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EQUITY AND EDUCATION:

An Exploration of International Policymaking

By Mandolyn Wind Ludlum

Although many countries with high levels of economic inequality have used policymaking to pursue equity in education, inequities continue to exist. Such policies often perpetuate inequities by providing benefits to the most socioeconomically advantaged students and families rather than groups historically disadvantaged or excluded from educational systems, due to race and/or socioeconomic status. I have investigated policymaking for equity in education by addressing three primary research questions. First, how has international policymaking for equity in education been pursued within localized contexts and global education trends in the United States, Brazil, and Chile? Second, within that context, what factors explain the failure of outcomes-based education curriculum reform in post-apartheid South Africa to result in holistic equity? Third, what are the commonalities that underpin the failures of these nations to achieve holistic equity? I found that the localized policy mechanisms used to pursue equity in education in the U.S., Brazil, and Chile have been in alignment with neoliberal global education trends such as increased privatization, school fees, and decentralization. I additionally found that the key factors that explain the failure of post-apartheid curriculum reform in South Africa to result in holistic equity are a complex policy subsystem, the formulation and implementation of symbolic policy, and the failure to properly evaluate substantive and procedural constraints. Furthermore, I have found the commonalities between researched nations to be high levels of economic inequality and poverty, *de facto* forms of segregation, and a failure to meet the holistic equity standard of equal education opportunity. Policymaking for equity in the U.S., Brazil, Chile, and South Africa has led to some progress, but has resulted in reforms that perpetuate educational inequities.

I. Chapter 1: Introduction

Indeed, it is impossible to be neutral. In a world already moving in certain directions, where wealth and power are already distributed in certain ways, neutrality means accepting the way things are now. —*Howard Zinn*

The quest for equity in education through policymaking has been embarked upon by many nations around the world with varying results. However, inequities in education continue to result in material consequences for far too many children who have been historically excluded from the promised opportunities ensured by a quality education based on the social construct of race¹ and/or socioeconomic status.² Within the global discourse on moving from the United Nations Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals, entities such as the Global Partnership for Education call for recognition of educational equity as a necessity.³ In the context of education, equity should not be confused with equality, as “equity is the process, equality is the result.”⁴ Furthermore, equity requires that all children enjoy a genuine chance for outcomes that are equal—regardless of who they are.

Policies that have targeted reformation of funding structures, teacher incentives, and curricula, in addition to restructuring schools, provide the historic mechanisms through which pursuit of equity occurs; yet, inequity in education persists. Understanding the need for equity in education requires one to recognize that all children do not start their educational journeys from the same point in life. More accurately, children most negatively impacted—those on the lower end of the achievement and opportunity gap—begin their journeys on pathways lined with inequalities.⁵ Children living in communities with higher socioeconomic statuses often enjoy disproportionate access to better trained teachers, general educational resources, and funding, resulting in greater opportunities for the pursuit of both higher education and employment than children living in impoverished communities.⁶ As rising economic inequality within nations creates larger and continually expanding disparities between those who have and those who do not,⁷ the need for equity in education will continue to be of critical importance until it is achieved.

How equity in education will be achieved through meeting standards of equal treatment, equal education opportunity, and educational adequacy—thus becoming *holistic equity* instead of individual standards of equity—needs to be determined within localized contexts. Additionally, understanding that educational reform policies are not disarticulated from global education trends and structural inequalities is critical. How a nation pursues holistic equity through

1 Na'ilah S. Nasir, *Racialized Identities: Race and Achievement Among African American Youth* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 3.

2 While I acknowledge and believe race to be a social construct, this thesis capitalizes all racial constructions that identify People of Color.

3 Meredy Talbot-Zorn and Rob Doble, “Education Equity: Fulfilling the Promise of 2015,” accessed October 5, 2015, <http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/education-equity-fulfilling-promise-2015>

4 Enid Lee, “Equity and Equality” (keynote speech at the Annual Connecticut National Association for Multicultural Education Conference, October, 2004), quoted in Sonia Nieto and Patty Bode, “Understanding the Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education,” in *Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education*, 11, 6th ed. (Boston: Pearson Education, 2011), 9.

5 Prudence L. Carter and Kevin G. Welner, eds., *Closing the Opportunity Gap: What America Must Do to Give Every Child an Even Chance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

6 Carter and Welner, eds. *Closing the Opportunity Gap*; Linda Darling-Hammond, *The Flat World and Education: How America's Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2010).

7 Branko Milanovic, “More or Less,” *Finance & Development* 48, no. 3 (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 2011), accessed October 2, 2015, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2011/09/Milanovic.htm>; Sergio Vieira, *Inequality on the Rise? An Assessment of Current Available Data on Income Inequality, at Global, International and National Levels*, Background Document for WESS 2013, (New York: United Nations, 2012), accessed October 2, 2015, http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wess/wess_bg_papers/bp_wess2013_svieira1.pdf

addressing both structural and educational inequalities is connected to the constraints that exist for enacting reforms. Even with constraints, both layers of inequality must be addressed to achieve holistic equity.

I introduce holistic equity as the overall analytical framework for this thesis not in opposition to current discourses on the opportunity and achievement gaps in the field of education but rather with an intent to extend the conversation.⁸ I suggest that the theoretical framework provided by the concept of holistic equity serves, in fact, to magnify the manner in which economic inequalities and global education trends can adversely impact policies intended to further equity in education. The ways in which broader systemic inequities manifest, and the means by which standards of holistic equity are met, must be evaluated within localized contexts, i.e., the educational apparatus of individual countries. In addition, an evaluation of the lessons in areas where policymaking for equity has failed will help shift the paradigm to the holistic equity deserved by all children—regardless of race or socioeconomic status.

The U.S., Brazil, Chile, and South Africa, complex multicultural nations with high rates of economic inequality and *de facto* forms of segregation, all fail to meet and achieve the holistic equity standard of equal education opportunity. The presence of neoliberal education trends, to varying degrees, counteracts the attempt of these countries to achieve equity through policymaking. Recent global trends emphasize decentralization, market-mechanism reforms (such as parental choice, school vouchers, and private schools), and the promotion of competitiveness within the global economy as part of a human capital framework, the foundation of which includes education. As policies are formulated and implemented, the pursuit of equity through reforms often results in a policy gap between the policy's intended goals and the results upon implementation.

South Africa presently exhibits one of the world's highest levels of inequality.⁹ The nation's attempted transformation of education within a post-apartheid climate, alongside broader transitional processes aimed at a more inclusive democracy and society, provides insight into the complexities of educational reform policies, particularly those which foreground equity as a goal in a globalized world. Although the reformation of funding structures, teacher incentives, and the restructuring of schools are policy mechanisms covered in important and ongoing areas of discourse and research, this thesis uses primary school curriculum reforms in post-apartheid South Africa between 1994 and 2000 as a case study. The South African case study enables identification of factors that explain how the adoption of outcomes-based education (OBE) implemented through Curriculum 2005 (C2005), as education reform policies, failed to result in holistic equity for all South African children. While the end of apartheid led to policy reforms that more closely approached meeting the holistic equity standards of equal treatment and equal education opportunity, systemic inequalities remain pervasive and problematic. At present, neither equal education opportunity nor educational adequacy has been met. Holistic equity has not been achieved.

To explore international policymaking for equity, I address three primary research questions. First, how has international policymaking for equity in education been pursued within localized contexts and global education trends in the U.S., Brazil, and Chile? Second, within that context, what factors explain the failure of curriculum reform in post-apartheid

⁸ For further information on the ongoing conversation, see Carter and Welner, eds., *Closing the Opportunity Gap*; Darling-Hammond, *The Flat World and Education*.

⁹ World Bank, "GINI Index (World Bank Estimate)," accessed November 7, 2015, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI>

South Africa to result in holistic equity? Third, what commonalities underpin the failures of these nations to achieve holistic equity? Against a backdrop of neoliberal global education trends, policymaking for equity in the U.S., Brazil, Chile, and South Africa resulted in reforms which failed to meet the standard of equal education opportunity, and continued to perpetuate the disproportionate allocation of greater benefits accorded to students and families not historically excluded from education. In contrast, more culturally homogenous countries, such as Finland, Korea, and Singapore provide an array of lessons to learn from. Equity-aimed policymaking in these countries, in a departure from global education trends, has resulted in vast improvements of their educational systems in connection with equity, whether through rejection of such trends themselves or through supplements with long-term localized reforms that address systemic and structural inequalities. This has been fundamental in their ability to meet more closely the holistic equity standard of equal education opportunity.

Holistic equity cannot be achieved solely through policymaking for equity in education and educational reforms necessitate evaluation within localized contexts and constraints; simultaneously, one must also address reforms for broader systemic and structural inequalities. Substantive reform policies, as opposed to symbolic reform policies, prove necessary to meet the standard of equal education opportunity, as well as to further progress towards holistic equity for all children regardless of their race or socioeconomic status.

A. *Definitions and Holistic Equity as an Analytical Framework*

In general, educational policies, discourses on education, and research on education are based on normative ideologies that stem from one's own positionality,¹⁰ and often go unrecognized, particularly when left unexamined and/or hidden. Recognition of this positionality, therefore, requires careful definition of certain terms used throughout this thesis. I define education, in the context of this thesis, as: the formal and compulsory instruction of children through "inputs and processes" to accomplish previously established educational goals and values that are measured as "outputs" when possible.¹¹ Regardless of temporal or geographical location, educational systems and goals remain dependent upon political structures, socially constructed hierarchies, gender role beliefs, religious beliefs, economics, and access to educational opportunities.¹²

This thesis draws on Edward B. Fiske and Helen F. Ladd's collaborative work on racial equity in education in *Elusive Equity: Education Reform in Post-Apartheid South Africa* to establish definitions related to equity and to propose a new analytical framework of *holistic equity*.¹³ While Fiske and Ladd use "equal treatment," "equal education opportunity," and "educational adequacy"

10 Richard H. Milner, "Race, Culture, and Researcher Positionality: Working Through Dangers Seen, Unseen, and Unforeseen," *Educational Researcher* 36, no.7 (2007), accessed October 5, 2015, doi: 10.3102/0013189X07309471

11 Joel E. Cohen, "Goals of Universal Basic and Secondary Education," in *International Perspectives on the Goals of Universal Basic and Secondary Education*, ed. Joel E. Cohen and Martin B. Malin (New York: Routledge, 2010), 5.

12 Cohen, "Goals of Universal Basic"; William K. Cummings, "The Limits of Modern Education," in *Quality Education for All: Community Oriented Approaches*, ed. Dean H. Nielson and William K. Cummings (New York: Garland, 1997).

13 Edward B. Fiske and Helen F. Ladd, *Elusive Equity: Education Reform in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2005), accessed April 11, 2015, http://www.hsrcpress.ac.za/product.php?product_id=2090&freedownload=1

as a framework to evaluate racial equity in education, I expand these standards with the aim of inclusivity as it concerns socioeconomic status. I use the notion of equal treatment as a standard that, when met, indicates that neither socioeconomic status nor the construct of race exclude children from education or inform decisions within a given educational system.¹⁴ Equal education opportunity builds upon equal treatment; the former defined as a standard met when disparities in educational opportunities are eliminated, and successfully engender quality education for all children. When the standard of equal education opportunity is achieved it creates possibilities for actually attaining “social and economic advancement,” through the educational opportunities provided.¹⁵ Educational adequacy as a standard is met when educational outcomes for all children, regardless of race or socioeconomic status, reach (without limitation) a “minimum acceptable ... level of education” that ensures involvement in both the “political and economic” components of a society.¹⁶

While Fiske and Ladd contend that successfully meeting these standards would result in “overall ... racial equity in education” in South Africa, I include socioeconomic status within this thesis, and consider the totality of such standards as holistic equity.¹⁷ The failure to meet the standard of equal education opportunity prevents the obtainment of educational adequacy, making the need for holistic equity a necessary discourse. The proposition of holistic equity as a new analytical category arises from research that underscores the recognized need to emphasize the interdependence of the standards, as well as the larger systemic inequalities and processes outside of educational systems that impact them.

B. Roadmap

The second chapter of this thesis reviews global educational trends and key country-level education reform policies in the U.S., Brazil, and Chile. I selected these countries for study due to their high levels of economic inequality and their pursuit of equity through policymaking.¹⁸ Examination of the literature on policymaking for equity in these countries does not provide a comparative analysis between the countries. It intends instead to build the context for understanding what kind of policy frameworks have been attempted as part of localized country-level reforms within global trends, the mechanisms which have been used when equity as a policy goal comprises part of educational reforms, and finally, situates South African reform as a case study within a larger global framework. I review literature around policymaking in these countries intended to promote equity in education, the policies themselves, and the results of those policies on achieving equity in education when implemented.

The third chapter uses South Africa as case study to examine policymaking for equity through post-apartheid curriculum reform, with a more in-depth exploration of what particular factors can impede policymaking for equity and result in failure to achieve holistic equity. I briefly examine Bantu Education during apartheid to contextualize the importance placed on education reform by the African National Congress (ANC) in the transition from apartheid to democracy. I then draw upon Harold Lasswell’s stages model to examine the complexity of the

14 Ibid., 5-6.

15 Ibid., 7-8.

16 Ibid., 8-9.

17 Ibid., 234.

18 World Bank, “GINI Index (World Bank Estimate).”

education policy subsystem during the transition to democracy, as well as the challenges and constraints that this created within the formulation and implementation stages of curriculum reform.¹⁹ Through the examination of the policy formulation and implementation stages, policy documents, and historical writings that represent the differing arguments and views about the reform, I identify the key factors which explain the failure of curriculum reform to result in holistic equity for all South African children regardless of their race or socioeconomic status.

The fourth chapter serves as a conclusion and presents a discussion of how policymaking for equity in the U.S., Brazil, Chile, and South Africa has increased the possibilities of meeting the standards of equal treatment and equal education opportunity. However, the standard of equal education opportunity continues to fall short, and suffers from *de facto* racial, economic, academic, and social segregation, which primarily exert a negative impact on non-white and poor students, and simultaneously continues increased benefits and education opportunities for the students and families previously more advantaged prior to the implementation of reforms. Existent economic inequities and policy gaps between the intended goals in formulation and those achieved in implementation have resulted in the maintenance of pervasive inequalities, rather than holistic equity. I close with examples of policymaking for equity in countries that have made improvements and offer proposals that stand to further the pursuit of holistic equity.

II. Chapter 2: Policymaking for Equity: Examining Global Trends Through Country-Level Education Reforms in the U.S., Brazil, and Chile

The paradox of education is precisely this—that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which [s]he is educated. —*James Baldwin*

A. Global Trends

Global trends in education since at least the 1970s use a human capital approach to inform educational policies; within that framework, policy attempts to increase equity have had varying results when examined in localized and globalized contexts.²⁰ The increase of human capital through education can be understood as such: The provision of education is an investment that later increases the productivity of individuals in the labor force, and contributes to broader economic growth.²¹ In the 1980s, education policies began to center in many ways on “globalization and the knowledge society, under the guidance of modernization and total quality assessment.”²² Holger Daun argues that since the 1980s, education has been expected to respond

19 Michael M. Howlett, Ramesh, and Anthony Perl, *Studying Public Policy*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

20 Gary Orfield, “Policy and Equity: Lessons of a Third of a Century in the United States,” in *Unequal Schools, Unequal Chances: The Challenges to Equal Opportunity in the Americas*, ed. Fernando Reimers (Cambridge: David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, Harvard University, 2001); Fazal Rizvi and Bob Lingard, *Globalizing Education Policy* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

21 Theodore W. Schultz, “Investment in Human Capital,” in *Investment in Human Capital: The Role of Education and Research* (New York: Free Press, 1971).

22 Ken Kempner and Ana Loureiro Jurema, “The Global Politics of Brazil and the World Bank,” *Higher*

to the demands of global competitiveness on an individual level and on a state level.²³ Daun claims that a “world model” constitutes part of broader globalization processes pushed by international organizations, such as the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in relation to global education trends.²⁴ Daun’s model includes, but is not limited to: a view of education systems as intended for all, compulsory for at least 9 years, with national core curriculum, including privatization as a funding source, increased “surveillance” and assessments of students and educators, and as being organized in a decentralized manner.²⁵ Fazal Rizvi and Bob Lingard argue that neoliberal ideologies have impacted global education policies by valorizing market efficiency initiatives since the 1980s, including school fees, the decentralization of education within national goals and curriculum, privatization, school choice for parents, standardized testing, and a concerted focus on primary education being important for increased economic yield.²⁶

Daun’s world model argument, and Rizvi and Lingard’s argument on a shift to the use of market mechanisms, prove observable in some countries but not all.²⁷ However, the use of these mechanisms occurs broadly enough to constitute global trends in the context of this thesis. Rizvi and Lingard argue that although most countries since the 1950s have taken up matters of equality in education, neoliberal free market approaches have superseded Keynesian education policies that included an emphasis on social justice and community.²⁸ The authors further argue that global policies such as the Millennium Development Goals have promoted global access to education, but fail to take into account the “dynamics of educational experiences and their social and economic outcomes, as well as the historical conditions that produce inequalities.”²⁹

Rizvi and Lingard are careful to acknowledge that within a global public policy context there are different “cultures, histories and politics within different nations” (x).³⁰ Carol Spreen notes that in a time of globalization, where “educational borrowing” between nations continues to occur, we must not neglect the “cultural imperatives and local nuances that contribute to educational approaches and understandings.”³¹ The positions of Rizvi, Lingard, and Spreen, underscore the critical need to review policymaking for equity in localized contexts within broader global trends. Such a review is a way to assist in the identification of policy frameworks used internationally, and further, to assess whether such approaches have resulted in holistic equity for children within different countries, political environments, and cultures.

B. The United States

Education 43, no. 3 (2002): 333, accessed October 26, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3447521>

23 Holger Daun, “Globalization and National Education Systems,” in *Educational Restructuring in the Context of Globalization and National Policy*, ed. Holger Daun (London: RoutledgeFalmer, 2002), 1.

24 Ibid., 18.

25 Ibid., 19.

26 Rizvi and Lingard, *Globalizing Education Policy*, 186.

27 For further reading on a country that has not adopted neoliberal global trends, see Pasi Sahlberg, *Finnish Lessons 2.0: What Can the World Learn from Educational Change in Finland?* 2nd ed. (New York: Teachers College Press, 2011).

28 Rizvi and Lingard, *Globalizing Education Policy*, 141.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid., introduction, x.

31 Carol Anne Spreen, “Appropriating Borrowed Policies: Outcomes-Based Education in South Africa,” in *The Global Politics of Educational Borrowing and Lending*, ed. Gita Steiner-Khamsi (New York: Teachers College Press, 2004), 102.

As of 2013, the U.S. had the fifth highest poverty rate for children between the ages of 0-17 among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member countries, with approximately 21% (13.4 million) of children living in poverty.³² Antipoverty programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, as well as refund and tax credits, lower this rate to 12.5%, but leave it larger than the overall poverty rate in the U.S.³³ The U.S. also had the fourth highest rate of income inequality among OECD member countries in 2013.³⁴ According to the OECD Better Life Index (BLI), 89% of adults between the ages of 25 and 64 have completed high school.³⁵ Students from the highest socioeconomic status on average scored 98 points higher than those students in the lowest socioeconomic status on the 2012 OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).³⁶ This disparity suggests that there is not “equal access to high-quality education” in the U.S. education system.³⁷

Different periods of educational policy reforms in the U.S. have included reforms intended to increase equity in education for children who have been historically disenfranchised. In the 1960s, during the Civil Rights Movement, the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 banned the formal racial segregation of public education, formalizing a commission through which to seek remedies and redress.³⁸ The passage of this act can be considered a step in meeting the holistic equity standard of equal treatment. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 included Title I, a federal funding program meant to “strengthen and improve educational quality and educational opportunities,” that provides increased aid to schools with large populations of impoverished students.³⁹ Title I falls within the holistic equity standard of equal education opportunities. Gary Orfield argues that policies between 1960 and the early 1970s, such as the Head Start preschool program and Title I, achieved greater success in increasing equity than “excellence reforms” in the 1980s and 1990s, which focused on “competition and standards” instead of “access and equity.”⁴⁰

The 1980s marked a shift in policymaking when Ronald Reagan’s presidency led to an emphasis upon assessments and “market or competition mechanisms.”⁴¹ John L. Rury argues that a conservative shift occurred during this time, in which education was viewed as an instrument necessary for economic development, as part of the growing awareness and concern about globalization as a change agent.⁴² *The Nation at Risk Report: The Imperative for Educational*

32 The Council of Economic Advisors, *The War on Poverty 50 Years Later: A Progress Report*, (Washington, DC: Executive Office of the President of the United States, 2014), 2, accessed October 7, 2015, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/50th_anniversary_cea_report_-_final_post_embargo.pdf; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), “Poverty Rate (Indicator),” accessed October 7, 2015, doi: 10.1787/0fe1315d-en

33 The Council of Economic Advisors, *The War on Poverty*, 12.

34 OECD, “Inequality,” accessed November 4, 2015, <http://www.oecd.org/social/inequality.htm>

35 OECD BLI, “United States,” accessed November 4, 2015, <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/united-states/>

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Our Documents, “Transcript of Civil Rights Act (1964),” accessed October 7, 2015, <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=97&page=transcript>

39 Public Law 89-10, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office, 1965), 27, accessed October 6, 2015, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-79/pdf/STATUTE-79-Pg27.pdf>

40 Orfield, “Policy and Equity,” 406, 411.

41 Ibid., 411.

42 John L. Rury, *Education and Social Change: Contours in the History of American Schooling* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 213-215.

Reform, issued in 1983 by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, opens with the statement: “Our Nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world ... If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war.”⁴³ The report resulted in five recommendations:

1. remedy the “homogenized, diluted, and diffused” curriculum
2. create measurable standards and higher expectations
3. extend the school day
4. set “high educational standards” for teachers, link “salary, promotion, tenure, and retention decisions ... to an effective evaluation system,” and provide “professionally competitive, market-sensitive, and performance-based” salaries
5. urge citizens to fund the implementation of the recommendations.⁴⁴

These recommendations can be understood as being in line with neoliberal global education trends, and as supporting existing decentralization with an onus placed on state governments and citizens for funding, increased emphasis on standardized testing for students, expansion of teacher assessments, and merit-based pay for educators.

Policies in the 1990s and early 2000s, such as the Equity and Excellence Act of 1990, as well as the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), formed part of a continued pursuit of equity through policymaking. NCLB sets standards of proficiency for students and provides mechanisms such as school choice, supplemental educational options (including private options such as tutoring), and restructuring of a school district if it fails to meet the standards of proficiency as measured through assessments.⁴⁵ It should be noted that the U.S. Constitution created a decentralized education system in which states carry the principle responsibility for primary and secondary education, so the federal government cannot mandate curriculum across states and can only provide incentives for reforms not issued through the courts.⁴⁶ Harvey Kantor and Robert Lowe argue that although NCLB was presented as increasing equity and supporting high-poverty schools through additional funding, it “more often functioned to reproduce educational inequality than reduce it.”⁴⁷ Additionally, the 2013 *Each and Every Child Report: A Strategy for Education, Equity and Excellence* report from the Equity and Excellence Commission to the Secretary of Education Arne Duncan focused on the need for equity in education and raised

43 National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (Washington: Department of Education, 1983), accessed October 5, 2015, <http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/index.html>

44 Ibid.

45 Elizabeth H. Debray, Kathryn A. McDermott, and Priscilla Wohlstetter, “Introduction to the Special Case of Federalism Reconsidered: The Case of the No Child Left Behind Act,” *Peabody Journal of Education* 80, no. 2 (2005), accessed November 4, 2015, http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S15327930pje8002_1

46 U.S. Department of Education, International Affairs Staff, *Education in the United States: A Brief Overview* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2005), accessed November 14, 2015, <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ous/international/edus/index.html>

47 Harvey Kantor and Robert Lowe, “Educationalizing the Welfare State and Privatizing Education” in *Closing the Opportunity Gap: What America Must Do to Give Every Child an Even Chance*, ed. by Prudence L. Carter and Kevin G. Welner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 37.

alarming flags about the lack of educational equity in the U.S.⁴⁸

Although equity has been pursued in the U.S., holistic equity remains to be achieved. This problem is reflected in the research and writings of several prominent scholars on the existing inequalities in education. One such scholar, Linda Darling-Hammond, argues that progress was made in closing the achievement gap between Black and white students in the 1970s and early 1980s.⁴⁹ Yet, she also argues that unequalized funding due to disparities in property tax revenue, the level of poverty, the dearth of social supports, limited access to early education opportunities, the resegregation of schools, unequal access to qualified teachers and “high-quality” curriculum, and the “factory design” of schools continue to produce and perpetuate inequalities in the education system.⁵⁰

De facto forms of segregation are present in the U.S. education system. In a 2012 report authored by Gary Orfield, John Kucsera, and Genevieve Siegel-Hawley, titled *E Pluribus... Deepening Segregation for More Students*, the collected 2009-2010 data shows 80% of Latino students and 74% of Black students are enrolled in majority non-white schools (50-100% minority); 43% of Latino students and 38% of Black students attend “intensely segregated schools” (0-10% white students); and 14% of Latino students and 15% of Black students attend “apartheid schools” (0-1% white students).⁵¹ As part of what Orfield, Kucsera, and Siegel-Hawley term “double segregation,” Black students attend schools where 64.8% of the students are low-income and Latino students attend schools where 63.5% are low-income.⁵²

Students in schools with high levels of poverty often face the constraints of “less experienced teachers, more remedial and special education classes, many more non-English speaking children, lower achieving peers, fewer honors or AP courses ... [and] lower graduation rates.”⁵³ In connection to the use of local property taxes for funding, parents and communities with higher socioeconomic status can often raise more funding for schools than those in impoverished communities. Policymaking for equity has resulted in some important progress for students in the U.S. education system, but it has not met the holistic standard of equal education opportunity among continued systemic inequalities—holistic equity has not been achieved.

C. Brazil

Brazil is recognized for having lowered economic inequality and poverty rates due to social programs such as Bolsa Família; however, in 2012 it had the third highest level of income inequality

48 U.S. Department of Education, *For Each and Every Child—A Strategy for Education Equity and Excellence* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2013), accessed September 4, 2015, http://www.ctbaonline.org/sites/default/files/reports/ctba.limeredstaging.com/node/add/repository-report/1386522132/CR_2013.02.02_For%20Each%20and%20Every%20Child%20Commssn%20REPORT.pdf

49 Darling-Hammond, *The Flat World*.

50 Ibid., 29-30.

51 Gary Orfield, John Kucsera, and Genevieve Siegel-Hawley, *E Pluribus... Deepening Segregation for More Students* (Los Angeles: The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles at the University of California, Los Angeles, 2012), 19, accessed October 6, 2015, <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/mlk-national/e-pluribus...separation-deepening-double-segregation-for-more-students>

52 Ibid., 26.

53 Darling-Hammond, *The Flat World*; Orfield, Kucsera, and Siegal-Hawley, *E Pluribus...*, 26.

among OECD member countries, as measured by the GINI coefficient—coming in only behind South Africa and Colombia.⁵⁴ Only 45% of adults between the ages of 25 and 64 have completed upper secondary education (high school), and students from the highest socioeconomic status on average scored 84 points higher than students in the lowest socioeconomic status on the 2012 PISA.⁵⁵ According to the OECD BLI (Brazil), this result suggests that there is “relatively equal access high-quality education.”⁵⁶ However, in 2009, 2.4% of children (over 730,000) were not even enrolled in primary and lower secondary schools.⁵⁷

While allowing for private schools, the 1988 Brazilian Constitution establishes a right to free and compulsory public education (in official schools), “equal conditions of access ...” and a “guarantee of standards of quality,” but policymaking for equity truly began in the 1990s.⁵⁸ The new Constitution further decentralized the education system by assigning the central responsibility for primary schools to states and municipalities, secondary schools to states, and also required states and municipalities to spend 25% of their tax revenue and transfer monies on public education, and for the Federal Government to contribute 18%.⁵⁹ According to Naércio Meneses-Filho and Elaine Pazello, this created disparities in funding due to the differing economic positions of regions, with more financially solvent states able to spend more money per student than poorer municipalities.⁶⁰ Along with funding disparities, no mechanisms existed to ensure that the funding spent on education proved effective.⁶¹

In 1996, under President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the Basic Educational Equalization Fund, Fundo de Desenvolvimento do Ensino Fundamental (FUNDEF), was created to address the unequal resources between primary schools. As a reform policy created by domestic policymakers, FUNDEF required all states and municipalities to contribute 15% of revenues into a federal fund, and then upon redistribution (based on student enrollment) to use 60% of the received funds to pay teachers.⁶² Additionally, a base minimum was established for the education of each student, which the federal government would supplement should extant resources prove

⁵⁴ Jens Arnold and João Jalles, *Dividing the Pie in Brazil: Income Distribution, Social Policies and the New Middle Class*, OECD Economics Department Working Papers, No. 1105, (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2014), 6-16, accessed November 4, 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jzb6w1rt99p-en>

⁵⁵ OECD Better Life Index (BLI), “Brazil,” accessed November 4, 2015, <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/brazil/>

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ United States Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics (UIS) and UNICEF, “Barriers and Policy Solutions,” in *Fixing the Broken Promise of Education for All: Findings from the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children* (Montreal: UIS, 2015), 43, <http://dx.doi.org/10.15220/978-92-9189-161-0-en>

⁵⁸ Political Database of the Americas, “República Federativa de Brasil” (Washington, DC: Center for Latin American Studies, Georgetown University, 2008), chap. 3, section I, accessed October 23, 2015, <http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/Brazil/english96.html#mozTocId674968>

⁵⁹ Naércio Meneses-Filho and Elaine Pazello, “Do Teacher’s Wages Matter for Proficiency? Evidence from a Funding Reform in Brazil,” *Economics of Education Review* 26 (2007): 661, accessed October 31, 2015, doi:10.1016/j.econedurev.2007.08.003

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Marcus A. Melo, “The Politics of Service Delivery Reform: Improving Basic Education in Brazil,” in *The Politics of Service Delivery in Democracies. Better Access for the Poor*, ed. Shantayanan Devarajan and Ingrid Widlund (Stockholm: Expert Group on Development Issues, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2007), accessed November 2, 2015, http://www.sarpn.org/documents/d0002962/Politics_SD_EGDI_2007.pdf; Meneses-Filho and Pazello, “Do Teacher’s Wages Matter,” 661.

inadequate.⁶³ According to Barbara Bruns, David Evans, and Javier Luque, FUNDEF increased resources and served as an incentive for municipalities to increase enrollment, which resulted in a greater amount of students being enrolled, a shift of students from state schools to municipal schools, and allowed funding to follow a child.⁶⁴

In 2007, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva reauthorized FUNDEF and expanded it with the creation of Fundo de Manutenção e Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica e de Valorização dos Profissionais da Educação (FUNDEB). FUNDEB is a Constitutional Amendment that increases the state and municipal shares for funding education from 15% to 20%.⁶⁵ Not only is the policy meant to create equalization of funding for pre-primary education, preschool, and secondary education, but it also “guarantee[s] minimum levels of per capita funding for enrollment in education programs for indigenous⁶⁶ and quilombo⁶⁷ communities, and youth and adult education.”⁶⁸

While FUNDEF and FUNDEB may have helped to further progress towards meeting the holistic equity standard of equal treatment, like the reform policies in the U.S., the standard of equal education opportunity remains unfulfilled. In Brazil, between 1982 and 2007, white students enjoyed an overall educational advantage, while the disparities between *Pardo* (mixed race) and Black students decreased.⁶⁹ Leticia J. Marteleto argues that the narrowing of the gap between *Pardo* and Black students may be empirically interpreted as the result of an increase in Black families’ resources due to structural changes.⁷⁰ Less empirically, she argues that this may be due to “darkening with education” caused by Black parents with high levels of education that assign a racial classification of Black to their children.⁷¹ While research based on micro-data by Menezes-Filho and Pazello demonstrates that the proficiency of students across different regions has been positively impacted by a growth in relative wages for teachers between 1997 and 1999, additional research shows that even with advances, equal educational opportunities remain hindered by segregation of varying types.⁷² The opportunity gap between white and Black

63 Menezes-Filho and Elaine Pazello, “Do Teacher’s Wages Matter,” 661.

64 Barbara Bruns, David Evans, and Javier Luque, *Achieving World-Class Education in Brazil: The Next Agenda* (Washington, DC: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ The World Bank, 2012), 4-6, accessed October 25, 2015, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/2383/656590REPLACEMENT0achieving0World0Class0.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

65 Teresa Ter-Minassian, *Structural Reforms in Brazil: Progress and Unfinished Agenda*, Policy Brief, No. IDB-PB-158, (Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank, Department of Research and Chief Economist, 2012), accessed November 1, 2015, <http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=36903972>

66 For further exploration of indigenous tribes in Brazil, see Stephen Perz, Jonathan Warren, and David Kennedy, “Contributions of Racial-Ethnic Reclassification and Demographic Processes to Indigenous Resurgence: The Case of Brazil,” *Latin American Research Review* 43, no. 2 (2008): 7-33, accessed May 4, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20488127>

67 For further understanding of the quilombo, see Louise Silberling, “Displacement and Quilombos in Alcantara, Brazil: Modernity, Identity, and Place,” *International Social Science Journal* 55, no. 175 (2003): 145-156, accessed May 4, 2016. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1468-2451.5501014>

68 Bruns, Evans, and Luque, *Achieving World-Class Education*, 6-7.

69 Leticia J. Marteleto, “Educational Inequality by Race in Brazil, 1982-2007: Structural Changes and Shifts in Racial Classification,” *Demography* 49, no. 1 (2012), accessed October 25, 2015, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22259031>

70 *Ibid.*, 356.

71 *Ibid.*

72 Menezes-Filho and Pazello, “Do Teacher’s Wages Matter?”

fifth graders in Brazil as represented in Portuguese and mathematics proficiency scores of Prova Brasil (a nationwide achievement test) indicates that the more racially segregated a school is in Brazil, the worse Black students perform academically in contrast with white students.⁷³

Research drawn from data from the São Paulo State Department of Education Evaluation System (SARESP) and the school census in state-run elementary schools in Campinas found that when schools are located in areas with high levels of poverty, students have lower rates of proficiency on math assessments than students in more affluent communities.⁷⁴ Cunha et al. argue that social segregation and “spatial differences,” as part of a relationship between school infrastructure, school academic achievement, and the neighborhoods in which schools are located, have a significant impact on math proficiency even when variables such as the education level and socioeconomic status of parents are controlled for.⁷⁵ The Bolsa Família (BF) conditional cash transfer program for poor families with children has conditionalities tied to children attending school and periodic health checkups. However, while BF has increased attendance and lowered the dropout rate, it has “not necessarily enable[ed] disadvantaged children to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty.”⁷⁶

There are both private and public schools in Brazil, but private schools often lead to better educational opportunities for white and economically privileged students in primary and secondary schools.⁷⁷ Abdias do Nascimento and Elisa Larkin Nascimento assert that this disparity stems from the policies of the military regime in power between 1964 and 1985, which destroyed the public education system by “turning education over to the private, education-for-profit lobby.”⁷⁸ This has had lasting impacts as public higher education is primarily accessible to those students who earlier attended private schools—leaving many of those who attended public primary and secondary schools, and who can least afford it, with the need to pay for private higher education.⁷⁹ There are large disparities in educational attainment between the Northeast region, where there are higher percentages of indigenous and quilombo populations, than in other regions of Brazil.⁸⁰ Students of African descent are routinely consigned to often underfunded public primary and secondary schools while white children of are often educated in private schools.⁸¹ This further emphasizes how meeting the standard of equal education opportunity is critical to achieving holistic equity. While there has been progress in Brazil, systemic inequities continue to exist, and the standard of equal education opportunity has not been met through

73 Roberto M. V. Flores and Luiz Scorzafave, “Effect of Racial Segregation on Proficiency of Brazilian Elementary School Students,” *Economia* 15, no. 1 (2014): 20-29, accessed October 25, 2015, doi:10.1016/j.econ.2014.03.001

74 José M. P. d. Cunha et al., “Social Segregation and Academic Achievement in State-Run Elementary Schools in the Municipality of Campinas, Brazil,” *Geoforum* 40, no. 5 (2009), accessed October 25, 2015, 10.1016/j.geoforum.2009.06.003

75 Ibid., 873.

76 Fábio V. Soares, Rafael P. Ribas, and Rafael G. Osório, “Evaluating the Impact of Brazil’s Bolsa Família: Cash Transfer Programs in Comparative Perspectives,” *Latin American Research Review* 45, no. 2 (2010): 186, accessed November 1, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27919200>

77 Adibas d. Nascimento and Elisa Larkin Nascimento, “Dance of Deception: A Reading of Race Relations in Brazil,” in *Beyond Racism: Race and Inequality in Brazil, South Africa, and The United States*, ed. Charles V. Hamilton, Lynn Huntley, Veville Alexander, Antonio Sérgio Alfredo Guimarães, and Wilmot James (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 116.

78 Ibid., 116-117.

79 Ibid., 117.

80 Ibid., 115-116.

81 Ibid., 105-116.

policymaking for equity—holistic equity has not been achieved.

D. Chile

In 2009, Chile had the highest rate of economic inequality and the third highest rate of poverty after taxes and cash transfers among all OECD member countries.⁸² Although the poverty rate for children in Chile fell between 2008 and 2012, 22.8% of children were living in poverty as of 2012.⁸³ Only 58% of adults between the ages of 25 and 64 have completed upper secondary education (high school), and students from the highest socioeconomic status on average scored 105 points higher than students in the lowest socioeconomic status on the 2012 PISA.⁸⁴ According to the OECD BLI (Chile), this disparity suggests that there is not “equal access to high-quality education” in the Chilean education system.⁸⁵

Since the transition to democracy in 1990, Chilean educational policy reforms in pursuit of equity have been ongoing for municipal government funded schools, private schools subsidized by the government, and private fee-paying private schools; however, reforms driven by economic neoliberalism prior to 1990 have in many ways defined the process.⁸⁶ Between 1973 and 1990, the military government (driven by concerns about efficiency) decentralized education administration – which created a market-mechanism voucher system tied to student attendance to help finance operational and capital costs – and introduced the Sistema de Medicion de la Calidad de la Educacion for student assessment.⁸⁷ According to Ann Matear, as private providers entered the educational system, public funding decreased, and the voucher system created a new group of subsidized private schools to compete with public schools, which acted as an impetus for parents to increase the use of private schools.⁸⁸ While these reforms resulted in an expanded market, Matear argues that schools became more segregated based on the socioeconomic status of different communities (rural/urban) and families).⁸⁹ Before leaving office, the military government enacted Ley Orgánica Constitucional de Educación (Constitutional Law on Education), and limited amendments to their educational reforms without reaching an “unattainable quorum in the parliament,” which left a lasting imprint on future educational reforms by constraining policymakers’ abilities to enact education reforms.⁹⁰

82 OECD, “Inequality,” accessed November 4, 2015, <http://www.oecd.org/social/inequality.htm>

83 Gonzalo Fanjul, *Children of the Recession: The Impact of the Economic Crisis on Child Well-Being in Rich Countries*, *Innocenti Report Card 12*, (Florence: United Nations Children’s Fund, 2014), 8, accessed November 4, 2015, <http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/rc12-eng-web.pdf>

84 OECD BLI, “Chile,” accessed November 4, 2015, <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/chile/>

85 Ibid.

86 Ann Matear, “Equity in Chile: The Tensions Between Policy and Practice,” *International Journal of Educational Development* 27 (2007), accessed October 25, 2015, <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0738059306000654>

87 Françoise Delannoy, *Education Reforms in Chile, 1980-98: A Lesson in Pragmatism. Country Studies, Education and Reform and Management Publication Series 1*, no. 1 (Washington, DC: World Bank, Human Development Network, 2000), 7-8, accessed October 25, 2015, http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2000/09/01/000094946_00081805551098/Rendered/PDF/multi-page.pdf; Matear, “Equity in Chile,” 104.

88 Matear, “Equity in Chile,” 104.

89 Delannoy, *Education Reforms in Chile*; Matear, “Equity in Chile,” 105.

90 Matear, “Equity in Chile,” 104.

Beginning in 1990, the democratic governments of the Concertación (Coalition) enacted three stages of educational reforms (with additional funding from the World Bank) that emphasized equity and quality.⁹¹ The first stage of educational reform policies under President Patricio Aylwin Azocar between 1990 and 1994 helped ameliorate the negative impacts of changes in labour laws for teachers under the military government, created Programa 900 to increase resources for poor communities and children, and initiated a new shared funding mechanism (while keeping the voucher system).⁹² These were part of Mejoramiento de la Equidad y de la Calidad de la Educación (MECE-Básica).⁹³ MECE-Básica targeted enhancing effectiveness in learning spaces, increasing the caliber of resources for teaching in primary schools, and launched a new national curriculum framework.⁹⁴ Between 1994 and 2000, President Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle led the second stage of reforms through MECE-Media. This stage included an increased focus on modernizing education to contribute to a more equitable democratic society, “social justice and equity,” and increasing participation in the global economy.⁹⁵ During this stage, MIDEPLAN (1999, 2001) established a longer school day through the Jornada Escolar Completa (1996) (Full School Day) legislation, provided for more textbook resources, along with “early years and preschool interventions, free school meals, learning materials, and support for teenage parents” were provided for children in “socially vulnerable” families.⁹⁶

In the third stage of educational reforms, under President Ricardo Lagos Escobar (2000-2006 as part of MECE-Superior), education became compulsory for 12 years and economic incentives were created for municipal and subsidized private schools serving poor families.⁹⁷ In 2008, Subvención Escolar Preferencial (Preferential School Subsidy) was introduced as reform for equity, and continues to provide increased financial resources to schools that serve vulnerable children.⁹⁸ Additionally, Ley General de Educación (General Education Act) was introduced in 2008, which prohibits student selection in publicly funded schools through the sixth grade.⁹⁹ This measure replaced the 1990 Ley Orgánica Constitucional de Enseñanza.

Although Chile has furthered equity through educational reforms, as with the U.S. and Brazil, such efforts have not yet resulted in the achievement of holistic equity through policymaking. Matear argues that a combination of shared funding and voucher financing mechanisms have provided more benefits for schools that were already serving more advantaged populations, adversely effecting equity in education.¹⁰⁰ Drawn from SIMCE data, Matear’s research found that municipal schools exhibit lower assessment scores than those of students in fee-paying private schools or subsidized private schools, and an achievement gap separates children from lower

91 [Ibid.](#)

92 [Ibid.](#), 104-105.

93 [Ibid.](#), 105.

94 [Ibid.](#)

95 [Ibid.](#)

96 [Ibid.](#)

97 [Ibid.](#), 106. MECE-Superior was initiated at this time to target improvements in higher education but this thesis predominantly focuses on primary education.

98 Jesús Duarte et al., *Education Equity in Chile: Trends 1999-2011*, No. IDB-TN-547, (Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank, Education Division, 2013), 2, accessed October 21, 2015, https://publications.iadb.org/bitstream/handle/11319/5964/Educational_Equity_in_Chile_Trends.pdf?sequence=1

99 [Ibid.](#)

100 [Matear](#), “Equity in Chile,” 105-107.

socioeconomic statuses from those students with higher socioeconomic statuses.¹⁰¹ In addition, her research found that assessments of students from lower socioeconomic statuses in municipal and subsidized private schools have very similar scores in language and mathematics.¹⁰² Thus, even though parents make greater financial contributions on top of vouchers to subsidized private schools, those schools are “not compensating educationally for the social disadvantages of the home and community environment” of students from lower socioeconomic statuses.¹⁰³

Florencia Torche uses her research on privatization and educational inequality in Chile to argue that the “school sector adds to, rather than mediates, the effects of socioeconomic status on educational attainment,” and constitutes a source of “qualitative inequalit[ies]” between subsidized private schools and fee-paying private schools.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, Torche argues that although there has been “significant educational expansion and radical educational reform,” changes do not carry over to the education sector, which remains stratified.¹⁰⁵ Torche’s research shows that inequality is on the rise for younger groups of students in relation to the level of educational attainment by their fathers.¹⁰⁶ An analysis of SICME results from 1999-2011 (from fourth, eighth, and tenth grades) by Duarte et al., measured through the Intra-class Correlation Index, has shown that there is a “high degree of social segregation” in primary and secondary schools.¹⁰⁷ This indicates that the “probability of students of a particular socioeconomic status being in the same school as students of a similar socioeconomic background is greater than 60%.”¹⁰⁸ The same analysis demonstrates that academic segregation between lower and higher performing students increases between the fourth and tenth grades.¹⁰⁹ There are *de facto* forms of segregation in the Chilean education system.

A report from the OECD confirms that inequity exists, stating, “Equity issues need to be addressed. PISA results decrease sharply by school type in line with the average socioeconomic background of the children ...”¹¹⁰ There continues to be disparities in the abilities of lower-income and indigenous families to be able to afford private subsidized schools, with larger percentages of socioeconomically vulnerable students concentrated in municipal schools (more frequently found in rural areas).¹¹¹ Additionally, poor teaching skills have been found to be a continuing impediment to the provision of a quality learning experience, and student outcomes.¹¹² Although progress has been made in regards to the standards of equal treatment and equal education opportunity in the Chilean education system, as in the U.S. and Brazil, policymaking for

101 Ibid., 111.

102 Ibid.

103 Ibid.

104 Florencia Torche, “Privatization Reform and Inequality of Educational Opportunity: The Case of Chile,” *Sociology of Education* 78 (2005): 335, accessed October 21, 2015, <http://soe.sagepub.com/content/78/4/316.short>

105 Ibid., 334.

106 Ibid., 335.

107 Duarte et al., *Education Equity in Chile*, 6.

108 Ibid.

109 Ibid., 7.

110 OECD, “Quality, Equity and Equality in the Education System,” in *Maintaining Momentum: OECD Perspectives on Policy Challenges in Chile* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2011), 64, accessed October 21, 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264095199-en>

111 Joseph Wales et al., *Improvements in the Quality of Basic Education: Chile’s Experience* (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2014), 4, accessed October 21, 2015, <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9067.pdf>

112 Ibid., 5-6.

equity has often resulted in the most advantaged communities and families before the reforms continuing to have greater educational opportunities than poor and indigenous communities. Holistic equity has not been achieved.

III. Chapter 3: Policymaking for Equity: Post-Apartheid Curriculum Reform in South Africa, A Case Study

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.
—*Nelson Mandela*

Twenty years after the fall of the apartheid state the legacies of apartheid still impact the lives of South Africans along racial lines as it relates to poverty, inequality, and equal education opportunity. South Africa has made progress in reducing poverty but still faces one of the world's highest rates of income inequality in the world, with little progress made as of 2011.¹¹³ In 2011, 45.5% of the population was living in poverty, 20.2% were living in extreme poverty, and 55.7% of children were living in poverty.¹¹⁴ The highest level of poverty between population groups of Black Africans was 54% in 2011.¹¹⁵ Still, South Africa's policymakers have emphasized the importance of education in the post-apartheid democracy since the very beginning of the transition to democracy.

This case study uses Harold Lasswell's stages model as a framework to analyze the formulation and implementation stages of the adoption of outcomes-based education (OBE) as implemented through Curriculum 2005 (C2005) as post-apartheid educational reform policies inclusive of equity as a goal. I identify the key factors that explain how OBE and C2005 as education reform policies failed to result in holistic equity for all South African children. In the context of this thesis policy with symbolic value represents interests and values but does not result in the goals established in the formulation stage leading to transformative, systemic, and material change when implemented as opposed to policy with substantive value which is identified by reaching these goals.¹¹⁶

A. Historical Context

The end of apartheid in 1994 opened a window of opportunity for the formulation and implementation of policies to transform the segregated and inequitable Bantu Education system. In 1953 the Eiselen Commission laid the foundation for the Bantu Education Act No. 47 leading to the systematic exclusion of Black students, and barring personal and economic agency due

113 Pali Lehohla, *Poverty Trends in South Africa: An Examination of Absolute Poverty Between 2006 and 2011* (Pretoria: Statistics South Africa, 2014), 12-22, accessed November 6, 2015, <http://beta2.statssa.gov.za/publications/Report-03-10-06/Report-03-10-06March2014.pdf>

114 Ibid., 12, 29.

115 Ibid., 27.

116 Jonathan Jansen, "Political Symbolism as Policy Craft: Explaining Non-reform in South African Education after Apartheid," *Journal of Educational Policy* 17, no. 2 (2002), accessed April 11, 2015, doi:10.1080/02680930110116534

to the provision of an inferior education, which was intended to reinforce a racial hierarchy that relegated Blacks to the position of subservient labor.¹¹⁷ The apartheid education system was divided into fifteen separate departments of education based on the constructed racial categories of South Africans as Black, Coloured, Indian, and white.¹¹⁸ There were immense disparities between the funding of schools for white students and non-white students resulting in the entrenchment of systemic educational inequalities.¹¹⁹ The curricula used within Bantu Education intentionally obstructed the education of Black students; to “indoctrinate instead of liberate.”¹²⁰ and to teach them be subservient to apartheid ideologies, practices, and the economic needs of the apartheid state.¹²¹

Vuyisile Msila argues that “education is not a neutral act; but always political,” relating to the apartheid government’s use of education as a tool to perpetuate racist ideologies and division, while the post-apartheid ANC-led government sought to use it as a tool for unification, inclusive democracy building, and racial equality.¹²² Any policy—both education and otherwise—that was formulated post-1994 necessitated symbolic inclusion of the values and interests of the new ANC-led government and democracy; but policies also needed to have substantive value to ensure the result of systemic and material changes to the racially unjust and unequal apartheid society and education system.¹²³

B. Policy Formulation: Complex Policy Subsystems and the Adoption of OBE Policy Subsystems

The complexity of a policy subsystem is tied to the “policy paradigms” and “symbolic frames” of the policy actors in the subsystem; differing beliefs, frames, and interests directly impact the “program ideas” or policy solutions that stakeholders find acceptable.¹²⁴ The education policy subsystem under apartheid only had one actor until 1990: the apartheid state. According to Jonathan Jansen as negotiations were in progress to end apartheid new actors rushed into the subsystem during a “race for policy positions” (1990-1994).¹²⁵ New actors included the ANC, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and actors from the private sector, international community, and non-governmental organizations.¹²⁶ There were differing ideologies based on core beliefs about race, racial equity, and democracy, as well as different interests about what education

117 Fiske and Ladd, *Elusive Equity*, 3.

118 Ibid.

119 Fiske and Ladd, *Elusive Equity*, 3; Vuyisile Msila, “From Apartheid Education to the Revised Curriculum Statement: Pedagogy for Identify Formation and Nation Building in South Africa,” *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 16, no. 2 (2007): 146, accessed April 15, 2015, <http://www.njas.helsinki.fi/pdf-files/vol16num2/msila.pdf>

120 Msila, “From Apartheid Education,” 146.

121 Graeme Bloch, *The Toxic Mix: What’s Wrong with South Africa’s Schools and How to Fix It* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2009), 43-44.

122 Msila, “From Apartheid Education,” 146.

123 Jansen, “Political Symbolism as Policy.”

124 Howlett, Ramesh, and Perl, *Studying Public Policy*, 51.

125 Jonathan Jansen, “Rethinking Education Policy Making in South Africa: Symbols of Change, Signals of Conflict,” in *Education in Retrospect: Policy and Implementation since 1990*, ed. Andre Kraak and Michael Young (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2001), 42, accessed April 11, 2015, <http://www.hsrcpress.ac.za/product.php?freedownload=1&productid=1961&js=n>

126 Ibid.

should include. The South African Democratic Teacher's Union (SADTU) wanted educational goals to be redefined as "competencies," the private sector wanted educational goals to focus on vocational and enterprise education, and the U.S. Agency for International Development wanted an emphasis on "early childhood and adult education."¹²⁷ A new Government of National Unity (GNU) (composed of ANC members and previous government officials under apartheid), unified the Department of Education, Minister of Education, local school governing boards, and a three-tiered federal type governing system by combining them with the interests of labor, the private sector, and the international community. This created a complex subsystem in which the actors only issued broad statements tied to interests and values as they staked symbolic positions.¹²⁸ The complexity of the education policy subsystem impacted policy formulation and implementation and was a factor in the failure of reforms to result in holistic equity.

i. Race for Policy Frameworks

The more complex a policy subsystem is the more challenging it is to formulate and implement policies that result in substantive change.¹²⁹ Jansen, who advocated against the adoption and implementation of OBE and C2005, argues that during the "race for policy frameworks" (mid-1990s) policymakers were more concerned with resolving "policy struggles in the political domain," or "political symbolism," than actually formulating policy that could be successfully implemented.¹³⁰ Ursula Hoadley argues that negotiated settlements had a profound impact on education policy and curriculum reform, sacrificing content and avoiding favoritism for one form of "knowledge distribution" over another.¹³¹ The differing interests, ideologies, and political struggles of stakeholders contributed to a complex education policy subsystem during the formulation stage, which led to OBE and C2005 being formulated and implemented with symbolic value.

Beginning in 1994, legal and policy frameworks *had* to be created to support education reform.¹³² While post-apartheid education reform was driven by equity imperatives it was also part of the broader social agenda of building political participation and human capital through education to support economic development.¹³³ The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (1994) is a broad socioeconomic policy document that was formulated to guide the overall transition from apartheid to a democratic and equal society. The RDP emphasizes lifelong learning and the need for an education system to help build democracy, human dignity, equality, and social justice to help overcome the legacies of apartheid.¹³⁴ Based upon the ANC

127 Fiske and Ladd, *Elusive Equity*, 156-157.

128 Jansen, "Rethinking Education Policy."

129 Howlett, Ramesh, and Perl, *Studying Public Policy*, 112-114, 136-137.

130 Jansen, "Rethinking Education Policy," 46.

131 Ursula Hoadley, "Knowledge, Knowers and Knowing: Curriculum Reform in South Africa," in *Curriculum in Today's World: Configuring Knowledge, Identities, Work and Politics*, ed. Lyn Yates and Madeleine Grumet (London: Routledge, 2011), 145, accessed April 15, 2015, http://www.education.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/104/hoadley2011.pdf

132 Jansen, "Rethinking Education Policy," 43.

133 Linda Chisholm, "The State of Curriculum Reform in South Africa: The Issue of Curriculum 2005," in *State of the Nation: South Africa 2003-2004*, ed. John Daniel, Adam Habib, and Roger Southall (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2005), accessed April 11, 2015, http://www.hsrcpress.ac.za/product.php?product_id=2055&freedownload=1; Fiske and Ladd, *Elusive Equity*.

134 Reconstruction and Development Programme White Paper, (Cape Town: Ministry in the

education policy framework created in 1994, the South African Constitution (1996) provides the right for everyone to a basic education in the Bill of Rights and laid the foundation for a decentralized education system with the creation of nine new provinces.¹³⁵

The adoption of the National Education Policy Act (NEPA) laid the framework for new national and provincial government responsibilities in regards to education and established the responsibility of the Minister of Education to determine national curriculum policy frameworks.¹³⁶ NEPA laid the framework for the adoption of OBE in 1997 as national curriculum reform policy, which was implemented through C2005 in 1998. Additionally, NEPA emphasized the need for the new education system to provide “equal access to education institutions,” help achieve equal education opportunities, and remedy past educational inequalities.¹³⁷ Education was presented as being intimately tied to the “moral, social, cultural, political and economic development of the nation at large, including the advancement of democracy, [and] human rights ...”¹³⁸ What NEPA *did not* do was explicitly address systemic legacies of the apartheid education system: disparities in financing, infrastructure, resources, or teacher training. Instead, curriculum was presented as a policy problem that would be addressed in future policy formulation.¹³⁹ This indicates that NEPA as a related policy framework for the adoption of OBE was directed towards symbolic change instead of systemic and substantive change and therefore failing to result in holistic equity.

The South African Schools Act (SASA) (1996) was formulated to promote access, quality, and democratic governance in education, while ensuring that all students have the right to access education without discrimination. SASA provides the policy framework for the setting of school funding norms to prioritize redress and to target the unequal funding allocations in public schools during apartheid.¹⁴⁰ It also sets provisions for local school governing bodies (SGB) to supplement public funds by setting schools tuition fees and privately raising money for their respective schools.¹⁴¹ The National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF) was enacted as a financing mechanism in 1998, providing increased funding for poorer schools, and as of 2010, to schools in the poorest three out of five quintiles.¹⁴²

ii. Substantive and Procedural Constraints

Office of the President, 1994), accessed February 27, 2015, <http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/governmentgazetteid16085.pdf>

135 Department of Education, *Education in South Africa: Achievements Since 1994*, (Pretoria: Department of Education, 2001), accessed May 8, 2015, <http://www.dhet.gov.za/Reports%20Doc%20Library/Education%20in%20South%20Africa%20Achievements%20since%201994.pdf>

136 National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996 (NEPA), (Pretoria: The President’s Office, 1996), accessed April 15, 2015, http://wced.pgwc.gov.za/documents/legislative_acts/a27-1996.pdf

137 Ibid.

138 Ibid.

139 Jonathan Jansen, “Curriculum Reform in South Africa: A Critical Analysis of Outcomes-Based Education,” *Cambridge Journal of Education* 28, no. 3 (1998), doi:10.1080/0305764980280305

140 South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (SASA), (Pretoria: The President’s Office, 1996), sec. 34, accessed November 8, 2015, <http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=aIolZ6UsZ5U%3D&tabid=185&mid=1828>

141 Ibid., sec. 39.

142 Helle Dossing, Letshego Mokeki, and Marinda Weiderman, *Mapping Transparency, Accountability and Integrity in Primary Education in South Africa*, (Berlin: Transparency International, 2011), accessed November 8, 2015, http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/pdf/luxembourg_tisda_south_africa_report_web.pdf

The rapid formulation of curriculum reform policy post-apartheid occurred in a complex and closed subsystem in which massive “substantive” and “procedural” constraints needed to be addressed to further equity.¹⁴³ Fiske and Ladd argue that equity has been elusive for three reasons: the legacies of apartheid, elements of power sharing arrangements that came from negotiated settlements, and limited financial and human capacity.¹⁴⁴ The inequality of training for teachers in Black schools (Non-Model C schools), the underfunding of those schools, and the “impoverished curriculum” are legacies of apartheid education that resulted in substantive constraints.¹⁴⁵ Limited financial capacity is a procedural constraint stemming from no new funding for education in the RDP, and further limits on funding upon the adoption of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR) in 1996 as macroeconomic policy based in neoliberal ideology and austerity, as well as a slowdown in the global economy.¹⁴⁶

The new federal-type governing system created nine new provinces and decentralized the apartheid education system by making provinces accountable for delivering education instead of the state.¹⁴⁷ Negotiated settlements led to a procedural constraint that limited the state’s ability to implement education reforms with absolute authority across provinces.¹⁴⁸ Limited human capacity and a lack of managerial capacity across all levels of the newly created and unified education system were also procedural constraints. Together, the financial and human capacity constraints limited South African policymakers’ ability to promote equal education opportunity and educational adequacy, and the possibilities of achieving holistic equity.¹⁴⁹ The intractability of transforming the apartheid education system and improperly evaluating the existing constraints as part of GNU power-sharing agreements contributed to the resulting policy gap in the implementation stage.¹⁵⁰ Without addressing these constraints, policymakers continued “playing-up the symbolic value” of adopting OBE instead of formulating policy with substantive value that could have helped to achieve holistic equity.¹⁵¹ The lack of proper evaluation of the constraints is a factor in the failure of curriculum reform policies to result in holistic equity.

iii. The Adoption of OBE

In the rush to implement OBE through C2005 into primary schools, there were no feasibility studies, pilot school programs, evaluations of whether OBE actually delivers on outcomes, or what those outcomes would mean in the context of a “resource-poor” country.¹⁵² Policymakers represented the adoption of OBE as being the antithesis of the apartheid state’s authoritative and inequitable education system and as being a learner-centered, teacher-empowering, outcomes-over-content, democratic approach to education.¹⁵³ The adoption of OBE can be considered educational borrowing from more developed countries that had previously adopted OBE such as

143 Howlett, Ramesh, and Perl, *Studying Public Policy*, 112-114.

144 Fiske and Ladd, *Elusive Equity*, 234.

145 Ibid., 234.

146 Model C schools were schools for white students during apartheid.

Ibid., 237.

147 Ibid., 239.

148 Ibid., 246.

149 Ibid., 236.

150 Howlett, Ramesh, and Perl, *Studying Public Policy*, 173-174.

151 Jansen, “Political Symbolism as Policy,” 111.

152 Jansen, “Curriculum Reform,” 322.

153 Fiske and Ladd, *Elusive Equity*, 158.

the U.S., New Zealand, and Australia. Its adoption was also based on the advice of international consultants such as William Spady.¹⁵⁴ Fiske and Ladd offer that policymakers in South Africa adopted OBE based on international practices, but expanded it to reflect the more the expansive goals of “access, equity, and development”¹⁵⁵ that were embedded in a “broader symbolic discourse” on transformation.¹⁵⁶ Msila presents that the two main reasons for initiating OBE were the apartheid education system’s failure to positively compare with international science and mathematics standards, and to meet the “social, political, and cultural” needs of a new South African society.¹⁵⁷ While the adoption of OBE was a part of a paradigm shift, it had symbolic value in that curriculum reform alone could not result in holistic equity and should have been further evaluated within a localized context.

There was opposition to the adoption of OBE in the policy formulation stage, but because the policy subsystem was complex and restrictive policymakers shut out stakeholders who had opposing ideas that could have contributed to the formulation of policy with substantive value.¹⁵⁸ As a stakeholder, Jansen argued that OBE was too complex in its language and concept structure for teachers to implement it in any meaningful way.¹⁵⁹ Additionally, the suppositions made by policymakers about what actually happens in classrooms and the lack of highly qualified teachers meant that more time would be needed before OBE could be implemented.¹⁶⁰ Further, the instrumentalist focus of OBE meant there was no values content to address the historical legacies of apartheid, to teach the “role of dissent in a democracy,” or to help to fight racism and sexism while “developing the Pan-African citizen.”¹⁶¹ This particular argument speaks to how emphasizing an outcomes-over-content curriculum led to policy with symbolic value instead of substantive and systemic change by not addressing structural inequalities and historical legacies of apartheid as part of policymaking for equity.

Jansen’s arguments were salient and focused on actual schools, teachers, and the transformation of the apartheid education system through policy with substantive value, but the policy subsystem did not embrace his ideas. Policymaking for equity cannot simply be formulated and passed on for implementation without addressing how those responsible for implementation may or may not have the training or resources to support the policy goals. Upon the implementation of OBE through C2005, Jansen’s warnings came to fruition.

iv. Policy Implementation: Policy Gaps and Equal Education Opportunity

Within the “race for policy implementation” (late 1990s) the goals set during the formulation stage of OBE failed to match the eventual results in the implementation stage, creating a policy gap and continuing unequal education opportunity for many previously excluded and

154 ¹⁵⁴ Jansen, “Political Symbolism as Policy.”

For further information on William Spady’s involvement with the adoption of OBE, see John Anthony Hader, “William G. Spady, Agent of Change: An Oral History,” PhD diss., (Chicago: Loyola University Chicago, 2011), accessed May 4, 2016, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/919995519?accountid=14496>

155 Fiske and Ladd, *Elusive Equity*, 157.

156 Jansen, “Rethinking Education Policy,” 50.

157 Msila, “From Apartheid Education,” 150.

158 Howlett, Ramesh, and Perl, *Studying Public Policy*, 135-137.

159 Jansen, “Political Symbolism as Policy,” 323.

160 *Ibid.*, 325.

161 *Ibid.*, 326-327.

disadvantaged South African students. The implementation of OBE through C2005 was critiqued as having the problems of complex curriculum, deficient coordination, poor teaching training, and inequality of financial and material resources between advantaged and less advantaged schools.¹⁶² Implementation was contingent on teachers, but cascade training (teachers training teachers) was insufficient for teachers who had been educated within the apartheid education system.¹⁶³ Teachers were responsible for creating their own curriculum based on their students, and expected outcomes, but most teachers were trained to *implement* curriculum, not to design it.¹⁶⁴ Additionally, C2005 curriculum was dependent on “resources, textbooks, and even classroom space” that were not available in poor schools serving the majority of the student population.¹⁶⁵ OBE was a “floating signifier” that meant different things to various stakeholders who infused it with “diametrically opposed qualities.”¹⁶⁶ The historical legacies of apartheid and limited human and financial capacity were indeed factors in the failure of curriculum reforms resulting in holistic equity.

The disparities between white and non-white schools (Model C and non-Model C schools) during apartheid were supposed to be equalized through the adoption and implementation of OBE/C2005. However, there were two different realities with the implementation of OBE/C2005 due to the historical legacies of unequal funding and the different training of teachers within the apartheid education system. This resulted in teachers at former Model C schools being better equipped with training and resources, while teachers at less advantaged schools struggled under the lack of training and resources.¹⁶⁷ Graeme Bloch, who was a proponent of OBE in the early stages, came to argue that OBE was a “mistake” that “created a shallow view of empowerment ... reinforced a tendency to top-down edicts, saw poor training and development for teachers, and a host of form-filling and compliance rituals.”¹⁶⁸ Graeme Bloch (2009) points out that teachers in former Model C schools who were self-assured in their “subject knowledge ... and classroom pedagogies” may have been challenged by OBE, but that its implementation would certainly not work well in schools with inferior pedagogies and resources.¹⁶⁹ This further represents how the constraints of limited human and financial capacity and the historical legacies of the apartheid education were factors in the failure of OBE/C2005 to result in holistic equity.

The local school governing boards provided for in SASA (often primarily comprised of

162 Jonathan Jansen and Nick Taylor, “Educational Change in South Africa 1994-2003: Case Studies in Large Scale Education Reform,” *The Education Reform and Management Publication Series 2*, no. 1 (2003): 38, accessed April 15, 2015, http://jet.org.za/publications/research/Jansen%20and%20Taylor_World%20Bank%20report.pdf; N. Mouton, G. P. Louw, and G. I. Strydom, “A Historical Analysis of the Post-Apartheid Dispensation Education in South Africa (1994-2011),” *International Business & Economics Research Journal* 11, no. 11 (2012): 1215, accessed April 11, 2015, <http://www.cluteinstitute.com/ojs/index.php/IBER/article/view/7369/7437>

163 Fiske and Ladd, *Elusive Equity*, 162; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), “Restructuring the System,” in *Report Reviews of National Policies for Education: South Africa*, (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2009), 80, accessed April 15, 2015, <http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=sKsxhYorWOk%3D&tabid=452&mid=1034>

164 Fiske and Ladd, *Elusive Equity*, 161.

165 OECD, “Restructuring the System,” 80.

166 Chisholm, “The State of Curriculum,” 271.

167 Mouton, Louw, and Strydom, “A Historical Analysis,” 1215.

168 Gtekriwal, “Lessons Must be Learned: OBE has Failed, Writes One of its Architects, Graeme Bloch,” *South African Education System*, September 27, 2009, accessed May 9, 2015, <https://gtekriwal.wordpress.com/2009/09/27/lessons-must-be-learned-obe-has-failed-writes-one-of-its-architects-graeme-bloch/>

169 Bloch, *The Toxic Mix*, 115.

parents) are allowed to set school fees that can lead to the exclusion of children from poor families (primarily Black) from better resourced schools. While SASA can be understood as having been formulated to provide equal treatment and equal education opportunity, students are often now economically excluded from schools instead of racially excluded.¹⁷⁰ This barrier represents a form of *de facto* economic segregation that often falls along racial lines. The averages of 2011 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (a cross-national assessment of fourth and eighth graders) scores in mathematics and science show a relationship between poverty and assessment scores, with schools with high poverty indexes having far lower achievement levels than those in superiorly resourced schools.¹⁷¹ Even though there is more equalized funding across schools as a result of SASA and NNSSF, school fees at ex-Model C schools continue to make them better resourced schools (as they were during apartheid) than those that serve the majority of Black, rural, and poor students.¹⁷²

In the context of equal education opportunity, the use of OBE/C2005 as a “uniform curriculum” was an “inequitable” approach due to teachers in schools serving the majority of Black students in disadvantaged schools not having the same set of skills and resources to implement it as did those in ex-Model C schools.¹⁷³ While the formulation of OBE helped promote equal treatment by serving as a national curriculum for all students, it failed to provide equal education opportunities due to such key factors as curriculum complexity, lack of teacher training for teachers unequally educated under apartheid, and disparity in human and infrastructure resources between schools as a legacy of apartheid. For the adoption and implementation of OBE/C2005 as policy to create equal education opportunities it would have needed to eradicate disparities in education opportunities for students across the board by addressing historical systemic inequalities instead of reinforcing opportunities for students in more advantaged schools.¹⁷⁴

Within a localized context, the existence of a complex policy subsystem, the formulation and implementation of symbolic policy, and the failure to properly evaluate the substantive and procedural constraints are all factors that explain how OBE/C2005 failed to result in holistic equity. Policymaking for equity in South Africa was also imbedded in neoliberal global education trends, as evidenced by the introduction of school fees as a market mechanism, the decentralization of education across the provinces alongside the creation of a national curriculum, and expansion of assessments. The adoption of OBE and its rushed implementation through C2005 occurred in a complex and restrictive policy subsystem that formulated education policy with symbolic value that was poorly implemented, creating a policy gap and bringing the educational system no closer to educational adequacy or holistic equity. The policy gap that exists between the goals included in the RDP, Constitution, NEPA, SASA, OBE, and C2005, and what was actually achieved in implementation, means that inequality is being reinforced through the continued provision of inequitable education—which perpetuates the social exclusion of poor and Black students from

170 Chisholm, “The State of Curriculum”; Fiske and Ladd, *Elusive Equity*.

171 Human Sciences Research Council, *Towards Equity and Excellence: Highlights from the TIMSS 2011, The South African Perspective* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2011), 9, accessed December 1, 2015, <http://www.hsrc.ac.za/uploads/pageContent/2929/TIMSSHighlights2012Dec7final.pdf>

172 Chisholm, “The State of Curriculum”; Raj Mestry and Raymond Ndhlovu, “The Implications of National Norms and Standards for Funding Policy on Equity in South African Public Schools,” *South African Journal of Education* 34, no. 3 (2014): 1-2, accessed November 8, 2015, <http://www.ajol.info/index.php/saje/article/view/107404/97285>

173 Fiske and Ladd, *Elusive Equity*, 8.

174 *Ibid.*, 7.

full political participation in the local and global economies.

The symbolic adoption of OBE indicates that even policy with symbolic value has material consequences that impact achieving holistic equity.¹⁷⁵ Instead of transforming the apartheid education system, the adoption of OBE with symbolic value as implemented through C2005 resulted in a policy gap and continued disparity in equal education opportunities. The adoption and implementation of OBE/C2005 as national curriculum policy did not lead to transformative, systemic, and material changes that help ensure holistic equity.

IV. Chapter 4: Conclusion: Holistic Equity, A Dream Deferred?

In order for the oppressed to be able to wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform. —*Paulo Freire*

The U.S., Brazil, Chile, and South Africa have all used different policy mechanisms to increase equity within neoliberal global education trends, have *de facto* forms of segregation, have not met the standard of equal education opportunity, and have failed to achieve holistic equity. Although progress has been made towards increasing equity, existing economic inequalities and policy gaps between the intended goals in formulation and those achieved in implementation for historically disadvantaged and excluded students have resulted in continued inequity. Localized policies embedded in global education trends have increased the possibilities for meeting the holistic equity standards of equal treatment and equal education opportunity, but remain unable to meet the equal education opportunity standard. There are still significant barriers to achieving holistic equity—*de facto* racial, economic, academic, and social segregation, along with structural inequalities. These barriers primarily have a negative impact on non-white and poor students. Students and families that were more advantaged before the implementation of the reforms in these nations continue to have greater educational and opportunity benefits.

A detailed examination of policymaking for equity through curriculum reform in post-apartheid South Africa has identified the key factors that contributed to the failure of OBE as implemented through C2005 to result in holistic equity. Those factors are: a complex policy subsystem, symbolic policymaking for political legitimacy within negotiated settlements, and an incomplete evaluation of the procedural and substantive constraints of historical and systemic legacies of apartheid, negotiated settlements due to the creation of a new federal type governing system, and limited human and financial capacity. The policy gap supports inequalities that are rooted in the unequal and painful legacies of apartheid. Important progress that should not be dismissed has been made in South Africa since the fall of apartheid in connection with increasing equity in education. However, education reform alone is not a panacea for equity in education, an equitable society, or holistic equity.

It would be remiss for this thesis to simply examine how policymaking for equity has resulted in some progress but has failed to result in holistic equity. Just as the failures of policymaking for equity have been examined within an international context within this thesis, so must the possible strategies for progressive movement towards holistic equity. I have drawn

175 Jansen, "Political Symbolism," 210; Chisholm, "The State of Curriculum," 271.

on the important work of prominent scholars to expand discourse and propose the need for holistic equity as a new analytical concept, and I submit that examining education reforms that have resulted in high levels of equity, or those being offered, are an additional part of achieving holistic equity.

Systemic inequalities in the form of poverty and economic inequality must be simultaneously addressed with education reform goals in the formulation of policies for equity in education, or the mechanisms selected within education systems will contribute less to achieving holistic equity. Kantor and Lowe argue, “education’s capacity to redistribute opportunity has been limited by the absence of social policies that directly address poverty and economic inequality.”¹⁷⁶ Carter and Welner argue that the achievement gap can be comprehended as a “predictable result of systemic causes—a representation of disparities in the opportunities available to children of different racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds.”¹⁷⁷ Recognizing the opportunity gap and the lack of equal educational opportunities requires that the “deficiencies in the foundational components of societies, schools, and communities that produce significant differences in educational—and ultimately socioeconomic—outcomes” be addressed in policymaking for holistic equity to be achieved.¹⁷⁸ Education is not separate from a society and cannot be expected to create holistic equity in isolation from broader policy reforms to address growing inequality within localized contexts. Addressing systemic inequalities that are tied to forms of *de facto* segregation within localized contexts must involve dialogue about the continuing legacies of apartheid, segregation, and colonialism. While this dialogue will be painful, it is necessary and worth having if it helps to end the human costs of these paradigms and to achieve holistic equity for all children.

Darling-Hammond offers five educational policy reforms that are important for addressing inequality in education:

1. increase social safety nets (e.g. health, housing, and food)
2. provide access to early education programs
3. reverse the trend of increasing segregation in schools
4. provide access to high-quality teachers and curriculum for all students
5. move away from a “factory-conception of school.”¹⁷⁹

Pursuing these reforms in a substantive manner will allow for all children to come to school better prepared to learn and establish an equitable early foundation for children from the beginnings of their educational journeys.¹⁸⁰ This will help meet the holistic equity standard of equal education opportunity so that the standard of educational adequacy can become more of a reality. These reforms will help address the impacts of broader systemic and structural inequalities on children while also improving the available learning opportunities throughout the lifetime of children coming from lower socioeconomic statuses.

While policymaking for equity should always be pursued and evaluated within localized contexts and constraints, Finland, Korea, and Singapore are examples of countries that have had greater success in policymaking for equity than the U.S., Brazil, Chile, and South Africa. They are

¹⁷⁶ Kantor and Lowe, “Educationalizing the Welfare,” 25.

¹⁷⁷ Carter and Welner, “Achievement Gaps Arise,” 9.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁷⁹ Darling-Hammond, *The Flat World*, 26.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 31-65.

all different in terms of cultures and histories, but Darling-Hammond's analysis of their education systems shows that they have used common strategies and have all made vast improvements over long periods of sustained reforms.¹⁸¹ The common strategies used include:

- a. adequate and equitable funding to help address existing structural inequalities, along with incentives for teaching in schools with the most need
- b. termination of examination systems tied to tracking systems for middle school and high school assignment, and changing curricula to emphasize learning goals on "higher-order thinking, inquiry, and innovation ... [and] technology"
- c. national programs for the recruitment of teachers and ongoing teacher development, along with complete subsidization of the training and education of teachers
- d. collaborative mentorship between new and more experienced teachers and continued professional development for teachers
- e. "professional" education ministries that are less influenced by politics as they regularly evaluate and pursue extended educational reforms.¹⁸²

Successful educational reforms and a highly equitable education system in Finland has led researchers interested in policymaking for equity to examine Finland's reforms for lessons that may benefit the pursuit of equity in education in other countries.¹⁸³ Finland has a commitment to a strong public school system in which teaching is a highly valued profession and equity is valorized.¹⁸⁴ Pasi Sahlberg presents that educational policies in Finland *include* addressing "structural elements" that contribute to students failing in school and that this has contributed to an exceptionally equitable education system.¹⁸⁵ Sahlberg also connects the success of achieving high levels of equity in educational outcomes in Finland as being partly ascribed to *not* following global education reforms that emphasize standardized testing, merit pay for teachers, and competition between students that have been adopted in other countries.¹⁸⁶ Through addressing structural and systemic inequalities and using a localized approach, Finland has made progress that remains to be a valuable learning opportunity for understanding an alternative approach to policymaking for equity. Finland's approach and success in pursuing equity is a lesson even for countries that are less homogenous and have higher levels of economic inequality and poverty.

Although Finland's reforms have been presented here in more detail, the common strategies used for educational reforms in Finland, Korea, and Singapore serve as examples of policymaking for equity that have resulted in substantive change instead of symbolic change. It may be argued that they have achieved this by moving away from or going against neoliberal global education trends by decreasing assessments, funding the training and continued development of teachers, and equalizing funding while addressing existing inequalities to benefit schools and students most in need. Still, these countries have engaged in policymaking for equity within localized contexts and the results cannot be interpreted as being perfected policy models for

181 Ibid., 192-193.

182 Ibid.

183 Carter and Welner, "Achievement Gaps Arise"; Darling-Hammond, *The Flat World*; Sahlberg, *Finnish Lessons*.

184 Sahlberg, *Finnish Lessons*.

185 Ibid., 43, 67.

186 Ibid., 66.

the U.S., Brazil, Chile, or South Africa. Rising inequality within countries, forms of *de facto* segregation in existing educational systems, legacies of racial and social hierarchies, and the complexity of education policy subsystems within all other competing policy subsystems will mean that different substantive and procedural constraints will exist within each country. Thus, these examples are presented as possibilities for helping to achieve holistic equity as opposed to an explicit call for more educational borrowing based in global trends.

A. *Education in the 21st Century*

Nel Noddings' call to examine the purposes of education in the 21st century may provide an additional resource framework for pursuing holistic equity. In contrast with using market models of competition, she argues for building cooperation and reducing the emphasis on competition within education.¹⁸⁷ She argues that education should help facilitate opportunities for students to explore their talents and interests, as opposed to following set curricula to simply meet testing goals.¹⁸⁸ Additionally, she calls for increasing the focus on the importance of communication and exploration within localized contexts embedded in critical explorations of our "universal home."¹⁸⁹ The global education trends of the last few decades were driven by the ideologies and values of policymakers and should not merely be ascribed to economic systems or globalization. As such, shifting away from the use of market-driven reforms as tools to promote equity will necessitate that policymakers with different ideologies and values become a larger part of the process of pursuing holistic equity. Further research on how the pursuit of holistic equity can be inclusive of educational opportunities driven more by care, dialogue, and responsibility in a globalized and interconnected world may benefit from using Noddings' research as a framework.

Achieving holistic equity need not be a dream deferred. Understanding what factors resulted in the failure of OBE/C2005 to result in holistic equity in South Africa as part of a broader exploration of policymaking for equity in the U.S., Brazil, and Chile provides important lessons for how policymaking for equity may be more successfully targeted in the future as part of broader systemic reforms. The common strategies used in Finland, Korea, and Singapore provide additional lessons that are crucial as economic inequality within countries grows and children are inequitably educated. Past failures do not mean that meeting the standards of equal treatment, equal education opportunity, and educational adequacy in pursuit of holistic equity should be abandoned. Rather, previous failures are a siren call to push forward and to keep the education of all children regardless of race or socioeconomic status a priority while addressing systemic inequalities. To achieve holistic equity, policymakers and other stakeholders in the futures of the most disadvantaged children need to formulate long-term, substantive, and localized policies that are regularly evaluated to ensure that the goals set in the formulation stage are achieved in the implementation stage. Across borders and cultures, policymaking for equity must truly benefit students and communities who were historically, and who are currently being excluded from the equal education opportunities that are crucial to the quality of their lives. Holistic equity is not only possible; achieving it will be part of the process that leads to equality among all children.

¹⁸⁷ Nel Noddings, *Education and Democracy in the 21st Century* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2013), 10.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 100.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

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