TRANSFORMING EDUCATION THROUGH CRITICAL LEADERSHIP, POLICY AND PRACTICE

Transformative Democracy in Educational Leadership and Policy

Social Justice in Practice

LISA FETMAN AND LINSAY DEMARTINO

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Series editors: Stephanie Chitpin, Sharon Kruse and Howard Stevenson

Transforming Education Through Critical Leadership, Policy and Practice is based on the belief that those in educational leadership and policy-constructing roles have an obligation to educate for a robust critical and democratic polity in which citizens can contribute to an open and socially just society. Advocating for a critical, socially just democracy goes beyond individual and procedural concerns characteristic of liberalism and seeks to raise and address fundamental questions pertaining to power, privilege and oppression. It recognizes that much of what has gone under the name of "transformational leadership" in education seeks to transform very little, but rather it serves to reproduce systems that generate structural inequalities based on class, gender, race, (dis)ability, and sexual orientation.

This series seeks to explore how genuinely transformative approaches to educational leadership, policy, and practice can disrupt the neoliberal hegemony that has dominated education systems globally for several decades, but which now looks increasingly vulnerable. The series will publish high-quality books, both of a theoretical and empirical nature, that explicitly address the challenges and critiques of the current neoliberal conditions, while steering leadership and policy discourse and practices away from neoliberal orthodoxy toward a more transformative perspective of education leadership. The series is particularly keen to "think beyond" traditional notions of educational leadership to include those who lead in educative ways – in social movements and civil society organizations as well as in educational institutions.

Transformative Democracy in Educational Leadership and Policy: Social Justice in Practice

BY

LISA FETMAN

Independent Scholar, USA

AND

LINSAY DEMARTINO

Arizona State University, USA

United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
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About the Authors

Lisa Fetman, PhD (she/her), is an independent scholar with adjunct faculty appointments at Florida Southern College (Educational Leadership) and the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs (Teaching and Learning). Dr. Fetman formerly taught K-12 Spanish in Chicago, Illinois and Tucson, Arizona, working within diverse communities and sociocultural/sociopolitical contexts. Her research encompasses the enactment of education policy within culturally diverse schools, particularly related to the effects of neoliberalism on policy creation, implementation, and disruption. As a former language teacher, she deeply cares about emergent multilinguals, and hence also focuses her scholarship on the intersection of policies and practices within linguistically diverse student populations. Dr. Fetman teaches coursework in diversity and inclusion, curriculum and instruction, culturally responsive leadership, and instructional leadership. She currently resides in Chicago, Illinois, where she commits herself to transforming education policies and practices.

Linsay DeMartino (she/her) is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Leadership & Innovation housed within Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University (ASU). Dr. DeMartino considers herself a scholar-practitioner. She was schooled by various postsecondary institutions across Arizona and educated by the students, families, educators, and community members affiliated with the Mexican-American Studies/Raza Studies program in Tucson Unified School District (TUSD). They changed her life and she will be forever grateful. As a former P-12 educational practitioner in TUSD, Dr. DeMartino served as a special education teacher, inclusion specialist, special education department chair, and as an instructional data and intervention administrative coordinator. Her current research examines transformative actions, equitable community collaboration, and justice-based practices in schools. She is particularly interested in educational practices grounded in just schooling and contextual alternatives rather than "best practices" and educational trends. Dr. DeMartino currently resides in Mesa, Arizona, with her perfectly imperfect puppy, Lorca.

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Preface

Context for This Book

We situate the book within the sociopolitical and sociocultural contexts surrounding education during our contemporary times. As such, we provide a concise, yet comprehensive overview of the sociohistorical milieu impacting education to contextualize this book. Education in the United States has been a democratic project since its founding in the 1700s. According to the Center on Education Policy (2020):

> The Founding Fathers maintained that the success of the fragile American democracy would depend on the competency of its citizens. They believed strongly that preserving democracy would require an educated population that could understand political and social issues and would participate in civic life, vote wisely, protect their rights and freedoms, and resist tyrants and demagogues. Character and virtue were also considered essential to good citizenship, and education was seen as a means to provide moral instruction and build character. (p. 2)

As such, early policymakers worked to create a unified and formal education system, beginning with land grants (or trusted federal lands granted to states) for the creation and maintenance of schools. In some states, boards of education sprouted up, and in Massachusetts, the father of public education, Horace Mann, served as secretary of the state's education board. In the 1830s, Mann advocated for "creation of public schools that would be universally available to all children, free of charge, and funded by the state" (Center on Education Policy, p. 3). His ideas spawned the "common school" movement, wherein all students received instruction in core subjects, such as reading and math.

Previously, despite the federal government's efforts, education remained grossly unequal with wealthy elites having access to literacy and numeracy education, leading to increased access to jobs and wealth. Mann advocated for common schools to serve as the great equalizer in society, as educating poor and middle class children "would prepare them to obtain good jobs...and hereby strengthen the nation's economic position" (Center on Education Policy, 2020). The common school movement laid the groundwork for our current public

education system despite some resistance from elites who did not want to pay for the education of other people's children (Center on Education Policy, 2020).

It is important to understand this brief history of public education in order to see how the American project of democracy is so deeply embedded into our educational system. As such, public education has morphed and adjusted in response to social, historical, cultural, and economic events that affect the US and the democratic project.

According to Alexander (1999), schools are open systems, as they consist of internal structures (the organization itself and people within it) and external structures (the environment, the students, graduates, and staff with lives outside the school). As an open system, school goals, functions, structures, and processes are constantly influenced by a feedback loop of the outside environment, which include social, economic, cultural, and political pressures (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Hence, various shifts in American history have impacted the internal structures of schooling. For example, throughout the course of history, we experienced increased immigration and industrialization throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, Civil and World Wars, the Great Depression, the Space Race, the Civil Rights Movement, the Chicano Movement, the Women's Rights Movement, the Vietnam War and counterculture, the AIDS epidemic, the internet and tech bubble, social media, the September 11th attacks, the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, Islamophobia, social media, the Great Recession, Barack Obama's election with the Affordable Care Act and the rise of the Tea Party, the legalization of gay marriage, Donald Trump's election, the #MeToo Movement, COVID-19, footage of police murdering Black, Indigenous and/or People of Color (BIPoC), #BlackLivesMatter, and the January 6th attacks have impacted shifts in public education.

As we write this book, we are facing a crisis in public education: A mass exodus from the profession following a global pandemic, low salaries and school budgets following massive cuts during the Great Recession 15 years ago, censorship of curriculum and instruction amid unfounded attacks on critical race theory (CRT) and ethnic studies, and increased scrutiny of public educators from parents, families, and the general public. These phenomena did not occur in a vacuum; these issues have boiled up over hundreds of years given public education's inextricable link with our political democracy.

Hence, we make a case for this book. The project of democracy in education is one that is unfulfilled in many ways, as we have failed to make public education the great equalizer in society. As we face crisis after crisis in education and beyond, we must adjust in such a way that fulfills the democratic process of equality and push forward the notion of equity in schools. As educators, we often work in silos, committed to getting through our curriculum, instruction, and impacting the students in front of us. Meanwhile, political mandates constrict our work, forcing us to focus more and more inward (i.e., the focus on standards and accountability, but more on that in this book!). As educational practitioners and leaders working within the institutions of public education, we have great influence over the trajectory of the institution. As such, in order to impact democracy and education, we must understand that as educators we are agents of democracy. As agents of democracy, we must then understand the roots of democracy in America and

education. Moreover, we present this book to prepare you, the current and aspiring educator, to be not only an agent of democracy, but an agent of transformative, critically just democracy, who impacts the fabric of public education in favor of equity and justice. In this book, you will uncover what democracy in education is, what it is not, and what it could be. In visualizing what is possible in taking on this work, while situating yourself in the current context of public education, you can cause that shift that we so desperately need in the profession.

Structure and Use of This Book

The structure and use of the book is twofold, both reflective and theoretical while situating itself to be utilitarian and practical. As we intend to bridge theory to practice, we structure the book in a way that inspires a reflective, critical practice that is immediately applicable. We front-load discussions of history and theory and buttress these theories with real-world examples from our research data and current events. Additionally, we weave case study data throughout the chapters to provide deeper understanding and an exemplar for your transformative work and include end-of-chapter activities to deepen your knowledge, plan, and implement transformative practices in your school.

In Chapter 1, we present and analyze the history of democracy in education and current social movements that directly impact public education. Then, in Chapter 2, we discuss key theories and concepts that explain impediments to democracy throughout history and today. In the subsequent chapters, we define transformative, critically just democracy in the context of educational leadership and classroom practices and include concrete actions for practicing educators committed to doing this work. Most chapters conclude with activities that prompt you to engage in reflection by applying the key tenets to your practice and experiences. In later chapters, we push further by inviting you to conduct a mini case study situated within your own context, including an adapted equity audit, a transformative practices survey, and a semi-structured interview protocol to collect the voices of your greater school community. In the final chapter, we present an organizing document where aspiring and current school leaders can leverage theory (included in this book) into practice by creating and implementing their action plan. To end this book, we include two appendices, a list of resources where you might find transformative professional development and guest speakers dedicated to equity and justice in schools and a book list to dive deeper into education for social justice as a solitary leader or in community with your fellow educators. We see this book as both a resource and a tool for transformative leadership in preservice programs of study and in practice and we hope you do, as well.

Data Sources and Methods: Two Case Studies

Data woven throughout the chapters derive from case studies conducted at two urban high schools in the Southwest United States: Desert High School and Millennium High School (both pseudonyms).

Desert High School

These data derive from a one-and-a-half year ethnographic investigation at Desert High School (DHS), a large public school in the Southwest that is part of a large, urban school district. DHS has a substantial and unique student population: it serves a significant number of immigrant and refugee students, with over 40 languages and dialects spoken on campus. DHS has consistently received a "C," "D," and even an "F" rating based on the state's school report card system, between 2013 and 2020. In the middle of data collection the school went into a "soft turnaround" in which the administration was replaced, discipline and academic curricula were overhauled, and faculty were given the option to stay or leave. At the time of research, DHS had 1,153 students, with a 20.67% rate of reclassifying students in English Language Development (ELD; i.e., students identified as English Language Learners) into "mainstream" classrooms, 86.35% attendance rate, 82% promotion rate, 5.16% dropout rate, and 57.32% four-year graduation rate (70.5% five-year rate).

We used purposeful sampling (Merriam, 2009) for selecting participants, with the following criterion: participants experience the effects of state and local education policies, particularly policies impacting ELD given its large and diverse population. Data include in-depth interviews with each ELD staff member (six total, including the ELD counselor, the former department chair and current department chair) and school administrators (includes the former principal and assistant principal, and current turnaround principal), and ELD students (currently in ELD and recently excited ELD classes) in one-on-one and focus group settings. Observations during ELD classes (three hours per day, three days per week), and field visits to school functions (e.g., Open House, pep assemblies, faculty meetings, summer meetings) were also included. Lastly, we gave open-ended, anonymous surveys to ELD students to further understand their experiences.

Millennium High School

These data derive from a 19-month critical ethnography at Millennium High School (MHS), a nonprofit, grassroots secondary charter institution located in the Southwest United States. At MHS, there was a five-member administrative team, consisting of an executive director, principal, assistant principal, dean of students, and the college access director. The executive director, principal, and director were the co-founders of the school. In addition, the 21 part-time and full-time faculty and staff were not as diverse as in years past and, at time of study, they were predominately white. As an aggregate, the demographics of the student population was 40–45% Latinx, 45–55% white, and roughly less than 5% Asian American, African American or Black, Native American each.

Various community members in this Southwest city reported that MHS involved faculty, staff, students, and other community members in the decision-making process, including progressive pedagogy, globally oriented curriculum, and inclusive campus policies. Therefore, since "particular settings, persons, or activities [were] selected deliberately to provide information that is particularly relevant to [the] questions and goals" a purposive sample was used

(Maxwell, 2013, p. 97). Since this research was grounded in leadership strategies, which pushed the status quo in favor of transformative practices, MHS seemed to be the right fit for this project.

These data sources included archival data, observations, and semi-structured interviews with administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents, and external stakeholders. Archival data collection included student demographics, free and reduced lunch, and educational flags, such as students identified with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) or 504 plans and enrollment numbers for advanced placement courses. In addition, electronic artifacts were gathered, including over 100 social networking posts and 72 weekly email bulletins. Observations, totaling over 80 hours, occurred during various classroom activities, whole school meetings, after school activities, division team meetings, student success team meetings, family nights, school board meetings, and corporate board meetings. Twenty-seven semi-structured interviews were conducted, including the executive director (1), the administrative team (3), the faculty and staff (10), students (9), parents/guardians (2), and community stakeholders (2).

Data Analyses

Drawing on these two case studies, we capture what contemporary critically just practices look like and do not look like to illustrate the theories and concepts presented in this book. Both case studies use a critical ethnographic design (Carspecken, 1996; Madison, 2012) to study phenomena within the schools. Because critical ethnography is "based on critical epistemology, not on value orientations," we approached these studies with beliefs in multiple truths grounded in the individual actor's personalized experiences (Carspecken, 1996, p. 22). Through documenting the participants' beliefs, language, and behaviors, we captured the phenomena that impacted their practices and perceptions, illustrating the concepts presented throughout the text.

Adhering to three of Carspecken's (1996) five recommended stages for analyzing critical ethnographic data, we compiled the primary record (or collection) of data, then engaged in preliminary reconstructive analysis, in which we noted underlying meanings (e.g., pragmatic, semantic, and linguistic structures) in the primary data records and coded for common themes, key issues, and preliminary patterns that emerged, and then compared those to findings to our critical analyses of extant theories, concepts, histories, and policies. We also coded for where and what particular types of power surfaced (relating to institutional logics and neoliberal/neoconservative ideologies – more on these in upcoming chapters). This analytical approach applied to the final stage, dialogical data generation, where we analyzed our records from classroom observations and field notes. Again, we looked for themes related to the location and articulation of power and cultural reproduction. Further, member checks were used to increase credibility and integrity of these interview data. To further protect the welfare of our participants, we expanded our ethical considerations "by protecting their rights, interests, privacy, sensibilities, and offering reports at key stages to participants" (Madison, 2012, p. 24). In this way, validity and trustworthiness were key components of these research studies.

How Can You Use This Book in Your Practice?

As we stated above, we see this book as both a resource and a tool for transformative leadership in preservice and administrative preparation programs of study and in practice. Our end of the chapter activities serve as tools to both supplement undergraduate and graduate courses in preservice and administrator preparation courses, where equity and justice is the crux of the curriculum, and for practicing educators looking to build the foundation for or enhance education for social justice. We recommend that undergraduate instructors use this book and graduate instructors use the content of this book to further students' understanding of transformative practices in favor of critically just education by framing class discussions around a theory into practice model. Additionally, we encourage instructors to use these research data and the end of the chapter activities as a mock case study or as a tool to frame a pilot study for future scholar-practitioners. For our practicing educators, we encourage you to read this in critical reading and dialogue groups. Critical reading and dialogue circles create an opportunity for educators to not only gain knowledge on transformative practices grounded in equity and justice but also to unpack their experiences and feelings in a courageous space (Fetman & DeMartino, unpublished manuscript). Further, by participating in this critical reading space, educators are more likely to develop an authentic understanding and belief in equitable opportunities with educational spaces and beyond becoming advocates who are willing to stand up for and speak out on these efforts (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). As scholar-practitioners always learning and growing, we hope you find this book both informative and thought provoking leading to critically just educational systems and a more humanizing world for our present and future students and families.

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Chapter 1

The Purpose of Education

> *A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience.*
> — John Dewey (1916, p. 50)

What is the purpose of education? This question circulates in philosophical and sociological circles and has done so for centuries. While scholars align on education's democratic purposes, public discourse has deviated away from the core democratic principles of education. Public education is increasingly at odds with democracy, becoming a space of tension and discord (Apple, 2005, 2006a, 2013; Cullen, 2017; Lipman, 2011a; Parker, 1997). The devolution of education into this sphere has precipitated since the inception of the common school movement in the mid-19th century, but gained momentum in the mid-20th century. Public education developed from the belief that our society depended on a literate and informed populace, and that these tenets lead to political stability and social harmony (Ford, 2020). This philosophy laid the groundwork for Horace Mann's common schools (and thus our public education system) in the 1800s, in which schools were viewed as extensions of communities, and therefore were paid for, controlled, and sustained by the public (Ford, 2020). Furthermore, the community and state authorities, who represent the public good in a democracy, ensure structure, curriculum, and pedagogy reflect the doctrines of a free society, meaning children of all backgrounds are embraced and educators are well-trained professionals (Ford, 2020). Hence, education reflects the common interest and common purpose of democracy at large. Given these principles are the foundation of public education, how have we lost sight of them? As you may have observed in your practice or experience as a student or parent or consumer of mass media, the current state of public education is not aligned with extant principles. But more on this later in this chapter and book.

To address this query, we must understand that public education, as a function of democracy, is woven into the sociocultural and sociopolitical nature of America and does not happen in a vacuum. Education is a conglomeration of sociohistorical, sociopolitical, socioeconomic, and sociocultural milieu. According to Dewey (1916), education is, at its essence, life's social continuity. Then, the

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purpose of education is to ensure the continuation of life as a society, through the passage of ideas, language, beliefs, and standards onto the next generations (Dewey, 1916). As a result, democracy is "a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experiences" (Dewey, 1916, p. 50), meaning that democracy is a communal phenomenon that ebbs and flows with the diverse demands of society. That is, a truly democratic education is one that responds to and resonates with the realities of society and the demands thereof. A democratic education, however, is not a byproduct of democratic society; rather, it is the nucleus of societal progress and development. If we want to imagine the ideal democratic society, we must execute a kind of education that enables progressive thought.

Furthermore, Dewey (1916) saw education as a project of reconstruction. His theories were presented amid great industrialization, and he observed the loss of democratic ideation to normative foci on economic efficiency. The democratic dreams of our nation were muddied by capitalistic demands and values for unity over plurality amid increased diversity with immigration waves (Parker, 1997). According to Dewey (1916), democracy in education requires a reconstruction of the purpose of schooling, which must equitably include diverse perspectives and visions. This vision of schooling aligns with Horace Mann's, considered to be the grandfather of public education.

Horace Mann solidified democratic education prior to Dewey's proclamations. He saw public education as a "great equalizer," and fulfilled this notion by developing his common schools, the framework for our current public school system (Ford, 2020). Mann posited that a public education would accelerate the democratic experiment by ensuring all citizens have access to the knowledge required to participate in a democratic society, and even transform it (Ford, 2020). Hence, we uncover the democratic, responsive roots of public education in America, and its founders' transformative intentions. Dewey, then, recognized a rupture between what schools do and what schools are for, per Mann's ideals. We can credit Dewey with recognizing the potential of democracy in education, and how we fall short of fulfilling Mann's ideals.

In this book we ask you, the reader, to consider education as an open system (Hoy & Miskel, 2012) that is susceptible to both internal and external minutiae. This phenomenon explains why we see a ruptured connection between democracy and education throughout the past 100 years: teachers have been increasingly deprofessionalized, local, state, and federal governments have significantly decreased investment in education, and the role of education has begun to reflect a business and industrial model, producing trained, compliant workers (Apple, 2005, 2013; Bantock, 1968). Given these changes, it is no surprise we experience increased civil unrest in the 20th and 21st centuries, as graduates are not equipped with the democratic education envisioned by the founders and current practitioners of public schooling.

So what does this mean for you, the reader, as a current or aspiring educator? To address this query, we aim to recenter the conversation around education with democracy at its core so that you, the practitioner, see openings to transform the conversation around education, across K-12 spaces. Educators are social actors who simultaneously impact and are impacted by our democratic system, and thus have the power to enact a system based in equity, justice, and true democracy. In this book, we will guide you through theoretical and historical discussions, case

studies, and activities that enable the development of educators as democratic actors in favor of justice and equity, and thus the arbiters of change. We accomplish this by structuring the chapters around historical and theoretical tenets like hegemony, dispossession, and neoliberalism, applying them to current and historic events, drawing connections to case study findings in K-12 schools, and inviting you to conduct exploratory activities and critical reflections within your schools and districts.

This chapter provides a backdrop and foundation for this book by defining what democracy is, and what it is not. We provide a historical overview pinpointing how democracy in education has been defined, refined, convoluted, and distorted over time. Foundational theories of democracy in education undergird this book, as we must revisit the purpose of education, where we fell short, and how we can take on Dewey's idea of *reconstruction* in favor of equity and justice. We conclude this chapter by discussing the contemporary challenges to the advancement of transformative democracy through the lens of current social movements that directly or indirectly impact public education followed by our interactive feature, theory applied to practice, which includes reflective prompts.

Democracy in Education: The 19th to the Early 20th Centuries

Following colonization and mass genocide of Indigenous populations, formal education was reserved for elite white boys who were taught in ways that promoted an Anglo-Saxon frame of mind, with curricula and methods structured around college preparation.[1] These curricular choices were determined by a committee of white, anglo men, called the Committee of Ten. Formed in 1892, they organized in response to an increasing population (due to the influx of immigrants in the 19th century) and industrialization (i.e., greater demand for job training) (Kliebard, 2004). In essence, a demand for uniformity amid social change, centered around the democratic ideals of public schooling, led to centralized curricular and pedagogical decisions being made by a committee of white men from elite universities, such as Harvard and Yale (Cohen, 1984; Kliebard, 2004). An awakening around education philosophy, with hopes to transform the field, arose in the wake of these sociocultural and socioeconomic shifts, and the demand for structure around how we do education (Kliebard, 2004).

Amid the responses to these calls for explicit structures of schooling, John Dewey (1916) warned that educators must stay true to education as a democratic, student-centered vocation. Dewey's (1916) philosophy of democratic education is grounded in the belief that education is the "means of social continuity of life" (p. 5). As such, learning must be continuous, it must reflect the

[1]Though APA7 indicates to capitalize racial and ethnic identifiers, in solidarity with other critical scholar-practitioners, we choose not to capitalize white. White folks do not share the same histories and experiences as Black, Indigenous, and/or other intersectional, marginalized, and oppressed identities. We see this act as increasing awareness to the ongoing movement to decenter whiteness in both the Academy and K-12 schooling.

communal and, therefore, democratic, social lives of children. Recent scholarship supports this philosophy, with constructivists continuing to argue that learning is an interconnected, discursive process in which pupils make sense and meaning with others in the community (Mitchell & Sackney, 2009). Furthermore, active, cooperative activity that gives meaning to democratic social life is an indispensable quality of schooling. Schools, then, are the epicenter for the transmission of democratic ideals such as participation, communication, and cooperation. This means that education, as an institution, must be a child-centered, transformative space that informs, inspires, and cares for the whole child and the future of society. Dewey (1916) emphasized this need as he foresaw the pitfalls of a public education system, with lost focus on the child and increased focus on schools as factories that prepare graduates for an industrial labor force.

Dewey warned of the industrialization of education (Bantock, 1968) that could develop with the spread of capitalism and industrialization in America at the turn of the 20th century. He argued that education is a project of reconstruction in which social ideals and methods go hand-in-hand, and that practical changes to society "cannot take place without demanding an educational reformation to meet them, and without leading men to ask what ideas and ideals are implicit in these social changes, and what revisions require of the ideas and ideals which are inherited from older and unlike cultures" (Dewey, 1916, p. 180). Indeed, real democratic praxis requires a departure from the ideals of the past in favor of a reconstruction of the purposes of schooling, reflecting diverse perspectives and visions. Moreover, a democratic society requires citizens that believe in the ethical, transformative power of humanity to answer the call for equity and justice among all peoples, and schools are to answer this democratic appeal. As such, education fulfills the visions of Horace Mann, in that it serves as the "great equalizer. . .the balance-wheel of the social machine" (in Ford, 2020, p. 203).

Foundational theories around democracy in education are the underpinnings of this book, as we see it important to visit and revisit the purpose of education, how we have strayed, and how we can refocus toward transformation in favor of equity and justice at the practitioner level. When discussing equity and justice in education, we must understand how equity and justice are inherent to education, and were wrapped up in the original imaginings of public education in America. When you ask yourself, what is the purpose of education, we are confident that your answer aligns with the philosophy of Dewey.

And so, we ask you to consider the circumstances that have pulled us away from the founding ideals of public education as we provide a brief history of the industrialization and conservative modernization, the reintegration of education into an economic agenda (Apple, 2005), in the American education system.

Education Evolutions: The 1890s-World War II

In 1894, the National Education Association (NEA) assembled the Committee of Ten, which consisted of six college presidents, the US Commissioner of Education, two high school principals, and one private high school headmaster, to report on the structure of schooling (Office of Education, & National Education

Association of the United States, 1969). This collection of elite white men determined that public education must serve as college preparation, resulting in school curricula consisting of subjects such as modern languages, history, civics, mathematics, Latin, and Greek (Kliebard, 2004). Shifting away from college and university reserved for elite, upper class citizens, as education became democratized and pupil demographics became more diverse, the NEA reconvened in the early 1900s and determined that schools should indeed prepare pupils for democratic participation in society (Steffes, 2012), see Table 1 for an overview of these evolutions. These ideals aligned with Dewey's philosophies, and also emerged out of the ashes of World War I, when a greater emphasis on community, including social cohesion and solidarity, took hold. At this time, America was very focused on preserving democracy as a countrywide ideal and a marker of its place in global politics. Here we begin to see the emergence of extracurricular activities and programming that encourage social cohesion, such as sports and dances (Cohen, 1984).

Throughout the 1920s, Dewey's theories gained traction as they aligned with postwar democratic ideals. Concurrently, economic growth with increased immigration created a fecund space for creativity in curriculum and instruction (Kliebard, 2004). Meanwhile, the industrialization in concert with immigration waves led to an increased focus on schools as training centers for the labor force, with philosophers and theorists like Henry Ford and Frederick W. Taylor who emphasized efficiency and standardization to boost production (Bantock, 1968). As the Great Depression hits, efficiency and productivity become more important, as industry and work take precedence.

In the 1940s, following World War II and the introduction of the GI Bill, the demand for higher education then increased, putting greater pressure on K-12 schools to prepare students (Cohen, 1984). Teacher recruitment increased and so did the emphasis on productivity and efficiency to accommodate the influx of teachers, school buildings, and students (Cohen, 1984; Kliebard, 2004). With the increase in the number of schools, students, and college-educated professionals, the focus on the function of schooling gained traction as we entered the mid-20th century.

"Democracy" in Education: The 1950s to Now

Theories of democracy in education in the mid-20th century to now took new shape, as they arose in response to watered down curricula, and sociocultural and sociopolitical shifts. As we hit the 1950s, we see education policy take greater shape, with formative court cases and policy decisions influencing curricula and pedagogy. Meanwhile, an increased focus on individual freedom and justice, along with growing narcissism and individualism in neoliberal society also begin to flourish (Apple, 2005, 2013). Consequently, discussions of democracy start focusing on equity and justice, with the emergence of social justice as a dominating theme. Political theorists and philosophers such as Mary Parker Follett (1927), John Rawls (1971), Amartya Sen (1999), and Martha Nussbaum (2011)

Table 1. Democracy in Education From the 1890s to World War II.

Timeframe	Historical Influences	Purposes	Key Thinkers	Community Included in Decision-Making	Democracy Definitions	School Results
1894–early 1900s	Industrialization	Define purpose of education and structure of schooling	National Education Association (NEA) Committee of Ten	Elite white men	College preparation	Focus on modern languages, history, mathematics, and classics
1914–1920s	Immigration, industrialization, World War I, economic growth	Define purpose of education and structure of schooling	John Dewey	white men	Social cohesion, solidarity	Extracurricular activities, sports, dances, creativity in curriculum and instruction
1930s	The Great Depression	Prepare an efficient labor force	Henry Ford, Frederick Taylor	white, male capitalists	Economic efficiency and standardization of labor practices	Decreased focus on what happens in schools
1940s	World War II, GI Bill	Prepare more citizens for higher education and a more educated workforce		white, male politicians	Postsecondary and career preparation	Influx of teachers, students, and surge in school building construction

call for distributed and enacted justice as the pillars of democracy; in other words, with the expansion of education and education policy, democracy in education becomes a discussion of fairness and equality. While a robust discussion of these theories is beyond the scope of this book, what is important to take away is that with the increase in diversity in our schools and expansion of liberalism in economy and politics, democracy in education evolves into justice in education, and definitions thereof are contested at the policymaking level.

So what happened in the 20th and 21st century to cause such a shift in the definition of democracy in education, and the complete rupture from Dewey's ideals? In the following sections, we provide an overview of key 20th-century events that shaped public education's trajectory.

Education Evolutions: The Baby Boom to Equity Strides in the 1970s

In the 1950s, four key events occurred to shape schools: The baby boom, the Russian launch of the Sputnik satellite, the beginning of the Cold War and "Red Scare" (widespread propaganda warning against the rise of communism in the US), and the growing presence of television (see Table 2). The baby boom led to the need for more schools, more teachers, and more material, along with increased expectations for students to attend college following the impact of the GI Bill with more college-educated parents (Kliebard, 2004). The launch of Sputnik was especially influential on curriculum, as schools were then tasked with making students into math experts and scientists to compete with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Hence, a "back-to-basics" movement with a focus on math, science, and reading took hold in school curricula, eliminating the community-enhancing aspects of schools such as electives and the arts, as well as an increased focus on vocational education (Kliebard, 2004). Along the same trajectory, teachers watered down their curricula for fear of job loss if their lessons were aligned with progressive ideals and therefore conflated with communism. The Red Scare, henceforth, caused a "chilling out" effect in schools where teachers leaned on teaching basic curricula in favor of more "rational" and efficiency-focused instruction (Zilversmit, 1993). As television presence proliferated, so did shared language and sets of expectations. The clean-cut, white patriarchal-centric ideals presented in popular shows such as "Leave it to Beaver" perpetuated a certain image of the American family and child, and promoted narrow social norms. These white, heteronormative, Evangelical visions of society trickled into schools and the politics that govern schools. Does all of this sound familiar?

Amid this push toward uniformity in education, a push toward civil rights and social justice arose. The Civil Rights Movement gained momentum and Jim Crow-era policies were challenged – and schools were key battlegrounds for these changes. In 1954, the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* case officially desegregated the schools. Desegregation overturned the "separate but equal" doctrine, as schools that served Black youth were underfunded and under-resourced, thus presenting gross social injustice. However, the "in deliberate speed" loophole stalled desegregation efforts, especially in the Southern states.

Table 2. Democracy in Education From the 1950s to the 1970s.

Timeframe	Historical Influences	Purposes	Key Thinkers	Community Included in Decision-Making	Democracy Definitions	School Results
1950s	Baby boom, Sputnik, Cold War and "Red Scare," television, Jim Crow policies, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*	Prepare for global competition and national defense		Elite white men (politicians, the Supreme Court), civil rights activists	Compete in the global economy and defend the United States, equal access	More schools, more teachers, more material, increased college expectations, "back-to-basics" focus on math and science, "chilling-out" effect on curriculum and instruction, focus on white-washed social norms, desegregation of schools, demotion of Black educators
1960s	Student protests, Vietnam War, Civil Rights Act	Create equality in schools	James Coleman	white men, civil rights activists, young people (primarily white, middle class)	Equal rights	Focus on poverty and student backgrounds, Title I, ESEA, Bilingual Education Act
1970s	Women's Rights Movement	Create equality in schools		white men (politicians), primarily white women	Equal rights	Magnet programs, Title IX, All Handicapped Children's Act