immigrant groups.<sup>215</sup> In developing economies, the lure of higher paying work in more economically developed nations leads to what is commonly termed 'brain drain,' the migration of high-skill workers to other countries, while also making those economies increasingly dependent on remittances from immigrants working abroad. Reductions in barriers to investment has led to the globalization of financial capital fueled by an international investment class

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<sup>212</sup> It is important to point out that the texts that make up my research data do note the importance of the reduction of these barriers, however they are treated as an ontological reality informing the challenges of educating students for a global workplace. They are not presented as being distinct characteristics of globalization that present educational challenges of their own.

<sup>213</sup> Microsoft's dominance of the operating system market is an excellent example of this phenomenon but certainly not the only one. Others include automobiles, cell phones, appliances, clothing, etc.

<sup>214</sup> Euro-Western fashion trends are an excellent example of this phenomenon, ie. the near ubiquity of Western business attire in professional settings across the globe, blue jeans, etc.

<sup>215</sup> Evident in recent anti-immigrant movements in the United States and Europe.

composed of individuals, investment firms, and national trusts whose economic interests transcend national boundaries. Economic security for workers is increasingly tied to the operation of global forces that, to a large extent, operate beyond the reach of the political structures that represent their economic interests to varying degrees. Further, the increasing integration of financial markets spreads systemic risks across the globe making what were once financial panics in one nation or region into international crises threatening jobs and economic security in areas long removed from source of the crisis.<sup>216</sup>

The educational challenges posed by the increasing globalization of material culture, labor, and financial capital call for providing students with a global economic literacy. Such a literacy begins with an understanding of economic geography. Students must learn the geographic distribution of economic production beginning with areas of resource extraction to manufacturing and industrial production regions to areas dependent on technological and knowledge production. Students must learn the infrastructure and movement of global flows: the transportation systems that move resources and manufactured goods, the communication systems that coordinate global production chains and facilitates the movement of ideas and knowledge; and the global financial architecture that enables the movement of capital and investments across national borders. In short, public education needs to provide students with a geographic understanding of patterns of economic development, labor distribution, production, and the structural systems that enable the global economic system. Understanding these structural systems, in turn, calls forth the challenge of empowering students with a working understanding of political economy. Students must learn to interrogate the ideas, motives, and policies that represent “national interests” in a global economy. Students must learn to understand the trade policies, military conflagrations, and political alliances that represent “national interests” within the framework of a global economy, to understand the motivations of different groups, and the political machinations through which those groups attempt to influence policy formation. Understanding the structural systems of a global economy requires that public schooling provide students with an understanding of the workings of intergovernmental organizations, such as the IMF and World Bank, and the influence of transnational corporations and the global investment class has over the formulation of national and global policies.

In the *political sphere*, globalization has led to the erosion of the power of the nation-state and a weakening of the notion of the citizen as being an individual with inherent rights, obligations, and status. Global economic pressures, in the form of intergovernmental organizations, trade unions, and complex production chains, are now being increasingly brought to bear on individual nation-states. Their need to open markets to their goods, ensure capital investment, and maintain a voice in

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<sup>216</sup> The global nature of the financial panic that began in the United States in late 2007 and continues to the time of this writing gives testament to the degree of global integration of financial markets and the spread of systemic risk.

intergovernmental organizations formulating global trade policy has led to an overall general erosion of the power of individual nation-states. Nation-states are now limited in the degree to which they can exert influence over their domestic economies and to ensure the rights and protections of their citizens. In developed nations, Habermas refers to the steady erosion of the power of Western welfare states to manage their domestic economic policies as a “cheerful self-dismantling” while under-developed nations’ limited powers of self-determination are even further circumscribed by global forces.<sup>217</sup> For citizens in developed nations, the democratic gains of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are being confined by the emergence of global political structures not beholden to the dictates of the ballot box in any one individual nation. For citizens of under-developed nations, the limited democratic gains they’ve achieved since the end of the colonial period is even further circumscribed by intergovernmental organizations and the forces of global political economy that dictate the rules of the global market in which they must participate.

This political aspect of globalization brings forth the challenge of fostering in students a global political consciousness. This kind of consciousness demands an understanding of the historical development and spread of the modern nation-state from the colonial period through independence, neo-colonialism, and leading to the current international system. It demands an understanding of the historical development of political theory and the theoretical underpinnings of current political structures, and it demands an understanding of different governmental systems that have emerged in different nation-states, the political theories at work in those systems, and the unique national character of each form of governmental organization. Further, it demands an understanding of the historical development of intergovernmental organizations from the League of Nations to today’s alphabet soup of intergovernmental organizations, and it demands an understanding of the historical development of global corporate power from Britain’s East India Company to America’s United Fruit to the truly transnational corporations of today. A global political consciousness requires these foundational understandings in order to engage, wrestle with, and resolve tough issues in the here and now, such as human trafficking, militarism, environmental destruction and labor rights, and it constitutes a necessary pre-condition for individuals to engage in self-determinative political action within an increasingly globalized world.

In the *cultural sphere*, globalization has brought forth dialectical tensions between cultural standardization and fragmentation. On the one hand, the spread of Western consumer culture alongside global economic development has infused the normativities and practices of individual societies with the commercial logic of consumerism threatening to erase traditional cultural practices and cultural diversity. On the other hand, the infusion of Western consumer culture into local cultures is a process of negotiation in which the cultural product that emerges from the engagement is unique

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<sup>217</sup> As noted earlier, the structural re-adjustment programs organized under the rubric of the Washington Consensus serve as the most extreme example of national policies being forced on nation-states from intergovernmental organizations and other global forces.

from both the indigenous culture and the normativities of Western consumerism. As Burbules and Torres note, it is probably more appropriate to conceptualize this dialectical tension as a conflicted cultural landscape in which the forces of standardization and hybridization co-exist alongside one another within individual nations and societies, as the stark contrasts, contractions and conflicts of modern India aptly demonstrate.<sup>218</sup>

The challenge for public education is to foster in students a global cultural consciousness that empowers them to engage issues of cultural change and conflict in both their local context and on the global stage. This kind of consciousness requires a foundational knowledge of human geography. Students must have a working understanding of language patterns, major world religions, culture history, and cultural change over time. From this foundational knowledge, students must engage in the social history of popular culture, the demarcation of high and low culture, and the spread of Western consumer culture throughout the world via the spread of global media and market capitalism. It is imperative that education prepare students to understand the ways in which cultural formations are both a reflection and determinant of political and economic power. To put it another way, students must develop a working understanding of ideas associated with cultural studies. This requires that students must engage issues of popular culture in the manufacture of ideological norms and in symbolically situating individuals within spatial fields of power. It requires that students understand the idea of cultural hybridity within their own cultural context and themselves as well as in other nations and regions. In short, the dialectical tensions between cultural standardization and fragmentation demands that students engage the history, conflicts, negotiations, and relevancy of cultural politics in a globalizing world.

It should now be apparent that an expanded presentation of globalization as an operative reality presents a daunting array of educational challenges that far exceeds those that emerged from my research data in chapter two. Both conceptualizations of globalization do point toward similar challenges of providing an education for a dynamic global workplace, however that is where the similarities end. Beyond the workplace, the expanded presentation of globalization developed here challenges educators to provide students with the tools to understand the economic geography of the global economy and the mediated messaging systems working to standardize consumption patterns across the globe. In the political sphere, an expanded conception of globalization challenges educators to provide students with the tools to interpret the dynamic political nexus conditioning global and national policies and to negotiate their own positionality within it. In the cultural sphere, an expanded conception of globalization challenges educators to provide students with the tools to understand cultural interaction, exchange, and transformation in a global context in which cultural identity intersects political ideology and action. To put it more succinctly, the presentation of the educational challenges of globalization that emerged from chapter two focuses

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<sup>218</sup> Nicholas C. Burbules & Carlos Alberto Torres, "Globalization and Education: An Introduction", ed. Nicholas C. Burbules & Carlos Alberto Torres, *Globalization and Education: Critical Perspectives*, 14.

exclusively on the challenges of preparing students to become employable in a global workplace. The educational challenge that emerges from an expanded presentation of globalization is that of preparing students to engage in self-determinative action within a dynamic global context characterized by continuous transformation, asymmetrical power relations, and economic polarization. The task is to provide students with the foundational knowledge of the global economy, the interpretive tools to engage issues of power and cultural change in a global context, and the intellectual skills for continuous learning and inquiry. The task is to construct a system of public education that establishes the necessary pre-conditions for individuals to achieve self-determinative life in a dynamic global context.

### ***Performative Contradiction & the Way of Despair***

In this chapter, I have examined the research literature relevant to the prescriptives that emerged from my research data in chapter two in order to expand and develop an empirical base from which to re-examine those policy recommendations, the normative ideals informing those prescriptives, and our initial description of globalization as an economic reality. The journey has taken us on a long and circuitous route of contradiction and possibility. Re-tracing our steps in this journey presents dialectical possibilities emerging from the epistemic failures and contradictions of educational reform policies now firmly situated in the popular discourse of globalization.

Our think tank experts offer three broad policy reforms for re-aligning public education with the economic reality of globalization: *construct a regulated educational marketplace*, *create a performance-based environment*, and *cultivate a professional labor force*. Through market competition, standards-based accountability, and the introduction of both into teacher training these reforms are presented by our think-tank experts as being the key to increasing academic achievement, fostering educational innovation, and increasing efficiency, yet the research literature calls into question each of those claims. Examining the research literature on school competition and market incentives, we cannot say with any certainty that market-based reforms improve average academic achievement nor do they contribute to achievement gains of students from low socioeconomic or minority backgrounds. Indeed, there is ample evidence within the research literature that market competition creates disincentives for educational providers to service those struggling student populations. Further, there is evidence that introducing market competition from private actors into public education fosters inefficiencies by either draining resources away from public institutions or by creating uncertainty in the budget-making processes of public institutions, the educators of last resort. Examining standards-based accountability, the research literature fails to substantiate their efficacy in raising student achievement or in providing educators with the necessary data they require to tailor curricula and instruction to student needs. What is most troubling about standards-based accountability reforms are the social costs they generate in the form of higher retention rates, increases in drop-outs and disappearances, and the retrenchment of curricula and instruction to the cognitive basement. Examining reforms for professionalizing the educational labor force, it is

clear that, in advocating for the introduction of market competition and standards-based accountability into teacher education, our think-tank experts value teacher subject knowledge over professional training in pedagogy and educational theory, as is apparent from frequent references in my research data to the “success” of programs such as Teach for America. However, the research literature suggests that this privileging is unfounded. There is significant evidence that teachers lacking in professional training have a negative effect on student achievement, and the concentration of alternative licensure teachers in low-income schools creates yet another barrier to raising the achievement of traditionally low performing student populations. The research literature suggests that a balanced approach to teacher education that focuses on content knowledge, professional training, and practicum experiences constitutes the most effective approach in raising student achievement. In short, each of the reforms offered by our think-tank experts not only fail their own epistemic test they also appear to generate significant negative effects. These apparent contradictions call into question both the normative ideals informing these policy prescriptives and the initial presentation of globalization as an economic phenomenon challenging public education.

In examining the normative ideals offering justification of the prescriptives that emerged from my research data, it is clear that these ideals are informed by a neo-liberal political ideology. It is an ideological commitment to the radical de-centering of public services to politicized markets in which the state is both a market participant and overseer. Conjuring up the ideals of a *regulated educational marketplace*, a *performance-based environment*, and a *professional labor force*, it is clear that the neo-liberal political ideology is built upon the fetishization of managerial efficiency and corporatist ideology. Neo-liberalism is uniquely economic in character in that it subsumes social reality within a logic of market capitalism. Thus, the problems or issues emerging from social institutions, such as public education, are framed as being the inevitable result of the absence of the market forces that drive growth, innovation, and efficiency in the corporate world. Neo-liberal political ideology advocates that both the organizational structure of public education and the educative ideals it is intended to achieve be framed within the logic of market capitalism. Neo-liberalism propounds the virtue of making government, its social institutions, and political policy the handmaiden of the capitalist economy.

In turn, this economic determinism is reflected in the initial presentation of globalization in chapter two as an economic reality conceptualized as an ontological real. Indeed, the initial presentation of globalization that emerged from chapter two demonstrates a crude economism that subsumes social reality within the dictates of an emergent global capitalism. It is defined as an inevitable reality uniquely economic in character. It is clear that the commitments to neo-liberal ideology that emerged from the structural ideals in chapter two is very much present in our think-tank experts' presentation of globalization. It is an ideological commitment that frames social issues as being economic issues to be re-solved through the introduction of “market forces,” as defined by classical economic models. Collective social action to address social ills is



the providence of individuals working within politicized marketplaces as consumers acting in their own self-interests and as citizens electing individuals to represent their interests as regulators of and participants in the marketplace. Thus, the initial presentation of globalization and the educational challenges it poses to public schooling that emerged in chapter two are framed within the strictures of this crude economism. The result is that globalization, its educational challenges, and the needed reforms to public schooling are treated as market problems to be resolved through market solutions.

Working back through the conceptual framework of globalization that emerged from my research data through the lens of the scholarship and research literature relevant to the policies, practices, and politics of education, two conclusions emerge from this chapter. First, the conceptual framework of globalization that emerged from chapter two demonstrates a commitment to neo-liberal ideology from its initial presentation of globalization and the educational challenges it presents to the structural ideal of a system of public education capable of answering those challenges to the policy reforms offered as the means of achieving that structural ideal. Second, the epistemic validity of the entire conceptual framework is called into question by the failure of the policy reforms that emerged from chapter two to achieve their own epistemic test of raising academic achievement, fostering innovation, and increasing efficiency. Further, the significant evidence of social costs associated with those reforms point toward externalities acting upon the practice of public schooling that the initial presentation of globalization in chapter two failed to capture. However, along the way, an outline of an alternative conceptualization of globalization began to emerge.

Neo-liberal approaches to education reform are now dominate throughout the world with few exceptions. The failures of the reforms offered by our think-tank experts led us to examine the reform policies of a nation that has bucked international trends in education reform with a high degree of success, Finland. The Finnish model offers an alternative to neo-liberal reforms. Finland adopted a model built around the organizing principle of an *autonomous professional teacher corps* working within *flexible public institutions* that utilize *intelligent systems of accountability* designed to inform educational decisions from policy to administration to pedagogy and curricula. The result has been that Finland has witnessed significant gains in academic achievement and has institutionalized educational innovation while keeping costs low in comparison to other developed nations. From the Finnish model emerged the norms of a *flexible public institution* in which innovation “bubbles up” from a *networked system of schools* conceptualized as both *professional communities* of educators and as *learning communities* of student inquiry, collaboration, and intellectual growth.

Re-thinking globalization and its educational challenges proved to be difficult. Even though Finland took a radically different approach to education reform from neo-liberal reform policies, Finland has adopted a similar perspective on the educational challenges presented by an increasingly globalized world and strives toward a human ideal little different from that which emerged from my research data in chapter two.

Nevertheless, no clear picture of globalization as a social phenomenon emerged from the research literature dealing specifically with the Finnish model of education reform. Locating the source of the failure of neo-liberal reform policies in fulfilling their own epistemic tests, as well as beginning the process of locating the source of Finland's relative success, required a re-examination of globalization as a social phenomenon and the educational challenges it poses to public schooling.

Expanding our understanding of globalization required an examination of three different theoretical approaches to globalization research: *world-system analysis*, *global cultural approach*, and *global capitalism approach*. What emerged is a presentation of globalization as an operative reality encompassing economic, political, and cultural processes as mediated moments of a dynamic totality. The educational challenges this conception of globalization presents proved to be expansive. Globalization challenges public education to provide students with a working knowledge of the structural framework and practices of the economic sphere, an understanding of global political structures and political issues, and a working knowledge of human geography and the role of culture in the exercise of and resistance to economic and political power.

Taken together, the reform policies and normativities that emerged from the Finnish experience with education reform and the expanded presentation of globalization and its educational challenges developed in this chapter do not constitute a coherent conceptual framework of globalization as a social phenomenon impacting public education. The outline of such conceptual framework begins to emerge in this chapter, however it remains inchoate and without logical connection. This leads us to the final task of this inquiry into the concept of globalization at work in the popular discourse of education reform. The final movement in this synthetic advance is to work back through the outline that has emerged in this chapter in order to develop a more sophisticated conception of globalization appropriate to the complexities and concrete realities that is its subject. It is to this task that we now turn.

## CHAPTER IV

The final task of the synthetic mode of inquiry developed in chapter one is to re-conceptualize globalization in its *transformed individuality* from the empirical base developed in chapter three. The 'division' of the concept of globalization that emerged from my research data in chapter two presented empirical evidence that created an epistemic grounding for not only a critique of that conceptual framework but, also, a way forward. At each step of conceptual failure in chapter three, this inquiry has presented alternative approaches grounded in empirical research and social theory. The failure of market- and standards-based reforms to fulfill their own epistemic tests of raising academic achievement, fostering educational innovation, and increasing efficiency led this inquiry to seek out reforms that do. This led us toward the Finnish model of education reform implemented in the financial crises of the 1990's and empirical evidence from research literature in the United States demonstrating the efficacy of similar reforms. The inadequacies of the neo-liberal ideologies informing market- and standards-based reforms led this inquiry to construct an alternative set of ideological commitments, again, using Finland's approach to public education policy as a model. The lack of sophistication of our think-tank experts' presentation of globalization as a crude economic phenomenon required a different approach. To work through the problematic of constructing a working understanding of globalization as a complex social phenomenon, this inquiry presented three different theoretical approaches employed by globalization researchers in order to develop a functional model that does justice to the complexity of its subject matter. Taken together, the positive elements that emerged from the critique in chapter three present a powerful refutation of the market- and standards-based reforms offered by our think-tank experts, the ideological commitments to which they speak, and the crude articulation of the social phenomenon in which it finds justification. However, these elements remain disjointed and lacking organic cohesion.

The task of this final chapter is to synthesize a conceptual framework of globalization from the elements that emerged from chapter three as an organic unity. For the reader who felt exhausted at the breadth and length of the previous chapter, what follows will make for a refreshing change. In this chapter, I will begin by presenting globalization as a *transformed individuality* from the functional model that emerged in chapter three in order to establish a grounding for the development of its other moments. I will first establish a working model of globalization as a social phenomenon from which I will articulate the educational challenges appropriate to it. The next step will be to develop a presentation of globalization as a *transformed universality* that is both appropriate to the complexities of the transformed individuality and that is grounded in the ideological commitments that emerged from the Finnish model of reform in chapter three. This will be presented in the form of both a human and structural ideal. Finally, this inquiry will conclude with an articulation of structural and organizational reforms appropriate to the educational challenges of globalization that are grounded in the Finnish model of education as a *transformed particularity*.

## **The Educational Challenges of a Globalized World**

In its broadest sense, globalization can be defined as an operative reality demarcating this current historical period of economic, political, and cultural integration as being historically unique. However, the task of developing a sophisticated conceptualization of globalization as a social phenomenon impacting educational policy and practice requires more specificity and refinement than provided by this initial definition. In the previous chapter, I used three different theoretical approaches to conducting research on globalization in order to establish an epistemic grounding for an expanded presentation of globalization to the level of sophistication appropriate to the task of this research project. These approaches bear revisiting.

World-system analysis establishes the historicity of globalization as a moment in the long development and spread of Western capitalism. More importantly, world-system analysis points toward this historical moment of globalization as being a moment of structural transformation and crisis in which the decisions being made now set the stage for an emergent global structure, or new world system, in the near future. The global cultural approach establishes the significance of global cultural flows in situating individuals within spatial fields of power that work toward the continuation of economic, political, and cultural domination. Yet, the global cultural approach also establishes the cultural sphere as a site of contingency in which economic, political, and cultural power is not only constructed but is also contested and challenged. The global capitalism approach points toward the emergence of transnational corporations and an emerging global political bloc as structural elements that are unique to this current historical period of globalization. Further, the global capitalism approach points toward the expansion of Western consumer culture and the development of global media and advertising as necessary structural elements of globalization. If we pull back our perspective in order to view these three approaches in the aggregate, a more refined proposition about the nature of globalization emerges.

Globalization can be defined as a dynamic totality understood as three co-determinative spheres: economic, political and cultural. The economic sphere can be characterized by an international division of labor made possible by advances in information and transportation technologies and an asymmetrical distribution of economic resources and capital wealth grounded in the historical development of Western capitalism and colonial conquest. Dominated by the emergence of transnational corporations whose interests often transcend the national boundaries in which they are situated, the economic sphere can be understood as global capital flows conditioned by inter-governmental organizations and global political structures that serve the interests a global economic elite, or transnational capitalist class, in perpetuating the expansion of global capitalism and the continuation of an asymmetrical distribution of economic resources.

The political sphere can be characterized by the emergence of a global power bloc working through global political structures and intergovernmental organizations in

perpetuating the continued growth of global capitalism and the subsequent erosion of the power of individual nation-states and the democratic gains achieved in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The cultural sphere can be characterized as a contested terrain that is a reflection and determinant of the economic and political spheres. It is a mediated sphere reflecting a fragmented cultural landscape in which knowledge of “others” is constructed and social relations between different nations, societies, and cultures are established as normative. In short, the cultural sphere can be characterized as a contested landscape in which the asymmetries of the economic and political spheres become naturalized as “common sense.” Indeed, the centrality of the ideological nature of globalization speaks to an even more refined proposition as to the nature of globalization.

Globalization can be defined as being an idea about the nature of social reality that works toward the realization of that idea in the concrete. It is an operative reality. Globalization is a systemically stable structural framework characterized by dynamic social processes of transformation, contestation, and contingency. It is an operative reality that points toward both the limits and possibilities of human agency with a framework of structural domination and transformation.

Thus, in its broadest sense, the educational challenge posed by globalization can be defined as preparing students to engage in self-determinative action within a dynamic global context characterized by continuous transformation, cultural exchange, asymmetrical power relations, and economic polarization. It challenges public education to provide students with the necessary tools to construct meaningful life-worlds within a transformative reality of economic, political, and cultural domination. Globalization challenges public education to prepare students for self-determinative action within the co-determinative processes at work in the economic, political, and cultural spheres.

Achieving self-determination in the economic sphere requires that public education provide students with a deep knowledge of global capitalism. To be sure, self-determinative life in an era of globalization requires, at the most basic level, that students leave their public schooling with the tools needed to become employable in a global job market. Food, clothing, and housing are certainly requisites for self-determinative life. However, self-determinative action in the economic sphere denotes more than simple human survival. It denotes a dialectical knowledge of the societal structures and dynamic processes conditioning the labor practices through which individuals ensure their survival that, in turn, empowers individuals to then effectively exert influence over the nature of those structures and processes. Thus, the educational challenge of preparing students for self-determinative action in the economic sphere requires that students exit public education possessing a working knowledge of the structural framework and operation of global capitalism. This demands that public education provide students with an understanding of the geographic distribution of production, the transportation and communication infrastructure that facilitates the movement of goods and ideas, and the global financial architecture enabling the free flow of capital and investment across the globe. It also demands that students possess a global media literacy that denotes their ability to recognize the methods marketers,

advertisers, and media outlets employ to target specific demographic groupings with targeted messaging systems, their own demographic positionality and the media messages that are targeted specifically toward them, and the ways in which media messages represent the relations between the consumers of specific messages to generalized “others” across the globe and the power relations implicit in those representations.

The educational challenge of preparing students for self-determinative action in the political sphere demands that public schools provide students with the tools they need to interpret the dynamic political nexus conditioning global and national policies. This requires that students leave their public schooling with a foundational knowledge of the historical development of political theory and the theoretical grounding of contemporary governmental systems throughout the world. It requires an understanding of the rise of the nation-state and different systems of governance, the political theories at work in those systems, and the unique characteristics of each governmental form. Beyond this foundational knowledge, self-determinative action in the political sphere demands that students leave public schooling with a rich understanding of the development and role of an emergent transnational capitalist class, or global political elite, in the operation of the global capitalist economy. It requires that students understand the role of intergovernmental organizations and global governing bodies in the global capitalist economy, and it demands that students recognize the ways in which the global political elite work through those institutions to ensure the continuation and expansion of the global capitalist economy in its current manifestation.

The educational challenge of preparing students for self-determinative action in the cultural sphere requires that public schooling provide students with the tools to interpret the cultural dynamics of a globalizing world. It requires a global cultural consciousness grounded in a foundational knowledge of human geography. It challenges public education to provide students with a rich understanding of cultural history and change, language patterns, world religions, and cultural migration. From this foundational knowledge, students must leave public schools with a deep knowledge of the spread of Euro-Western consumer culture through the expansion of global media and the role of mediated cultural practices in exercise and continuation of economic and political power in a global context. In short, self-determinative action in the cultural sphere challenges public education to provide students with the skill sets often associated with cultural studies. Students must be able to recognize the role of mediated popular culture in the manufacture of ideological norms and common sense understandings of the world that situate individuals in spatial fields of power that work to cement the asymmetrical relations of the economic and political spheres. It demands that students recognize the constellation of cultural formations that emerge from the dynamics of culture exchange in a global context that often work to challenge the exercise of power in the economic, political, and cultural spheres.

In sum, the educational challenges posed by a re-conceptualized globalization are both expansive and daunting in scope. In the economic sphere, it challenges public

education to provide students with the tools to understand the economic geography of the global economy and the mediated messaging systems working to standardize consumption patterns across the globe. In the political sphere, the challenge is to provide students with the tools to interpret the dynamic political nexus conditioning global and national policies and to negotiate their own positionality within that nexus. In the cultural sphere, the challenge is to provide students with the tools to understand cultural interaction, exchange, and transformation in a global context in which cultural identity intersects political ideology and action. More succinctly, preparing students to engage in self-determinative action within a dynamic global context characterized by continuous transformation, cultural exchange, asymmetrical power relations, and economic polarization challenges public education to provide students with the foundational knowledge of the global economy, the interpretive tools to engage issues of power and cultural change in a global context, and the intellectual reflexivity and curiosity required for continuous learning and inquiry.

## **The Educative Ideals of a Globalized World**

The next task is to present globalization in its transformed universality as the normative ideals appropriate to its transformed individuality. This requires that our inquiry now turn to the ideological commitments that emerged from the Finnish approach to education policy in chapter three. However, it is not a simple process of presenting a re-statement of those commitments. The task here is to offer a synthesis of the educational challenges that emerged from the transformed individuality of globalization as an operative reality that presents a series of profound challenges to our system of public education and the ideological commitments informing Finland's successful approach to education reform. It is a task that requires an articulation of the ideal human that would emerge from her/his schooling fully prepared to achieve self-determinative life within the dynamic complexities of an increasingly globalized world and an articulation of the ideal system of public education capable of producing such students.

In this section, I will first develop the human ideal appropriate to the operative reality of globalization. This human ideal represents a significant extension of the *creative-innovative individual* with which this inquiry began in chapter two. The human ideal that emerges in this chapter adopts some of the key elements of the foundational knowledge and intellectual skills offered by our think-tank experts, however it is necessary to extend them beyond the narrow strictures in which they are formulated. The expanded presentation of globalization in its transformed individuality demands a more extensive set of foundational knowledge and intellectual skill sets as necessary pre-conditions for achieving self-determinative life, the over-arching challenge of globalization. From this human ideal, I will then articulate the structural ideal capable of producing individuals possessing the foundational knowledge and intellectual skills sets required for achieving self-determinative life within a global context using the ideological commitments associated with the Finnish education model that emerged from chapter three.

## ***The Human Ideal***

The human ideal appropriate to the challenge of achieving self-determinative life within a dynamic global context of transformation, cultural exchange, asymmetrical power relations, and economic polarization is that of the *creative-innovative individual* possessing a solid grounding in the foundational knowledge necessary for constructing productive understandings of a rapidly globalizing world and the critical intellectual skills to put that knowledge to the task of self-determinative action. Beginning with foundational knowledge, it should go without saying that, at the most basic level, mastery of literacy, composition, and basic mathematics constitutes the bedrock of the educative process. Further, it would appear that in the era of globalization a functional mastery of computer and information technology, the biological and physical sciences, and the principles of engineering provide both a foundation for constructing a holistic understanding of the material reality of technologically-driven societies, such as ours, as well as a knowledge base for achieving and maintaining employment in a global job market. However, moving deeper into the prerequisites for self-determinative life, the human ideal that emerges from this inquiry is an individual with a productive mastery of three global literacies: economic, political, and cultural.

A *global economic literacy* denotes a solid understanding of the economic geography of the global capitalist economy. The ideal student would leave public schooling with a solid grasp of global production patterns and the communication and transportation systems coordinating and connecting resources, production, and consumption. A global economic literacy also denotes a working knowledge of marketing and advertising practices in the marketplace and the ways in which marketers draw upon and shape the contours of Western consumer culture. An ideal student would possess a sophisticated understanding of the history and significance of advertising in a capitalist economy, the development and spread of Western consumer culture, and the methods currently employed by marketing firms create and shape consumers through targeted messaging systems. Perhaps most importantly, a global economic literacy denotes a working knowledge of the institutional structure of the global economy. The ideal student would leave school with a sophisticated understanding of the historical development and current dominance of the transnational corporation in global affairs, and s/he would have a working knowledge of the global governing bodies and intergovernmental organizations regulating the global marketplace.

A *global political literacy* denotes an individual possessing a solid grasp of the historical development and spread of the modern nation-state, the historical development of political theory, and the different systems of governance that have emerged. An ideal student would possess a sophisticated understanding of the evolution of the modern nation-state from early-modern Europe to the present. S/he would have a working knowledge of the political theories that both spawned and developed from the evolution of the nation-state and that has generated the menagerie of national and global governing bodies existing today. Further still, a global political



literacy denotes a sophisticated understanding of the dynamic relations between national- and global-level governing bodies, transnational corporations, and the global political elite. The ideal student would leave their public schooling with a working knowledge of the constellation of players, organizations, and configurations of power operating at a global level through the machinations of nation-states, global governing bodies, and intergovernmental organizations. And, finally, a global political literacy denotes an individual possessing a working knowledge of the prominent political issues emerging from the dynamics of a globalizing world and their interconnectedness to the economic and cultural spheres. An ideal student would possess a sophisticated understanding of the contemporary political issues at work in their local context as complex social phenomena emanating from the dynamics of economic polarization, cultural migration and exchange, and political domination associated with globalization.

A *global cultural literacy* denotes, at the most basic level, a working knowledge of human geography. The ideal student would have a solid understanding of language patterns, world religions, cultural histories, and culture change. Or, more succinctly, an ideal student would possess a sophisticated understanding of culture history, migration, and hybridization. A global cultural literacy also denotes an understanding of cultural representation in popular culture and discourse. An ideal student would well versed in the dynamic relations between popular culture, corporate business, and marketing practices and would possess a working knowledge of the linkages between cultural representations in popular culture and economic and political relations. This demands that the ideal student possess a sophisticated understanding of myriad ways in which cultural representations in popular culture situates individuals into definite power relations to generalized “others” while also offering a social space for negotiating and contesting those representations.

It is readily apparent that the educative ideal appropriate to the complex dynamics associated with globalization denotes a highly skilled individual possessing a great breadth of foundational knowledge. As a necessary pre-condition for self-determinative life in a globalizing world, the human ideal that emerges from this inquiry is one who possesses: first, the basic skills commonly associated with the educative process; second, a solid grasp of computer and information technology, biological and physical sciences, and the principles of engineering; and, most importantly, a working knowledge of this current historical moment of globalization as an operative reality understood as three co-determinative spheres. As with all knowledge, however, the educative ideal of public schooling is not so much concerned with what a student “knows” as much as what s/he can do with that knowledge.

Self-determinative life in a dynamic global context demands that an individual possess a discrete set of intellectual skills to make use of his/her foundational knowledge in the organization and execution of self-determining action. The dynamic nature of this current period of globalization demands that an ideal student possess, first and foremost, an *intellectual reflexivity*. The educative ideal of intellectual reflexivity denotes an individual who maintains an uneasy relationship to what s/he “knows” which

itself denotes an individual possessing a well-developed imagination, intellectual curiosity, and a disposition toward life-long learning. Perhaps most importantly, the ideal of intellectual reflexivity speaks to an individual possessing the intellectual skills sets with which to carry out inquiry. Intellectual reflexivity denotes not simply an individual who maintains an uneasy relationship with her/his understandings of the world but an individual capable of seeking out and constructing new knowledge. It speaks to an individual possessing the skill sets to formulate questions, construct methodologies appropriate to the subject matter at hand, and engage in a process of inquiry in order to answer those questions. Intellectual reflexivity speaks to both an intrinsic motivation for a continuous questioning and (re)imagining of social reality and the skills sets with which to seek out new knowledge and understandings of it. However, the complex and fragmentary nature of a rapidly globalizing world demands that, in the pursuit of knowledge and even in attending to the demands of daily life, individuals possess the required social skill sets to work collaboratively with others.

The sheer complexity of the global context defining this historical moment renders an individualistic approach to learning and inquiry problematic. From material culture to scientific knowledge, the enormity of the political processes, social forces, economic relations, and cultural flows conditioning any one phenomenon within social reality presents an individual seeking knowledge of that phenomenon with an epistemic task beyond his/her individual capacity. Further still, a fragmented global ontology of economic polarization, asymmetrical power relations, and cultural hybridity renders each specific location within the social milieu limited in perspective. Living, learning, and working in the dynamic complexity of a globalizing world demands that individuals have the ability to work collaboratively in creating new understandings of social reality and to view others, and their unique perspective within the social totality, as valid sources of knowledge. It requires the skills to solicit from and share with others ideas, theories, questions, and perspectives in the collaborative pursuit and construction of knowledge and new understanding. It requires a willingness to take imaginative leaps in asking new questions, in pursuing new ideas, and in generating new knowledge. The educative ideal appropriate to the dynamic complexity and fragmentation of a globalizing ontology denotes an individual possessing the skills of *constructive thinking*. It denotes an individual with the intellectual disposition and skill sets to utilize her/his imagination, reason, and collaborative inquiry to extend his/her thinking beyond the immediacy of the moment, to see the everyday in a new light, and to construct new understandings of a dynamic social reality.<sup>1</sup>

The innovative-creative individual that emerges from this inquiry denotes the intellectual skills and disposition to see oneself as being a part of a larger social totality. It denotes an individual possessing what Mill termed a *sociological imagination*. The ideal of a creative-innovative individual speaks to the ability to situate one's own experiences and knowledge within the cultures, social institutions, political ideologies,

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<sup>1</sup> For a more complete articulation of constructive thinkings see: Barbara J Thayer-Bacon, *Transforming Critical Thinking: Thinking Constructively* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2000)

and modes of economic production that make up the historical moment s/he inhabits. Both the ideals of intellectual reflexivity and constructive thinking are predicated on the recognition of the social construction of knowledge and an acknowledgment of the global structures conditioning our experiences and life-worlds. Thus, actualizing self-determinative action into the concrete realities of social life demands such an innovative-creative individual also possess a well-developed *political consciousness*. Self-determinative life in a dynamic global context speaks to an individual possessing the skills to work within existing social and political structures toward establishing the necessary conditions for self-determinative action. It denotes an individual possessing both the intrinsic motivation and skills with which to become politically active. Self-determinative life speaks to a rigorous grounding of all knowledge and human existence within the dynamic social structures of a global context and the ability to utilize the necessarily unfinished nature of a globalizing world to make possible self-determinative action.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in addition to possessing a foundational knowledge of this current period of globalization as an operative reality understood as three co-determinative spheres, the human ideal that emerges from this inquiry denotes an individual possessing: an intellectual reflexivity to the dynamics of a global reality; the constructive thinking skills required to move beyond the immediacy of one's own context in the imaginative and collaborative construction of new knowledge and understanding; a sociological imagination with which to situate one's own life-world within a global context; and the political consciousness to work toward the realization of self-determinative life.

### ***The Structural Ideal***

The over-arching structural ideal that has emerged from this inquiry is that of the *flexible public institution* that fosters innovation and experimentation from the “ground up.” The transformative reality of globalization demands that if institutions are to remain relevant they must possess a built-in institutional flexibility. Technological change, new knowledge, and the continuous re-articulation of social reality present a never ending challenge to the institution of public education that cannot be overcome but only engaged. At the system level, a flexible public institution denotes a balanced approach to national concerns that students leave public schooling with the skills they will require for self-determinative life in this historic moment of globalization, while also guarding against a stifling “top-down” approach of educational standardization that discourages experimentation and risk-taking on the part of educational actors. This balance is built on a framework of national education standards and local autonomy in educational decision-making.

A flexible public institution establishes the goals of public schooling through the development of a national set of academic standards. These standards denote broad learning objectives that reflect the intellectual complexity implicit within their domains and, therefore, require authentic, formative assessments to gauge student achievement. While the national standards establish the objectives of student learning for all schools,

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<sup>2</sup> See: C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959)

the flexible public institution relegates educational decisions on teaching methods, curricula, and assessment to the district and school levels. Within this institutional model, the school-level serves as the primary engine of education reform. Teachers and local administrators should have the flexibility to experiment with new curricula, the organization of work, the delivery and teaching of content, and the development of assessments. At the district level, schools represent individual nodes of educational experimentation within a network of information sharing and collaborative research. Most importantly, within schools, teachers are empowered to utilize their classrooms as laboratories for experimentation and research. The ideal of a flexible public institution protects a teacher's classroom space for the kind of risk-taking and experimentation required to drive educational innovation. Teachers are provided the protection to construct their own curricular approaches and instructional methods, and they are encouraged to constantly seek out and incorporate new knowledge and technology into their classrooms. To state more formally, the structural ideal of a flexible public institution can be understood as three co-determinative processes or themes: *schools as professional communities*, *schools as networks*, and *schools as learning communities*.

The theme of *schools as professional communities* denotes an institution populated by professional educators with expertise in teaching methods, educational theory, and research methodologies. A professional community is built upon extensive training and advance education that invests in teachers the autonomy, responsibility, and accountability that denote professionalism. Professionalism speaks to teachers' ability to make pedagogical and curricular decisions for their students within the framework established by national standards. A professional community denotes a collaborative community of educators who share ideas, methods, and curricula with their peers and who work collaboratively in developing new pedagogical and curricular approaches. The theme of schools as professional communities speaks to an ideal of professional educators working collaboratively to construct lesson plans, identify educational issues as they arise in their classrooms and schools, formulate methods to address those issues, develop research projects to judge the efficacy of those methods, and communicate the results to the larger community of their peers.

The theme of *schools as networks* denotes a recognition of the resources already present within the institution as a potential engine for educational change. It is an ideal that speaks to an integrated network of professional communities working collaboratively to answer tough educational questions and resolve issues as they emerge. It envisions an institutional framework that carves out and protects a space for collaborative research projects within and among schools, and it denotes the free flow of ideas within the system through information networks. The theme of schools as networks speaks to a research-based public education system constructed on collaborative research, information networks, and professional communities of educators. It denotes an institutional framework for the exchange of methods, curricula, and assessment techniques that is geared toward the singular goal of student learning.

The theme of *schools as learning communities* points toward a recognition that a world of dynamic knowledge demands that schools place an equal emphasis on the development of intellectual skills and the transmission of foundational knowledge within a framework of collaborative inquiry and the social construction of knowledge. Learning communities denote schools that are sites for inquiry, collaboration, and communication that teach students not only foundational knowledge but also the productive skills of knowledge creation and intellectual growth. Learning communities point toward classrooms that are stimulating environments that stoke the imagination of students and provide an intrinsic motivation for student learning. These classrooms provide a space for students to develop the relational skills to effectively communicate their ideas to one another and to work toward common [or complementary] goals. Learning communities speak to an ideal of classrooms that employ inquiry-based instruction in which students work collaboratively in formulating research questions, developing research methods appropriate to those questions, carrying out research, and communicating their findings to their peers. Learning communities denote educational spaces in which students acquire foundational knowledge through the process of learning how to learn in collaboration with their peers.

## **Education Policy for a Globalized World**

We now come to the concluding section of this research project. At this point in our inquiry, it is now possible to articulate reform proposals to align education policy and practice with the challenges presented by the operative reality of globalization. The final task in the presentation of globalization in its transformed individuality is to articulate specific recommendations for reforming public education within the logic of the transformed universality developed above. What emerges here is an articulation of structural and organizational reforms built upon the Finnish education model. The structural reforms that emerge from this discussion denote the structural inputs required to construct a flexible public institution capable of maintaining a reflexive relationship with the dynamics of the social reality it is intended to serve. The organizational reforms that emerge here speak to an organizational structure and curricular approach to public education that is a synthesis of the Finnish model that emerged from chapter three and the structural reforms emerging from this discussion.

### ***Structural Reforms***

The first structural reform that emerges from this research project is that the United States should adopt a national approach to education reform that seeks to establish a *flexible public institution*. A flexible public institution denotes a fully public institution of shared responsibilities at all levels of governance, administration, and schooling in which educational experimentation and innovation are “hard-wired” into the institution from the “ground up.” At the national level, the federal government should be responsible for establishing national standards and ensuring equitable educational opportunity and funding. In consultation with educational actors at the local, state, and national levels, including teachers and administrators, and educational theorists and

researchers from the academy, the federal government should formulate a unified set of generalized educational standards to serve as the organizing principles of public education in the United States. In addition, the federal government should be responsible for the provision of adequate funding to the educational sector and for targeting resources toward the areas of greatest need. The states should also serve as organizing bodies that are responsible for ensuring the adequate and equitable provision of educational resources to school districts and the targeting of resources toward districts and schools as needed. It is at the district and school levels that curricular and pedagogical decisions should be made.

A flexible public institution de-centralizes the educational decision-making process to schools and individual classrooms. Teachers and principals should be empowered to decide the best methods and curricula to achieve national standards, and they should be encouraged to experiment with new curricular and pedagogical approaches. Teachers should be encouraged to test out new strategies and conduct practical research in their classrooms and in collaboration with their peers. Local districts should encourage school- and district-based research programs to address issues as they arise, and they should establish an institutional framework of professional development and networking to ensure the spread and adoption of new ideas and methodologies. In short, a flexible public institution seeks to continually adjust instructional practices and curricula to the changing needs of students growing and learning within the transformative reality of globalization. It is an approach to education reform predicated on the existence of a cadre of professional educators and intelligent systems of accountability.<sup>3</sup>

The second structural reform that emerges from this research project is that the United States should make significant investments in *teacher training and professional development*. The U.S. should set a high bar for entering the education field and create an incentive structure appropriate to its professional status.<sup>4</sup> Teacher education programs should be embedded within university settings that focus on subject didactics, educational theory, and pedagogical practice. Teachers should be required to attain a Bachelors degree in education with a dual specialization in one subject-area and in multidisciplinary studies that leads, ultimately, toward the completion of a Master's thesis and degree. Teachers-in-training should begin their practice teaching early on in their university careers so as to ground the subject matter of their coursework into the complex realities of a working classroom. Their education coursework should stress student mastery of educational theory, cognitive psychology, pedagogical practices and methods, curriculum development, and research paradigms and methodologies. Only student-teachers who have demonstrated mastery of these areas in practical settings and in formative, authentic assessments should receive teacher certification.

Once they enter the classroom, teachers should be empowered as autonomous professionals responsible for making curricular and instructional decisions for their

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<sup>3</sup> See below.

<sup>4</sup> In terms of both salary and professional autonomy.

students and engaging in research-based instruction.<sup>5</sup> Teachers should be empowered to develop pedagogical and curricular approaches to achieving national standards that are tailored to the needs and interests of their students. Teachers should be responsible for identifying and addressing educational issues as they arise in their classrooms, and they should be encouraged by administrators to engage in classroom-based research projects, individually and in collaboration with their peers, to evaluate and analyze their impact on student learning. Developing a professional community of educators demands that schools be organized so as to provide space and time for teachers to share ideas and build professional bonds. The teachers lounge should be transformed into collaborative spaces in which teachers share their planning time and can work together in curricular development, teaching methods, and assessment strategies. In short, the United States should focus significant resources toward developing a professional teaching corps that utilize their classrooms as laboratories for driving educational innovation and student learning.

The third structural reform that emerges from this research project is that the United States should construct a *system of intelligent accountability* built around an ethic of shared responsibility. The de-centralized model of a flexible public institution that relegates educational decisions to the local level and protects school autonomy demands a sharing of accountability pressures between leadership at the national, state, and district levels and professional educators in local schools. Accountability systems should take a balanced approach between the needs of policy-makers to gauge student learning in reaching national standards and the needs of teachers to utilize formative assessments to accurately gauge student learning and make adjustments to their pedagogical and curricular approaches to address the needs of their students. States and local districts should be responsible for implementing authentic, low-stakes assessment regimes that utilize random-sampling methodologies in order to measure school efficacy in achieving national standards and to identify issues in specific schools and districts as they arise. Within individual schools, student assessment and accountability should be the providence of the teacher and geared toward student learning. Teachers should employ low-stakes, formative assessments that measure student achievement in reaching learning objectives developed from national standards. These assessments should be constructed so as to produce actionable knowledge of student learning from which teachers can tailor instruction and curricula to the specific needs of each student in their classrooms. The autonomy afforded local districts and schools brings with it a direct accountability of local administrators and teachers to their local communities, and any issues that may arise can be addressed at the local ballot box, ie. school board and local government elections. A system of intelligent accountability denotes an ethic of shared responsibility in which local districts and schools are held accountable for student learning while national and state policy makers are held responsible for providing the resources necessary to make student learning possible.

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<sup>5</sup> Autonomy in the sense of having the professional authority to make educational decisions for their students.

## ***Organizational Reforms***

The organizational reforms that emerge from this research project are that, first, education policy-makers should focus *significant investment toward primary schooling*. Primary schools should be small, well-equipped neighborhood schools that offer small class sizes and a whole child approach in fostering the academic and social development of their students. Students should generally work with the same “home-base teacher” throughout their primary education, and retaining the social cohesion of individual classes as learning communities should constitute a significant priority for both teachers and administrators. Student learning in the primary years should be focused on acquiring the foundational knowledge of literacy, composition, and mathematics and the foundational intellectual skills of inquiry, collaboration, and life-long learning. Students should acquire a foundational knowledge of the so-called 3 R's in collaborative inquiry-centered classrooms in which computer and information technology is vertically integrated into the curricula as tools for research, information gathering, calculation, and communication.

Perhaps most importantly, it is imperative that primary schools attend to the physical and emotional needs of their students. Primary schools should provide two nutritious meals every school day, primary health care in schools, transportation to and from school each day, all necessary learning materials, and counseling services to their students in order to create as equitable of a learning environment as is possible. Providing a level playing field for each student to succeed in school, and ultimately in adult life, regardless of their social status demands that schools provide the necessary pre-conditions for student learning.

Secondary schools should retain a comprehensive, whole child approach to student learning but should do so in a larger setting than primary schools in order to control expenditures and focus resources on the early years of student learning. As with primary schooling, it is important that both the physical, emotional, and material well-being of students be attended to, and it is equally important that student learning continues to take place within cohesive learning communities. This can be accomplished by assigning students to individual classes that remain intact throughout their secondary schooling while teachers shift in and out with changes in subject matter. Secondary schooling should build on the foundation laid in primary schooling by utilizing an inquiry-based curriculum in which information and computer technology is vertically integrated. The general framework of the secondary curriculum should be constructed along four general lines of study organized around the foundational knowledge and intellectual skills identified in this inquiry as being the human ideal for self-determinative action within a global context.

The first line of study focuses on the most basic knowledge and skills students will require in order to achieve and maintain employability in a global job market and to acquire the basic foundational knowledge required to develop even a cursory understanding of their material and social worlds. Secondary schools should prepare



students for a marketplace of technical specialization and transformation. Students should be instructed in the principles of science and the scientific method, engineering, and advanced mathematics, such as algebra and trigonometry, and they should be instructed in the use of computer technology in scientific inquiry, design, and carrying out complex mathematical calculations. Secondary schooling should provide students with a *foundational knowledge of science, math, and engineering* that will enable them to either pursue careers in one or more of those fields or, at least, possess a basic understanding of the engineering principles and scientific knowledge that make possible much of the material worlds in which students live. Importantly, technology should not be a discrete subject of instruction in secondary schooling nor should it be limited to applications in engineering, mathematics, or science. Computer and information technology should be vertically integrated into the curriculum across all four lines of study in order to ensure that students leave their secondary schooling with the tools to utilize technology as a means to an end, as tools of collaborative inquiry and knowledge creation.

The second line of study focuses on the *political economy of globalization*. The secondary curriculum should instruct students in the historical development of Euro-Western capitalist modernity from the rise of the nation-state and early-capitalism through colonialism and industrialization to the global phenomenon of today. Students should learn about the historical development of political theory, the theoretical foundations of current political structures throughout the world, and the current challenges faced by the polities of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The secondary curriculum should place a great deal of emphasis on the economic geography of the global economy. Students should leave their secondary schooling possessing a working knowledge of the geographic distribution of economic production and the social issues associated with globalization, such as labor and workers' rights, environmental degradation, political corruption and turmoil, and social dislocation. Secondary students should understand the transportation infrastructure moving goods and labor throughout the world and the communication technology coordinating their movement. Most importantly, the secondary curriculum should seek to synthesize the dynamic relations between political structures and global capitalism. Secondary students should leave their schooling with a sophisticated understanding of the local and national issues conditioning their everyday experiences within the framework of a global political economy in which different groups, or classes, work through the political machinations of national and global governing bodies in order to craft policies benefiting those groups and their economic interests.

The third line of study should seek to foster in students the *intellectual skills of constructive thinking* through the study of the arts, philosophy, and humanities. Through the study of philosophy students should develop their powers of reason, criticality, and dialogue by engaging questions of ontology, epistemology, and axiology as an on-going conversation linking the issues confronting contemporary thinkers, such as themselves, with those issues faced by theorists stretching all the way back to antiquity. The study and production of art should foster in students a mode of imaginative perception and

expression that constitutes the core of creative thought, just as it must provide them with intellectual skills the essential for carrying out processes of creative inquiry and problem-solving. Secondary schooling should work to hone students' skills of creative inquiry and focus them on current social reality as a subject of research and critique. The foundational knowledge of science, modern engineering, and political economy should not be delivered as “dead” content to be internalized by students but, instead, viewed as dynamic social phenomena to be analyzed and interrogated from the perspective of normative understandings of ethics, beauty, and justice.

The final line of study should provide students with a *foundational knowledge of human geography* and instruct students in the *critical methods of cultural studies*. Students should teach students global patterns of language distribution, religions, cultures and ethno-nationalities, and cultural change over time. The secondary curriculum should work to ensure that students develop a working understanding of the global cultural dynamics in which they live and possess the intellectual skills to critically engage their cultural context. Students should learn about the social history of popular culture and the development of communication and entertainment media as global phenomena inextricably linked to the development and spread of modern capitalism across the globe. Secondary education should encourage students to engage issues of popular culture as mediated social processes in the manufacture of ideological norms that symbolically situate individuals within spatial fields of economic and political power. Students should learn to interrogate the popular culture that surrounds them as dynamic processes that condition and are conditioned by structural formations of political and economic power, cultural migration and hybridization, technological change, and historical knowledge.

### ***In Closing***

It is at this point that our inquiry draws to a close. This chapter offers a re-conceptualization of globalization that is the product of a working through the epistemic failures of the concept with which we began in chapter two. The positive elements that emerged from the critique in chapter three provided an empirical grounding to synthesize a conceptualization of globalization to a level of sophistication that is appropriate to the concrete realities of our 'globalized world.'

Synthesis began with a formal definition of globalization as a social phenomenon that then allowed for an articulation of the educational challenges it presents. The next step was to flesh out the normative ideals appropriate to those challenges in the form of a human ideal, or the ideal student, and a structural ideal, or the ideal educational system. The normative ideals of a globalized world developed here was a synthesis of the expanded presentation of the challenges associated with globalization and the ideological commitments developed from the Finnish model of education reform in chapter three. The final step in this synthetic advance was the articulation of specific reform proposals developed from the synthesis of successful reforms in Finland and the

United States identified in chapter three and the normative ideals developed in this chapter.

Taken together, the clarification of the concept of globalization that is the task of this research project has produced a conceptualization that is far more expansive in scope and complexity than the one with which we began. Despite the rhetoric of radical change offered by our think-tank experts, the neo-liberal reforms now dominate in public discourse appear to be little more than a re-articulation of classical liberal ideas in the form of an activist political state, a model that bears more resemblance to the corporatism of *El Duce* than the language of “individual freedom” in which it is cloaked. The challenges, ideals, and reforms that emerged from this research project demand of would-be reformers a willingness to re-think public education in the United States from the “ground up,” literally. It demands that would-be reformers step outside a corporate model of education reform that has now become “common sense” and re-orient popular understandings of public schooling as a social institution in which all share a responsibility.

## CHAPTER V CONCLUSION & NOTES

In the introduction to this inquiry, I established the task of this research as being that of bringing philosophic clarity to the concept of globalization as it is used in the popular discourse of education reform. It is a concept that is commonly employed by reform advocates of all political stripes, yet the way in which the concept is employed in popular discourse demonstrates an ambiguity of meaning that inevitably speaks to the political agenda of those who employ the term. More importantly, I argued that the concepts employed in the popular discourse of education reform constitute one of the primary points of contention in public debates over schooling and education policy. Thus, these concepts provide researchers with a unique heuristic tool to flesh out the political dynamics at work in education policy. These concepts also offer a way to critique current education reform proposals that constructs a positive argument for a way forward in future reforms. Looking back at what has emerged from this process, I believe that the inquiry that has emerged in the preceding chapters offers justification for that argument.

**In chapter one**, I constructed a synthetic mode of inquiry for examining the concept of globalization by tracing the influence of Hegel's work on a long-running conversation taking place in social theory. Bringing Gramsci and Habermas into conversation with Hegel, I demonstrated that the ambiguity of meaning associated with the concepts with which modern society understands itself is a product of a transformative ontology that is simultaneously historically constructed and fractured along the lines of class, race, and gender. The principle lesson to be learned is that the conceptual frameworks of "common sense" at work in popular discourse are the product of a dynamic socio-political landscape and that it is necessary for modern society to maintain an uneasy relationship with the conceptual norms with which society actualizes itself in self-determinative action.

Bringing Hutchings into the conversation established the epistemic model appropriate to this task. The lesson we learn from Hutchings is that there is no way to transcend the contractions and ambiguity of the concepts of modernity. Instead, it is necessary to work through those ambiguities and contradictions in order to re-conceptualize the conceptual norms at work in modern society to a level of sophistication appropriate to their domains. In conversation with Hegel, Hutchings points us toward a mode of philosophic inquiry as a "this-worldly" engagement that seeks to establish the necessary pre-conditions for the transformation of conceptual norms through an explication of the concrete realities in which those norms become actualized.

In order to develop a systematic approach to this philosophic task, I introduced Garrison's and Meaney's recovery on Hegel's synthetic mode of inquiry in the work of Dewey and Marx, respectively. A synthetic mode of inquiry begins with the definition of a concept in its most immediate form as an inductive analysis of the phenomena to

which it refers, the normative ideals implicit within this explication of the phenomena, and the actionable prescriptives explicitly offered. From definition, inquiry then moves through the logic of this conceptual framework in a deductive movement of division that articulates the complex determinants and processes conditioning its actualization in the concrete. The empirical base created by division is then used in an inductive movement of synthesis that re-conceptualizes the subject of inquiry as an organic system of normativity and action. The critical phenomenological method that emerged from chapter one takes as its subject the conceptual norms at work in modern society. For the research project to follow, it established a synthetic mode of inquiry that begins with the concept of globalization in its most immediate form from which inquiry moves by deduction and induction toward its re-conceptualization through an articulation of the educational practices, policies, and outcomes that are its subject in the concrete.

**In chapter two**, I defined globalization in its simple universality through an analysis of popular texts produced by large, national think-tanks over the past ten years. Think-tanks play an important role in shaping popular discourse. By examining the popular literature they produce, it is possible to get a sophisticated perspective on the contours of the popular discourse of education policy reform, more generally. The synthetic method developed in chapter one begins by identifying the moments of the conceptual framework that is the subject of inquiry. The concept of globalization had to be defined as a social phenomenon impacting public education, the ideal system of public education appropriate to that phenomenon, and the policies required to make that ideal system a reality. What emerged from my research data is that globalization is primarily an economic phenomenon that has a wide impact on the larger social body. More specific to our inquiry here, globalization is presented as posing specific challenges to our nation's system of public education that it has thus far failed to answer. The information-based economy associated with globalization demands that public education produce students well-versed in the basics of literacy, composition, and mathematics, and it further demands that students are comfortable with information technology, scientific inquiry, and abstract mathematics in order to increase the nation's supply of engineers, scientists, and technicians. Yet, burdened by the heavy-hand of political bureaucracy, teachers unions, under-qualified teachers, and poor administration, public education is presented as being a failing institution.

In contrast to this nightmare, the popular texts that make up my research data presented an ideal model of a robust marketplace of specialized education providers offering niche services to fulfill the nation's educational needs. The ideal presented by our think-tank experts is an educational marketplace that creates a welcoming environment for entrepreneurs and professional educators to create innovative schools built upon a meritocratic ethic of high standards and accountability. The ideal educational marketplace that emerged from chapter two is a dynamic, flexible institution that will raise student achievement, foster educational innovation, and increase efficiency.

The prescriptives that emerged from my research data in chapter two are that federal policy-makers should construct a *regulated educational marketplace* by requiring states to offer parents more educational choices by expanding the number of charter schools available, providing supplementary educational services to struggling students, and re-configuring school funding so as to create competition among all education providers, public and private. To ensure a stable marketplace, policy-makers should work to create a *performance-based environment* by establishing a clear regulatory bar in the form of high-academic standards and an unified regime of high-stakes assessment for evaluating school success and failure. It is necessary that they establish economic incentives for high student achievement and clear mechanisms for eliminating failure. Finally, policy-makers should *cultivate a professional labor force* by creating a similar educational marketplace for the training of teachers that includes alternative means of attaining teacher licensure, and they should create significant economic incentives for the nation's best and brightest to enter the education field.

**In chapter three**, I examined the prescriptives that emerged from chapter two through an investigation of empirical research literature as the starting point of critique. The second task of the synthetic method developed in chapter one identified the next task of this inquiry to be a deductive movement that worked through the moments of globalization identified in chapter two from the “ground up.” Market competition, standards-based accountability, and similar reforms to teacher education are put forth as being the key to increasing student achievement, fostering educational innovation, and increasing efficiency in education funding, yet the research literature examined in this chapter calls into question each of those claims. Looking at the research literature on school competition and market incentives in education, we cannot say with any certainty that market-based reforms improve average academic achievement nor that they contribute to closing achievement gaps associated with low socio-economic and minority students, a claim made by many of the authors in my research data. Interestingly, the introduction of market forces into education appears to create inefficiencies in resource allocation by draining resources and creating uncertainty in the budgeting of public institutions, the educators of last resort.

Similarly, the research literature examined in chapter three fails to substantiate the efficacy of standards-based accountability reforms in raising student achievement or in providing educators with the information they require to tailor instruction to student needs. Most troubling, standards-based accountability reforms appear to generate high social costs in the form of higher retention rates, increased drop-outs and disappearances, and the retrenchment of instruction and curricula to the cognitive basement of easily assessed skills. Standards-based accountability regimes not only appear to not raise student achievement, they appear to contribute to the educational failures to which these reforms are aimed, ie. drop-out rates.

Looking at the reforms for cultivating a professional labor force, it is clear that the calls for an educational marketplace that emerged from chapter two are predicated on a privileging of teacher content knowledge over professional training in educational theory

and practice. However the research literature offers no justification for this privileging. There is significant evidence that teachers lacking in professional training have a negative effect on student achievement and that the concentration of alternative licensure teachers in high-poverty schools presents yet another educational barrier to the nation's under-class. In contrast, the research literature suggests that an approach to teacher education that balances professional training and practicum experiences with content knowledge is the best approach. It is also an approach to teacher education well-suited for a traditional university setting.

Each of the prescriptives that emerged from chapter two failed to find justification in the research literature which then led this inquiry to question the normative ideals informing those reforms. In so doing, it became clear that these prescriptives are grounded in a neo-liberal political ideology committed to the radical de-centering of public services to politicized marketplaces. Uniquely economic in character, neo-liberal ideology subsumes social reality within the logic of market capitalism, thus any one social issue that may arise is framed as a market problem to be resolved through a market solution. Neo-liberal political ideology propounds the virtue of making government, its social institutions, and public policy the handmaiden of the capitalist economy. The economism of neo-liberal ideology is reflected not only in the prescriptives that emerged from chapter two but also in the ways in which globalization is presented in my research data as an economic reality.

The initial presentation of globalization that emerged from chapter two subsumes current social reality within the dictates of an emergent global capitalism. Globalization is defined as an inevitable reality that is uniquely economic in character, thus the educational challenges it presents are treated as market problems to be resolved through market mechanisms. However, the failure of the prescriptives that emerged from chapter two in fulfilling their own epistemic tests of raising student achievement, fostering innovation, and increasing efficiency calls into question the validity of the entire conceptual apparatus at its empirical base. The conceptual framework of globalization that emerged from chapter two presents a logical whole composed of interdependent elements. Conceptual failure in any one element, in this case the policy reforms advocated, calls into question the "truth" of the conceptual framework as a whole.

Working through these conceptual failures required that this inquiry utilize points of conceptual failure as opportunities to identify activities<sup>1</sup> capable of fulfilling the criteria established by those concepts.<sup>2</sup> The failure of market- and standards-based reform policies to fulfill their own epistemic criteria led this inquiry to seek out in the research literature policy reforms that have been successful in raising student achievement, fostering innovation, and increasing efficiency. This led us toward an examination of evidence from Finland's successful reforms implemented in the 1990's and evidence from the United States that demonstrate the applicability of similar reforms in this

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<sup>1</sup> In this case, education reform policies.

<sup>2</sup> In this case, raising student achievement, fostering educational innovation, and increasing efficiency.

country. What emerged was an education model built around the organizing principle of an *autonomous professional teacher corps* working within a *flexible public institution* that utilizes *intelligent systems of accountability* designed to inform educational decisions from pedagogy and curricula to administrative policies. The normative ideals informing the flexible public institution that emerged from the Finnish model envision *schools as learning communities* of student inquiry, collaboration, and intellectual growth that operate within *networked systems of professional collaborative research and innovation*.

Working through the initial presentation of globalization that emerged from chapter two required that we expand our perspective on globalization as a social phenomenon. In order to do so, this inquiry presented three different theoretical perspectives at work in the research literature on globalization so as to construct a holistic presentation of globalization. What emerged is a presentation of globalization as an operative reality intertwined with the historical development of Western modernity encompassing economic, political, and cultural processes as mediated moments of a dynamic totality. The educational challenges associated with this presentation of globalization are expansive in both scope and depth. Globalization challenges public education to provide students with a working knowledge of the structural framework and practices of the economic sphere, an understanding of global political structures and the issues they create, and a working knowledge of human geography and the role of culture in the exercise of and resistance to power.

Taken altogether, the reforms and ideals that emerged from an examination of the Finnish model and the more sophisticated presentation of globalization as a social phenomenon developed from differing theoretical models of globalization present the necessary elements for a positive critique that makes a contribution to public discourse and knowledge. However, these positive elements, as they are developed in chapter three, remained disjointed and lacking in logical cohesion.

**The task of chapter four** was to utilize the positive elements developed in chapter three to re-conceptualize globalization as an organic totality. This required that we once again trace through the 'moments' of the conceptual framework from its initial presentation of globalization as a social phenomenon impacting public education, to the normative ideals appropriate to this phenomenon, and to finish with the policies necessary to make those ideals a reality in the concrete. What emerged was a presentation of globalization as an operative reality composed of three inter-dependent spheres: economic, political, and cultural. It was presented as a systemically stable structural framework characterized by dynamic processes of social transformation, political and cultural domination, and economic polarization. Globalization emerged as an operative reality that speaks to both the limits and possibilities of human agency within a framework of structural domination and continuous transformation.

The educational challenges that emerged in chapter four were broadly defined as being that of preparing students to engage in self-determinative action within a dynamic



global context characterized by transformation, cultural exchange, asymmetrical power relations, and economic polarization. The challenge that emerged was that of preparing students for self-determinative action within the co-determinative processes at work in the economic, political, and cultural spheres. In the economic sphere, globalization challenges public education to provide students with the tools to understand the economic geography of the global economy and the mediated messaging systems working to standardize consumption patterns across the globe. In the political sphere, globalization challenges public education to provide students with the tools to interpret the dynamic political nexus conditioning political policies at the global and national levels and to negotiate their own positionality within that nexus. In the cultural sphere, globalization challenges public education to provide students with the tools to understand cultural interaction, exchange, and transformation in a global context in which cultural identities and political ideologies intersect.

The normative ideals that emerged in chapter four as being appropriate to the educational challenges of globalization were presented as human and structural ideals. The human ideal that emerged was that of a *creative-innovative individual* who possesses the foundational knowledge necessary for constructing productive understandings of a globalizing world and the critical intellectual skills to put that knowledge to work in self-determinative action. Such an individual would possess a productive mastery of *three global literacies* with which to understand this current historical moment of globalization as three co-determinative processes of economic, political, and cultural interaction. Equally necessary, the human ideal that emerged in chapter four denotes an individual possessing an *intellectual reflexivity* and curiosity, the *constructive thinking skills* to act on that curiosity in creative inquiry, the *sociological imagination* to situate his/her active life-world within a larger social context, and the *political consciousness* to work within that social context in self-determinative action.

The structural ideal that emerged in chapter four was that of a *flexible public institution* built on a commitment to national standards and local autonomy. The flexible public institution that emerged denotes a model of education policy in which national standards establish broad objectives for student learning while relegating the educational decisions on pedagogical methods, curricula, and assessment to the district- and school-levels. The key to the structural ideal that emerged in chapter four was a conceptualization of schools as first, professional communities in which teachers engaged in research-based teaching and collaborative inquiry with their peers; second, schools as networks in which ideas are shared between schools and schools organize collaborative research projects to answer shared problems; and, finally, schools as learning communities of inquiry, collaboration, and communication that teach students not only foundational knowledge but the skills of knowledge creation and intellectual growth.

The reform proposals that emerged from chapter four as a means of achieving these educative ideals were broken down into two categories: structural and organizational reforms. The structural reforms that emerged speak to the need to utilize

schools as the engines for educational innovation and reform. More specific reforms included:

- At the national level, the federal government should establish national academic standards that reflect the intellectual complexity implicit in their domains and ensure the equitable distribution of educational resources.
- Public education should seek to de-centralize the educational decision-making process to schools and individual classrooms. Teachers should be encouraged to utilize their classrooms as laboratories for research-based teaching, and principals should establish an institutional framework for professional development and collaborative inquiry among teachers.
- Policy-makers should make significant investments in the training and professional development of teachers. Teacher education programs should be embedded with an university setting that takes a balanced approach of ensuring that future teachers possess a professional mastery of their subject content knowledge, education theory, and research methodologies.
- Policy-makers should construct a system of intelligent accountability that takes a balanced approach to the needs of policy-makers to assess student achievement in reaching national standards and the needs of teachers to utilize formative assessments to accurately gauge student achievement and make pedagogical adjustments as needed. States and local districts should be responsible for implementing authentic, low-stakes assessment regimes that utilize random-sampling methodologies while, in the classroom, teachers should be encouraged to utilize formative assessments geared toward student learning.

The organizational reforms that emerged from chapter four speak to the need to focus educational resources on primary education and re-focus current approaches to secondary education. More specific reforms included:

- Policy-makers should focus significant investment toward primary schooling. Primary schools should be small, well-equipped neighborhood schools with low teacher-student ratios in which teachers work with the same students over multiple years. Primary schooling should be geared toward a whole-child approach to teaching students foundational knowledge in collaborative inquiry-centered classrooms in which technology is vertically integrated into the curriculum.
- Secondary schooling should retain a whole-child approach to student learning but in larger settings in which individual classes remain in tact while teachers shift in and out as appropriate. Secondary schooling should employ an inquiry-based curriculum in which technology is vertically integrated that is organized around four general lines of study that provide students with: the knowledge and skills to become employable in a global economy, a deep understanding to the political economy of globalization,

the intellectual skills of constructive thinking for engaging in creative inquiry, and a sophisticated understanding of human geography and the critical methods of cultural studies.

The final product that emerged from chapter four was a synthesis of the positive elements that emerged from the critique in chapter three as a re-conceptualized globalization that called forth specific recommendations for policy-makers and that makes a positive contribution to on-going debates over education reform.

## **Notes**

In the space remaining, I would like to offer some brief discussions on individual issues that emerged in the preceding process of inquiry that bear further consideration. They are presented in no specific order.

### ***Notes on Efficiency***

One of the key arguments that emerged from my research data in chapter two points to the need for increased efficiency in the allocation of educational resources. As many of our think-tank experts point out, the United States spends a great deal on education in OECD comparisons but doesn't appear to get much in return. In this regard, Finland's comparatively low educational expenditures and high academic achievement offers policy-makers a powerful model for potential reforms that, while requiring significant expenditures on the front-end, could lower educational costs in the long -term and allow for more specific targeting of existing resources.

The Finnish model's most obvious cost-saving feature might sound heretical to an American education reform advocate: reduce the number of years for compulsory education. Finland has nine years of compulsory schooling from age seven to sixteen that focuses its resources on six years of primary education in small neighborhood schools. It would seem that the United States could adopt a similar approach that reduces the length of compulsory education so as to focus existing resources on creating small, neighborhood schools at the primary level that take a whole-child approach to public education, ie. nutrition, health care, exercise, etc. Much like arguments common in current health care debates over the need to target resources on preventative care, targeting resources toward comprehensive primary schooling could result in significant educational gains well beyond students' primary education. Further, as noted in chapter four, secondary schooling could help to reduce overall expenditures through larger class sizes without necessarily losing the ideal of schools as learning communities. Keeping classes together while shifting teachers in and out could help to maintain a learning community approach at a minimal expense.

Two more cost-saving proposals emerge from the Finnish model that bear mentioning, although they are implicit to the model rather than explicit. First, public education in the United States incorporates vocational classes into the secondary

curriculum while Finland, as well as many other OECD nations, has no such component in its secondary model. Instead, vocational training constitutes a key element of the tertiary sector in Finland. Eliminating vocational classes from the secondary sector in the United States could free up significant resources to focus on academics.

Second, in the United States, technology has been introduced into the curriculum much as would be expected from the factory model of education we have inherited from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Thus far, technology has been treated as a separate element of the curriculum with individual courses dedicated toward teaching students how to work with computer and information technology. If the United States were to adopt Finland's inquiry-based approach to primary and secondary education then the need for separate technology classrooms would be eliminated. The approach that I developed in chapter four attempts to reconcile the need for inquiry-based schooling with the need to teach students how to utilize information technology by advocating that technology be vertically integrated into the curriculum as tools of inquiry. Schools will require technology specialists to help teachers effectively integrate technology into their classrooms, but this approach would eliminate the need for individual technology classrooms and their associated costs.

### ***Notes on Research Literature***

In my review of the research literature in chapter three, it became apparent that much of the research on issues such as school competition and educational innovation is still in its infancy. In what follows, I would like to point to some of the gaps in academic literature in need of attention by educational researchers.

First, it is clear from my review of the literature that educational researchers need to reclaim some disciplinary territory. Much of the academic research impacting policy discussions today originate from business schools and economics departments. While much of the research they bring to the table is highly sophisticated and relevant to education issues, their heavy reliance on econometric models that utilize publicly available data place clear limitations on the kind of conclusions they reach and the efficacy of policies they recommend. As is clear from the previous discussion in chapter three, standardized assessments are inadequate tools for measuring student success with any degree of sophistication, yet these econometric models rely on the results from standardized assessments as the sole measure of student success.

There is a clear need for educational researchers to engage in research projects that investigate market- and standards-based education reforms now dominant in public discourse that utilize *authentic academic assessments* to compare, for example, student achievement across different school types. While econometric-based research is both cost-efficient and relatively easy to carry out [as the researcher need never leave her or his desk], the complexity of the issues involved in education policy and the importance of public education to our society demands of researchers more sophisticated understandings of the empirical realities of market- and standards-based reforms than

even the most complex mathematics can provide. Educational researchers need to employ the knowledge-base housed within colleges of education to fill this void in the research literature.

On a similar note, educational researchers need to address a void in the research literature on the issue of school choice. What is needed is some good qualitative data on the characteristics of parents who choose to opt-out of public schools and the characteristics of parents whose children remain. More data is required on how parents make their decisions and how they judge the quality of schools. The research literature presented in chapter three is limited in scope and, as with the research literature more generally, is predominantly quantitative. Given the significant evidence of student sorting in competitive environments, it is important that educational researchers develop a clearer picture of parental decision-making in the context of school choice.

Along those same lines, educational researchers need to peer beneath the veneer of specialization often associated with educational markets. One of the key arguments for school competition is the idea that an educational marketplace will foster specialization and drive innovation to serve the changing needs of the market. The empirical research presented in chapter three fails to offer validity to this assumption, however the research literature is somewhat limited in scope and is reliant on evidence that is indirect, ie. promotional material provided by schools. There is a clear need for educational researchers to get into the classrooms of charter schools and schools of choice to assess the degree of innovation taking place.

One final note, it is clear that educational researchers need to further investigate the Finnish model. If lessons from the Finnish miracle are to have any impact on policy debates on this side of the Atlantic ocean then educational researchers need to develop a clearer picture of how research-based teaching plays out in real classrooms, how administrators create space for teachers to engage in collaborative research, how teachers and schools assess student learning, etc. Likewise, there is a need to examine student life in Finnish schools, their daily learning activities, the roles they play in their own learning, and the problems they face. Further, there is a need to analyze public schooling in Finland from a sociological perspective that fleshes out the linkages between schools and their communities, the roles parents play in their children's education, public attitudes toward schooling and teachers, etc. Thus far, there is limited discussion on the mechanics of Finland's educational success in American research literature beyond what is presented in this research project. There is a clear need for educational researchers to take up a more thorough inquiry.

### **Notes on Method**

*[I]t is precisely the advantage of the new trend that we do not dogmatically anticipate the world, but only want to find the new world through criticism of the old one... Hence, nothing prevents us from making criticism of politics, participation in politics, and therefore real struggles, the starting point of our criticism, and from identifying our criticism with them. In that case we do not confront the world in a doctrinaire way with a new principle: Here is the truth, kneel down before it! We develop new principles for the world out of the world's own principles. We do not say*

to the world: Cease your struggles, they are foolish; we will give you the true slogan of struggle. We merely show the world what it is really fighting for, and consciousness is something that it **has** to acquire, even if it does not want to. - Marx "For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing"

In September of 2007, National Public Radio's Andrea Seabrook interviewed Daniel Robinson of Oxford University to offer listeners a philosophic perspective on the "bad options" facing American policy in the Iraq War. The central problem being: If the U.S. pulls out of Iraq, then there will be bloodshed. If the U.S. stays in Iraq, then there will be bloodshed. Robinson's response began with a brief discussion of the classics of ethical theory [Aristotle, Kant, and Mill] and ended with a somewhat troubling conclusion on the "nerve racking" limits of philosophy. While all three of these moral philosophies offer us a course of action, just about every "reasonable" option one could think of would likely find support from each of those very same theories. Philosophy is not a guide book of answers but a guide book of methods that force us to be more deliberative, to distrust our passions, to trust our reason more, and to know our limits. While I certainly do not want to devalue or question the necessity of those philosophic tasks, demarcating the limits of philosophic inquiry to the role of the gadfly would go a long way toward explaining philosophy's marginalization in the academy as well as philosophy of education's marginalization in colleges of education.

Perhaps Robinson's discussion would have benefited from a Deweyan perspective on the role of philosophy in modern human society. Within a Deweyan framework, there is a *sociological consciousness* implicit in the philosophic recognition of the link between knowledge and action or, in Hegelian terminology, self-knowledge and self-determination. For Dewey, the role of philosophy is to engage the highest ideals and issues of the day, "to gather up the threads into a central stream of tendency, to inquire what more fundamental and general attitudes of response the trend of knowledge exacts of us, to what new fields of action it calls us." (Dewey 1983) Dewey's conditioning of philosophic problems through an explication of the dynamic processes that are their subjects *in concreto*, his "gathering up of the threads," finds its terminus in their resolution, a process of conceptualization and human action.

As discussed in chapter one, the ontological landscape of modernity requires a reflexive approach to the conceptual norms emerging from its internal gaze. Nevertheless, while necessarily contingent and fallible, conceptual understandings lend themselves to certain actions just as social actions lend themselves to certain conceptual understandings. Divorcing understanding from action, self-knowledge from self-determination, denies philosophic inquiry that most precious of attributes: relevancy. Denied the power of judgment, philosophy is incapable of carrying out such tasks as bringing clarity to public discourse and debate, empowering individuals and societies to answer tough ethical questions, and providing human society with the hermeneutical tools required to ethically organize and inform human action and social policy. It becomes disengaged from the world. This is an issue of particular importance to an applied field such as philosophy of education.

While philosophy's role as the gadfly is certainly vital, it is just as important that philosophic analysis provide mechanisms for working through the issues societies and individuals face. To return to the example that introduced chapter one, the concepts one would encounter on the "Education" aisle of a book retailer, such as 'equity' and 'globalization', signify complex issues facing public education in the here and now. Bringing philosophic clarity to these concepts must entail the construction of new understandings, or conceptualizations, that lend themselves to specific modes of action while also articulating the means by which the epistemic validity of those claims are to be established. A philosophical analysis of the concept of 'globalization' must generate new understandings of the relation of globalization to public education that point toward specific education policies and practices while also articulating an agenda for educational research to validate those understandings and advance human knowledge.

In chapter one, I traced the outline of a methodology that provides philosophy with an important tool for fulfilling its essential role in modern society. While necessary, a critical phenomenological method places large demands on theorists. As is apparent from the preceding inquiry, it is a methodology that requires theorists to work across a wide array of disciplinary fields, and, further, it requires a willingness to engage in empirical research to address gaps in knowledge that emerge from inquiry. However, the critical phenomenological method outlined in this essay provides an important tool in the education theory carpenter box for fulfilling the *sociological consciousness* implicit in its domain, and I believe that the preceding inquiry gives testament to this assertion.

Educational research in the United States **is** a political project. From Cold War politics to the neo-liberal imagination animating education policy in the early twenty-first century, educational researchers are political actors whether they acknowledge this reality or not. The challenge for critical education researchers is to develop research methodologies that make a positive contribution to political transformation and human liberation. A critical phenomenological method provides theorists with a heuristic tool for a radical engagement with education policy that works through the logic[s] of popular discourse. It provides a rigorous methodology for engaging what Gramsci termed the "long-war" for hegemonic dominance. It is a radical politics that, as Marx clearly states, develops new principles for the world out of its own principles.

The policy battles that have raged over the past one hundred years of education reform have, for the time being, cemented around a discrete group of neo-liberal ideas, or concepts, advocated by policy institutes, business groups, and political organizations. This relation is by no means accidental. It is representative of the "play of power" in the early twenty-first century. As such, it is imperative that critical education researchers take up those concepts as subjects of inquiry so as to create ruptures in common sense understandings of public education and the challenges the institution faces. Critical education research must engage the normative field of common sense as the *alpha* and *omega* of its political project, in the realization of its *sociological consciousness*. However, a critical phenomenological method is not without its limitations.

In this research project, I quickly learned that pulling the threads from the conceptual fabric of globalization can easily lead a researcher down a seemingly endless number of empirical “rabbit holes.” In this methodology, the researcher is very much “present” in the process of inquiry. The phenomenological movement of the synthetic mode of inquiry developed in chapter one forces the researcher to make judgments as to what data is relevant, where to extend the inquiry, and where to draw a line in the sand. Even though the initial definition of the concept in a synthetic method provides a structural framework for the inquiry that follows, the researcher must acknowledge that any lines drawn between education policy and practice and the larger society are fuzzy at best. For example, noticeably absent from the preceding inquiry are the voices of parents and students as well as issues related to special education. Their absence in my research data led this inquiry to follow suit, but their importance to the educative process and education reform cannot be overstated. As a researcher, I was forced to make a series of judgments on how to best advance the process of inquiry in an intellectually rigorous and honest manner while also keeping the scope of the overall project within the capacity of one individual to complete. I believe that I have accomplished this task, but it is important to recognize that there are limitations to the preceding inquiry. I would argue that the re-conceptualized globalization that has emerged from the preceding inquiry is to be treated as a working model of education reform that is a necessarily unfinished project requiring further inquiry from many different theoretical and methodological perspectives. The point I hope to make is that the critical phenomenological method developed for this research project is not the tool for a critical educational project, but it is an important one that situates educational research within a critical politics. *It is a necessary element of a critical education project that seeks to effect educational justice and political transformation.*



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## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix I

### **Think Tanks**

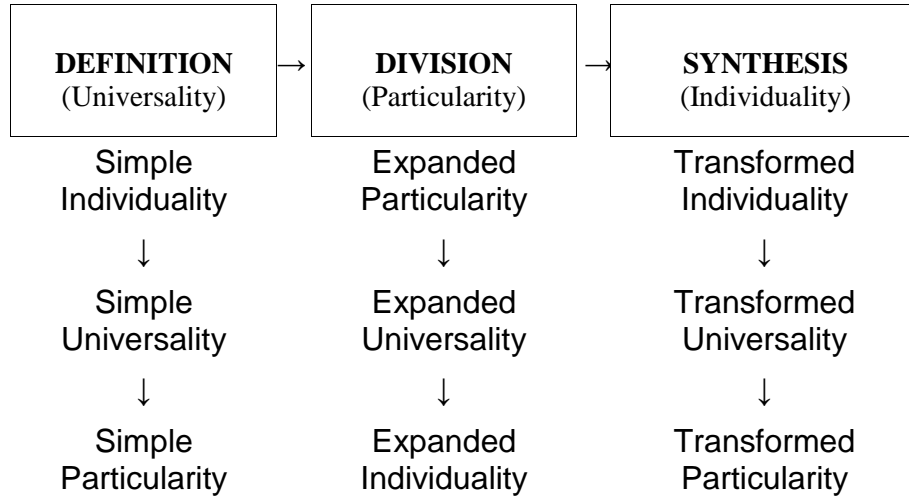
American Enterprise Institute  
Brookings Institution  
Cato Institute  
Hoover Institute  
Manhattan Institute  
National Center on Education and the Economy

### **Popular Literature**

-*Common Sense School Reform* Frederick M. Hess [American Enterprise Institute]  
-*No Remedy Left Behind: Lessons from a Half-Decade of NCLB* Frederick M. Hess & Chester E. Finn Jr. [American Enterprise Institute]  
-*Tough Love for Schools: Essays on Competition, Accountability and Excellence*, Frederick M. Hess [American Enterprise Institute]  
-*With the Best of Intentions: How Philanthropy is Re-Shaping K-12 Education* Frederick M. Hess [American Enterprise Institute]  
-*A Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom?: Appraising Old Answers and New Ideas*, Frederick M. Hess, Andrew J. Rotherham, Kate Walsh [American Enterprise Institute]  
-*Revolution at the Margins: The Impact of Competition on Urban School Districts* Frederick M. Hess [American Enterprise Institute]  
- *Educational Entrepreneurship* Frederick M. Hess [American Enterprise Institute]  
-*Bringing the Jobs Home* Todd G. Buchholz [American Enterprise Institute & Hoover Institute]  
-*The Great Curriculum Debate* Tom Loveless (ed.) [Brookings Institution]  
-*A Legacy of Learning: Your Stake in Standards and New Kinds of Public Schools* David T. Kearns [Brookings Institution]  
-*Feds in the classroom: how big government corrupts, cripples, and compromises American education* Neal P. McCluskey [Cato Institute]  
-*Education and Capitalism* Herbert J. Walberg & Joseph L. Bast [Hoover Institute & Cato Institute]  
-*Education in the Twenty-first Century* Edward P. Lazear (ed.) [Hoover Institute]  
-*Within Our Reach* John E. Chubb [Hoover Institute]  
-*Our schools and our future: are we still at risk?* Paul E. Peterson [Hoover Institute]  
-*Failing Grades: The Federal Politics of Education Standards* Kevin R. Kosar [Hudson Institute & Manhattan Institute]  
-*Government 2.0: Using Technology to Improve Education, Cut Red Tape, Reduce Gridlock, and Enhance Democracy* William D. Eggers [Manhattan Institute]  
-*Tough Choices or Tough Times: The Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce* Report from the National Center on Education and the Economy

## Appendix II

Graph of Synthetic Method of Philosophic Analysis:



## **VITA**

Scott Ellison was born in Nashville, Tennessee and graduated from McGavock High School in 1989. He completed his university training at the University of Tennessee in 1994 with a degree in Geography and secondary teacher licensure in Social Studies. After taking temporary positions in high school and middle school settings, Scott accepted a position as the Teaching Director of a “for-profit” supplementary education service in 1995. The next six years provided Scott hands-on experience with many of the issues addressed in this research project, such as standardized assessments, competition and innovation in a competitive educational marketplace, and market efficiency. Since leaving the private education sector, Scott completed his M.A. in Theory and Practice in Teacher Education in 2003 and plans to complete his Ph.D. in Cultural Studies in Education in 2009.