POLICY, EQUITY, AND DIVERSITY IN GLOBAL CONTEXT

Educational Leadership after the Welfare State

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The role of the school administrator is changing rapidly. In New York City, for example, the role of a principal is modeled after that of a chief executive officer. The school district has essentially disappeared, as has any mechanism for citizen input under mayoral control. Principals instead deal with “vendors” in a marketplace to contract for services. They purchase professional development packages that contain different prices for different services. Many aggressively market their schools, partner with the private sector, and engage in data-driven decision-making like any businesses leader would do, except the data is mostly test scores. While New York City may represent an extreme case of the marketization of leadership, similar examples could also be found in Chile, Singapore, or England. This chapter will provide a global overview of the shifting economic and policy context that is radically reengineering the role of school and district administration from one of public servant to one of private sector CEO and the serious implications these changes have for equity and diversity.

In the spirit of this handbook section’s subtitle—“Where We Have Come From and Where We Are Going”—we will provide a brief historical overview of a major global shift in economic and social policy over the past three decades and its implications for public education policy, leadership, equity and diversity. In terms of political economy, this shift is best understood as a shift away from Keynesian, welfare state policies toward a return to 19th-century free-market, neoclassical policies inspired by economists such as Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman (Ball, 2008; Gewirtz, 2002; Harvey, 2005).

We believe that social policies that impact educational policies and leadership are best understood when framed by these global shifts, since their focus on deregulation, markets, and their privileging of the individual and the private over the social and the public has seeped into both education policy and leadership (Angus, 2004; Lipman, 2002). While we could discuss trends in U.S. education policy without recourse to its global context, we believe that in this era of globalization, policy has increasingly become a global phenomenon and should be treated as such. While critiques of globalization and neoliberalism in education are often disconnected from the everyday realities of school
and classroom level issues of policy and leadership (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004), an even more serious problem is that empirical research, especially of educational leadership, whether qualitative or quantitative, too often proceeds as if these shifts had not occurred. Instead, the educational leadership literature tends to be silent on the ways in which global shifts in political economy are intertwined with the everyday lives of school leaders and low-income children of color.

The educational leadership literature is also largely mute on the ways public schools—and the teachers and leaders within them—become both a scapegoat and solution for problems of growing social inequality that are largely beyond their control (Labaree, 2008). Addressing global political and economic shifts while also attending to the effects of these shifts on public schooling has its challenges. The dilemma is that introducing a macro policy analysis always runs the risk of overdeterminism, while ignoring it risks a naïve understanding of the local level.

Global neoclassical economic policies have resulted in growing social inequality and there is increasing evidence that social and educational policies that reflect its logic also lead to greater inequality and racial segregation (Berliner, 2007; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010). Nor can issues of race, class, and gender on the ground be divorced from these structural changes, as we will discuss below. Rather than exhaustively review literature on educational policy or leadership, this chapter will take a global look at educational policy and how it has impacted both educational leadership and equity/diversity over the last several decades.

Framed by this new global policy environment, we will review current scholarship on education policies in English-speaking countries since these have, to a greater extent than other Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, adopted neoliberal, free-market policies. In the first section, with a focus on policy exchanges between England and the United States, we will compare and contrast what Levin (1998) refers to as a global epidemic of education policies within and across national contexts. This will be followed by a discussion of how new policy entrepreneurs and networks are fundamentally changing the nature of educational leadership at the school and district levels. In the final section, we will discuss how these policy shifts and their consequent redefinition of leadership roles have impacted equity and diversity. This new generation of largely White male philanthropists and reformers are designing education policies and practices for low-income students of color in urban schools (Scott, 2009). These largely well-intended efforts reflect earlier attempts by White male reformers to design a largely vocational education for African Americans under Jim Crow (Watkins, 2001).

EDUCATIONAL POLICY: A GLOBAL PHENOMENON

The economic and policy shift that is the focus of this chapter refers to a transition from a post-World War II Keynesian welfare state (1940s to 1970s) to a Competition or neoliberal state (1980s to present). This shift has resulted in a new set of social and education policies that reflect a shift toward more corporate and market influenced policies and practices (Anderson, 2009; Cuban, 2004; Gewirtz, 2002).

The post-World War II welfare state was characterized in the United States by a Keynesian economic policy, pro-labor policies, and civil rights legislation. While the nature of the welfare state during this period varied from country to country—the weakest being that of the United States, Harvey (2005) states that
what all of these various state forms had in common was an acceptance that the state should focus on full employment, economic growth, and the welfare of its citizens, and that state power should be freely deployed, alongside of or, if necessary, intervening in or even substituting for market processes to achieve those ends. (p. 10)

The neoliberal state emerged in the late 1970s in most countries and weakened or replaced welfare states that had been in place for three decades. In the United States, one of the only national vestiges of an already weak welfare state is public education, making it a key target of neoliberal reformers. Neoliberal reformers promote a new role for the state as it shifts from provider of public services to steerer, referee, and contractor of multiple providers from the state, non-profit, and for-profit sectors. This new neoliberal state is made up of a new set of bipartisan policy networks and policy entrepreneurs in education (e.g., venture philanthropists, think tanks, lobbyists, owners of media, etc.) that have gained increasing importance during the post-1970s period, often eclipsing traditional policy actors, such as teachers’ unions, school boards, and professional associations (DeBray-Pelot, 2006). During this transition from the welfare to the neoliberal state, cross-national policy borrowing has increasingly become a focus of study, both in its explicit (Beech, 2006; Rizvi & Lindgard, 2010) and non-explicit forms, which Wal- dow (2010) refers to as “silent borrowing.” In some cases, the process seems less like policy borrowing and more like policy imposition (see Moss, 2007), as international agencies—and intranational acts like the American Recovery and Investment Act of 2009 or “Race to the Top”—essentially impose policies across localities through their power to withhold funding and reconstruct state education agencies as competitors for federal money (Obama, 2009).

While local contexts remain important in policy analysis and even more so in policy implementation, social and educational policy can no longer be analyzed solely within the limits of the nation state. Ball (2008) refers to a “global policy ensemble that rests on a set of basic and common policy technologies” (p. 39). These technologies, according to Ball, are the market, management, and performativity, and together they “work to bring about new values, new relationships and new subjectivities in arenas of practice—schools, hospitals, universities, etc.” (p. 40). It is precisely these forces that are redefining what it means to be an educational leader.

Because Britain and the United States have somewhat similar neoliberal, post-welfare state trajectories (beginning with the Thatcher and Reagan administrations), a plethora of comparative studies have looked at how British New Labour under Tony Blair and U.S. New Democrats like Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, have continued neoliberal policies that have resulted in Goals 2000, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and Race to the Top. How these policies are impacting educational leadership, equity, and diversity will be discussed later in the chapter.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BIPARTISAN SCHOOL REFORM: THE CASE OF ENGLAND

Most American scholars of educational leadership are familiar with the educational reforms that have occurred since the 1983 commissioned report, A Nation at Risk. However, fewer are aware of the parallels with school reform in other countries and the extent to which these reform trends are global. For this reason, we will begin with
a brief history of school reform as it moved from the post-World War II welfare state to the neoliberal reforms of the last three decades in England. With slight variation, educational scholars from the United States, Australia, and New Zealand will find most of these reforms familiar. All four countries have pursued these reforms aggressively. As we will see later, Canada has more successfully resisted the high-stakes, zero tolerance, and privatizing aspects of neoliberal policies.

In England, the post-World War II policy settlement was marked by strong commitments to the public good; it brought the provision of universal health and welfare services accompanied by generous social policies on housing, transport, pensions and the like (Hill, 1993). In education, the bifurcated system of grammar schools and secondary modern schooling was largely replaced with non-selective comprehensive secondary schools that served their local communities. Hitherto marginalized ideas about child-centered and activity-based education came together into a progressive mix that informed a series of national reports in the late 1960s (Evans, 2005). These reports, and the alleged laissez-faire practices of the schools that epitomized the pedagogies that were espoused, became a target for conservative politicians and thinkers (Jones, 2003).

When Margaret Thatcher was elected to the leadership of the Conservative Party in the mid-1970s, conservative forces meshed with classic liberal beliefs in the necessity of a small state and free markets and the neoliberal desire for modernization brought about through privatization, marketization, and the contractualization of public services (Overbeek, 1990). The conservative government also had an eye on equity, taken to mean the need to improve the basics and improve standards “at the bottom” via a raft of significant changes, inter alia: the devolution of funding and staffing responsibilities to schools; the development of a national curriculum; the introduction of new forms of audit via standardized testing; parent choice of schooling, informed by the production of league tables and enabled by the freeing up of selection processes; the contracting out of services such as school lunches, school buses, and provision of temporary staffing; the standardization of teacher education; and the dismantling of much of the advisory and professional development functions of local authorities.

These shifts effectively decentralized process functions previously undertaken by central or local authorities and recentralized professional functions. This policy agenda led to charges that teachers were being systematically deskilled; at the same time teacher unions, along with all other such organizations, were deliberately sidelined (Bowe, Ball, & Gold, 1992; Gewirtz, Ball, & Bowe, 1995; Hall, 1991).

When the New Labour government was elected in the early 90s, there were hopes that this agenda would be overturned. Instead, the self-styled “Third Way”2 (Giddens, 1998) largely continued this agenda, arguably making it more efficient and effective. There is no doubt that the Blair government was very concerned with equity, and his first sequence of policy actions were geared to trying to even out the greatest disparities in the performance of children it called “deprived” compared to the most wealthy. The key strategies in its carrot and stick approach included the transformation of the previously development focused inspectorate into an arm’s length inspection body responsible for independent audits of schools (Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills [OfSTED]); schools were able to be designated against a calibrated scale which went from outstanding to failing; a review of the national curriculum and the introduction of the highly scripted daily literacy hour in primary schools. Throughout New Labour’s period in office further changes were initiated: permission for secondary
schools to offer a specialized designated curriculum area; support for teachers professionalism via the funding of a professional standards organization (as opposed to a union); and the elevation of the importance of school leadership via the development of the National College for School Leadership and a mandatory headship qualification.

While these strategies did raise test results including those of the “long tail,” there was also evidence that the gap between those at the top—the economically well off—and those at the bottom—generally the poor—had widened. The middle class took advantage of selection rules in order to further the advantages their children already enjoyed, and there were mounting concerns about the ways in which test and inspection regimes worked against the kinds of changes that they were said to produce. In addition, there was evidence of a leveling out of the results bell curve (see Ball, 2003; Gewirtz, 2002; Gleeson & Husbands, 2001; Jones, 2003; Tomlinson, 2001; Whitty, 1997; Whitty, Power, & Halpin, 1998). A further policy adjustment was required.

The next raft of changes were geared to harness the energies and knowledge producing capacities of schools and included the introduction of the Every Child Matters agenda designed to address the health and welfare needs of the most deprived; development of a new organizational arrangement—federations of schools—which allegedly reduced competition and shares resources and expertise; and new light touch inspection regimes, which cost less but arguably produced more arbitrary judgments; the introduction of new school types—academies and “trust schools” which offered the opportunity to opt out of the local authority, an initiative that the Thatcher government had initiated but the first round of Third Way policies had removed.

These changes gave the majority of schools the impression that they had regained some of the professional educational responsibilities that were taken away in the 1988 Education Reform Act, although the basic architecture of school audit and league tabling via testing and inspection remained firmly in place (Jones & Thomson, 2008). For the minority of schools, those that struggled to make headway against the odds in neighborhoods suffering from ongoing waves of de-industrialization, the punitive regime of naming, shaming and closure remained the order of the day (see Ball, 2007, 2008, 2009; Beckett, 2007; Chapman & Gunter, 2009; Gerwitz, Mahony, Hextall, & Cribb, 2009).

In 2010, a conservative-coalition government was elected and a new set of policy initiatives appeared. These included the abolition of a number of national development agencies (teachers, technology, curriculum), the introduction of ‘free schools’ (charter schools) and the further reduction of local authorities to focus only on statutory matters with accompanying privatization of other functions.

THE U.S. CONTEXT: HIGH-STAKES TESTING, SCALING UP, AND MARKETS

As we have indicated, through policy borrowing, there are multiple dynamics common to reforms in both England and the United States. This commonality includes a mix of greater accountability leveraged through the State, mainly through high-stakes testing and the social Darwinism of the market. Therefore, the United States relies heavily on policy inducements from above, and a tendency toward standardization, franchising, and scaling up reforms (Payne, 2008).

In the United States, the last decade’s emphasis on rapidly scaling up reforms and introducing top-down pressures, such as high-stakes testing and inducements like
pay-for-performance is, in part, due to impatience with the decades long failure to systematically improve schools in areas of concentrated poverty. But it is also, in part, a result of reform strategies based on the transfer of corporate principles into education that fail to deeply understand and attend to the relationship between poverty, inequality, and schooling, the pedagogical core, professional culture and micro-politics of schools (Cuban, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Payne, 2008).

In the United States, a generation of neoliberal reformers has little to show for their efforts in terms of producing higher test scores as states lower standards in order to comply with unrealistic NCLB mandates. Even when test scores improve in mathematics or reading, it is often at the cost of spending less time teaching other subjects. These reformers, many unfamiliar with life in schools, have dismissed the lessons of an earlier generation of change scholars regarding the complexities of policy implementation (Hargreaves, Leiberman, Fullan, & Hopkins, 2010).

Privatization in the U.S. Context

While high-stakes testing, franchising, standardizing, and scaling-up are all important hallmarks of neoliberalism in U.S. public education reform, perhaps the largest departure from previous practice is a near obsession with privatization. The privatization of public assets is a common characteristic of globalization, but how privatization proceeds often varies from country to country and even within countries. A common and straightforward form of privatization involves government subsidies to private schools or making tuition payments tax deductible. Such subsidies have been common for some time in Catholic countries like Spain, Argentina, and Chile, and even in some European countries where church-state separation is weaker. Despite their relative widespread practice, the subsidies are also a form of social stratification as middle class families tend to select private subsidized schools, relegating public schools to lower-income families.

Some subsidizing of private schools also occurs in England and Canada. For instance, the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan fund private schools, but they must implement the provincial curriculum, hire provincially certified teachers and meet provincial criteria. Alberta has created legislation granting 60% of public school funding to private schools, allowing them to compete with public schools for consumers (Davidson-Harden & Majhanovich, 2004).

In the United States policy makers and policy entrepreneurs promote privatization at the local school, school district, state, or federal levels. In these multiple policy arenas, privatization forms vary, but there are also some remarkable similarities; a primary one is the targeting of cities with high populations of poor students and students of color in the schooling systems (Lipman, 2002). For example, several urban school districts have the same types of privatization reforms in common: a rapid expansion of charter schools run by private, for profit and non-profit management organizations (MOs); mayors and district leaders actively seek private intermediary organizations to run schools; private contractors perform many functions formerly delivered exclusively by central offices; merit pay for teachers based on student test score data; and, for-profit companies oversee the collection, analysis, and storage of student test score data, and more recently, teacher evaluation data (Scott & DiMartino, 2009). This expansion of urban public education’s privatization has been supported with significant investments from venture philanthropies (Scott, 2009), and has also attracted parents and some progressive advocates who have long been frustrated with the conditions of traditional public schools (Holt, 2000; Sullivan, 2000).
Similar to the British “third way” under Blair, the neoliberal ideological shift in the United States has come to include those who have traditionally identified with liberal/progressive ideology, especially with regard to educational reform. Beginning with the Clinton administration’s embrace of charter schools and its adoption of reforms favored by the Business Roundtable, privatization forms have become popular with many Democrats, including those in the Obama administration. And new advocacy groups, such as the political action committee, Democrats for Education Reform, whose board of directors and advisors come from MOs, private sector finance, and advocacy groups have assumed national prominence.

In many ways these ideological shifts among Democratic policy elites help to explain why urban districts have been identified by reformers, policy makers, and advocates of privatization—including an active philanthropic community—as sites in which choice, privatization through school management, mayoral control, and merit pay will be concentrated, evaluated, and fine tuned (Hess, Palmieri, & Scull, 2010; Scott, 2009). New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and New Orleans are cities in which privatization reforms are thriving. Moreover, alternative teacher and leadership programs place an increasingly large number of new teachers, principals, and district leaders in these cities’ schooling systems in order to staff the resulting neoliberal schools, with a constant stream of new teachers replacing those who stay for a few years (Scott, 2009; Scott & DiMartino, 2010).

These developments have several important implications for research, policy, and, most importantly, equity. First, the empirical literature on the educational effectiveness of these reforms presents fairly mixed results, and yet poor students and students of color who are in most need of high quality schooling largely populate charter schools and partnership schools (Reardon, 2009; Lubienski & Lubienski, 2006).

Next, privatization reforms further constrain democratic practices—such as shared governance that includes parents, teachers, and communities. While democratic inclusion has yet to be fully achieved under traditional public systems, these districts still maintain elected school boards and other forms of citizen input, however problematic and contested. In contrast, privatization reforms often begin with the dismantling of elected school boards, and include the use of multimillion-dollar, no-bid contracts for district services such as what has transpired in New York City, for example (Scott & DiMartino, 2009).

Another issue for democratic process is the evidence of selectivity and, in some cases discrimination against students of color, language minority students and students with disabilities in small schools and charter schools (Wells, Holme, Lopez, & Cooper, 2000; Welner & Howe, 2005). In other cases, there is evidence that parents are choosing racially homogenous schools for their children for a complicated set of reasons—in some cases, for example, parents of color appear to be selecting schools whose demographics reflect their racial/ethnic identities (Bell, 2007; Garcia, 2008; Scott, 2005), and in other instances, choice schools are engaging in intensive marketing to particular communities and locating themselves geographically to target specific groups (Lubienski, 2007).

Other selective choice schools, such as the popular KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) schools, free open-enrollment, college preparatory public schools, post high student attrition rates that raise questions about their reports of superior student achievement, even though their schooling model requires teachers and leaders to work a much longer school day and year (Woodworth, David, Guha, Wang, & Lopez-Torkos, 2008). Despite these troubling, underexamined dynamics in schools being held up as models,
many charter schools are emulating such models. To date, the literature on educational leadership has not paid sufficient attention to the effects of these schooling models on teaching, leading, and learning. Furthermore, the ways in which such reforms stand to reshape teaching and educational leadership in traditional public schools has yet to be sufficiently explored, especially with regard to the education of students of color and to the diversity of the teaching and leadership sectors.

**EDUCATIONAL LEADERS AS ENTREPRENEURS: THE INFLUENCE OF NEW POLICY NETWORKS**

Critical ethnographies of the school principalship under neoliberal policies have been relatively common outside the United States (Blackmore, 2004; Forsey, 2009; Gewirtz, 2002; Heystek, 2007; Smyth, 1993; Strachan, 1999; Thompson, 2009). These studies of what was often called “new managerialism,” documented the shifting role of the principal (or headship) as their day-to-day work included increased financial, accountability and marketing responsibilities. These studies demonstrated how human agency at the school level is intertwined with a new policy environment that is fundamentally changing the nature of administrative work in schools.

As described at the beginning of this chapter, in New York City, the school district has all but disappeared, having been replaced by a series of largely private sector vendors that market their wares to principals and superintendents (Burch, 2009). Choice there has so permeated the system that all students are forced to choose schools. Under this extreme choice system, they are not guaranteed their neighborhood school, even if they and their families want to attend it (Jessen, 2011). Not only are students and parents choosers, but principals have also become choosers of students. And yet while some studies are looking at how principals are resisting, coping with or thriving under high-stakes testing and other NCLB requirements (Black, 2008), there are still few U.S. studies of how they are working under marketized and privatized environments.

As public policies are increasingly informed by privatization advocates, business models, and market principles, new policy networks are forming globally that focus on educational leadership (Gunter & Forrester, 2008; Scott, 2009). We use “policy networks” to describe “the properties that characterize the relationships among the particular set of actors that form around an issue of importance to the policy community” (Coleman & Skogstad, 1990, cited in Collyer, 2003, p. 14). We do not assume policy networks share a common worldview or “conspiracy”; rather they may have nuanced differences or even work at cross-purposes on some issues. In the aggregate, however, constellations of policy networks can ultimately end up promoting similar ideas and broad agendas (Scott, 2009).

In this section we will enumerate a set of tendencies that are reshaping educational leadership. While the focus here is more on the United States, such tendencies are evident to a greater or lesser extent globally. These tendencies are the result of powerful new policy networks and policy entrepreneurs that have focused on reorganizing educational leadership around a new set of assumptions and knowledge claims (Gunter & Forrester, 2008). With interlocking social and professional networks, these policy entrepreneurs have formed synergistic policy networks focused on educational leadership. The following is a brief summary of some of the new policy entrepreneurs, new sets of
assumptions, and new institutional arrangements that are impacting the nature of how schools and districts are administered and lead.

1. **Venture philanthropists** who aggressively promote private agendas in public education (Scott, 2009). Venture philanthropist Eli Broad has financed professional development retreats where for decades business and military leaders have been retooled to run school districts and where superintendents have been drilled on business principles. New Schools Venture Fund, Aspire, Green Dot, New Leaders for New Schools, and Teach for America have received millions of dollars from The Broad Foundation. His influence in educational leadership at the district level and school reform generally is so pervasive, it is referred to as the “Broad effect” (Saltman, 2009).

2. **Alternative administrative certification programs.** In the United States these are non-profits and for-profits and local leadership academies in urban school districts (Hess & Kelly, 2005). In many cases, charter school franchises like KIPP are creating programs to train their own school leaders (Scott & DiMartino 2009).

3. **The growth and global dissemination of charter schools, contract schools, and education/charter management organizations** (or their equivalents elsewhere) that are deregulated and generally non-union (Ball, 2009; Pini, 2004). In England, they are increasingly prevalent as academies, trust, and “free” schools; in Spain, concerted schools (escuelas concertadas) (Escardibul & Villarroya, 2009); in Bogota, Columbia, Concession Schools (Colegios de concesion) (Barrera-Osorio, 2007); in Argentina, the province of San Luis has implemented charter schools (Feldfeber, Jaimovich, & Saforcada, 2004). In Canada, the province of Alberta passed charter school legislation in 1994 (Bosetti, 2001). It remains the only Canadian province with charter schools.

4. **A growing education industry** that aggressively promotes data management and assessment products, educational software, tutorial services, educational design and management companies, professional development, surveillance cameras, private security companies, and metal detectors (Anderson, 2007). These industries have mined NCLB to create niche school markets in the interstices of the policy (Burch, 2009). The testing industry has more recently targeted school administrators, as a national exam has become a requirement for administrative certification in most states.

5. **An evidence-based, “what works” movement** that promotes randomized experiments and that provides the intellectual justification for one-size-fits-all standardized testing, scripted curricula, school design models, and the growth of an audit culture in schools (Ball, 2001; Biesta, 2007). This is represented by the consequent growth of for-profit and non-profit management organizations that franchise schools (Scott & DiMartino, 2010).

6. **Partnerships with non-public organizations** that sometimes function as management organizations (Ball, 2007). As a result of these developments, a “third space” in education is developing that combines elements of the public and private sectors, what Emmert and Crow (1988) referred to as “hybrid organizations.” The formation of partnerships with business schools to prepare school leaders is currently gaining popularity (Wallace Foundation, 2004).
7. The educationalization of social problems by focusing on education as a solution to poverty instead of implementing social policies that would more directly ameliorate it (living wages, access to universal health care, affordable housing, etc.; Labaree, 2008).

Researchers in educational leadership are only beginning to catch up with the implications of these changes for practice. In England, where similar policy entrepreneurs and networks are active, school leaders also have had to adapt what they do to meet changed policy agendas. Similar to the New York City example above, devolution and autonomy brought major changes, which continue to this day. Rather than being appointed by local authorities, headteachers (principals) are selected by governing bodies with a range of legal powers and expectations. Their role also shifted from that of leaders of local school-based curriculum development to that of managers of large budgets and executive directors of organizations, from that of being accountable to their local communities to being listed in national league tables. There is considerable disquiet over these changes with some arguing that the educational role of the designated school leader had been altered permanently (Smyth, 1993), others saying that there was simply no time to do it (Bush, Bell, Bolam, Glatter, & Ribbins, 1999; Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley, & Beresford, 2000), and some (e.g., Southworth, 1995) suggesting that heads simply needed an adjustment period in order to accommodate educational leadership alongside the managerial load.

There has certainly been some standardization of what is expected from school leaders. The change from once being responsible for their own professional development to the Third Way requirement to participate in national training programs has produced a core of acceptable and expected practice. School leadership is, for example, one of the key indicators used in inspection. Because the Blair government enthusiastically adopted what Thrupp (2005) dubbed “official school improvement,” “satisfactory” school leaders are those who can articulate a vision, distribute leadership, and have systems for the regular observation of teachers, the production of risk assessment and safety records, the tracking of student attainment data and the regular surveying of parental and student satisfaction.

However, there has also been occasion for some heads to go their own way. Successful school leaders range from those who have turned around a failing school, to those who have exercised entrepreneurialism, to those who follow their own beliefs while at the same time meeting the mandatory requirements (Blackmore & Thomson, 2004; Thomson, 2008). The more recent loosening of school governance arrangements and encouragement to innovate has allowed a far greater number of heads to take up pedagogical questions rather than confine themselves to matters of school culture/structure and the creation of learning communities. In other words, some discussion of the purposes and content of educational change has re-entered the ambit of school leaders (McLaughlin, Black-Hawkins, Brindley, McIntyre, & Taber, 2006; Thomson & Sanders, 2009).

Nevertheless, it is the leaders in the schools at the bottom of league tables who are, like their students and communities, in the most vulnerable position. They have the most difficult task to accomplish. While there is now official recognition that school context does make a difference to how much can get done, the emphasis for school leaders remains strongly focused on imperatives and on the continued production of tables of various kinds of data which illustrate via a narrow range of measures what has not been achieved,
rath than what has. Local area-based intervention programs show clearly the additional kinds of resources that are required to make headway against the odds—stable and more staffing, committed and helpful external support and secure funding being three of the most fundamental (Chapman, 2005; Harris, James, Gunraj, Clarke, & Harris, 2006; Macbeath et al., 2007). Regardless of this kind of evidence, successive governments remain committed to being ‘tough’ on ‘poor performers’ and continue to sacrifice school leaders and entire staffs and schools to that end (Thomson, 2009).

In England and the United States, administrator certification has been tightened up with the addition of national standards and exams, at the same time alternative pathways are opening up. On the other hand, in Canada, only two provinces (Ontario and New Brunswick) and two territories (the Northwest Territories and Nunavut) require principals to be certified as well as having 5 years of successful teaching. Principals in the other eight provinces and the Yukon Territory do not require that principals have certification for administration roles.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR EQUITY AND DIVERSITY**

Discourses of social welfare and the common good have shifted dramatically within this post-welfare state period. Perhaps nowhere is this more evident than with the concept of “equity,” and current attempts to redefine its meaning. In doing an archival search of major U.S. newspapers, Crawford (2007) discovered that the term “achievement gap” suddenly appeared in 1999. The use of this term was the brainchild of George W. Bush and Karl Rove, who were planning Bush’s presidential campaign. The notion of holding all children—not just the middle class—to rigorous standards was seen as a way to co-opt a traditionally Democratic theme and put teachers and their unions on the defensive. When NCLB legislation was written, all references to “equal educational opportunity,” which had been prominent in previous versions of the law were replaced by “closing the achievement gap.” In this way, the notion of equity was re-engineered away from a focus on _inputs_ to education—equal access to resources and opportunity. Crawford (2007) rhetorically asks,

> What’s the significance of this shift in terminology? Achievement gap is all about measurable “outputs”—standardized-test scores—and not about equalizing resources, addressing poverty, combating segregation, or guaranteeing children an opportunity to learn. The No Child Left Behind Act is silent on such matters. Dropping equal educational opportunity, which highlights the role of inputs, has a subtle but powerful effect on how we think about accountability. It shifts the entire burden of reform from legislators and policymakers to teachers and kids and schools. (p. 11)

Similarly, in England the dominant discourse is that of “raising the bar and closing the gap.” However, in reality while the attainment of those at the bottom of the league tables, measured in standardized tests, has increased, the gap between those at the bottom and those at the top has actually widened. It now seems clear that English middle-class parents have proved adept at using the choices available to them to maintain class advantages and that educational reforms which raise the bar—that is teach to the test—do nothing to redress historic patterns of inequity. The apparent success of increased numbers of school leavers entering higher education masks the number of
young people leaving schools without any qualification at all—the number of NEETs (not in education, employment or training) in England is the highest in Europe. It is also widely acknowledged that social mobility has now stagnated (Blanden, Gregg, & Machin, 2005) and that, despite New Labour rhetoric and good intentions, schooling now offers pathways out of poverty only for the exceptional few.

The older discourse of equal opportunity recognized that equity, unlike equality, means that those on the bottom require additional resources, not equal resources. This was the initial impulse in the notion of compensatory education or Title I, the predecessor of NCLB. Anyon (2005) argues that it was social policies that have created current record levels of inequality, and that reversing them will require both social and educational reforms. Equity has been redefined in education to be synonymous with individual choice, rather than redistribution of resources and opportunities to communities with shared histories of state-sponsored and private sector discrimination.

**Race and Gendered Educational Expertise**

Educational privatization and its emphasis on the private sector generating ideas, human capital, and managerial models for education has created a policy environment in which the leadership of public schools is becoming increasingly racialized. Specifically, the most influential policy networks are ones in which White people, and White men, in particular, are uniquely positioned to assume positions of leadership and expertise over the educations of children of color (Scott, 2008). Many have noted the lack of racial and gender diversity in corporate leadership, and to the extent that many of the new educational leaders emerge from the private sector, they tend to reflect that demographic pattern. Few EMOs are led by people of color or women, and many of the new entrepreneurial education advocacy organizations, such as Democrats for Education Reform have almost no representation by women or people of color on their governing and advising boards. This trend has historical and sociological precedent in the troubling U.S. history of the relationship between racial inequality and education.

Watkins (2001) has detailed how early White architects shaped education for African American children along particular, explicit notions of racial inferiority, the need to maintain inequality more broadly, and an assumption that business models were needed for school management. African American communities were largely excluded from decision-making about the schooling of their children, even as they found localized ways to circumvent their exclusion and assert their preferences (Foreman, 2005). While the current iteration of school leaders embraces a civil rights mandate for expanding managerial models of schooling for poor children of color, largely realized through the provision of market-based school choice, they also tend to animate around what some adherents have termed “paternalistic” schools. These schools, focused on back to basics, discipline, and order (Whitman, 2008), do not map onto the schooling characteristics researchers and advocates have long held to be essential for “good” schools: democratic, equitable, with sufficient resources and highly prepared teachers and leaders who understand and value the competencies children bring with them to school. In fact, while discussions of effective instruction and measurement are hallmarks of the privatization sector, less emphasized are considerations of pedagogy and community engagement in schools.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

School and district level studies of educational leadership tend to proceed as if larger global forces have not impacted the policy environment within which leaders work. School-level studies of how leaders develop social trust, deal with micropolitics, distribute leadership, manage budgets, provide inclusive environments, etc. are valuable, but these issues also need to be understood within a context of how global, neoliberal economic shifts are redefining leaders’ roles.

The opposite is also true. Critiques of political economy and global policy shifts need to understand how these play out in often-contradictory ways on the ground (Bates, 2008). Without this multilevel analysis, practices that may appear to be democratic or just or sensible on the ground, may in fact be enmeshed in larger ideological intentions. A keyword search of globalization, neoliberalism, or political economy turns up only a handful of references in U.S. journals of educational administration. The rest proceed largely oblivious to global influences or even local communities. Most are timeless, sponsored, structural-functionalist studies.

The same is true for the analysis of policy texts. Discourses that frame local policy texts (or leadership) are mediated by texts and social actors at the global, nation-state, and local levels. The production of policy texts is a complex process of influences that takes place within local political negotiations as well as discursive battles that now also take place on a global playing field.

A multi-level approach will require research methods capable of understanding the local in the context of the global and the global with an eye to the local. For instance, methods like institutional ethnography (Andre-Bechley, 2005; Campbell, 2004), critical discourse analysis (Anderson, 2001; Fairclough, 2003), and critical geography (Baker & Foote, 2006) force researchers to struggle with macro-micro social and economic relationships. Neglecting either level distorts reality. Seeing charter schools as only a macro-level strategy to privatize, neglects on the ground charter school experiments based on progressive, grassroots goals. On the other hand, to ignore powerful policy entrepreneurs who do see a charter school movement as a privatizing agenda may make one’s on the ground research seem naïve.

The same is true for understanding the local in a historical context. The demographic of those who promote paternalistic forms of inner-city education and fund it with donations from young hedge fund executives from Wall Street has a historical precedent. As Scott (2009) points out, this is not the first time powerful White men have been the architects of education for children of color (Anderson, 1988; Watkins, 2001). Many paternalistic, zero tolerance approaches to inner-city education also fail to understand that poverty has both cultural and structural dimensions (Wilson, 2009).

For instance, new questions that neoliberal reforms have imposed on principals involve how principals negotiate public-private partnerships, how principals, in the absence of traditional school districts, select vendors for services, the ways high-stakes testing has manifested in gaming, cheating, and other perverse incentives, how principals provide a rich curriculum in spite of pressures to provide a test-driven one, or how they cope with “surplus” populations with a large police and military presence in schools.

It’s not so much that these things are not being studied, but that there is a lack of fine-grained action research or ethnographic studies of how leaders are experiencing
these changes. Many studies are done more as policy than leadership studies, even though implications for leadership are sometimes included or can be extrapolated. For example there are excellent studies of school closings or reconstitution (Malen, Croninger, Muncey, & Redmond-Jones, 2002), district level privatization (Gold, Christman, & Herold, 2007), the education industry (Burch, 2009), alternative certification (Herrington & Wills, 2005), and many other neoliberal inspired policies that affect the lives of principals and superintendents. But, again, they tend to stress the policy, more than day-to-day leadership implications.

Some studies explore the dilemmas principals encounter under pressure to engage in performative, test-driven, audit cultures (Black, 2008; Maxcy, 2006). A few studies look at how principals cope with pressures to negotiate public-private partnerships (DiMartino, 2009) and historical origins of accountability pressures (West, Peck, & Reitzug, 2010). Others suggest alternative paradigms for leadership that might reassert more authentically equitable discourses and practices (Anderson, 2009; Evans, 2007; Gold, Simon, & Brown, 2004; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2008; Meier, 2002; Rogers & Terriquez, 2009).

Last—but certainly not least—in the face of growing evidence for the negative impact of fossil fuels and hydrocarbons on climate change how can educational leaders produce a generation of critical thinkers to confront the contradictions of an economic system based on unlimited growth and a finite planet (Furman & Gruenewald, 2004). This and most other forms of civic education have been largely pushed out of the curriculum by high-stakes testing and a concern with producing human capital to feed that very economic system.

CONCLUSION

Welfare state policies in the United States lifted the working class and the elderly out of relative poverty. This accomplishment was the result of a large labor movement that gained force during the 1930s. It took the Civil Rights movement for African Americans to gain access to these welfare state policies, eventually resulting in a sizable Black middle class. Many of us who are professionals today, owe our social advancement to these movements. In the last 30 years, we have witnessed the rolling back of many of these social policies with a resultant increase in social inequality and social instability (Pickett & Wilkinson, 2009) that rivals that of the 1920s.

Because these shifts are global, reversing them will require a global effort. While the current Washington consensus on globalization is clearly dominant, organized groups of globalization from below—groups struggling to hold onto the gains of previous social struggles—are also gaining strength. Argentina, for instance, was the poster child for neoliberal policy under president Carlos Menem during the 1990s. After the economy imploded, the new Kirchner administration rejected neoliberal economic and social policies. We see similar trends in Uruguay, Bolivia, Venezuela, Brazil, Ecuador, Paraguay, and, until recently, in Chile, where an extreme form of neoliberalism was imposed by the Pinochet regime after the U.S.-backed coup of 1973.

Neoliberalism in the 1990s left Argentina with a shredded social fabric. The ideological complex of individualism, entrepreneurialism, personal responsibility, and suspicion of government took a toll on expressions of social solidarity and a sense of a common good. The promised economic growth and trickle down did not materialize,
a phenomenon that is becoming clearer by the day in Europe and the United States as a series of economic speculative bubbles continue to burst and social inequalities continue to grow. As with Argentina, the first to go is the social fabric, but stronger economies can stay the neoliberal course longer, supported by ideologies that scapegoat public education, immigrants, big government, and teachers unions.

Countries like Argentina have chosen to change course, returning to welfare state discourses and policies, but also incorporating lessons learned. As just one of many examples, the 2009 Law of Universal Allowance per Child (Asignación Universal por Hijo) allocates payments to the household head for each child, accompanied by the requirement to attend school and to receive health services and vaccines. The money parents receive is not dependent on the parent having legal work, thus, effectively reaching unemployed, informal, and domestic workers—the most vulnerable. Since the inception of the program, poverty has fallen from 32% to 13%, and the levels of inequality reached their lowest point since 1986 (Cufré, 2010).

Two hundred and fifty thousand new students were incorporated into schools through this policy, especially at the secondary level (Lukin, 2009). This has brought difficult new challenges for educational leaders in terms of class sizes, facilities, and the addition of more low-income students. Nevertheless, it demonstrates how social policies and inputs into the system can have a greater impact on education than popular, but largely ineffectual, reforms like pay-for-performance, charter schools or high-stakes testing, all of which have been roundly rejected by the Argentine public.

This sounds like heresy in the context of neoliberal discourses that have shifted a focus from inputs to outcomes. But if Argentina is any example, it may be just those heresies that will bring some needed balance to a policy regime that has left traditional notions of equity and equal opportunity behind.

NOTES

1. Some use the terms “neoclassical” and “neoliberal” as interchangeable. In this chapter we will use “neoclassical” when referring specifically to the school of economic scholars who critiqued the Keynesian economic model. Milton Freidman is the best known of this group. We will use “neoliberal” to denote the broader array of economic, political, and cultural policies that have emerged from this economic model since the 1970s.

2. The Third Way is the term used to describe the combination of neoliberal and social democratic approaches; governments which are characterized as Third Way include the Clinton (USA), Hawke-Keating (Australia), Chretien-Martin (Canada), and Blair/Brown (UK) administrations. The political theory of the Third Way was explicated by Anthony Giddens (1998) among others.

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