THE POWER OF RESISTANCE: CULTURE, IDEOLOGY AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION IN GLOBAL CONTEXTS

ADVANCES IN EDUCATION IN DIVERSE COMMUNITIES: RESEARCH, POLICY AND PRAXIS

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THE POWER OF RESISTANCE: CULTURE, IDEOLOGY AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION IN GLOBAL CONTEXTS

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

This volume, *The Power of Resistance: Culture, Ideology and Social Reproduction in Global Contexts*, is dedicated to poor communities and her children who suffer from inequality, uneven opportunity, and oppression in global contexts. We extend our hands to you in solidarity and stand beside you in the pursuit of free expression, social justice, and education to advance humankind across the globe.
Your struggles are ours.

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CONTENTS

vii

SECTION 2
STUDENTS, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES AS AGENTS OF RESISTANCE

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INTRODUCTION

This volume *The Power of Resistance: Culture, Ideology and Social Reproduction in Global Contexts* comes at a unique point in the lives of humankind. Social protests, demonstrations, and calls to redress racism, inequality, marginalization, unfairness, and underrepresentation abound on local, national, and international levels in all segments of the broader society. No part of the globe has been spared as the millennial generation focuses on the growing division between the haves and have-nots, as present generations suffer from the decisions of their forefathers and foremothers. Research (Yeakey & Shepard, 2014, 2016) has demonstrated the impact of the Great Recession, ending in 2009, and its resultant impacts on a global scale, which occasioned crises and institutional collapse on a major scale. Systemic problems went well beyond institutional crises brought on by collapsed economies and corporate excess, but exacerbated issues of inequality, racism, sexism, inadequate housing and health care, un/employment, poverty, underachievement, inadequate schooling, and crime and in/justice. The shifting nature of work, global economic competition, and technological advance now has a marked influence on jobs, income, and social mobility, in both developed and developing countries. Schooling, education, and advanced education have never played more important roles in selecting and sorting individuals for future social placement in the broader society.

It was perhaps the Occupy Movement that provided one of the first massive social protest movements across the globe in the new millennium. It has been argued that high unemployment rates and poor economic downturns worldwide, as a result of highly questionable corporate and bank irregularities, brought forth global debt crises and bankruptcies, which in turn, propelled the 2011 Occupy Wall Street Movement. Globally speaking, what has resulted is high unemployment worldwide and college educated youth with the limited employment and career prospects in competition for jobs with low wages that are unrelated to their educational background. Broader career prospects are proving to be even more daunting for millennials with the decline in average incomes that are expected to last for at least another decade (Yeakey & Shepard, 2014). While the college educated have suffered, worse still are those persons living on mainstreet. The social indices for those persons at the bottom of the economic pyramid are painfully sobering with massive increases in poverty, unemployment, hunger, homelessness, foreclosures, increased crime and

drug abuse, mental illness, two-parent family disintegration and growing class divisions.

Millennials, also known as Generation Y, are the demographic cohort following Generation X. As a generic group, the Millennial Generation is known for its marked familiarity with communications, technology, media, and digital technologies – vehicles that have been used to spread their message and galvanize social protest and resistance to unfairness and injustice. Similarly, the millennial generation has been characterized as being more liberal- and civic-minded, with a strong sense of community, both local and global (Strauss & Howe, 1997), and a shift toward work in the public service sector (Howe, Strauss, & Matson, 2000).

While Occupy Wall Street is among the largest social protest movements to have emerged in twenty-first century America, it is by no means the only one. The most recent Arab Spring in Egypt, The Black Lives Matter Movement, the Women's March following the election of United States President Donald J. Trump, campus protests against sexual assault, organized marches against the Muslim immigrant ban in the United States, the movement against homophobic laws and practices, and the ongoing protests against the proposed U.S. border wall with Mexico are a few of the many protests that have social, political, and economic reverberations across the globe. What unites these movements is the fight against inequality and authoritarianism in all of their manifestations.

Schools as purveyors of institutional and normative values are in the crosshairs of the aforementioned intersectional issues. As such, schools and the education they impart are not neutral entities, but are powerful social, political, and economic reproductive engines of society and serve as the primary vehicles for social mobility in our twenty-first century society. Because of their centrality, schools and education are a primary focus of the volume *The Power of Resistance*: *Culture, Ideology and Social Reproduction in Global Contexts*. As a result, they invite our analysis and focus as institutions to uncover structured biases, to foment change, and to reinvent policies and practices that marginalize student populations across the globe. The words of Freire (1993) could not be more relevant as he states:

> The very nature of the educational practice-its necessary directive nature, the objectives, the dreams that follow in the practice-do not allow education to be neutral as it is always political… . The question before us is to know what type of politics it is, in favor of whom and what, and against what and for whom it is realized. (p. 22)

This volume is most fortunate in providing original research from authors across the globe, including Norway, Australia, Finland, China, Iran, Malaysia, Sweden as well as research conducted among highly marginalized groups and neighborhoods in the United States. As such, readers will gain from the insights, research, and viewpoints by examining schools and schooling practices and problematics, and attempted resolutions to those problematics, from multiple voices, spaces, and places.

The Power of Resistance is divided into two major sections. Section 1 of the volume, "Institutional and Historical Factors in Inequality," aims to highlight various mechanisms of inequality from a global perspective. In order to understand the power of resistance efforts, it is important to interrogate how unequal power structures operate in different contexts. In this section, analyses from various local settings begin to paint broad strokes of how ideology, embedded institutional structures, and even mundane interpersonal interactions can contribute to the perpetuation and exacerbation of inequality. In Nicholas P. Triplett's chapter "Conceptions of Equity in an age of globalized education: A discourse analysis of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) Results" examines the ways that PISA and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) conceive of educational equity in a global context. Analysis revealed that the OECD and the PISA foreground economistic notions of educational equity, which diminishes the role of other factors (i.e., race/ethnicity, gender, immigration status, language) that mediate equity in schools. Rollert's chapter "Advancing or Inhibiting Educational Opportunity: The Power of New Teachers to Reinforce or Deconstruct Social Reproduction in Urban Schools," addresses the increase in negative perceptions of students as new teachers in the United States face challenges that are less likely to occur in non-urban schools. Findings suggest that new teachers do change their beliefs during their first year, and that these beliefs often reflect the beliefs of trusted and close colleagues within their social networks. The chapter concludes that historical context provides a lens to understand the complexity of how education systems are formed and reformed under various ideologies, and the ensuing consequences of social inequity. Afridi and Berrwin look at the evolution of Egypt's educational system under different regimes that were in power during the years of 1954 to 2011 in their chapter "Tracing Egyptian Education Policy in Changing Eras and Regimes: From 1954 to 2011." The chapter aims to show how different ideologies have influenced the educational system and the larger goals of social development in Egypt. The chapter "Accommodating and Resisting Dominant Discourses: The Reproduction of Inequality in a Chinese American Community" by Yu-Ling Hsiao and Lucy E. Bailey draws from a three-year ethnographic study focused on the educational and community interactions among working and middle-class ethnic Chinese immigrants in a Midwestern town in the United States. Findings suggest the complexity of Chinese immigrants' accommodation of and resistance to normative ideologies and local structures that cumulatively contribute to social reproduction on the basis of class. Duncan-Shippy, Murphy, and Purdy's analysis in the chapter "An Examination of Mainstream Media as an Educating Institution: The Black Lives Matter Movement and Contemporary Social Protest" focuses on one of the most recent contentious social protest movements in America, dealing with the shooting of an unarmed African American youth. Their chapter examines the framing of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) Movement in

mainstream media. Notaro's chapter "The Stonewall Riots: Moving from the Margins to the Mainstream" examines the systemic discrimination of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities, and their growing fight for equal rights and empowerment. Notaro captures the Stonewall Inn riots as the foundation for a legacy in the civil and political rights of the LGBT community in the United States. Rounding out the first section of the volume, Afridi's chapter "PPPs in Global Education Policy: Looking at the case of the Egyptian Education Initiative" explores the rise of public-private partnerships (PPPs) through theories of neoliberal globalization, by analyzing the practices of international organizations and transnational corporations in education sector reforms.

Section 2 of *The Power of Resistance* narrows the focus of social resistance and protests to students, youth, and families as agents of resistance. Section 2 acknowledges, honors, and analyzes how individuals and communities — all centered in schools and educational spaces — make their mark against the oppressive structures of inequality. How do students, youth, and families effectively negotiate these structures to produce social change? Each chapter in this section examines a small piece of that question. Mary Yee's chapter "Resisting the Hegemony of School Bureaucracy and Organizing for Safe Schools: First Generation Immigrant Asian Students Develop Activist Identities and Literacies" details the lived experiences of first-generation Asian immigrant student activists, who waged a powerful struggle against school violence and bullying in a large urban high school. The chapter "Standing in Solidarity with Black Girls to Dismantle the School-to-Prison Pipeline," by Cumi, Washington, and Daneshzadeh, studies the proliferation of zero-tolerance behavioral policies and the deleterious effects they have on students' functioning. Skårås' chapter "Educational and Social Challenges in the Reintegration Process of Former Child Soldiers" explores how marginalized youth, specifically former child soldiers in South Sudan, struggle to access education that is crucial in the process of reintegration to the broader society. Using data from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study, Lee, Dean, and Kim examine the structural relationships between negative school social relations, school safety, educational expectation and academic achievement of Latino immigrant students in the chapter "Academic Achievement of Latino Immigrant Adolescents: The Effects of Negative School Social Relationships, School Safety, and Educational Expectation." Yin's chapter "Youth in Modern Egypt: Toward an understanding of Civic Engagement and underlying social dynamics" provides a study of the broader ecology and political economy associated with Egyptian youth's development during the transition from the twentieth to the twenty-first century. Issues related to education, poverty, health, opportunity structures and challenges associated with social mobility are discussed. In her chapter, "Resources for Resistance: The Role of Dominant and Non-Dominant Forms of Cultural Capital in Resistance among Young Women of Color in a Predominantly White Public High School," Bueker explores the

ways in which Black and Latino women who graduated from a predominantly White, elite public high school in the northeastern United States engaged in acts of resistance, while students, both within the classroom and within the larger community. Dorio's chapter "Pedagogy of Transition: Understanding University Student Movements in Post-2011 Egypt" conceptualizes social movement theory and applies it to three transitional political periods in modern Egypt, followed with a discussion of the implications of student activism on future university reform. The chapter written by Hedayati, Kuusisto, Gholami, and Tirri and titled "Gender-Specific Religious Moral Dilemmas in Iranian Schools" discusses how, in Iranian schools, the power of resistance is evident in students' and teachers' moral dilemmas. The study reveals the impact of Islamic values in school life and how issues related to gender and religion are interconnected in Iranian schools and society. In their chapter "The Role of Everyday Spaces of Learning for Refugee youth," Wilkinson and Lloyd-Zantiotis highlight the fact that everyday spaces can act as rich sites of informal learning, which young refugees can draw upon to advance their life chances, employability, and social inclusion. The chapter "Chicago African American Mothers' Power of Resistance: Designing Spaces of Hope in Global Contexts," by Mendenhall, Linear, McKee, Lamers, and Mouawad, centers the lived experiences of African American women living in Englewood, a neighborhood with high levels of violence in Chicago. This study illustrates Black mothers' efforts to resist ideologies and stereotypes about their mothering, beauty and socioeconomic status, among other factors. The chapter ends by discussing the implications of the findings in relation to two programs developed to help mothers work toward neighborhood change, collaboratives which seek to remedy the paradoxical existence of spaces of hope and spaces of despair through innovative approaches. Zion, York, and Stickney's chapter "Bound Together: White Teachers/Latinx Students Revising Resistance" examines data from a student voice research project, framed by the theory of sociopolitical development, implicating both teachers and students in the process of resistance and liberation. The final chapter provides an epilogue examining both macro and micro attempts of humankind to resist and challenge those factors which oppress the human spirit and endanger human fulfillment in global societies.

As resistance to growing inequality, marginalization, and increasingly limited opportunity structures becomes more pronounced across the globe, schools and their neighborhood ecologies have become a forum for protest, from preschool through tertiary education, among youth and adults alike. The editors do not pretend to address or provide solutions to all of the serious issues confronting marginalized groups throughout the globe, using education as our lens to view these confounding issues. *The Power of Resistance: Culture, Ideology and Social Reproduction in Global Contexts* attempts to further the dialogue and address the myriad of challenges facing those suffering from marked

inequality and lack of opportunity. We welcome your voices and contributions in this struggle.

Rowhea M. Elmesky
Carol Camp Yeakey
Olivia Marcucci
Editors

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SECTION 1
INSTITUTIONAL AND HISTORICAL FACTORS IN INEQUALITY

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CONCEPTIONS OF EQUITY IN AN AGE OF GLOBALIZED EDUCATION: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF HOW THE PROGRAM FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSESSMENT (PISA) DISCUSSES EQUITY

Nicholas P. Triplett

ABSTRACT

Over the past two decades, scholars have noted an increasing global convergence in the policy and practice of education that predominantly contains Western ideals of mass schooling serving as a model for national school systems (Bieber & Martens, 2011; Goldthorpe, 1997; Spring, 2008). A number of transnational organizations contribute disproportionately to global educational discourse, particularly the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) through its international comparative performance measure, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). This study conducted a critical discourse analysis of the OECD document PISA 2012 Results: Excellence through Equity *(OECD, 2013) to examine the ways that PISA and the OECD conceive of educational equity in a global context. Given the growing convergence of global educational policy, the way that transnational educational organizations address equity has crucial implications for the ways that the world intervenes*

in schooling to promote or diminish equitable outcomes. Analysis revealed that the OECD and the PISA foreground economistic notions of educational equity, which diminishes the role of other factors (i.e., race/ethnicity, gender, immigration status, language) that mediate equity in schools. Findings and implications are discussed.

Keywords: Equity; education; discourse analysis; PISA; globalization

Education is an increasingly global phenomenon, and is nested within larger economic, political, and social forces associated with the process of globalization. The economist Theodore Levitt is credited with coining the term *globalization* in 1985 to describe worldwide changes in global economics affecting production, consumption, and investment (Stromquist, 2002). Globalization quickly moved beyond the realm of economics, often becoming a fixture of political, cultural, technological, and social analyses that describe ongoing processes affecting large segments of the world and its inhabitants (Spring, 2008). It should be noted that many of the processes that define globalization were underway on a smaller scale long before the 20th century (Frank, 1998; Gills & Thompson, 2006). In contemporary usage, globalization more broadly refers to the compression of the world and the intensification of worldwide social relations wherein more people across larger distances are becoming connected in more and different ways (Giddens, 1991; Lechner & Boli, 2014; Robertson, 1992).

Given that schooling is perhaps the "most commonly found institution and most commonly shared experience of all in the contemporary world" (Dale & Robertson, 2003, p. 7), it is not surprising that globalization was also quick to enter the discourse in education (Spring, 2008). In 2003, the editors of the new journal *Globalisation, Societies and Education* defined the field of globalization and education as the study of "an intertwined set of global processes affecting education, such as worldwide discourses on human capital, economic development, and multiculturalism; intergovernmental organizations; information and communication technology; nongovernmental organizations; and multinational corporations" (Dale & Robertson, 2003, p. 7).

Over the past two decades, scholars have noted an increasing global convergence in the policy and practice of education that predominantly contains Western ideals of mass schooling serving as a model for national school systems (Baker & LeTendre, 2005; Lechner & Boli, 2005; Meyer, Kamens, & Benavot, 1992). Scholars have used the dual phenomena of internationalization (Furlong, 2005; Goldthorpe, 1997) and convergence (Holzinger & Knill, 2008)

to characterize the ways in which transnational organizations draw lessons from each other, engage in cooperative problem-solving, and practice policy emulation and promotion within a global educational context (Bieber & Martens, 2011). Spring (2008) notes how most of the world's governments generally discuss similar educational agendas centered on "investing in education to develop human capital or better workers and to promote economic growth," which has produced a convergence of educational discourses emphasizing "human capital, lifelong learning, the improvement of job skills, and education as a means of economic competitive advantage" (p. 332).

This convergence belies a growing overlap and an increasing influence of economic organizations and transnational corporations over policy and practice in education. Government and business groups regularly invoke the need for of schools to meet the needs of the global economy (Business Roundtable, 2005; Great Britain Department for Education & Skills, 2004; Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development, 2013). Bill Gates, the American founder of the multinational software corporation Microsoft, sums up the sentiment: "In the international competition to have the biggest and best supply of knowledge workers, America is falling behind. That is the heart of the economic argument for better high schools" (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2005).

A number of transnational organizations contribute disproportionately to global educational discourse and practice through both the internationalization of schooling policies and the influence of economic aid contingent upon educational reforms (Bieber & Martens, 2011; Odora-Hoppers, 2014). The major institutions in this arena include the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, the United Nations, UNESCO and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (Spring, 2008). In particular, the use of international assessments such as Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) as a normative benchmarking tool have contributed to global uniformity of national curricula and production and reproduction of global educational policy (Bieber & Martens, 2011; Grek, 2009; Rizvi & Lingard, 2006).

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has emerged as one of the most influential organizations in global education (Martens, 2007; Rinne, Hokka, & Kallo, 2004), primarily through the PISA as an international performance measure, and more broadly in terms of its influence on public perception (Bieber & Martens, 2011; Rogers, 2014). The PISA measures the performance of high school graduates in member nations who have completed compulsory schooling and are poised to enter the labor market (Lingard & Grek, 2007). A report authored by the OECD entitled *PISA 2012 Results: Excellence through Equity* opened by stating: "Equipping citizens with the skills necessary to achieve their full potential, participate in an increasingly interconnected global economy, and ultimately convert better jobs into better lives is a central preoccupation of policy makers around the world"

(OECD, 2013, p. 3). As the title of the report makes plain, the OECD does not merely conduct and report upon international assessments, it uses the results of the PISA to actively engaged in the discourse around *equity* in global education. The OECD's emphasis on the relationship between educational equity and the economic future of students and nations in a world of increasingly mobile capital has been echoed in similar arguments by notable American scholar Linda Darling-Hammond (2010).

However, the meaning of educational equity in a global context is contested. In contrast to the view that education is primarily a means of attaining economic competitive advantage, many stakeholders emphasize how global policy can "support educational alternatives that will preserve local languages and cultures, ensure progressive educational practices that will protect the poor against the rich, and protect the environment and human rights" (Spring, 2008, p. 336). Given the aforementioned convergence of global educational policy, how equity is conceived in global educational discourse has crucial implications for the ways that the world's nations intervene in schooling to promote or diminish equitable outcomes.

This chapter reports on a discourse analysis of the document titled *PISA 2012 Results: Excellence through Equity* (OECD, 2013). It asks a rather straightforward research question: *What conceptions of educational equity are forwarded by the OECD in the publication: PISA 2012 Results: Excellence through Equity*? I begin by providing background on the OECD and the PISA before reviewing the literature on classical and contemporary thought around educational equity. Next, I address discourse theory (Foucault, 1970, 1989), the chapter's theoretical framework. I then describe the chapter's methodology, critical discourse analysis (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough; 1995) before turning to findings and interpretations related to the research question. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings and implications.

BACKGROUND TO THE OECD AND THE PISA

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is an international economic organization of 34 member countries founded in 1961. The OECD grew out of the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC), which administered the Marshall Plan of American financial aid and economic programs for the reconstruction of Europe after World War II. While the OEEC was exclusively a European association, the OECD opened membership to non-European nations upon founding. While the current membership of the OECD includes a small number of nations from East Asia, South America, and the Middle East, the organization remains composed predominantly of European nations (Table A1). The OECD's mission is to "promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of

people around the world" (About the OECD, n.d., para. 1). The group's primary functions are data gathering, policy formulation and implementation, and policy assessment. While the OECD began as an economic agency, it is involved in "a wide range of things, from agriculture and tax to the safety of chemicals" (About the OECD, n.d., para. 2). The OECD conducts the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), "a triennial international survey which aims to evaluate education systems worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students" (About PISA, n.d., para. 1). PISA measures students' performance on mathematics, science, and reading. The 2012 PISA was conducted in 65 countries (Table A1). The assessment is created in English and French languages, and translated into the various languages of participating populations (42 languages in 2012).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Classical Conceptions of Equity in Education

While economic, social, and political arrangements vary widely across the world's developed countries, all have instituted some form of mass schooling to give the public access to education (Hutmacher, Cochrane, & Bottani, 2001). The use of the term "developed" is noteworthy here, because while a full treatment is beyond the scope of this manuscript, it should be noted that in many parts of the "developing" world access even to primary education has not been thoroughly achieved (Global Campaign for Education, 2010). However, neither a lack of access in the world's poorest countries nor universal establishment in the developed world has been sufficient to produce equitable outcomes in a sustainable manner amongst significant numbers of students (Hutmacher, et al., 2001).

Equity has been defined in education (and in other fields) in various ways through time. While current conceptions of equity eschew the anachronistic (and empirically unfounded) belief in biological factors as a basis for differential outcomes in schooling, scholars from various theoretical perspectives have remained skeptical toward the prospect of educational equity. Reproduction theories, which position schooling as an important contributor to the maintenance (reproduction) of existing social arrangements, often view equity as unattainable in the absence of global social revolution (Benadusi, 2002; Bourdieu, 1996; Bowles & Gintis, 1976). Others maintain that equity is reachable only at the expense of other more important ethical values associated with individualism and choice (Boudon, 1976). While there remains no universal consensus regarding the desirability or plausibility of attaining equity, the most diffused perspective within the sociology of education holds that barriers to equity are primarily social in nature and can be addressed through social change (Benadusi, 2002).

Here, the equity principle emphasizes the independence of educational outcomes from student's social background (class, race, gender, community, etc.) (Bloom, 1979; Perry, 2009). Some ascribing to this principle still allow for differences in educational outcomes based on notions of merit or natural ability (Rawls, 1971, 1993), while others hold firmly to the total independence of scholastic output and background variables. Benadusi (2002) proposes a middle ground, wherein "genetic factors and those related to individual discretionary choices are held to exercise an effect only on inequalities within, not among, groups … (a)s only the last ones are considered unfair."

The Current Discourse on Equity in Education

Up to this point, this review of literature has focused on what might be termed "classical" conceptions of equity in education and society. While these theories are critical to an understanding of the equity discourse, readers might have noted that much of the above literature is not new. The rise of globalization and global education over the past two decades offers an explanation for the dearth of current theoretical and scholarly works on educational equity. There has been a perceptible shift in the equity discourse toward transnational educational institutions (such as the OECD) that favor conceptions of equity that attempt to address economic, social, and political implications of globalization (Hutmacher et al., 2001; Perry, 2009; Spring, 2008; Wood, Levinson, Postlethwaite, & Black, 2011).

Google and Wikipedia provide further evidence of this shift. While not scholarly in the traditional sense, these organizations are nonetheless in keeping with the zeitgeist of globalization in terms of the speed, diffusion, and availability of knowledge and information. A Wikipedia search for the term "educational equity" results in an article that relies heavily on OECD publications in its discussion of the topic. The article also uses infographics published by the OECD. The top three results from a Google search of the term "equity in education" are (1) an OECD policy brief on equity, (2) the Wikipedia article mentioned above, and (3) the website of Edutopia, a California-based nonprofit featuring articles on topics like global education and global competence.

The OECD (2013), along with international organizations such as the World Bank (2000), UNESCO (2007), and the World Trade Organization (Robertson, 2006) are at the forefront of the global discourse around equity in education. These organizations share a common definition of equity that has much in common with the classic scholarly works mentioned above. They forward a definition based on two conditions: (1) "fairness" implies the absence of a statistical correlation between schooling outcome and students social background, and (2) "inclusion" refers to a set of comprehensive standards that apply to all students (OECD, 2008, p. 2). Recent literature on equity, international

assessment, and educational policy contains a similar construction (Perry, 2009; Spring, 2008; Wood et al., 2011). This conception of equity involves the reduction of disparities between the most and the least educated while simultaneously raising average competence levels (Hutmacher, et al., 2001). As Hutmacher et al. (2001) continue, this twin goal "is becoming a major goal of realistic and effective education policy for the future" (p. 14).

The growing influence of OECD and other transnational organizations is also evident in current policies and practices in global education (Spring, 2008). Global educational discourses related to the knowledge economy and human capital education are reflected in the decisions of national and transnational policy makers (Grubb & Lazerson; 2006; Guile, 2006; Spring, 2006). For example, the European Council's Lisbon Declaration urged member nations "to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" (Directorate-General for Education & Culture, 2002, p. 7). Discursive trends also provide context for understanding the growing convergence in global curriculum, instructional methods, and assessment (Bieber & Martens, 2011). In the realm of higher education, Weiler (2001) has identified a growing global system in which a transnational system of power works to legitimate particular forms of political and economic knowledge through the efforts of global organizations, such as publishing corporations, research organizations, education institutions, professional organizations, and testing regimes. Rizvi and Lingard (2006) note that such transnational institutions have largely constituted globalization in a "performative way" (p. 259) that applies marketization, privatization, and strong systems of accountability to the whole globe. In addition, discourse on education and globalization positions English as the language of global commerce, which has led to the near universal inclusion of English language in national curricula (Spring, 2008; Tollefson & Tsui, 2004). This has raised concerns about the loss of indigenous language and culture (Tsui & Tollefson, 2007), and the effect of externally applied, non-native language on metrics of student achievement (Maiga, 2005).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Discourse Theory

Discourse theory (Foucault, 1970, 1989; Howarth, 2000; Potter, 2005; Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001) is generally concerned with human expression, particularly in the form of language. It seeks to clarify the relationship between how the things people say and do affect society, and how social discourse in turn influences people (Schneider, 2013). Here, discourse is understood to encompass "anything

written or said or communicated using signs" (Fillingham, 1993, p. 100), as well as "talk and texts as parts of social practice" (Potter, 1996, p. 105).

Discourse is not limited to individual social actors (people, institutions, etc.) or individual texts. Rather, discourse implies a reciprocal and iterative exchange composed of communications, reactions to communications, and the ways that communication affect social knowledge and action. As Schneider (2013) has noted, part of the functioning of discourse involves a process whereby the "things people say or write draw from a pool of generally accepted knowledge in a society, while at the same time feeding back into society to shape or reinforce such knowledge" (p. 1). Likewise, Haberman (2000) maintained, "language is not an innocent reflection of how we think. The terms we use control our perceptions, shape our understanding, and lead us to particular proposals for improvement" (p. 203). Therefore, when discourse flows to and from institutional actors (such as OECD and PISA), the communications (i.e., texts, documents, publications) as well as the social relations (policy positions, recommendations, goals) accompanying those communications come to constitute the institution's contribution to the broader discourse.

Discourse theory recognizes that certain social actors may be in a particularly strong position to define "knowledge" and "truth," while others may be marginalized or excluded from the discussion (Fillingham, 2005; Foucault, 1970, 1989). As a result, what is deemed to constitute knowledge and truth changes over time, depending on the ideas that members of a society exchange, and how specific people or groups influence flows of knowledge (Schneider, 2013). Certain people and social groups create and formulate ideas about our world, which over time can become unquestioned truths and start to seem normal (Foucault, 1970, 1989; Potter, 2005). Therefore, discourse theory is naturally concerned with questions of power, institutional hierarchies, domination, and resistance to "regimes of truth" (Potter, 2005, p. 86).

Discourse Analysis

This study draws on two threads within discourse theory. The first is critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 1995; Jäger, 2004; Link, 2013). CDA analyzes language as a form of social practice wherein linguistic expression and social action come to co-constitute one another as power relations in society are established and reinforced through discourse (Fairclough, 1995). Language interacts with social action through ideology, which is viewed as a context for historical power struggles in society (Gee, 2015; Rogers, 2011; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Here, discourse produces social coercion based on what is considered normal (Link, 2013). Conceptions of normality are created and reinforced through communication and social interaction, and inform the policies and practices of individuals and

institutions, such as legal or educational systems (Foucault, 1970, 1989). Given CDA's emphasis on power analysis, scholars in this tradition examine ways to emancipate people by revealing structural ideologies that reinforce socioeconomic class affiliations (Fairclough, 1995; Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). This study utilizes a CDA framework developed by Fairclough (1995, 2001) that includes (1) critical analysis of text, (2) analysis of the process(es) of text production, distribution, and consumption, and (3) analysis of discourse as a social practice. In the current study, CDA provides a framework for conducting critical linguistic analysis (text coding, thematic analysis, and interpretation.) and for relating discourse to questions of power, economics, and equity in globalized education.

This study also draws on critical realism (Bhasker, 1975, 1993), which argues that language and expression operate in a physical reality that "talks back" through constantly evolving processes. These processes constitute a social reality that are represented through and can be made accessible by the examination of discourse (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Sperber, 1996). The logic of critical realism often relies on Marxist theories of discourse and ideology, which recognize that the structures of social reality are in a state of constant fluctuation and may be very different from surface appearance (Bhaskar & Callinicos, 2007; Callinicos, 2006) Therefore, critical realists seek to identify the mechanisms (such as discourse) that produce social reality and to provide explanations through the examination of hidden generative structures (Lawson, 1994). Critical realism also foregrounds human agency because the individuals operating within social structures are capable of reflecting upon, resisting and changing the knowledge, discourse and actions that produce social reality. In the present study, critical realism provides a framework for examining how the OECD and PISA represent part of the generative structure of discourse on equity in global education. Further, it frames how the equity conceptions of dominant educational institutions (i.e., OECD and PISA) are understood to constitute a site for agency, resistance, and change within the context of growing convergence in global education systems.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses critical discourse analysis (CDA) to address the research question: *What conceptions of educational equity are forwarded by the OECD in the publication: PISA 2012 Results: Excellence through Equity*? CDA does not necessarily constitute a research methodology per se. Since its formal inception (Fairclough, 1995), scholars have used a number of methodological variations from a number of disciplines within the humanities and social sciences to systematically relate texts to extant and emerging social, political, economic, and cultural structures (Chilton, 2004; Jäger, 2004; Mayring, 2002; McMullen, 2011).

The specific research design used in this study draws on a number of previous CDA studies as outlined in the "Data Analysis" section.

Document Context

This study analyzes the document *PISA 2012 Results: Excellence through Equity, Giving Every Student the Chance to Succeed, Volume II* (OECD, 2013), a 334-page document. The first 128 pages constitute the primary narrative on equity while the remainder is made up of a series of annexes detailing how data was collected and analyzed along with a large number of tables and figures that provide the results of statistical analysis. The core narrative (first 128 pages) is divided into five chapters on (1) the document's definition and measurement of equity, (2) outcomes based on socioeconomic status, (3) the influence of "diversity" (p. 63; i.e., students' family structure, parent job status, school location, immigration status), (4) the influence of differences in opportunity to learn and access to resources, and (5) policy implications for educational equity.

PISA 2012 Results: Excellence through Equity, Giving Every Student the Chance to Succeed, Volume II was chosen for this analysis because (a) it is published by a highly influential global educational institution (OECD), (b) it is based on an international comparative assessment (PISA), and (c) it directly addresses equity in education. Similar international assessments programs exist, such as Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). While all of these organizations also contribute to the discourse on global education, the PISA is the only international normative assessment upon which substantial reports specifically addressing educational equity have been published. The OECD has also published a large number of reports on individual countries that participated in the PISA. The country-specific reports also include equity analysis, but this study focuses on how institutional actors practice discourse in a *global* context. An examination of the comparative international document, rather than country-specific documents, allowed for an analysis of how the OECD related its measurements in the PISA to equity conceptions and the resultant implications for global educational policy and practice.

Data Analysis Process

Following document selection, formal analysis commenced with a first reading of the document in a "fairly undirected fashion" (McMullen, 2011, p. 209). My approach here was similar to what Price (2002) has termed *engagement without estrangement*, referring to an approach where one digests the text, accepting the reading in an unquestioning manner, regardless of

one's own position. While undirected, this first reading had a number of analytical goals. First, it aimed to come to grips with what the document intended to communicate about equity in education. Simply put, it was important to digest what the document had to say on its own terms. As with any close reading, key terms and concepts (i.e., equity, productivity, growth, socioeconomic status) were examined, as were areas of emphasis, and directly stated definitions and purposes.

I waited several days before completing a second, more analytical reading based on the study's theoretical framework and research question. During this reading I began to pull out sentences or groups of sentences that I deemed particularly relevant to the study's goals. For instance, I noted the places where the document explicitly defined equity, such as the first line of the document's Executive Summary:

> PISA defines equity in education as providing all students, regardless of gender, family background or socio-economic status, with opportunities to benefit from education.

I entered these phrases into a database. Some of the phrases were entered with accompanying descriptions or tentative interpretive notes (Melia & Charmas, 2006; Merriam, 1997) that consisted primarily of paraphrases of the text, potential search terms (i.e., gender, family background, immigration), and interpretations of passages deemed to provide fundamental arguments in the document. For example, I noted the following phrase from the document's Forward:

> … investing in structural reforms to boost productivity, such as education and skills development, is key to future growth.

I attached the terms "economic productivity" and "economic growth" to this fragment, along with the phrase "education as a means of economic growth productivity." In addition, I included a memo indicating that a search for the term "structural reforms" may provide some insight into what kinds of social, political, and economic conditions the document might consider to be mediators of equity in education.

I also read the text against my interpretations of how previous literature viewed the OECD and the PISA, and their position within the discourse on global education. Here, I considering questions like: *Did this text belie the OECD's economic orientation? Did this text position the PISA as an authoritative voice in the discourse on international assessment?* For instance, I recorded the phrases (a) "an accurate indicator," (b) "an powerful re-tuning tool," and (c) "what PISA claims to be" in reference to the sentence:

> PISA is not only an accurate indicator of students' abilities to participate fully in society after compulsory school, but also a powerful tool that countries and economies can use to fine-tune their education policies.

At the conclusion of the second reading, I had identified around 150 passages with various accompanying notes. These provided direction and raw material for further analysis.

The second reading was followed by a more directed, iterative data coding process, wherein paragraphs and sentences were refined into concise descriptive codes, or discourse fragments (Hutmacher et al., 2001). Fragments were analyzed in relation to others, and grouped into thematic categories. For example, I attached codes referencing the ways that the document positioned the relationship between economics and education to the following passages:

(a) … highly skilled adults are twice as likely to be employed and almost three times more likely to earn an above-median salary … (Code: skills and future salary)

(b) … modern economies reward individuals not for what they know, but for what they can do with what they know. (Code: knowing in "modern" economies)

(c) Today's education is tomorrow's economy. (Code: education is the economy?)

These and other similar codes would later coalesce into a discourse strand related to education and the economy (more on this below).

During the formal data coding process, I also searched the document for specific terms (i.e., equity, gender, ethnic/ethnicity, race, economic, family background) in an effort to achieve the most representative collection of fragments on a topic. By collecting all the instances of a term or phrase, I could determine what topics received the most attention, and examine the relationship(s) between other key concepts, the surrounding text and the hierarchy of structural features of the document (i.e., headers, bolded titles, chapter divisions). For example, the term "ethnic/ethnicity" appears six times in the document's primary narrative on equity (the first 128 pages), in chapters 2, 3 and 5, but not in the Executive Summary or in chapter 2 entitled: "Equity in Outcomes." The term "socio-economic" is prominent throughout the document, with 17 instances in the Executive Summary and over 130 instances in chapter 2.

The collection, coding, and organization of discourse fragments allowed for an examination of how groups of fragments might sketch the broad outlines of larger discourse strands and themes (Hutmacher et al., 2001). To continue the previous example, by identifying and analyzing the context and content of the six appearances of "ethnic/ethnicity," I could begin to interpret the document's disposition toward ethnicity, and the relationship of ethnicity to the PISA assessment results and other factors that were positioned as relevant to educational equity (i.e., socioeconomic status, gender, family background). The discourse strands were further analyzed in light of my research memos and in relation to the research question of the study. The identification and comparison of these larger discourse strands allowed for interpretations of the major discursive themes of the text. Mayring (2002) refers to this process as "evolutionary coding" (p. 120), wherein analysis evolves from a set of discourse fragments and strands into a set of claims and interpretations based on the data in

the text (McMullen, 2011). In the current analysis, the discourse theme labeled
"The Meaning, Production and Implications of Equity" (see Theme 1 under the
"Findings and Interpretations" section) emerged from the analysis of discourse
strands labeled (a) education and the economy, (b) globalization, (c) equity
defined, and (d) assessment results interpreted, each of which was based on a series
of discourse fragments. This theme emerged as I tried to answer questions such as:

- How does the document explicitly define equity? Are there implicit dimensions to the document's definition?
- What kinds of factors facilitate/constrain equity in the document?
- According to the document, what kind of things can equity enable for students? For countries?
- According to the document, why should we pursue equity in education?

Other discourse themes were produced in the same manner.

It is important here to note the interpretive nature of the themes that result
from discourse analysis. While the end result, interpretive discourse themes, are
empirically grounded in the text, they represent the interplay of the document
data, the researcher's analytical process, "temporal, cultural, and structural con-
texts" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 524) inherent in text, historical and social context of this
particular document, and the document's relationship to an ongoing discourse
around equity in education. It remains up to the researcher to substantiate inter-
pretations by referencing specific features and functions of the text. Such is the
aim of the following section, which focuses on two discourse themes. I then turn
to a discussion of the interpretations as they relate to past research, the operating
theoretical framework, and research the question of the study (McMullen, 2011).

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

This section presents two discourse themes that emerged from analysis of *PISA
2012 Results: Excellence through Equity, Giving Every Student the Chance to
Succeed, Volume II* (OECD, 2013): (1) The Meaning, Production and Implications
of Equity and (2) Socio-economic Status as the Primary Mediator of Equity.

Discourse Theme 1: The Meaning, Production and Implications of Equity

As noted above, this theme emerged from the analysis of discourse strands
labeled (a) education and the economy, (b) globalization, (c) equity defined,
and (d) assessment results interpreted. During the process, I sought answers to
the following kinds of questions:

- How does the document explicitly define equity? Are there implicit dimensions to the document's definition?
- What kinds of factors facilitate/constrain equity in the document?

- According to the document, what kind of things can equity enable for students? For countries?
- According to the document, why should we pursue equity in education?

1(a). Equity-Defining Statements

The text explicitly speaks to the meaning of equity in five passages. These appear exclusively in the introductory and transitional sections of the text (i.e., the Forward, section and chapter introductions) and in the first chapter, "Defining and Measuring Equity in Education." While the bulk of the analysis document is a presentation and of statistical outcomes with attendant narrative explanation, the introductory and transitional portions of the document are used to frame the statistics and analysis that follow. These sections were interpreted to provide (as is often the case in research reports) a conceptual framework for subsequent sections of the document. As such, the introductory and transitional portions were taken to offer an indication of particularly salient ideas in the document.

The document contains two instances of the following statement:

> PISA defines equity in education as providing all students, regardless of gender, family background or socio-economic status, with similar opportunities to benefit from education.

The phrasing "*PISA defines equity in education as …*" indicates the document's intention to explicitly define equity. The second instance of this definition is supported by an example:

> For example, the stronger the impact of a student's socio-economic status on his or her performance, the less equitable the school system.

This definition positions three factors, gender, family background, and socio-economic status (SES) as mediators of equity. The choice of (SES) as an exemplar can be interpreted to denote a particular emphasis on this mediator, a conclusion that is supported by subsequent analysis.

The document introduces additional mediators of equity (student immigration status, school urbanicity) in the following two excerpts:

> (a) Performance differences between socio-economically advantaged and disadvantaged students, immigrant and non-immigrant students, or between those attending rural and urban schools indicate the degree to which an education system is equitable.

> (b) … students' socio-economic status or the fact that they have an immigrant background has little or no impact on their performance, and that all students, regardless of their background, are offered access to quality educational resources and opportunities to learn.

SES appears in all four statements discussed thus far, background/family background in three, gender and immigration in two, and school urbanicity in one. This further supports the interpretations that the relationship between SES and educational equity receives the most attention in the document.

The final excerpt on the meaning of equity states: ... *equity does not imply that everyone should have the same results*. This statement is something of an outlier; it is not an affirmative defining statement and makes no references to mediators of equity. However, it does make clear that there are other possible mediators of equity that can produce differential outcomes, though what those may be remains unstated. It is plausible that this statement is making reference to conceptions of equity that allows for differences in educational outcomes based on notions of merit or natural ability (Rawls, 1971, 1993).

1(b). The Rewards of Education, and the Rewards of Equity

The document contains numerous ($n = 12$) statements that discuss the ways education affects the economy. *Today's education is tomorrow's economy(.)* is a representative example because it directly equates the well-being of education with that of the future economy. Other passages link the skills acquired through education with various aspects of students' economic prospects, including future employment, productivity levels, salary and wages, and the ability to fully participate in the global economy. For instance, the opening sentences of the document states:

> Equipping citizens with the skills necessary to achieve their full potential, participate in an increasingly interconnected global economy, and ultimately convert better jobs into better lives is a central preoccupation of policy makers around the world. Results from the OECD's recent Survey of Adult Skills show that highly skilled adults are twice as likely to be employed and almost three times more likely to earn an above-median salary than poorly skilled adults.

Education is also positioned as an arbiter of economic outcomes on the national level. In particular, the improvement of educational outcomes is presented as a means of protecting nations from economic crisis while enhancing economic growth productivity.

> (a) The ongoing economic crisis has only increased the urgency of investing in the acquisition and development of citizens' skills — both through the education system and in the workplace.

> (b) At a time when public budgets are tight and there is little room for further monetary and fiscal stimulus, investing in structural reforms to boost productivity, such as education and skills development, is key to future growth.

Further, success in a global economy demands that nations measure up against other countries deemed to have the most effective educational systems.

> In a global economy, success is no longer measured against national standards alone, but against the best-performing and most rapidly improving education systems.

Amidst this predominantly economic discourse, the document contains a single passage on the social and political implications of educational reforms:

> Highly skilled people are also more likely to volunteer, see themselves as actors rather than as objects of political processes, and are more likely to trust others.

This minimal treatment of social and political concerns highlights the econo-mistic nature of the document's conception of the relationship between educa-tion, equity, and the well-being of citizens.

By outlining the kinds of things that are enabled or constrained by educa-tion, the collected passages in this discourse strand constitute the document's implicit justification for the pursuit of educational equity. I use the phrasing "implicit justification" because the document stops short of any explicit linkage of educational equity and improved economic outcomes. Despite the docu-ment's emphasis on the relationship between educational and economic out-comes, there is a notable absence of statements equating higher levels of equity with improved economic conditions. Stated differently, this discourse theme suggests that the document is more concerned with equating education and less concerned with equating educational equity with economic benefits. Indeed, a casual reading of the document's Executive summary might lead readers to wonder why so much of the narrative is about economics, rather than equity. This is striking given that equity is positioned as the core subject of the docu-ment. While it seems tenable to presume that the document's authors are (at least implicitly) arguing that equity is a positive for education and the economy, their position remains unclear based on the discursive treatment of these topics in the text.

Discourse Theme 2: Socio-Economic Status as the Primary Mediator of Outcomes and Equity

This theme further explores the factors and variables that are presented as mediators of equity in *PISA 2012 Results: Excellence through Equity, Giving Every Student the Chance to Succeed, Volume II* (OECD, 2013). As previously noted, the document discusses several mediators that might either promote or constrain the degree of educational equity present in schools or national school systems. This theme draws on discourse strands related to those mediators, including SES, gender, immigration sta-tus, and ethnicity. It emerged as I sought answers to the following kinds of questions:

- According to the document, what kinds of student traits should be the target of equity producing measures? County traits?
- Are there important mediators left out of the document's equity producing measures?
- What about the way that PISA views equity might influence the presentation of the potential mediators of educational equity, such as SES, gender, immi-gration status, language and ethnicity?

2(a). Socio-Economic Status

Similar to Discourse Theme 1, SES figured most prominently in the passages related to mediators of educational outcomes. Further, SES received an entire chapter in the document, while other mediators garnered only sections within chapters. Nineteen passages addressed the relationship of SES to educational outcomes/equity.

Seven of the passages are related to the statistical correlation between SES and results on the PISA. As the document notes:

(a) In all countries and economies that participated in PISA 2012, a student's socio-economic status has a strong impact on his or her performance.

(b) Chapter 2 of this volume analyses equity in education outcomes, particularly the relationship between performance and socio-economic status, at both the student and school levels.

Ten passages discuss the relationship between SES and other school and student traits related to educational outcomes. For instance:

(a) Parents' aspirations for their child's education are also strongly related to socio-economic status.

(b) … socio-economically advantaged students tend to spend more hours after school doing homework or other study required by their teachers.

In addition to parent aspirations and hours of study, additional passages link SES with students' immigration status, the availability of pre-primary education, the concentration of qualified teachers, the amount of pressure academic pressure applied by parents, access to high quality curricula (in mathematics), class-based segregation, and academic tracking.

2(b). Immigration Status, Language, Gender, and Ethnicity

The choice to combine immigration status, language, race/ethnicity, gender, and culture into a single section in the current analysis reflects a similar practice in the document. While SES receives an entire chapter, the numerous other mediators of achievement are split between two chapters in the text.

Six passages addressed the relationship of nationality/immigration status to educational outcomes/equity. The relationship between SES and immigration is the subject of three of the six. For example:

(a) Immigrant students tend to be socio-economically disadvantaged in comparison to non-immigrant students, yet even when comparing students of similar socio-economic status, immigrant students perform worse in mathematics than non-immigrant students.

(b) … variation in performance differences between immigrant and non-immigrant students across countries, even after accounting for socio-economic status, suggests that policy has an important role to play.

The remaining passages (three) concerning immigration address the presence of high achieving immigrant students, the need to find acceptable ways to

integrate immigrant youth, and the finding that Canada and China have high and relatively equitable results on the PISA despite large proportions of immigrant students.

Seven additional passages discuss the challenges of immigration in relation to potential language differences between immigrant youth and schools in destination countries. For instance:

> Given the diversity of immigrant student populations across countries, designing education policies to address those students' specific needs – particularly that of language instruction – is not an easy task.

It is notable that the document only discusses language practices in relation to immigration. It makes no mention of the ways that language and expression often exhibit significant cultural variation between student populations speaking the same language at home. For example, research in the United States has discussed how differences in language and expression between racial/ethnic minority students and a predominantly White teaching force can mediate achievement and school discipline (Gay, 2006; Vavrus & Cole, 2002).

The document refers to gender four times as a mediator of educational outcomes/equity. Two focus on girl's lower achievement in and more negative disposition toward mathematics. For instance:

> Even when girls perform as well as boys in mathematics, they report less perseverance, less motivation to learn mathematics, less belief in their own mathematics skills, and higher levels of anxiety about mathematics.

The other two gender excerpts address the underrepresentation of girls in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields and higher education, and how this state of affairs constrains girl's labor market prospects and damages nation's economic wellbeing. For example:

> These findings have serious implications not only for higher education, where young women are already under-represented in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields of study, but also later on, when these young women enter the labour market.

The document refers to ethnicity four times as a mediator of educational outcomes/equity. Two make reference to the economic effect of ethnic residential segregation. For example:

> (a) In some countries and economies, there is also a large degree of residential segregation based on income or on cultural or ethnic background.

> (b) … provided that ethnic agglomerations do not become permanent enclaves with little possibility of outward – and upward – mobility.

A third passage discusses how differences in ethnicity and culture between host nations and immigrant students have the ability to produce inequity.

The final reference to ethnicity states:

> Some approaches select students on the basis of a risk factor other than socioeconomic status, such as whether the students are recent immigrants, members of an ethnic minority, or living in a rural or low-income community.

This passage appears in the context of an explanation of the ways that schools might target disadvantaged children through specialized curricula, additional instructional resources, or economic assistance. It is notable in the current analysis for several reasons. First, it is the document's only clear reference to the relationship between ethnicity and an ascribed minority social status, which entails a great deal more than residential patterns or national origin (the subjects of other references to ethnicity discussed above). As such, this passage makes reference (at least implicitly) to associated construct of "race," and to the numerous forms of oppression and discrimination faced by racial and ethnic minorities across the globe, including pervasive and long-standing inequities in academic achievement, school discipline, and school funding and resources (Coleman, et al., 1966; Jencks & Phillips, 1998; Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008). Beyond this implicit reference, the document makes no reference to the concept of race, or its relationship to (in)equity in education.

Overall, the document's treatment of the mediators of equity tends to focus on things like SES, gender, or ethnicity in terms of the educational or economic outcomes. This is most apparent in the numerous passages linking SES to PISA results noted above. It is also present when the document addresses the intersectionality of immigration status, SES, and academic outcomes. Similarly, gender is referenced in terms of girls' performance in math. The document's practice of discussing mediators primarily in terms of educational (and economic) outcomes, in effect, refuses to address the role of the social actors and policies involved. The document might have taken a different approach. It could have positioned factors like SES, gender, or ethnicity in terms of how educational actors might reform prejudicial policies and practices that discriminate against various students groups. As such, this discourse theme highlights how the document foregrounds the identification of risk factors or statistical variables that might constrain parity of educational outcomes. In doing so, it is less comprehensive in its treatment of what might be referred to as the roots causes of inequity, such as discrimination or the differential impact of policy and practice on students from subordinate social groups. Recall that the document conditions equity on a minimal correlation between the mediators of equity and educational outcomes. It is unclear whether an emphasis on identifying the potential sources of inequity is sufficient to realize this conception of equity in the absence of a robust treatment of root causes.

Summary of Findings

Discourse theme 1 (The Meaning, Production and Implications of Equity) began with analysis of the document's multiple passages explicitly defining equity (see discourse strand 1a). The text defines equity primarily by naming various mediators of educational equity (i.e., SES, gender, ethnicity), and by conditioning equity on the lack of statistical correlation between these named mediators and student outcomes on the PISA. SES is referenced most often, and was used in the single supporting example of the relationship between equity and mediators. In the document's only statement of what equity is not, it makes clear that equity does not demand that all students attain the same results, which leaves open the possibility of other, unnamed variables to either promote or constrain equity. The document also discusses what kinds of rewards might be expected from education and equity in education (see discourse strand 1b. Here again the document skews heavily toward the economic rewards of education based on the numerous passages referencing economic concerns and a single reference to social and political matters. This suggests that the primary justification for the pursuit of educational equity is economic in nature. Furthermore, while it is clear that the authors equate educational outcomes to economic conditions, there is no clear indication in the text that educational equity might provide a brighter economic future for citizens. This is curious given that the document's title (*PISA 2012 Results: Excellence through Equity*) positions equity (not economic matters) as the primary subject of the text.

Discourse Theme 2 (Immigration Status, Language, Gender, and Ethnicity) noted how SES appeared as the most prominent mediator of educational equity, both as a predictor of academic outcomes, and in correlation with other school and student traits (i.e., immigration status, pre-primary education, academic tracking). This theme also examined the document's treatment of three other potential mediators of equity (immigration, gender, and ethnicity). Immigration is discussed predominantly in relation to SES. The document links students' spoken language to immigration as well, though it does not discuss culturally based language variation between groups speaking the same language within schools or countries. The document addresses gender in reference to the ways that the economic prospects of girls might be constrained by a more negative disposition toward mathematics and less STEM course taking in higher education. Ethnicity is presented as a mediator of equity through its relationship with residential segregation and student immigration status. The document contains a single passage that links ethnicity with ascribed minority social status, which is notable because it implicitly references the construct of "race," and the numerous forms of oppression and discrimination faced by racial and ethnic minorities across the globe. This theme also highlights how the document positions mediators predominantly in terms of educational and economic

outcomes, rather than focusing attention on how educational actors might promote equity (not just more pleasing outcomes) by addressing discriminatory policies and practices in education.

Taken together, the findings from both discourse themes demonstrate the document's underlying recognition of the complexities around academic outcomes and mediators like SES, immigration status, and gender, and how these intersect with what might be referred to as structural inequities within and between schools and nations. Here, structural inequalities refers to underlying historical and social arrangements that influence the distribution of educational, social, and economic benefits in society, such as those based on race/ethnicity, gender, nationality, and so on. The document's recognition of the relationship between mediators, educational outcomes, and structural inequalities makes its emphasis on educational and economic outcomes (rather than equity) all the more striking.

While this point will be taken up in more detail in the discussion section, it is worth noting again here that the document does not draw explicit connections between SES and the larger structural inequalities mentioned above. Nor is there any discussion of between-country variation in SES. It is unclear why the document chose to compare the results of the PISA assessment across nations, but limited their analysis of SES and other mediators to within-country differences.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Within the context of growing global convergence in education policy and practice (Bieber & Martens, 2011), the equity conceptions of transnational educational institutions are of increasing importance. The OECD and PISA have significant influence over the direction of global education (Rogers, 2014). However, in many ways, the OECD and PISA represent a proxy for the educational ideas and policy goals of the developed world (Spring, 2008). The way that these institutions conceive of equity is likely to filter into educational policies and practices across the globe. Yet, education and its equity principles entail *contested* normative judgments (Hutmacher, et al., 2001) in a world characterized by asymmetrical power relationships between the global North − global South, developed − underdeveloped, modern − traditional, and transnational − national − local. Therefore, where education is concerned, part of the process for pursuing equity must be to make the discursive disposition of dominant organizations like the OECD explicit and open for scrutiny.

Given the history of the OECD, the overwhelming focus on SES in PISA is perhaps not surprising. However, PISA's discourse does not maintain that it is only concerned with the economic components of education, but rather positions itself as a "politically and ideologically neutral" (Rogers, 2014, p. 1) actor

in the equity discourse. PISA also appears to take for granted that their SES index provides and adequate measure of all the bases for inequality. Meanwhile, an expansive body of research shows that factors ignored by PISA (such as race/ethnicity and associated cultural traits) have profound effects on educational outcomes in achievement, discipline, and school resources even after accounting for SES (Coleman et al., 1966; Jencks & Phillips, 1998; Krezmien, Leone, & Achilles, 2006; Lee, 2007; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2000; Wallace et al., 2008). Thus, PISA's discourse threatens to create policy directions that over-emphasize SES, producing inadequate reform efforts that fail to account for other important structural factors.

The document's lack of analysis of race/ethnicity in relation to educational equity is particularly concerning, as it precludes a fundamental basis upon which to pursue structural analysis of equity. Within the economistic perspective of the OECD, PISA and its Eurocentric membership, SES is associated with neoliberal notions of competition and meritocracy (Becker, 2006; Spring, 2008), which allows discourse to ignore racial inequity based on its correlation with SES and to rely on "cultural deprivation" arguments (Valencia, 1997) to justify inequality. This study's finding that PISA pursues analysis based on race, but leaves this within the realm of bounded *national* systems is particularly noteworthy given PISA's overwhelming *international* focus on between country analysis of test results. The same international focus is evident in PISA's analysis of how different countries address the relationship between SES and test results. The unwillingness to account for race on an international scale is indicative of widespread efforts at "managing" inequality and disparity for the sake of social cohesion and international competitiveness (Hutmacher et al., 2001, p. 14). From this perspective, reducing the achievement gaps between the most and the least educated, while raising the average achievement level at the same time is proposed as the most "realistic and effective education policy for the future" (Hutmacher et al., 2001, p. 14). Here, reducing gaps and raising the average stand in for more intentional policies specifically aimed at reducing racial oppression in schools.

PISA's tendency to eschew structural power analysis (based on race and other factors) also serves a way to use their assessment results to exercise transnational influence over educational policy. As Bieber and Martens (2011) note, "countries that rank low in international comparisons or do not follow the recommended models are under normative pressure to either legitimate their domestic models or adapt to these models" (p. 103). In addition, normative pressure tends to lead PISA to diminish its own first principle of equity: fairness, which states that student background is to have no influence on educational outcomes (OECD, 2008). Given that "low performing" nations risk the normative penalty associated with poor PISA results, disadvantaged countries often feel compelled to install various top-down policy changes that may or may not be congruent with the traditions and cultural norms of the populace (Spring, 2008). Scholarship indicates that this kind of "tinkering" can be

harmful to schools (Tyack & Cuban, 1995) and local cultures (Spring, 2008). As a result, PISA results can diminish equity because living in a "low performing" country constitutes a background trait that threatens to further diminish student achievement. We have already noted the growing convergence of global education, which can only be expected to increase the risk of normative penalty for poor performers into the future.

How than is the equity discourse to proceed in a more acceptable manner? A reasonable starting point is greater emphasis on education's role in democratic participation and social justice (Friere, 1970/2000). This kind of critical pedagogy has the ability to expose the power relationships that frame social discourse in education and beyond. Further, they forward a conception of equity that emphasizes the ability to understand and engage in the discourses that are affecting ones' life, and the ability to exercise some degree of agency and self-determination. To this end, scholars have suggested that critical pedagogy and critical language awareness (Fairclough, 1995) should be considered as an entitlement for students, especially in light of the power of discourse to shape policy that filters down to educational stakeholders at the national and local level (Spring, 2008). The OECD, PISA, and other transnational educational institutions have a role to play here as well. Influential institutions should provide the epistemological and ontological roots of their operating equity conceptions. As has been noted, equity principles, criteria, and beliefs are a matter of normative judgment, and must be made explicit if they are to contribute to an open and democratic dialogue. The combination or critical pedagogy, open dialogue between institutions and stakeholders, and enhanced emphasis on structural analysis has the potential to further a global equity discourse in which participation is an option for all educational stakeholders.

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APPENDIX

Table A1. Countries Participating in the 2012 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

Albania	Latvia
Argentina	Liechtenstein
Australia[a]	Lithuania
Austria[a]	Luxembourg[a]
Belgium[a]	Macao-China
Brazil	Malaysia
Bulgaria	Mexico[a]
Canada[a]	Netherlands[a]
Chile[a]	New Zealand[a]
Chinese Taipei	Norway[a]
Colombia	Peru
Costa Rica	Poland[a]
Croatia	Portugal
Cyprus	Qatar
Czech Republic[a]	Republic of Serbia
Denmark[a]	Romania
Estonia[a]	Russian Federation
Finland[a]	Shanghai (China)
France[a]	Singapore
Germany[a]	Slovak Republic[a]
Greece[a]	Slovenia[a]
Hong Kong-China	Spain[a]
Hungary[a]	Sweden[a]
Iceland[a]	Switzerland[a]
Indonesia	Thailand
Ireland[a]	Tunisia
Israel[a]	Turkey[a]
Italy[a]	United Arab Emirates
Japan[a]	United Kingdom[a]
Jordan[a]	United States[a]
Kazakhstan	Uruguay
Korea[a]	Vietnam

[a]indicates OECD membership.