



2015

## A Study of Education Management Organizations: Competition Framing as a Technique in Education Policy

Calli Leigh Burnett  
*Loyola University Chicago*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc\\_theses](https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses)



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Burnett, Calli Leigh, "A Study of Education Management Organizations: Competition Framing as a Technique in Education Policy" (2015). *Master's Theses*. 3665.

[https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc\\_theses/3665](https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses/3665)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact [ecommons@luc.edu](mailto:ecommons@luc.edu).



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License](#).  
Copyright © 2015 Calli Leigh Burnett

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

A STUDY OF EDUCATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS:  
COMPETITION FRAMING AS A TECHNIQUE IN EDUCATION POLICY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS

PROGRAM IN CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY STUDIES

BY  
CALLI LEIGH BURNETT

CHICAGO, IL

MAY 2018

Copyright by Calli Leigh Burnett, 2018  
All rights reserved.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	v
ABSTRACT	vi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	5
Globalization	5
Marketization: From Citizens to Consumers	7
The Competition State	10
Education Management Organizations	17
CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	27
Accountability and Audit Culture	27
Conflict Theory	36
CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY	41
CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	45
Findings	45
Edison Learning, Inc. (ELI)	48
Leona Group, LLC (TLG)	51
KIPP Foundation (KIPP)	53
Summit Academy Management (SAM)	54
Midwest Management Group (MMG)	55
Options for Youth, Inc. (OFY)	57
Heritage Academy, Inc. (HAI)	58
Choice Foundation (TCF)	59
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION	62
APPENDIX A	66
REFERNECE LIST	68
VITA	72

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Education Management Organizations	EMO
Critical Discourse Analysis	CDA
Edison Learning, Inc.	ELI
Leona Group, LLC	TLG
Midwest Management Group	MMG
Heritage Academy, Inc.	HAI
KIPP Foundation	KIPP
Summit Academy Management	SAM
Options for Youth, Inc.	OFY
Choice Foundation	TCF

## ABSTRACT

As world markets become more interconnected through the phenomenon of globalization, many scholars have noted an expansion of capitalist and economic language in the realm of education discourse. This study focuses on the adoption by education policymakers of the “competition” model and framing, which traditionally used in business, is now being used to describe and promote education policies, such as school choice. This study pursues how competition framing occurs within education, the possible effects of such language use on education stakeholders, and the specific historical contexts and different interests being served by such framing in education. Specifically, this study examines the websites of education management organizations (EMOs) using a critical discourse analysis (CDA) while theoretically drawing on the concepts of audit culture and conflict theory.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

“How will we compete?” Asks the President during the State of the Union Address, the parent during the school board meeting, the principal during the staff meeting, and the CEO during the strategic staffing meeting. Over the last three decades this question has increasingly been uttered by a variety of educational stakeholders concerned with competing. Similarly in 2006, *The Economist* ran an article titled, “The Battle for Brainpower,” which argued that the wars of the future will not take place on the battlefield, but will take place in schools, as companies and countries battle for talent (Woolridge, 2006). This question of how will we compete, and the larger inclusion of economic and business language in the educational arena, is indicative of a shift in the way educational stakeholders are discussing and conceptualizing education and schooling, including how we perceive the purposes of schooling. It is also indicative of a shift in the arguments and logic policymakers use when creating and implementing laws that affect millions of teachers and students. Take the federal Common Core standards in the United States, for instance, the messaging around which relied heavily on the economic language of competition. In its promotional video, the Common Core Works (2015), the standards are touted as a means to better compare students across the country, and the video concludes by claiming the standards will insure students from the United States will be ready to race ahead of students from other nations.

The influence of economic and business language in the education sphere isn't just one of discourse, it's actually impacting how public education is implemented. In the United States, one only has to look as far as the emergence and rapid expansion of education management organizations (EMOs) to see the extent to which the economic and competition model has found a home in education. An EMO is a private organization that manages public schools under contract with executive authority and the expectation that the school produce measurable academic outcomes within a certain time period (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). This usually requires schools to perform equally or better than similarly situated schools and leads to high amounts of testing and continuous publications of data. Between the 1997-1998 academic year and the 2011-2012 academic year the number of for-profit EMOs in the United States has grown from 131 to 840, an increase of over 600 percent (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). On top of that in the 2011-2012 academic year there were also 1,206 schools operated by nonprofit EMOs in the United States (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). This means during the 2011-2012 academic school year, nearly one million primary and secondary students attended schools operated by EMOs (either for-profit or nonprofit), which accounts for 44% of all students enrolled in charter schools that year (Miron & Gulosino, 2013).

The rise of competition in the realm of education and schooling is not just a phenomenon of the United States of America. In China and Russia, debates and discussions regarding the development and expansion of higher education institutions are steeped in competition framing, specifically how to compete with the West (Wang, 2014; Zajda, 2007). If there was any doubt that competition within education is a global phenomenon, the rise of international testing and ranking services shows otherwise. Most recognizably services such as Programme for



International Student Assessment (PISA), which had 71 economies participate in the 2015 testing from Albania to Chile and Kazakhstan to Vietnam according to OECD.org.

Competition and economic language have not just seeped into educational policy debates; rather competition and economic models have become a growing norm in public education.

EMOs have become a big business and they have brought business-like practices to schools and classrooms throughout the United States. This study will consider how competition framing has impacted the way EMOs in the United States communicate their value, outcomes, and mission to education stakeholders including parents, students, teachers, and community members, via their websites using a critical discourse analysis (CDA) and the lenses of accountability/audit culture and conflict theory. This study adds to current research in a variety of ways. Firstly, CDA has rarely been used to study website texts, likely due to the dynamic and often changing nature of website text and discourse. Secondly, while many researches have looked at the structure and role of EMOs, the messaging of EMOs has rarely been studied. Lastly this study considers the impact on public education equity in this time of tight budgets and limited resources, if EMOs are relying on competition framing to both set their goals and justify their own existence.

Chapter two contains an overview of the literature surrounding globalization, marketization, the competition state, and EMOs, as this study will aim to add to these bodies of literature. Chapter three discusses the theoretical frameworks of accountability/audit culture and conflict theory.

These theoretical lenses will be used in the explanation and social analysis stage of the CDA of the EMOs' website discourse. Chapter four explains the methodology of this study including the practical format of CDA that was used. Chapter five will discuss the findings across all eight websites, the specifics of each EMO website that was reviewed, and some textual samples and the insights offered through CDA. Lastly, chapter six will compare and contrast the findings

across the eight EMOs and offer conclusions on what this means for the larger competition movement in public education.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

A limited survey of the literature discussing globalization, marketization, the competition state, and competition framing within the realm of education is presented below. This discussion is not meant to be exhaustive, but is rather meant to paint a picture of the many different perspectives and theories attempting to describe and capture this season of globalization and marketization within education. Following this is a review of the research literature concerning EMOs and education specifically. It is within this body of research that this study is postulated.

#### **Globalization**

A majority of scholars point to globalization as a contributing factor or an initiating force in the shift toward marketization, consumerism, and the competition state in education. Over the last 25 years the term “globalization” has been used within the business community to describe the increase in commerce and the exchange of goods occurring across the world. Within households the term is used to capture the increase in access to news, events, and people through the Internet and social media platforms. In academia though the term has been conceptualized in different ways by different researchers, as has its relationship to the shift toward marketization and competition within education.

Some theorists give globalization a lot of power as an independent force, arguing education has been swept up in the marketization tidal wave, while others warn education may be “under siege” (Amos, et al., 2002), stressing that globalization “is not an active entity in

itself,” but rather a process set in motion through the mechanisms of governments and individual participants with regional organizations acting as drivers of the process (Huilan, 2007). Theorists in this camp have used the rise of educational institutionalism, which refers to “the pursuit of similar educational cultures in different countries,” as an example of globalization being used by actors to drive education policy (Huilan, 2007).

Other theorists like Ball (2012) argue that these actors are not working independently, but rather that specific, calculated, and synchronized actions of governments, NGOs, nonprofits, businesses, and individual actors, are driving globalization within education policy. Ball (2012) maintains that this complex set of “obligations, exchanges, and interactions” upon which these different actors rely and ultimately act, can be documented as education policy networks. For Ball (2012) education policy networks allow researchers to examine how these relationships between actors can create mutual legitimacy for the parties while increasing the flow of financial, social, and cultural capital for shared projects and perspectives. One current example of this would be the rise in testing and accountability as a tool to drive education policy. While PISA is an international test, the way countries and districts use the results to change or reform education varies from context to context.

While Moutsios (2009), like Ball (2012), believes actors are driving globalization, he attributes this power specifically to transnational organizations. Moutsios (2009) argues the intersection of three aspects of globalization have led to this rise in power of transnational organizations: the enhanced role of institutions such as the World Bank to lend money, the rise of market-orientation and competition as an ideological basis for policies, and the increased use of opaque, informal venues for decision-making along with the connection between economic power and voting power on the transnational stage. Moutsios (2009) argues that these factors

give transnational organizations large amounts of influence and power, which is not easily accessed by nations that lack economic surplus, causing the passage of asymmetrical policies and ultimately inequality.

These different arguments and theories surrounding globalization set a strong stage for considering the research literature on marketization, consumerism, and competition, as these concepts of globalization are weaved throughout that literature.

### **Marketization: From Citizens to Consumers**

As noted above, many scholars find the rise of the global economy has caused a shift in education policy. Many studies boil this down to a growing need of the global economy: workers. Stated another way, as “human capital formation has become a central economic focus of national policy,” it has resulted in the economization of education policy (Lingard, et al., 2013). Others equate the transition more directly to the expansion of neoliberal thought, in which “democracy is equated with the freedom to consume in the market, and the ideal of the citizen is the consumer: ‘rather than democracy being a political concept, it is transformed into a wholly economic concept,’”(Lipman, 2011). Following this logic, the economization of education is simply a natural extension of the economization of democracy.

First literature regarding the rise of consumerism in America overall will be considered, then literature which specifically looks at the consumerism of education will be discussed. It is within this process of consumerism and marketization that many theorists postulate the intersection of competition and public policy, like the school choice movement.

Regarding consumerism broadly, Hochschild (2012) sets out to explain the rise of consumerism by discussing the increase in outsourcing of every day tasks by average Americans. She contrasts the world she lives in with the small, Maine farming community her ancestors

called home for some 200 years (Hochschild, 2012). She speaks of the self-reliance and communal work her ancestors required as they practiced the “near-sacred value of working together to grow (their) own food and put it on the table” (Hochschild, 2012). For herself and her generation, Hochschild (2012) finds this pride in work well done now feels hollow as its value is beginning to fade. Her family no longer lives on the farm, instead only spending the summers there, the tasks of the farm have become tedious and empty rituals, like “playing farm” (Hochschild, 2012).

Further Hochschild (2012) identifies a breakdown of the social and economic ties to one’s community. Within the small farm community, there was an interdependence to survival, making each individual “part of a larger whole,” creating a trust between people which was not questioned, so that when need arose in the community, people “just did.” This trust is built and reinforced through the economic operations of a small community in which favors, goods, and capital were exchanged over years of a relationship. Hochschild (2012) points to the loss of these long-formed communal bonds in today’s world, noting that as “we move, our generations live apart, the sense of community is gone so we look to ‘stuff and services’ to fill the void.” (Hochschild, 2012). Without community, trust and social capital give way to the forces of economic capital and the need for immediate repayment. Hochschild (2012) argues this has a wide, practical outcome, for instance “in 1900, 95 percent of American food dollars went to food prepared and consumed at home” while today, “nearly half such dollars go to food prepared behind take-out counters or eaten in diners and restaurants.” She argues, post-1970s, “American life slipped from the realms of community, commons, and government into the market. Prisons, parks, libraries, sectors of the armed forces, security services, schools, universities- these have moved, in full or part, into for-profit hands,” (Hochschild, 2012). This trend doesn’t seem to be

slowing down; rather scholars like Huilan (2007) see this “project in status display,” as Hochschild (2012) coins it, reverberating across the globe.

Labaree (2010) has explored a similar shift from citizens to consumers, specifically in the realm of education. He argues schooling was originally tasked with shoring up the new republic and creating civic virtue for the public good, but with the transition to a market rationale, education is now meant to promote social efficiency and social mobility for the private good by producing education for human capital (Labaree, 2010). In his view, society now demands from schools the private good as well as the former public good, but these goals contradict one another so we require “schools to take each of these goals seriously but not to push any one of them too far, since to do so would put other, equally valued goals in jeopardy” (Labaree, 2010). This tension makes it hard for schools to be successful, according to Labaree (2010), creating an education reform cycle in which he observes this shift from the public to private, specifically in the language and dialogue surrounding schooling. For example, while the 1983 report *The Nation at Risk* treats education as a distinctly public good, Labaree (2010) notes it is framed as a particular public good, “which benefited American society by giving it the human capital it needed in order to be economically competitive with other nations.” The result of this shift has been “two decades of restructuring public education through new forms of top-down, punitive accountability and prescriptive standards, increased business involvement, and school leadership redefined as (corporate) managerialism,” all trends seen within education in the United States and abroad (Lipman, 2011). Education has become a new focus for business interests, whether through companies like Pearson, who have become involved with programs like Learning Curve as an attempt to rebrand themselves as a global edu-business, or through the expansion of international testing regimes such as PISA (Lingard, et al., 2013).

The expansion of consumerism into education, begs the question, is this a problem in terms of equity? Hochschild (2012) suggests it is, because “Those who are most insecure are America’s poor, who also, of course, can least afford the tempting offerings of the market.” Huilan (2007) also sees a problem, “because markets will sometimes not function as they should, and the public nature and external outcomes of the vocation of education make it difficult to operate exclusively in terms of market-oriented thought.” Labaree (2010), too notes, that we have seen a shift to the notion that “schools exist to give all consumers access to a valuable form of educational property,” but if education becomes another “personal experience” we can outsource and purchase, a large percentages of “consumers” may be left unable to afford it. Hochschild (2012) urges that the solution may not be found “in universal access to private outsourcing... but rather in a greater commitment to public life and community.” Labaree (2010) too asserts that this shift has been a political one, which ultimately “transforms education from a public good to a private good, and from a source of political community to a source of individual opportunity.”

### **The Competition State**

It is within the processes of globalization and marketization that many scholars position competition framing. Before looking at competition framing in education, first consider some of the literature regarding the competition state and competitiveness in general.

Philip G. Cerny is credited with first coining the term “competition state” in reference to a shift he witnessed within the economic activities and interventions of the state to meet, respond to, and control the growing international economy and the transnational organizations that it spurred, though not all states took to competition in the same way (Fougner, 2006). Instead three paths emerged: states which took a strong direct influence over investment, neoliberal states built



on a free-market liberalism, or state corporatism marked with social partnership (Fougner, 2006). Fougner (2006) explains that Ronen Palan and Jason Abbott used Cerny's ideas to identify three broad elements that more comprehensively define a competition state. First, a competition state has a deep belief in competitiveness at the national level as a means to generate economic growth and raise living standards for citizens (Fougner, 2006). Second, a competition state executes competitive policies within the economic market by focusing predominantly on "supply-side measures" rather than on demand-side measures (Fougner, 2006). Lastly, a competition state embraces and integrates a wide array of national and international policies into its national competitive strategy (Fougner, 2006). Within this competitive state perspective is the inherent understanding that globalization has initiated and created a new reality or space in which states and governments still have an important ability and role to act.

Many scholars argue that competitiveness follows a similar path to that of globalization and marketization, arising first in the area of business management and made meaningful only in relation to actors operating within the market economy (Fougner, 2006). Similarly, literature verbalizing concerns over competitiveness first arose in the United States after 1980 and slowly spread through Western Europe and onto the developed nations of the East (Fougner, 2006). Fougner (2006) argues the discourse of globalization is not the cause of international competitiveness, but rather is a product of international competitiveness concerns. International competitiveness was a means to achieve a higher living standard and meet social welfare goals, and globalization was seen as a means to improve national competitiveness, first in the form of eliminating trade barriers and increasing exports, which helped individual firms compete, but then with the spread of globalization the battle changed to one of attracting the most investment capital and corporations to one's state (Fougner, 2006). From this shift, international

competitiveness took on a new form in states, one in which the states themselves had to compete, not just their firms. Competitiveness is thus a cycle, which perpetuates itself as the discourse it creates spurs governments to adopt further measures of competition (Fougner, 2006).

Returning to Woolridge's (2006) concept of the "battle for talent," which was briefly discussed in the introduction to this study, keep in mind Fougner's (2006) perspective regarding the transition of states from supporters of competition to competitors. Woolridge's (2006) article can help us draw a clearer picture of how education became one of the battlegrounds of competitiveness for states. According to Woolridge (2006) as states began to be competitors they turned immediately to education and talent as a means to get ahead. One common policy was to relax immigration standards in combination with opening up universities and colleges to serve as magnets for talent (Woolridge, 2006). The United States for example has separate visa categories and allotments for students and workers, as well as a special category, the O visa, for aliens who possess extraordinary abilities and have been nationally or internationally recognized for such abilities in valued areas such as education, business, and science as well as in art, athletics, or the motion picture or television industry.

While Woolridge (2006) argues there can be many benefits that come from competitiveness, "from boosting productivity to increasing opportunities, from promoting job satisfaction to supercharging scientific advances," he also more somberly notes that competition also sharpens the question of equality. For Woolridge (2006) the equity question is what happens if the free market proves talent to not be "distributed equally across races, classes and genders?" Many academics conceptualize the question of equity within competition a bit differently. For instance, Tannock (2009) postulates the battle for talent and the resulting investment and competition over education is not in itself unequal, but rather the nationalistic messaging that

flows from these concepts and the way it is hypocritically enacted within nations, but not across them, is what leads to inequality. Tannock (2009) supports his argument with the conception of global meritocracy, which he argues is a “transparently elite project,” which “promotes corporate interests, elevates competition and pursuit of competitiveness as central organizing principles of world society, and reinforces the neoliberal agenda of liberalizing world labor markets.”

What Tannock (2009) pinpoints, that Fougner (2006) misses, is that underlying the battle for talent and global meritocracy is the neoliberal and capitalist ideal of maximizing earning and profitability through “opening, entering and dominating new markets, reducing labor costs, and increasing corporate workforce flexibility and control.” Put more simply, the same neoliberal and capitalist ideals, which prompt businesses to embrace practices such as outsourcing, according to Tannock (2009), now threaten to undermine “the very notion of national citizenship that has previously proven so valuable in securing broad-based public commitment to the neoliberal project of increasing (national) competitiveness in the first place.” In order to address this tension, Tannock (2009) cites two discourses which have been embraced by governments: first, that bringing in foreign talent will increase the standard of living for the nation as a whole, which appeals to pure nationalist self-interest, and second, that the most talented should be allowed to succeed anywhere, which appeals to meritocratic self-interest, or rather expands the American dream to a global level. The bulk of education research and policy, Tannock (2009) asserts, is conducted and created within these two competition discourses, which leads to an “educational misdistribution.” For Tannock (2009) the question is how do we build a world that values merit and talent while simultaneously creating a world where “opportunity is not grotesquely skewed and limited to favor only the privileged”?

There is thus hypocrisy between the discourse around education competition within a nation and education competition between nations. For example, Tannock (2009) points to the fact that within a nation the “tracking of working class and racial minority students ... into vocational educational programs and low-level manufacturing and service sector jobs is condemned, on the global level, such tracking is celebrated for its basic justice, rationality, and efficiency.” Similarly, Tannock (2009) points to the pressure within nations for universities to accept, support financially, and cater to, students with disadvantaged social, economic, and academic backgrounds in order to increase outcomes from under-represented communities, yet international students with top academic credentials receive no such benefits. To return equality to education, according to Tannock (2009), competition must be considered globally in order to remove the nationalist perspective, which can be used to justify grossly unequal policies.

Much of the literature shows some agreement surrounding the concept that international competitiveness is engaged in at the global, national, and local level, and that actions or motivations at all three levels can and are continuing the development of the “competition state.” Meyer and Benavot (2013) specifically address one example of competition which is developed on the global or transnational scale, then enacted, interpreted, and used on the national or local scale to guide policy: PISA. Specifically, Meyer & Benavot (2013) argue that PISA, a tool of audit and accountability as well as an institution-building apparatus, has the potential to transfer the main education decision making from the national sphere to the global sphere, to increase standardization of education globally while eliminating cultural knowledge by limiting the choices and preferences available in the marketplace, and to “induce changes in how nations and states organize public education, to what ends, and in what spirit.” Meyer and Benavot’s (2013) questions attribute a lot of power to the forces of markets and capitalism and overall their

posturing of the issue of competition through the analysis of PISA was in alignment with the other literature discussed.

Darling-Hammond (2007) uses competition to argue for change to the United State's education practices in order to provide for more equitable "educational inputs and outcomes between White students and non-Asian minority students." Darling-Hammond (2007) frames her argument based solely on international competition, relying on PISA data and other international measures to conclude the United States is slipping quickly in international academic rankings. For present purposes, the most interesting aspect of Darling-Hammond's (2007) argument is that she, as a national policy maker, responds to global competition data in the exact way most theorists presumed, including Meyer and Benavot's (2013) fear that PISA would be used to impact and change goals and behaviors within classrooms. Why are rankings important? As Fougner (2006) and Woolridge (2006) theorized, Darling-Hammond (2007) argues that competition is a tool for increasing the wealth of a nation, stating "a recent OCED report found that for every year that the average schooling level of the population is raised, there is a corresponding increase of 3.7% in long-term economic growth." Darling-Hammond (2007) similarly relies on testing data, though national, which shows that Black and Hispanic students achieve at significantly lower rates than White students, to defend her solution that the United States work to target non-Asian minority students in order to boost its overall international competitiveness. She then breaks her solution down into distinct policy practices, which she argues should be fostered within the United States (Darling-Hammond, 2007). Darling-Hammond's argument exemplifies many of the perspectives and relationships described and predicted by competition theorists, specifically in illustrating how individual nations will interact with global governance tools such as testing.

U.S. policy makers are not the only one's leveraging competition, Wang's (2014) study, considers the transitions that have occurred in China regarding the discourse of internationalization and the government strategies adopted in light of such discourses since 1978. This historical perspective allows Wang (2014) to argue that China has increasingly embraced internationalization within higher education, by using examples of actual policies and their justifications to demonstrate a transition over time from awareness of internationalization to an active adaption of internationalization strategies. Specifically, Wang (2014) cites China's investment in creating globally attractive universities as part of its overall strategy for increased economic success and international competitiveness. This argument seems to support ideas put forth by Fougner (2006), Woolridge (2006), and Tannock (2009) that competitiveness is viewed as a means to build economic wealth within the nation and that education is one tool used to attract talent and build competitiveness. What is most interesting and unique is Wang's (2014) assertion that China has also begun to export its cultural views and perspectives to other nations through the exportation of its educational establishments. Wang (2014) sites the spread of Confucius institutes to some 96 countries, the rise in the Chinese language being offered and taught abroad, and the increase in Chinese aid to African nations in the form of schools, teachers, and scholarships. None of the other literature reviewed in this paper discussed the possibility that nations would begin using international competitiveness in the traditional market sense to export its culture to other nations.

As this research shows, many scholars have addressed the shift of marketization into the realm of education and its relationship with globalization and competition. There also exists a substantive body of literature, which considers what makes the competition state and how competition plays out within the different levels of policy making.

## **Education Management Organizations (EMO)**

Turning specifically to Education Management Organizations (EMOs), this section samples the literature on EMOs. Looking first at how EMOs are defined. Ultimately, this is the specific body of literature in which this study will reside.

What is an EMO? According to the National Education Policy Center, an education management organization is broadly “a private organization or firm that manages public schools, including district and charter public schools” (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). Noticeably missing from this definition is whether such private organizations are for-profit or nonprofit. Much of the literature defines EMOs as solely for-profit organizations. For example, Gluckman (2003) describes EMOs as “for-profit organizations, opening and running charter schools, or being paid by traditional school districts to operate traditional public schools,” while Sandoloski (2001) states EMOs are “public-private hybrid education corporations, colloquially known as ‘for profit public schools’.” Other theorists explicitly include both for-profit and nonprofit organizations within the definition, like Fleischman & Heppen (2009) who state, “EMOs are either for-profit or nonprofit education organizations that contract with new or existing public, charter, or private schools and school districts to provide comprehensive services to schools.” For the National Education Policy Center, it appears the distinction of for-profit or nonprofit is not critical to defining an EMO, rather instead these terms indicate a way to catalogue or classify EMOs (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). Further, Holyoke (2008) argues that relying on “a simple for-profit versus nonprofit distinction” misses the nuance of both mission and market decisions that are made by these organizations. This study follows the National Education Policy Center and uses for-profit and nonprofit as a way to categorize and compare EMOs.

Another important aspect of EMOs is the type of school being managed or partnered with. It is important to note that not all charter schools are run by EMOs and that EMOs, as discussed below, do more than just run charter schools (Fleischman & Heppen, 2009). In fact, EMOs are hired not just to work with charter schools, but also to work with public schools, public school districts, and sometimes private schools (Miron & Gulosino, 2013).

These definitions also include action words like manage, operate, serve, contract with, etc.... so practically speaking what do EMOs do? The short answer is that it depends on the EMO and the school or district it is working with. Fleischman & Heppen (2009) note two types of services offered by EMOs: educational programming and administrative services.

“Educational programming includes curriculum design, professional development, and tools for student assessment. Administrative services include operation-management (for example, student enrollment, school marketing), financial management (for example, payroll assistance, budget oversight), facilities management maintenance and use of facilities), and human resources management (hiring and training staff, staff benefits)” (Fleischman & Heppen, 2009). Sandoloski (2011) agrees, noting EMOs are typically hired to “deal with: (1) specific aspects of school administration, such as payroll, or (2) run the day-to-day operations of the school.” This means some EMOs may not address the actual academic content or classroom pedagogy at all, in favor of simply targeting how the school is managed (Fleischman & Heppen, 2009). When EMOs do address academic content or classroom practice, this can include selecting specific curriculum for core subjects or even developing their own curriculum based on the EMO’s ultimate goals for students (Fleischman & Heppen, 2009). For example, to prepare students for college, the Edison School designed a high school curriculum to prepare students for Advanced Placement (AP) classes, “partnered with Princeton Review to focus on SAT or ACT preparation and provides



college and career counseling” (Fleischman & Heppen, 2009). While the National Education Policy Center acknowledges that some EMOs provide specific services for a fee, they make an important distinction between EMOs and vendors/service contractors, in that EMOs have “executive authority over a school” (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). The National Education Policy Center report only includes data on “those schools that are fully managed by the company or organization”(Miron & Gulosino, 2013). Other theorists also view this distinction as important since for-profit companies have long served schools as vendors in particular niches, but in EMOs “for-profit companies are now in the business of running entire public schools” (Gluckman, 2003).

Where do EMOs get their authority to manage schools? This authority comes most commonly through a contract between the EMO and the hiring public school district or private school. This “contract details the terms under which executive authority to run one or more schools is given to an EMO in return for a commitment to produce measurable outcomes within a given time frame” (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). In the case of charter schools the EMO may be given authority through the school’s chartering agreement, an agreement usually made between the licensing school district or board and the charter school (Larkin, 2016).

Now with an understanding of what an EMO is we turn to the question of where they came from. While a rather recent development, many scholars such as Sandoloski (2011) trace the emergence of EMOs to much older educational thinkers and concepts. Specifically, Sandoloski (2011) points to Milton Friedman’s 1955 article, *The Role of Government in Education*, as “introducing the argument that free market principles can and should be used to administer our children's Schools.” For Sandoloski (2011), “the creation of new organizations created with the goal of utilizing free market principles to improve education,” EMOs, makes

perfect sense and is a natural extension of the concepts first introduced by Friedman. Other theorists see the development of EMOs as an emulation of similar developments in other fields, driven by market forces. Specially the transition in the “health care sector from non-profit and public sector to private sector HMOs and a ‘multibillion dollar industry’” (Gluckman, 2003). Larkin (2016) agrees, pointing to the term EMO itself, “aptly named as an analogue to HMO (Health Maintenance Organizations)” which “transpired as a product of the free market school reform with the idea of bringing an entrepreneurial spirit and a competitive culture to public education.”

Most common is the view that economic globalization and marketization lead to increased privatization and deregulation, making it only a matter of time before social goods and public markets become commodities (Steketee, 2004). “Even areas that have traditionally been considered public services and goods are filtering into the marketplace. Consequently, governments promoting neo-liberal policies are pressured to reduce state regulations that restrain private influence and to facilitate the transformation of social goods—including public health services and education—into commodities.” (Steketee, 2004). These processes only remain lucrative if conducted on a large scale, argues Steketee (2004), which provides “motivation to broaden their markets.” So why education? Steketee (2004) argues first, that education is one of the “great frontiers for for-profit ventures” based on the size and scope in “participants and potential for economic returns.” Second, Steketee (2004) notes, “Business leaders and politicians look to primary and secondary education providers to produce a well-trained and competitive labor force,” so privatization in the area is a logical extension of that interest, especially if there is a perceived failing of schools to meet that need. Steketee (2004) attributes privatization in education, like EMOs, to this “growing awareness of the deficits in primary and secondary

public schools, coupled with a mounting need to ready students for the global workplace.”

Fleischman & Heppen (2009) expound on this concept:

“Many high schools are failing to prepare students well either for postsecondary education or for careers. (...) In today's global economy, students with only a high school education face far lower career earnings and greater chances of being unemployed than their college-educated peers. (...) Moreover, most of the good jobs being created in the new economy, particularly the best-paying ones, require postsecondary education.”

The goal than for schools is that “all students will attend, stay and succeed in, and then graduate from high school well prepared for further learning, successful careers, and engaged citizenship,” which when not met, or perceived as not being met, made the education sector prime for marketization (Fleischman & Heppen, 2009).

It is important to note that EMOs do not stand alone, but are part of the broader movements of education reform and school choice supported by government policy at the international, federal, and local level. Most recently, such laws have “incorporated policy tools focused on introducing competition and choice into the education system and on accountability schemes that build incentives for action based on performance-based rewards and sanctions” (Superfine, 2011). Pointing specifically to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 in the United States, Superfine (2011) states federal law strongly encourages states “to improve student learning standards and assessments, link student and teacher performance data, and develop teacher incentive systems based on such data,” and implement “robust charter school policies.” Looking internationally, Steketee (2004) argues the World Trade Organization’s General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), uses sweeping language to open public school systems up to international market competition, which “could allow GATS to accelerate and spread the process of privatization” already seen in education is the United Kingdom and the United States.

So, what do EMOs bring to the education reform table according to proponents? First, the expectation of governance that draws from the experience and resources of the business sector. Fleischman & Heppen (2009) note charter schools and EMOs “share in common the fundamental premise that schools will be more successful if they are governed differently.” Specifically, they argue EMOs “epitomize an approach to improvement that focuses on how schools are run. Their approach suggests that, by altering their governance, schools will have greater opportunities to make required instructional and structural changes that can lead to improvement” (Fleischman & Heppen, 2009). This is why EMOs often are hired to manage low-performing schools for districts, on the assumption that by “fundamentally changing how classrooms in the school operate” they can turnaround schools “in a relatively short period of time” (Superfine, 2011). Holyoke (2008) notes EMOs help schools to, among other things, “reduce costs by attracting progressively larger student bodies to achieve economies of scale,” and make other more “market-oriented” decisions. Critics argue that “money spent on these advertisements is money that would otherwise be spent on students” and “fear that greed and a desire for profit will drive the EMOs and overshadow the main purpose of schools – to educate children” (Sandoloski, 2011). However, “supporters of for-profit education point to the ability of the market to discipline bad faith actors” and “also champion the ability of charter holders and school districts to cancel their contracts with EMOs that sacrifice achievement for larger dividends” (Sandoloski, 2011).

Second, supporters believe EMOs bring innovation to schooling. Sandoloski (2011) argues that even if imperfect, the desire for innovation in education is enough to justify the “expanded implementation of these organizations for the near future.” Other theorists push back on this assumption, noting that in practice EMOs do not bring innovations to schools but rather

bring standardization (Gluckman, 2003). Others argue the “potential for competition environments” may “limit the opportunities for EMOs to make real educational innovations” (Lubienski, 2003).

Lastly, supporters believe that EMOs make positive financial and economic changes as they “erode public education's insulation from market forces” (Sandoloski 2011). Some scholars posit that EMOs’ “economic benefits- like their supposed ability to take advantage of economies of scale and to create positive economic externalities - should lead to the widespread implementation of EMOs” (Sandoloski, 2011). This last point has received the most push-back from critics. At its most basic, many critics argue that private corporations should not be involved in the business of educating the public, because “placing a greater emphasis on whether a school is profitable will lead to a lower quality of education” (Sandoloski, 2011). Further critics argue that a focus on profits motivates EMOs to avoid educating those students that are most expensive to educate, including high school students, minority students, and students requiring special education services (Gluckman, 2003). West (2006) and others argue that the selective admission processes used by many EMOs allow “the neediest students to be excluded from the benefits attributed to school choice.” Others say this criticism is unfounded, in fact Sandoloski (2011) sites a study by Natalie Lacireno- Paquet which found “while smaller EMOs tended to target a lower percentage of minority students who are more expensive to educate, there was no difference between the ethnic makeup of schools run by large EMOs and the average charter school.”

Critics also counter that economies of scale do not actually work in public education. For instance, the supposed action of “cutting fat” to pour into instruction, according to Gluckman (2003), often turns into cutting teachers when EMOs discover there is no fat to cut. Sandoloski

(2011), discussing Henry Levin, puts it this way, “EMOs have larger cost structures than the average public and charter school. The simple expenses associated with running a business drain money from the schools and toward the corporate bottom line. Because of their overhead, EMOs are unable to funnel more money into the classrooms.”

Lastly, critics raise another concern, that unlike in other areas of the free market the concept that parents and students can “hold EMOs responsible” by choosing another provider is unrealistic, as there are usually limited educational options available for a family to access that don’t require the expense and time of moving the family home (Gluckman, 2003). Similarly, the impact of one or even a few families moving from a school that serves some 400 students would be minimal (Gluckman, 2003). Therefore, in reality, critics state parents cannot hold EMOs accountable (Gluckman, 2003).

Most literature regarding EMOs doesn’t appear to take a critical perspective or study the actual outcome of such organizations, but rather the majority of literature addressed instead the organizational effectiveness and structural changes of such organizations. Those articles that did take a more critical look at EMOs were interested in their ability to deliver on promises regarding student achievement (Garcia, et al., 2009), their role in the larger push by districts to use privatization as a method of reform (Cook, 2001), and if similar trends were occurring outside the United States (Fitz & Fitz, 2003).

One reason for this may be the lack of a standard way to accurately compare the outcomes of EMOs across districts, states, and nations. In considering how to judge outcomes of EMOs there are many intervening factors, which often leads schools and researchers to default to standardized test scores as the sole measurement of success. Larkin (2016) further explains the issue:

“A measurement of success is a required element of competition, and competition is the driving force behind the educational free market. In theory, the academic achievement of schools will increase when the schools are put in competition with one another. Most states that have adopted the educational free market theory into their legislation do so in the form of charter schools. The measurement of achievement in these charters is the same as the measurement used in traditional schools, scores on state mandated standardized tests. Therefore, researchers tend to use state standardized assessment scores as the tool for measuring the success of the schools and for comparing the schools.”

It is well documented that standardized tests offer little insight into the abilities of an individual student and are a highly inaccurate measurement tool, especially of students of color, as standardized tests are usually written in ways that benefit white students.

Those studies that do attempt to critically consider the outcomes of EMOs come to a mix of conclusions. Green, et al., (2009) found EMOs and school choice policies such as charter schools were an ineffective tool for remedying “failing schools” and recommends states implement a race-based funding tool instead. Sandoloski (2011) found varying academic outcomes for students in EMOs when relying solely on test scores and “years of growth” in the subjects of math and reading. Considering the type of education services and manner in which they are provided, Steketee (2004) found “there is little evidence that for-profit school management corporations offer substantially better services than those offered by traditional public providers. Neither is there convincing data to suggest that for-profit providers are able to offer a similar quality of services in a more efficient manner.” Fleischman & Heppen (2009), when conducting a systematic review of effectiveness and quality of seven EMOs, found only one had a “moderate rating for the overall effectiveness on student achievement” while the other EMOs received a rating of either “Zero” or “No rating,” which signified “a lack of strong research that demonstrates positive effects on student outcomes.” They concluded that, “as a

whole there is not yet reliable evidence that EMOs can have a positive impact at the high school level” (Fleischman & Heppen, 2009).

This study is meant to serve as one bridge between these two bodies of literature regarding globalization, marketization, and competition and EMOs by specifically considering competition framing in examining how EMOs present themselves through their websites.



## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to fully answer the research questions presented this study will rely on two different theoretical lenses when engaging in the explanation and social analysis portion of the CDA. Those concepts will be: accountability/audit culture and conflict theory. These theories were chosen because they provided for a rich and diverse analysis of the discourse found on the EMO websites. Each theory is discussed briefly below.

#### **Accountability and Audit Culture**

Accountability and audit culture are two terms that are used in conjunction with one another and sometimes interchangeably by theorists. Ball (2003) aptly defines these concepts as:

“ . . . a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgments, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change based on rewards and sanctions (both material and symbolic). The performances (of individual subjects or organizations) serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of ‘quality,’ or ‘moments’ of promotion or inspection.”

Broadly, accountability and audit culture “insist upon endlessly intensified cycles of planning, measurement, assessment, and evaluation” (Saltmarsh, 2012). Basically, accountability and audit culture demands an outside, measurable verification of events. Theorists that study audit culture, argue that the audit has become more than a measurement tool, but is now a form of governance as it is used to articulate what is valued, set the bar for productivity and performance, reinforce an image of control, and ultimately creates a framework in which policymakers can judge and make sense of events (Power, 1994). According to Ball (2003) this can entail everything from

appraisal meetings and annual reviews to data collecting, inspections, and peer reviews.

Similarly, accountability can also come in different forms. Suspitsyna (2010) notes, for the purpose of contrast, market accountability “is achieved through provision of services and financial management” while political accountability involves “direct contact with voters and responsiveness through elected officials.” Overall Suspitsyna (2010) identifies several types of accountability: market, political, bureaucratic, professional, consumer, and managerial, and argues different actors may require different types of accountability, or prioritize one type over another.

Most theorists who conceive of accountability and audit culture today attribute its roots to the work of French philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault. Foucault’s work focused on governmentality and self-entrepreneurialism, or rather the relationships that lead to societal control (Suspitsyna, 2010). Though many theorists who have been critical of accountability and audit culture find an inconsistency in its current implementation and Foucault’s original conception (Ball, 2003; Holligan, 2010; Suspitsyna, 2010). As Holligan (2010) notes, Foucault thought self-auditing would prevail and would lead to government power being exercised from a “distance.” That as people individually audited themselves there would be less direct government involvement and a “reduced role of the state” (Suspitsyna, 2010). While the current implementation of accountability and audit measures through law often “depends on a greater state involvement” in areas like educational affairs (Suspitsyna, 2010). Ball (2003) further critiques the accountability and audit culture movement, noting that while these reforms are often presented as providing greater freedoms and removing constraints it would be a “misrecognition to see these reforms processes as simply a strategy of de-regulation, they are processes of re-

regulation. Not the abandonment by the State of its controls but the establishment of a new form of control.”

The rise in accountability and audit culture is often attributed to the neoliberal desire for economic accountability, which leads to “an endless cycle of record-keeping, documentation, verification, and other technologies of professional accountabilities” (Saltmarsh, 2012). Thus audits have become “the main expression of accountability in today’s global society” and a natural bi-product of globalization and marketization (Power, 1994). According to Suspitsyna (2010) “neoliberal governmentality is deeply suspicious” which leads to a “preoccupation with checking, accounting, and monitoring,” the “essential characteristic of the audit culture that pervades institutions and organizations” today. This is another criticism of accountability and audit culture, that they undermine trust within society and inherently breeds distrust which gives rise to greater surveillance from the outside (Holligan, 2010). Further, there is concern as to who it is that “determines what is to count as a valuable, effective or satisfactory performance and what measures or indicators are considered valid” (Ball, 2003). Accountability and audit culture replace experts and internal motivations with outside requirements so that “commitment and service are of dubious worth within the new policy regime” (Ball, 2003). Suspitsyna (2010) argues that audit culture “challenges the grounds of the legitimacy of knowledge and operates on mistrust,” which when applied to the education sector for example, leads “the authority of teachers and academics, who are the producers of professional and disciplinary knowledge” to be “superseded by bureaucratic authority in judging the validity of that knowledge.”

Of further concern for critics is that accountability and audit culture “are in many important ways self-referring,” meaning when they fail, further accountability and audits are prescribed (Holligan, 2010). Put another way, “audit shapes conceptions of accountability which

favour audit as the solution,” meaning even when audits fail, the result is simply a call for more audits (Power, 1994). Holligan (2010) references an apt metaphor to express this point noting that to “find out the truth about the world, one does not read the same paper twice, but this is the kind of verification regime which audit appears to adopt.” Why, because audit promises “control” to governments who are concerned with achieving the highest quality assurances possible in order to meet their growing preoccupation with competitiveness (Power, 1994). Critics note that accountability is ‘the most advocated and least analyzed’ notion, as it is “propagated by the government, industry, and business as a necessary and unquestionable good, it is in principle difficult to oppose” (Suspitsyna, 2010). This makes accountability and audit culture difficult to critically analyze and combat in specific fields, theorists note critical interrogations of accountability and audit culture seem to be growing (Suspitsyna, 2010).

Looking specifically at the field of education, Suspitsyna (2010) argues accountability and audit culture have become engrained “as an education reform, a movement, and a social trend,” which “places a strong value on transparency, measurement, and evaluation.” Accountability in schools is not new. Suspitsyna (2010) argues that broadly under neoliberalism a new wave of reforms began, first with calls for an increase in professionalism, licensing, and accreditation agencies, which gave way to the desire to audit and provide accountability through scientific, measurable means. Suspitsyna (2010) argues such a development can clearly be seen in the field of education. Similarly, Weiner (2000) points to the 1970s when individual states within the United States began instituting “state-wide tests of students’ competence” as a means to measure and identify success. Since then, Suspitsyna (2010) notes the United States has been a frontrunner in enacting accountability and audit policies aimed at “controlling and managing

educational quality,” specifically pointing to The No Child Left Behind legislation of 2002 and the Commission on the Future of Higher Education of 2005 as recent examples.

Practically, within schools this means, “the measurement of a school’s success depends on its production of evidence,” demonstrating it is doing things efficiently and correctly in relation to the standards provided (Keddie, 2013). Such evidence often takes the form of student performance data and is neatly captured in charts and graphs, “akin to a business model of output representation, students are reduced to a form and process that is auditable – to be efficiently measured, evaluated and governed” (Keddie, 2013). Thus Suspitsyna (2010) argues accountability and audit within education has been “endowed with potent powers” as:

“it is said to bring progress, high academic achievement, and success; it leads to access and brings difference for students; it helps students to graduate and schools to improve; it makes businesses succeed and it helps Americans achieve dreams. The absence of accountability portends devastating consequences on a large scale: a loss of students behind averages, an increasing achievement gap for poor and minority students, and a threat to the preeminence of the US higher education system. Thus, accountability becomes both a means and an end of policy-making in education.”

Again, the practical effect of accountability and audit culture in education has not been fully examined, according to Suspitsyna (2010) most literature explores what accountability should look like in schools, focused on developing conceptual or practical models of accountability, without even addressing why accountability has entered the field of education or whether it should be here at all. Overall the literature showed four large criticisms of accountability and audit culture within the field of education: it leads to performativity rather than increased “success,” it promotes standardization over innovation, it undermines high quality teaching, and it inherently furthers existing inequalities in schooling.

As a result of this juxtaposition and the propagation of accountability into education policy and practice, Power (1994) and other theorists argue that accountability and audit culture

have become a “new form of image management rather than a basis for substantive analysis,” for the competition state. Ball (2003) defines performativity as “the translation of complex social processes and events into simple figures or categories of judgment,” in a way that is “misleadingly objective and hyper-rational.” Ball (2003) notes that accountability and audit culture have brought into the field of education a whole new vocabulary that practitioners must learn to speak in order to communicate their successes. Practitioners must now submit to “regular appraisal and review and performance comparisons” while achievement is now “a set of productivity targets,” and so on (Ball, 2003). Ball (2003) notes that it isn’t just discourse that is changed, rather in order to be audited, organizations must make themselves into a commodity that can be audited. This Ball (2003) argues invites fabrications, or versions of the organization or its people that does not exist truly, but is instead a directed and purposefully produced version of an organization so that it might be “held accountable.” For Ball (2003) these “fabrications conceal as much as they reveal. They are ways of presenting oneself within particular registers of meaning, within a particular economy of meaning in which only certain possibilities of being have value.” Elaborating further, Ball (2003) notes:

“acts of fabrication and the fabrications themselves become embedded in and are reproduced by systems of recording and reporting on practice. They also work to exclude other things which do not ‘fit’ into what is intended to be represented or conveyed. They may be reactive or defensive or satisfying, as suggested above, or innovative and proactive or differentiating. They must render the organization into a recognizable rationality”

What Ball (2003) argues then is that the very act of participating in an audit limits what information and aspects of an organization will be considered and included in the creation of the crucially-needed “evidence” which means ultimately the measures will be an unrealistic fabrication in that they do not consider the whole of the organization.

Keddie (2013) reiterates Ball (2003) point. Keddie (2013) analyzed data from interviews with key staff members at a school to find how situated, professional, and external contexts impacted the school's "capacity to thrive amid the external demands of the performative audit culture." Those interviews revealed the school staff had internalized "audit logic" as a means of competing and reputation, rather than as a way to improve school practices and success (Keddie, 2013). Which Keddie (2013) argues generates a "sociality of anxiety – related to the uncertainty, fragility and investment associated with schools' compliance with, and positioning within, these particular fields of judgment and mechanisms of surveillance and control." Keddie (2013) argues that schools "perform" accountability and audit processes out of a desire to compete and not be left behind.

Other theorists argue that audit culture in education is less about performativity and is more about how education work gets communicated with outsiders, whether it be to policy makers, governments, the general public, or to the larger global audience (Sobe, 2012). Sobe (2012) argues that economic anxieties compounded by the linked nature of "individual and national success to the global economy," leads schools to participate in and perpetuate audits such as high stakes tests, with the motivation communicating "competitiveness" (Sobe, 2012).

Another common critique of accountability and audit culture in education is that it promotes standardization rather than innovation in the field. Broadly, Suspitsyna (2010) argues that schools are only motivated to implement accountability due to a desire to "fit-in" and in order to properly compete in the current educational market where accountability is a standard practice. By implementing accountability measures, schools are "thereby enhancing their legitimacy among peers and the public, contributing to their competitiveness, and ensuring their survival," indicating accountability in schools is growing out of a desire to conform with what is

now deemed the appropriate practice in education (Suspitsyna, 2010). Now considering how schools approach accountability, instead of audit culture cultivating creative ways to measure education and capture schools' successes, theorists argue accountability has simply become "synonymous with standardized testing and student growth" (Suspitsyna, 2010). The impacts of this standardization are not just seen in how success is measured, but also in what the field of education produces. Holligan (2010) notes, "the intellectual serendipity upon which blue-skies research often grows is struggling to maintain its foothold in the academy as core funding shifts towards scientific research deemed to have more probable outcomes for delivering economic growth." Lastly, to this point, Saltmarsh (2012) argues that while accountability and audit policy are set centrally, they are "nonetheless generally executed at a personal level." For Saltmarsh (2012) the processes of accountability and audit, though executed on the personal level, are used to make impersonal, universal claims, producing a standardize conclusion.

Critics also argue that accountability and audit culture may be undermining excellent teaching by requiring the production of evidence of such good teaching. The argument is that accountability and audit require teachers to use valuable time and energy on documenting and proving their excellent teaching, which takes away from the time and energy they have to actually teach excellently. With less time available to teach, excellent teachers, in order to survive, "devote energy to establishing audit trails just in case" they are challenged (Holligan, 2010). This can lead to teachers "game playing," and breeds a culture of "deception" in which "persons and systems develop strategies in order to withhold material" so "what is available publicly is quite different from the actual" organizational life (Holligan, 2010). In effect, excellent teachers lose valuable time and energy, without genuine accountability actually being secured (Holligan, 2010). This can lead to teachers experiencing "a kind of values



schizophrenia” by which “commitment, judgment and authenticity within practice are sacrificed for impression and performance” (Ball, 2003). Similarly, “teachers are no longer encouraged to have a rationale for practice,” or account for themselves the “meaningfulness of what they do” (Ball, 2003). For excellent teachers, “the alienation of self is linked to the displacement of individual qualities, mechanisms of introjection, by responsiveness, external contingencies, the requirements of performativity,” with a result of “inauthentic practice and relationships” (Ball, 2003).

Lastly, critics argue the implementation of accountability and audit culture inherently increases inequality in schools. Overall, Suspitsyna (2010) found that many critics find an “ambiguous relationship between educational inputs and outputs” and “maintain that outcome-based accountability exemplified by high-stakes testing does not narrow socioeconomic and racial gaps in scholastic achievement.” Ball (2003) notes desire to demonstrate growth in students in order to validate performance means school managers and teachers may be less likely to “invest in work with children with special needs where the margins for improved performance are limited.” Ball (2003) argues that in the logic of accountability and audit culture, “an organization will only spend money where measurable returns are likely to be achieved.” As such already disadvantaged populations may be pushed to the wayside in the fight to produce evidence that demonstrates success. Further, Keddie (2013) argues for teachers in schools that “serve disadvantaged communities” the mechanisms of accountability and audit “remain highly disempowering” as they breed mistrust by accusing or blaming “teachers for students’ poor academic performance.” This could lead to talented teachers moving to schools where mechanisms of accountability and audit easily demonstrate success.

Accountability and audit culture as a lens in this study sheds light on the questions of “why?” and “to what end?” EMOs use the language of competition and economics to promote their schools via their websites. Prior to the completion of the study we predicted EMOs would use the language of accountability and audit culture to create a reputation of success and demonstrate their value by producing evidence of their successes. EMOs may be communicating in the language of accountability and audit in order to compete in a market where such requirements are conceived of as standard, in hopes of promoting their products to education providers (school districts, schools, public officials, teachers, etc.) and education consumers (families and students).

### **Conflict Theory**

Conflict theory was also used as a lens to bring meaning to the data produced by the CDA of the eight EMO websites. Conflict theory is a sociological theory which acknowledges society is held together partly by “shared values and collective agreement,” but places significant emphasis on the “ability of dominant groups to impose their will on subordinate groups through force, cooptation, and manipulation,” and the struggle that follows (Sadovnik, 2011). In this view, it is power that holds society together and motivates, specifically “economic, political, cultural, and military power” (Sadovnik, 2011). With this emphasis on struggle, conflict theory argues groups are consistently and constantly in a battle for access to power and status, as well as the resources and benefits that flow from them. Bratton (1997) presents a clear and concise summary of some of the theorists and what each identifies as the precipitants of conflict:

“Kuhn (incommensurable viewpoints); Dahrendorf and Collins (conflicts of interest, i.e., different interest groups with different goals, differential distribution of authority); Lockwood (discontinuity in distribution of scarce resources); Coser (dissent and reaction to what is perceived as sick in the body social); Marx (bower differentials and authority issues); Weber (deprived wanting upward mobility); Simmel (dissociative processes,

hostile impulse, instincts of hate, envy, desire and need, as well as disturbances and damages); and Turner (outburst of frustrations).”

Bratton (1997) merges all of these “triggers of conflict” into three groups: “(1) power differentials, (2) scarce resources, and (3) different interest groups having different goals.” For Bratton (1997) and other theorists, “such disharmony is a precondition” and root cause of social conflict.

More specifically, Marx considered the class system created by industrialization and urbanization and saw class struggle as inevitable due to class differences (Sadovnik, 2011). Other theorists found Marx’s ideas to be incomplete, as they did not capture the “complex ways human beings form hierarchies and belief systems that make these hierarchies seem just and inevitable” (Sadovnik, 2011). These theorists argue that status and class position are equally important in this struggle for power. Further others note other forces complicate conflict, for instance the State is able to exercise political and military power “without direct reference to the wishes of the dominant classes,” and bureaucracy has become a dominant authority in the modern state (Sadovnik, 2011). In this study the focus on “struggle,” between classes for power and the three triggers of conflict are all drawn on to interpret the discourse presented.

Considering conflict theory within education specifically, under Marx’s theory, “Schools are similar to social battlefields, where students struggle against teachers, teachers against administrators, and so on” (Sadovnik, 2011). Education may be a channel by which to access power and status. As such different groups covet control over education entry and success as a means to an end. Many theorists argue that as an access channel education reflects the values of capitalism including hierarchy, social control, and a division or stratification of labor, which promotes those with privilege over others without equality (Sadovnik, 2011). In this way some

theorists see a direct correlation between how society is organized and how schools are organized, which means, “until society is fundamentally changed, there is little hope of real school reform” (Sadovnik, 2011). Similar to the Marxist perspective, Weiner (2007) seems to take issue with the argument that education reform is the only way to address income inequality, or class stratifications, by pointing instead to a need to first address the economic and political systems in which schools are located. Ultimately, some argue that “school processes at the micro level result in the reproduction of social stratification at the macro level,” which means some students, specifically those from working-class backgrounds, are at a disadvantage in schooling (Sadovnik, 2011).

Contemporary conflict theory agrees that school is a social battlefield, but that these “antagonisms” and the “real” power relations in schools are muted by the inherent authority and power of schools, and are cloaked by the achievement ideology, which holds “that schools promote learning and sort and select students according to their abilities, not according to their social status” (Sadovnik, 2011). The focus in school reform then becomes one of “status competition and organizational constraints” in schools, with the ultimate question of “what should be the goal of education: training individuals for employment or for thinking” or “are these two goals compatible” (Sadovnik, 2011).

Some contemporary conflict theorists argue that public schooling expanded and has become mandatory due to status group struggles, so that school credentials are now “primarily status symbols, rather than indicators of actual achievement” (Sadovnik, 2011). Other theorists argue further that the status that can be obtained from a college degree is more important to employers than actual technical skill, which leads to a “spiraling relationship” between education credentials and status (Sadovnik, 2011). In effect, theorists argue “education is increasingly used

by dominant groups to secure more advantageous places in the occupational and social structure for themselves and their children” (Sadovnik, 2011).

Weiner (2007) similarly points to findings from the U.S. National Adult Literacy Survey, which concluded that education “provided an inadequate explanation for the differential earnings of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and European Americans, as well as men and women, failing to account for ethnic and gender inequality in employment and earnings,” indicating “that most of the effect of obtaining educational credentials operated independently of cognitive skills, as indexed by adult literacy.” Similarly, Servage (2009) discussing Collins (1979) notes that the increase in post-secondary credentialing was attributed to “an increasingly complex system of professional competition and closure” rather than “an expanding need for higher learning.” Further, Servage (2009) notes Collins argues that higher education continues a “stratified system of labour wherein economic rewards are the product of social or cultural capital, not the value of one’s skills.” This phenomenon is called “credentialing” and hints that neither goal- training individuals for employment or for thinking- is being met by education.

Other contemporary conflict theorists emphasize the effect of “cultural capital” on the status of a group or individuals, arguing that cultural capital is passed on by families and schools which are designed to reflect the interests of elites (Sadovnik, 2011). The point being that if “cultural characteristics of individuals and groups are significant indicators of status and class position” then schools can “pass on to graduates specific social identities” solely through the school’s power of reputation for serving elites (Sadovnik, 2011). Thus it is not so much about what is being learned by students, but the reputation and power of the institution at which they are learning (Sadovnik, 2011). Wiener (2007) points to another study that considered desegregated schools, economic mobility, and acquisition of academic skills. In that study,

researchers found attending a desegregated school had significant effects for African-American students in terms of social mobility and opportunities (Weiner, 2007). Partly because of the “social confidence and networks and skills they developed in school, black students who had attended desegregated schools in grades K-12 were more likely to be working in white collar and professional jobs in the private sector, rather than in the blue collar and government positions held by black students who had attended segregated schools” (Weiner, 2007).

Conflict theory as a lens in this study sheds light on the questions of “why?” and “to what end?” EMOs use the language of competition and economics to promote their schools via their websites. Prior to the completion of the study we predicted EMOs would use language to create a connection between a “quality” education and an expanded access to status, power, and employment. EMOs may be directly appealing to this desire for power when they use competition framing to promote their products to education providers (school districts, schools, public officials, teachers, etc.) and education participants (families and students).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is to examine how EMOs use competition framing and an economic argument to justify and promote school choice and charter school policies. It pursues how competition framing occurs within education, the possible effects of such language on education stakeholders, and the specific contexts and different interests being served by such framing in education. Ultimately asking, what is the effect of such framing on educational equity for students, can competition motivate us to expand educational equity (Darling-Hammond, 2007) or does the consumerism of education inherently mean, “someone has to fail” (Labaree, 2010)?

This study will analyze eight EMOs’ websites. *Profiles for For-Profit and Nonprofit Education Management Organizations*, Fourteenth Edition – 2011-2012, produced by the National Education Policy Center, was used to identify all the possible EMOs. While this report is dated, it was used simply to identify possible EMOs. The actual discourse analyzed was current.

The report divides EMOs into two categories: for-profit and nonprofit. Within these categories the report groups EMOs as large, medium, and small based on the number of schools operated by the EMO. A small EMO manages three or fewer schools, a medium EMO manages between four and nine schools, and a large EMO manages 10 or more schools. During the 2011-2012 academic year, there were 97 for-profit EMOs operating in the United States: 17 large, 21 medium, and 59 small. At the same time, there were 201 nonprofit EMOs operating in the United

States: 31 large, 68 medium, and 102 small. One EMO from each category (for-profit large, medium, small, and nonprofit large, medium, small) was chosen, and a second EMO from each of the large categories (for-profit large and nonprofit large) was chosen. Two large EMOs were chosen because of their proportion of impact. In 2011-12, large for-profit EMOs operated schools, which served 78 percent of the students enrolled in for-profit schools, while large nonprofit EMOs operated schools, which served 54 percent of the students enrolled in nonprofit schools respectively.

The eight EMOs were chosen randomly. The eight EMOs and their websites are as follows:

#### For-Profit

##### Large

- Edison Learning, Inc. (<http://edisonlearning.com>)
- Leona Group, LLC (<http://www.leonagroup.com/index.htm>)

##### Medium

- Midwest Management Group (<http://midwest-mgt.com>)

##### Small

- Heritage Academy, Inc. (<http://heritageacademyaz.com>)

#### Nonprofit

##### Large

- KIPP Foundation (<http://www.kipp.org>)
- Summit Academy Management (<http://www.summitacademies.com>)

##### Medium

- Options for Youth, Inc. (<http://www.ofy.org>)

##### Small

- Choice Foundation (<http://www.choicefoundation.org>)

The discourses analyzed are public on each of the websites. The discourse included any material (visual and textual) present on the website which is used to communicate the vision, mission, and goals of each EMO. This included discourse labeled on each of the websites' home page and any page labeled "vision," "mission," "strategic goals," "statement of purpose," "founder's statement," "our philosophy," etc. It also included any discourse describing school



choice, voucher programs, or charter schools. One reason text from websites is rarely studied is because it can so frequently be changed or updated. In order to capture the text, the websites were accessed on the same day and screen shots were taken and compiled of all relevant text on the website on that day. One website was accessed on a different day due to confusion over the correct website for the EMO- Heritage Academy.

These discourses were analyzed using critical discourse analysis (CDA) as described by Fairclough (2013) and as adopted by Janks (1999) and Neiger, et al. (2011). CDA was chosen with the goal of observing more than just the sum of the discourse's parts (Janks, 1999). In following Fairclough's model (2013), each text was considered in three stages: a text analysis (description), processing analysis (interpretation), and social analysis (explanation). All the while the analysis was guided by the three questions of this study: how competition framing and economic language occur within education, the possible effects of such language use on education stakeholders (parents, students, teachers), and the specific historical contexts and different interests being served by such framing in education.

The text analysis followed the road map used by Janks (1999) and Neiger, et al. (2011), to actively read with and against the text. First the visual signs were considered, as many websites are organized in a way that is outside the normal blocked text found in books/articles, and often include visuals including pictures and charts (Janks, 1999). While many of the discourses included videos, due to the limitations of this study, this study did not analyze the content of those videos, but only considered the thumbnail, or the static shot before the video plays. Next the textual signs were considered, using the checklist designed by Janks (1999): lexicalization, patterns of transitivity, use of active and passive voice, use of nominalization, choice of mood, choices of modality or polarity, thematic structure of the text, information focus,

and cohesion devices. While the check list was used on each passage, overall lexicalization, use of active and passive voice, choice of mood, thematic structure of the text and information focus proved to be the most enlightening. All the while the goal was to find and establish patterns within the discourse (Janks, 1999). Then the interpretation analysis, which requires consideration of the situational and intertextual contexts, looking largely for signs of “textual hybridity” was completed (Janks, 1999). Finally drawing on the concepts of audit culture and conflict theory as lenses in analysis; the explanation and social analysis of each discourse was completed. The next chapter discusses general findings, each of the eight EMOs analyzed, and some unique examples from each website discourse. Chapter six then compares and contrasts these findings to tease out any patterns or differences in the discourse.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter first describes the general findings, then describes in turn the eight EMO websites that were analyzed while pulling out some examples from each website to illustrate the overall findings of the study including examples of competition framing language, economic and marketization language, and applications of accountability/audit culture and conflict theory. The websites will be discussed in order, large for-profits first, then large nonprofits, medium for-profits, medium nonprofits, small for-profits, and finally small non-profits.

#### **Findings**

Taking a quantitative look across the eight website discourses we found overall a greater diversity in the communication of these EMOs than hypothesized. First there was great diversity in the audience or market each EMO website seemed to be targeting. We had assumed EMOs would largely target school districts/schools, as they are the actors who ultimately would hire an EMO. We also assumed some EMOs would target teachers as possible employees, families/students as the consumers or participants in education, and lastly community members due to the public contention around EMOs, charter schools, and school choice. Based on the content of the discourse from each website, 38% of websites had a primary target market of teachers and families/students; 38% had a primary target market of school districts/schools; and the remaining 24% had a primary target market of just families/students. Community members did not appear to be the primary target market for any of the EMOs, even the large EMOs whose

prevalence and greater impact due to number of schools managed could have indicated a higher likelihood to target community members as a primary audience for their website discourse.

Similarly only one of the four large EMOs examined seemed to be targeting school districts/schools as their main audience, which is surprising since as stated above school districts/schools are the people hiring and paying EMOs for their services. The two EMO websites whose primary audience appeared to be school districts/schools were both for-profit EMOs, one large and one medium.

Overall across all the EMO websites we found less blatant references to competition and use of competition language, especially global competition, than hypothesized. Of the eight EMO websites analyzed, only 25% referenced global or international competition directly within the discourse used to describe their organization. This was lower than hypothesized. The two EMOs whose websites directly referenced global competition are classified as large EMOs, each impacting more than 30,000 students during the 2011-12 school year, though one is a for-profit and the other is a nonprofit EMO. But when expanding competition include a reference to global/international competition or to national competition within the United States, the percentage jumped to include 75% of the EMOs analyzed. The two EMO websites that did not reference competition at the global or national level were both non-profit EMOS, one large and one medium. When EMOs did directly reference competition at the global/international or national level, it was usually used to describe student outcomes, for example from ELI's website, "We strive to shape a world in which every student, regardless of socioeconomic circumstance, has access to an excellent education and the ability to attain life skills that unlock their potential to powerfully impact our global society." Other times the national landscape was referenced to justify the existence of the EMO and their services, for example consider this statement from

MMG's website, "Midwest is committed to helping schools and students thrive in today's challenging environment. Let us show you how we can help empower your school for the future." These were the two main ways in which websites used competition language.

Through the lens of accountability/audit culture, we considered if and how EMOs chose to make measurable student outcome data available on their websites. Overall, 63% of EMO websites published some sort of measurable student outcome data on their website, while 50% chose to prominently displayed measurable student outcome data points on their websites. An example of prominently displaying measurable student outcome data comes from KIPP whose website included three large numbers with a corresponding fact below them such as, "4x" below which text read, "KIPP alumni graduate college at 4x the rate of their peers." The percentage of EMO websites displaying student data was again less than what we would have predicted based on the trends in education. Turning to the lens of conflict theory, we looked at whether EMOs addressed the circumstances of students or mentioned a target population of minority or low-income students. In fact 63% of the EMO websites mentioned a target student population of minority or low-income students.

The pictures EMOs chose to feature on their websites were also analyzed. Taken together, across all the EMO websites analyzed, 65% of the pictures used on EMO websites included students. In fact two EMOs chose to use solely pictures of students on their websites. Both those EMOs were nonprofit EMOs. Again, considering all the pictures found across all eight EMO websites, 16% were images of graduation ceremonies. Across all the websites, this percentage seemed low given the current educational focus on graduation and college acceptance, but for EMOs whose discourse promoted graduation, the images of graduation were very prevalent. For instance, ELI directly references graduation and college-readiness on their

website, and this theme is continued in the pictures chosen as 67% of the pictures ELI used were images of graduation. Another recent trend in education has been the rise of technology use in the classroom, yet only 9% of all the pictures featured across all eight EMO websites include technology of some kind. This seemed surprisingly low given the amount of technology found in most schools today and the technological world we live in.

Lastly from the pictures, the subjects' racial appearances were coded as white or person of color. Some 50% of EMO websites featured pictures that included more subjects of color than white subjects, 38% of the EMO websites used pictures with more white subjects than subjects of color, and 12.5% of the EMO websites used pictures that portrayed white subjects and subjects of color equally. Looking solely at the racial appearances of adult-aged subjects in these pictures, across all the pictures used by EMO websites, when an adult-aged subject was featured they were 1.5 times more likely to be white subjects than subjects of color. It is interesting that most EMOs chose to use pictures that included equal or more images of subjects of color than white subjects, and yet in terms of racial appearances of adults, the percentage of subjects of color presented across all EMOs were significantly lower than the percentage of white subjects presented. Especially troubling is that in the majority of pictures, adult-aged subjects were portrayed as teachers, principals, and other important staff roles at schools. What does it mean to students if these roles are being portrayed as belonging to white subjects in a significant amount of these pictures featured on the EMO websites?

Each EMO and samples from each website discourse are discussed below.

### **Edison Learning Inc.**

Edison Learning Inc. (ELI) is a large, for-profit EMO (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). ELI is based in Nashville, Tennessee and manages some 53 schools, of which 37 are charter schools

and 16 are public school district schools (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). This means ELI impacted some 31,445 students during the 2011-12 school year in 17 different states including California, Colorado, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia, and Wisconsin (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). ELI's website offered the densest amount of text of the eight websites analyzed. Also interesting was that a majority of the research literature on EMOs chose to offer ELI as an example or illustration of an EMO. This may be because ELI is one of the larger, more enduring EMOs in that it has been around for over two decades.

From ELI's website the examined text included the home page (that is the first page a searcher is directed to upon entering the website), the "Mission" page, the "Solutions" page, and the "Values" page. The "Values" page also included links to eight separate pages for each of the eight values. Those eight "value" pages were not included in this analysis. Overall the discourse analyzed from ELI's website contained many examples of competition framing language and illustrates applications of both accountability/audit culture and conflict theory. Unlike other of the websites analyzed, the target audience of ELI's discourse appears to be school districts/schools whom ELI refers to as "partners."

ELI's website home page displays the phrase "Changing the Conversation," which is superimposed on an image of three young people of color (two boys/one girl) who are engaged in an activity using individual computer screens. They all appear to be wearing the same grey polo shirts. None of the young people look at the camera, they are engrossed in their individual computer screens. Based on the matching clothing, likely school uniforms, and the fact that this is from an EMO website, we can properly infer that these young people are students. Then consider the interaction between the image and the main headline "Changing the Conversation."

Based solely on the visual and textual elements, it is fair to wonder as a reader, what conversation? Who is having the conversation? Based on the headline alone there is no way to discern, but keeping in mind the *A Nation at Risk* report and the continued panic that the United States may be falling behind the world in education, especially the education of minority and low-income students, it may be this is the conversation being referenced. The image does not bring the reader any clarity. Do the three students pictured demonstrate the current conversation, or are they meant to demonstrate where ELI wants the conversation to go?

Looking further, below the headline, in smaller print, reads: “We provide our partners with progressive solutions aimed at eliminating the persistent disparity of academic opportunities for students confronted with socioeconomic challenges.” This text seems to reinforce the previous interpretation that the conversation ELI aims to change is about that of the United States failing low-income and minority students. It is interesting though that there is no clear subject mentioned – who is confronting students with socioeconomic challenges? ELI leaves that ambiguous. Also found in this text is the repetition of words that imply a struggle such as changing, eliminating, persistent, disparity, confronted, and challenges. Is ELI positioning themselves in the struggle? It appears yes, as a “partner” who can provide “solutions” to the struggle. By describing their solutions as “progressive” ELI implies that not every solution offered is progressive, hinting at the ability of school districts and schools to seek out options in the educational market.

Later on ELI’s “Solutions” page of their website the following text appears: “Charter and Turnaround,” “Partnering With Districts And Charters To Improve Underperforming Schools,” “We offer a spectrum of services, from fully managed schools to targeted consulting. We implement our ‘Whole School Design’ that enhances the staff and learning environment while



driving superior student outcomes.” Underneath the text is an “Our Results” button. To claim that “superior student outcomes” is a result of ELI’s “Whole School Design” is to make a claim as to the value of ELI’s product, and they make that claim in the currency of audit culture with student outcomes, “results,” and “evidence.” These are just two examples of the competition framing, conflict, and accountability/audit discourse ELI’s website included.

### **The Leona Group, LLC**

The Leona Group, LLC (TLG) is another large, for-profit EMO (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). TLG is based in Phoenix, Arizona and during the 2011-12 school year TLG managed 68 schools in five states- Arizona, Florida, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). All of the schools TLG manages are charter schools (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). During the 2011-12 school year TLG impacted some 19,538 students (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). While TLG and ELI are both considered large EMOs it is important to note that ELI impacts almost twice the number of students that TLG does.

From TLG’s website the home page, the “Our Philosophy” page, and the “Organizational History” page were analyzed. The discourse from TLG’s website was distinct as it made no direct reference to student outcomes or test scores, nor did it directly reference competing at a global level. This may have been because TLG’s website target market seems to be families/students and teachers, rather than school districts/schools. It did include an extensive discussion of the national education landscape in the United States though, including statements regarding the marketization of education in the United States. For example, TLG’s website says in part, “Our philosophy about schools is that every family deserves quality choice in free public education.” Here the verb deserves is an interesting choice because it conjures up images of

taking something back or regaining something that was meant to be yours all along. Taking on the lens of conflict theory, inherent in the act of “deserving” something is a struggle, a struggle for ownership and access, so when TLG says families deserve choice in education they are positioning choice as a channel for families to gain ownership and access to power. Under conflict theory then it would be natural for families to want choice, because it is natural to want more power.

Now consider this paragraph from TLG’s “Organizational History” page:

“The Leona Group is acutely aware of the fiscal and academic challenges that families, communities and educational institutions face today. As a national organization employing more than 2,200 team members and serving more than 60 schools in five states (Arizona, Florida, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio), TLG has made significant and positive strides toward improving the nation’s educational landscape, especially in high-need urban areas.”

Again, we are reminded of the *A Nation at Risk* debate, is the United States falling behind in educating our children, especially our low-income and minority children? The language used here implies not only that the answer to that question is yes, but that TLG is a solution to that problem. In the first sentence TLG states they are aware of the fiscal and academic challenges. Aware can signal simply the knowledge of something, or can indicate an effect on the mindset and decision making of a party. It is unclear which level of aware TLG means to suggest here. They then suggest two separate challenges, financial and academic, maybe as an attempt to separate the business side from the education side of schooling? Then TLG parses out the different stakeholders who they say are facing these two challenges, families/communities and educational institutions. It is interesting that they specifically include communities as a stakeholder, suggesting that education and schooling have a wider effect than just on the student/family and the institution itself. The second sentence is used to position TLG as a part of

the solution to this national problem. Of special interest is the phrase “improving the nation’s educational landscape.” This is the sentence that really reinforces the *A Nation at Risk* claims and paints the “challenges” from the previous sentence as more widespread, not just something families, schools, and communities are facing, but a “national” issue. Lastly, TLG notes they have “especially” been part of the solution in “high-need urban areas” either signaling their specific strides in that community or maybe acknowledging these challenges are more pressing in those communities.

### **KIPP Foundation**

KIPP Foundation (KIPP) is a large, nonprofit EMO based in San Francisco, California (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). In 2011-12, KIPP managed 98 charter schools, impacting 35,045 students in 21 different states (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). I have a personal connection to KIPP in that several of my colleagues from the program Teach for America have or currently work for KIPP. On the KIPP website discourse from the home page, the “What is a Charter School” page, and the “Our Approach” page was analyzed.

Competition framing language was present in the discourse from KIPP’s website, and the use of accountability and audit theory may shed light on the motivation for such language. KIPP states, “Our goal is to help students develop the knowledge, skills, and character strengths they need to succeed throughout their education and in the competitive world beyond.” Later on, KIPP notes that they “focus on character” explaining, “We believe that our students need both a strong academic foundation and well-developed character strengths to succeed in college and the world beyond.” Competition framing can be seen in the repeated statement that students are being prepared for the “competitive world beyond” and the “competitive world.” Implying that students eventually leave school and will enter the world where they are compared to others.

KIPP's focus seems to be on creating students who will "succeed" in that eventual environment. KIPP's use of visual text and images is consistent with this message as the majority of photos focus on students entering college and after. Even when KIPP attempts to lay out "evidence" as accountability and audit culture demands, they maintain this focus on post-secondary outcomes by including two statistics about college, "80,000 students currently enrolled in KIPP schools," "12,000 KIPP alumni currently attending college," and "KIPP alumni graduate college at 4x the rate of their peers." Through the lens of accountability and audit culture the use of these numerical facts can be viewed as an attempt to capture through measurable data what KIPP is and does. The last fact is most interesting because it again appeals to this "world beyond" and argues KIPP students are not just more likely than their peers to enter that world with a college degree, but four times as likely. This both reinforces this concept of a competitive world students need to be prepared for and portrays KIPP a successful preparer of students for that world.

### **Summit Academy Management**

Summit Academy Management (SAM) is another large, nonprofit EMO (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). SAM managed 26 charter schools during the 2011-12 school year, impacting some 3,515 students (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). SAM is based in Akron, Ohio (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). From SAM's website discourse was taken from the home page, the "Code of Conduct & Core Values" page, and the "Curriculum Approach" page.

The discourse from SAM's website was interesting in that there was no reference to competition on the national or global level, though the discourse included a focus on getting students onto "grade level" material so that they would be prepared for careers and life after school. Despite this general lack of competition framing language, using the lens of accountability and audit culture, the desire to offer "evidence" and "data" to demonstrate

legitimacy was seen in the discourse. At one point, SAM notes, “Summit Academy schools average over 90 hours of professional training annually.” This statement uses a numerical value to provide evidence of their credentials. Later SAM also notes, “Assessment data determines student tier placement and drives instructional decisions.” This statement may be an attempt to demonstrate the value SAM places on assessment data organizationally, or it may be an attempt to “check the box” on assessment data usage as that has become the norm in education. Either way the decision to include such a statement indicates a desire to illustrate that accountability and audit exist at some level at SAM. Lastly, under SAM’s “Code of Conduct & Core Values” they note as a code of conduct, “Hold yourself and each other accountable.” This may signify that not only does SAM expect to be held accountable, but that students and families should be holding themselves accountable. How EMOs demonstrate accountability and auditability varied across the website discourses.

### **Midwest Management Group Inc.**

The Midwest Management Group Inc. (MMG) is a medium, for-profit EMO (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). Based in Commerce Township, Michigan, MMG managed five charter schools, impacting 2,152 students during the 2011-12 school year (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). Discourse was analyzed from the home page and the “Our Philosophy” page of the MMG website.

There were two small illustrations to pull out of the discourse found on MMG’s website. First consider MMG’s use of the word and concept of choice in the declaration on their home page- “Michigan’s Charter Schools Have a Choice.” This is a unique use of the word choice. While in other EMOs’ website discourses the word choice seemed to refer to a family’s ability to make decisions about what specific school their student attends, here MMG uses choice as an option for Michigan Charter Schools, meaning it is an action taken by an organization at an

institutional level. The target market for MMG then is clearly educational institutions like school districts/schools, not families and students.

Keeping in mind the likely target market of educational institutions, examine the next few statements through a lens of accountability and audit culture as well as through conflict theory. In listing its characteristics, MMG includes “Responsive and Accountable to the School Board.” Considering accountability and audit culture, and possibly responding to one popular critique that EMOs and charter schools are often left unchecked, MMG is specifically stating who it is they are accountable to. Then, MMG lays out their business model and what they provide to Michigan Charter schools stating, “Our Business Model Gives Your Charter School or Public School Academy: Transparency, Flexibility, and Accountability.” The choice of these three characteristics could certainly be argued to demonstrate a marketization of education, as these are three aspects often demanded in the business world and demanded by audit culture. Again, naming these characteristics up front may be MMG’s response to some other popular critiques of EMOs and charter schools in general. MMG again repeats these points in saying, “With transparency, flexibility, and accountability, we put the power back in your hands ... where it belongs.” Using the lens of conflict theory, this reference to power is unique. It is not immediately clear whose hands MMG is speaking of. The school board’s hands possibly, as that is who will be holding MMG accountable? Or is it the chartering organization’s hands? Or the principal’s hands? In most of the literature we see power being discussed in terms of a parent’s or family’s ability to make educational choices for their child, while here MMG seems to be using the term power to refer to educational institutions’ abilities to act. Lastly consider the phrase “where it belongs.” If we have correctly identified MMG’s target market as educational institutions then under a lens of accountability and audit culture this statement may be serving as

a pivoting point, acknowledging that despite recent political and business interventions in education, the power should be with educational institutions.

### **Options for Youth, Inc.**

Options for Youth, Inc. (OFY) is a medium, non-profit EMO (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). OFY is based in Hesperia, California (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). In the 2011-12 school year OFY managed seven charter schools with some 10,029 students in California (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). Discourse from the OFY home page and “About Us” page was analyzed.

A paradox of sorts seems to exist between OYI’s narrative language and also its direct use of statistics to validate its legitimacy. Throughout OYI’s narrative language there was a focus on their “tailored,” “individualized,” “flexible,” and “alternative,” education options for students. The target audience of these sections appeared to be students as they emphasized personal interaction and connection, and used words like “inspire,” “dream,” and “hope.” As an example of this language, consider this paragraph from OYI’s “About Us” page:

“Ask any OFY Alum and they’ll likely tell you that their time at OFY taught them critical study and life skills and fostered a deep sense of pride and responsibility- click here for more from OFY Alumni. We welcome you to visit one of our centers so that you can witness the magic of true connection firsthand. For many students, OFY has been a beacon of hope after years of academic struggle, and we’re eternally grateful to have been a part of their success.”

Then directly to the right of this long block of narrative text is an image titled “By the Numbers” underneath which OFY lays out about eight numerical data points including: (1) “Savings to society,” “\$286 million total savings attributed to dropout recovery of last year’s graduation alone,” (2) “Collective acceptances to over 70 different colleges and universities!” (3) “711 average API score” and (4) “Community Service,” “7670 hours performed by seniors in the 2014-2015 school year alone.” Your average high school aged student may care about the rate of

college acceptances or the average state standardized test score in choosing a high school, but they likely would not care about “savings to society” or “community service.” Using the lens of accountability and audit culture the inclusion of these types of numerical data points may be an attempt by OFY to offer a collection of measurable evidence to demonstrate legitimacy. The difference though between these statistics and the narrative language found throughout the rest of the OFY discourse is striking. Possibly OFY has chosen to include these measurable data points in order to “check the box” or meet the new industry standard that demands measureable evidence of proof.

### **Heritage Academy, Inc.**

Heritage Academy, Inc. (HAI) is a small, for-profit EMO (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). HAI is located in Mesa, Arizona where it manages one charter school (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). During the 2011-12 school year HAI served some 639 students (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). Discourse from HAI’s website was taken from the home page and the “Founder’s Message” page. Consider this paragraph from the “Founder’s Message” page of HAI’s website:

“While teaching the academic disciplines, Heritage Academy is dedicated to instilling into the minds and hearts of our youth knowledge of and respect for the ideals and values of the great men and women of history, including those who founded the American nation. As they gain an appreciation of these people of accomplishment, they will be ready to provide the selfless service to their fellow citizens and to their country which will be required in the coming years to assist in restoring America’s greatness.”

While the discourse from HAI’s website did not explicitly reference international competition the focus on the “American Nation” and building “greatness,” “character,” “citizenship,” and “high standards” implies competition at both the national and international level. If HAI believed there were no element of competition they would not be placing such an emphasis on education as a means to citizenship and character in order to ultimately restore “America’s greatness.” It is



easy to assume the use of this specific lexicon may have been influenced by the 2016 presidential campaign in which Donald Trump ran and was elected under the slogan “Make America Great Again.”

A second word choice of interest was the use of the verb “build” or “building,” which was repeated throughout the discourse. For example, HAI’s tagline is “Building America’s Heroes.” HAI also notes they believe in “building sound character through strong families, strong communities, and a strong nation.” At another point, in a bid to recruit teachers, HAI notes candidates can “build a great career” at HAI. The use of the specific verb build can imply a long process that results in a tangible finished product, which may be HAI’s attempt to conjure up images of the tangible outcomes of schooling.

### **The Choice Foundation**

The Choice Foundation (TCF) is a small, nonprofit EMO (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). TCF manages two charter schools in New Orleans, Louisiana (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). In the 2011-12 school year, TCF impacted some 1,239 students (Miron & Gulosino, 2013). The discourse from the TCF website was taken from the home page and the “About Us” page. Like many of the other discourses TCF included language meant to create a measurable collection of evidence to prove legitimacy. This included listing five awards TCF received or was recognized for, as well as a table displaying the “school performance score history.” To the outside reader, even someone with a background in education, these scores as presented have no real meaning. In audit culture, it is sometimes enough just to present numerical evidence, even if they offer no real insight into the school’s concrete outcomes. TCF also includes “Data-Informed Decision-Making” as one of the three pillars of its model for success, and expands on this concept noting, “In brief, Choice Foundation schools are thoroughly focused on aligning every

resource, every teacher, and every activity with rigorous educational standards. We use data of all sorts throughout our operations to make sure that every decision is made in the best interests of our students.” Here TCF is directly appealing to the requirements of accountability and audit culture by stating the importance of “data of all sorts” and its role in decision-making at all levels of the organization.

Similarly, TCF’s website also included dialogue rich in conflict theory. TCF’s “About Us” page includes these two statements about power:

“He and the cohort of founding trustees believe that parents should have the flexibility to choose the right school for their children. No child should be condemned to stay in a neighborhood school that does not meet the needs of the child.”

And, “All of our schools are ‘takeovers of takeovers.’ That is, each school was operated by another organization, and we were assigned the school by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education after successfully negotiating a rigorous application process.”

The first statement, from the perspective of conflict theory, describes a power struggle for families. With choice, families have the flexibility to find a school that meets the needs of their child. Without choice, families are stuck in neighborhood schools and “condemned” to schools that do not meet the needs of their child. As the dichotomy here is set up by TCF it would be hard to argue against choice and flexibility in favor of neighborhood schools. The second statement also implies a power struggle or shift, but this time it is at an organizational or institutional level. TCF notes that they have now taken control of schools that were previously operated by other EMOs. To add credibility to their “takeover” TCF notes their power comes from the “State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education” after a “rigorous” application process. TCF wants it to be clear that their power is legitimate because it comes from and through a previously established governing body and process.

This chapter has used specific examples from the eight EMO websites analyzed to illustrate the ways EMOs are using competition language, and demonstrating accountability and audit culture, as well as conflict theory to position themselves within the education field for their target markets.

In the last chapter, specific trends, similarities, and differences found in the discourse are presented as the original research questions are revisited. The limitations of this study are also discussed and opportunities for future research are identified.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to examine how EMOs use competition framing and an economic argument to justify and promote school choice and charter school policies. Discourse from eight EMO websites were analyzed in order to observe how competition framing occurs within education. CDA and the lens of accountability and audit culture as well as conflict theory were used to determine the possible effects of such language use on education stakeholders, and the specific contexts and different interests being served by such framing in education.

Ultimately asking, what is the effect of such framing on educational equity? Can competition motivate us to expand educational equity as Darling-Hammond (2007) suggests or does the consumerism of education mean, “someone has to fail” as Labaree (2010) argues?

The low percentage of EMO websites that directly referenced global or international competition was surprising, but the use of CDA allowed for a more contextual, critical analysis, which revealed several subtler uses of competition language, including in the description of schooling purposes, student outcomes, and the national education landscape in the United States. Further, the use of accountability and audit culture as well as conflict theory in analyzing these texts demonstrated that often competition language was used in these different ways to justify an EMO’s existence, simplify an EMO’s organizational mission and vision, and position an EMO as a legitimate solution to a problem. Competition framing seems to also be being used to increase student enrollments in EMO-run schools, entice teaching talent to EMOs,

counter common anti-EMO or anti-charter school critiques, increase EMO-school partnerships, and encourage community members to donate financially to EMOs.

It is doubtful that this study or any one study alone could fully answer the ultimate question of what is the effect of such competition framing on educational equity for students. The majority of the analyzed EMO websites directly indicated a target student population of minority and low-income students, and often used competition framing to promote themselves and their schools as a solution to the challenges facing minority and low-income students. Similarly many of the EMO websites supported choice in schools for families, suggesting that choice in itself will expand educational equity. Because of these discussions, it would seem as though all the EMOs analyzed would support Darling-Hammond's (2007) presumption that competition can and does lead to an expansion of educational equity. In the promises and measurable student outcome data touted by the analyzed EMOs websites though is the implication that students that attended these EMO schools will score higher, graduate more, enter college readier, and begin work better equipped than other students, both internationally and when compared with their neighbors. Implicit in these rankings and promises is the idea that someone has to fail, and so parents, teachers, and schools should do all they can to guarantee that someone is not their student. Again all the EMOs analyzed seemed to also acknowledge Labaree's (2010) idea in their discourse and use it to some extent to position themselves as a solution. Someone has to fail, so don't let it be your student, take the ability to choose and choose an EMO-run school. In terms of competition language it seems as though these two concepts may not be opposed, but rather may be two different sides of the same coin for EMOs. The practical impact and affect on minority and low-income students, families, and communities of competition language in education is hard to fully discern, but these EMOs clearly think such

language is generating partnerships with school districts/schools, families/students, teachers, and communities.

Regarding limitations of this study and opportunities for future research, one obvious limitation to this study is the sample of EMOs being analyzed only represents a small portion of the EMOs operating within the United States and across the globe. Due to the intensity of CDA and the fact that a single researcher completed this study, a larger sample size was not practical, but the findings here suggest an expanded analysis may further demonstrate the patterns observed within this small sample. Along the same lines, the EMO websites that were analyzed in this study were selected randomly. It would be interesting to go back and do a similar analysis, but with more intentionality behind the EMO selections to provide more opportunities for contrast. For instance it would be interesting to conduct a similar analysis of all the EMOs operating in a single state or looking just at the 5 largest nonprofit and for-profit EMOs in the nation.

The discourse analyzed from each website was limited to narrative and visual text from only specific sections of the website, while more dynamic discourse such as videos or slideshows were not included in the present analysis. Such discourses are rich with further opportunities for analysis. Lastly, all the discourse used in this study was gathered in 2017. Due to the ever-evolving nature of websites as platforms for communication and the regularity with which they can be update or changed, it would be interesting to conduct a second study in three, five, or 10 years from now to compare how the language used by EMOs changes over time in response to current events, debates, and criticisms within the education field.

While this study looked specifically at the discourse of EMOs, there are several other educational stakeholders whose discourse, if studied, could offer similar or contradictory

findings to those demonstrated by EMOs. Such stakeholders might include policy makers, governors, state representatives, local officials, and lobbyists. Future studies examining the use of competition framing at different levels of policymaking would add greatly to this body of literature. Another opportunity for future research in this area, would be to follow a specific education bill from drafting through the legislative session and voting to local roll out and implementation, analyzing the discourse used by different circles of policymakers to describe and carry-out the bill at each stage. This design would allow an opportunity to compare and contrast how different levels of policymakers use competition framing, similarly or differently, at different stages of policy formation and implementation. There is still much that can be gleaned from looking critically at what and how economic and competition language is being used in the education sector to influence, create, and promote specific education policies that have very real impacts for students, families, teachers, and communities.

APPENDIX A  
LIST OF ORGANIZATION WEBSITES



Edison Learning, Inc. (2017). Retrieved from <http://edisonlearning.com>. *Accessed on 04/30/2017.*

Leona Group, LLC. (2016). Retrieved from <http://www.leonagroup.com>. *Accessed on 04/30/2017.*

Midwest Management Group. (2013). Retrieved from <http://midwest-mgt.com>. *Accessed 04/30/2017.*

Heritage Academy, Inc. (2013). Retrieved from <http://midwest-mgt.com>. *Accessed 12/10/2017.*

KIPP Foundation. (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.kipp.org>. *Accessed 05/27/2017.*

Summit Academy Management. (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.summitacademies.com>. *Accessed 05/27/2017.*

Options for Youth, Inc. (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.ofy.org>. *Accessed 05/27/2017.*

Choice Foundation. (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.choicefoundation.org>. *Accessed 05/27/2017.*

## REFERENCE LIST

- Amos, S. K., Keiner, E., Proske, M., & Radtke, F. (2002). Globalisation: Autonomy of Education Under Siege? Shifting Boundaries Between Politics, Economy and Education. *European Educational Research Journal*, 1(2), 193-213.
- Ball, S. (2003). The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy*, 18(2), 215–228.
- Ball, S. J. (2012). *Global Education Inc. New Policy Networks and The Neo-Liberal Imaginary*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bratton, L. B. (1997). Themes of Conflict Theory. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 15(1-2), 131-146.
- Buras, K., & Apple, M.W. (2005). School Choice, Neoliberal Promises, and Unpromising Evidence. *Educational Policy*, 19(3), 550-564.
- Cook, G. (2001). Searching for Miracles. Some Districts See Privatization as a Last-ditch Chance at Reform, but can the Education Management Organizations Really Deliver? *The American School Board Journal*, 188(12), 18-23.
- Council of the Great City Schools. (2014). *Common Core Works*. [Video]. Retrieved from <http://www.commoncoreworks.org/Page/378>.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2007). The Flat Earth and Education: How America's Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future. *Educational Researcher*, 36(6), 318-334.
- Fairclough, N. (2013). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language, Second edition*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Fitz, J. B., & Fitz, B. B. (2003). Education Management Organisations and the Privatisation of Public Education: a Cross-national Comparison of the USA and Britain. *Education Administration Abstracts*, 38(2), 147-282.
- Fleischman, S., & Heppen, J. (2009). Improving Low-Performing High Schools: Searching for Evidence of Promise. *Future Of Children*, 19(1), 105-133.

- Fougner, T. (2006). The State, International Competitiveness and Neoliberal Globalisation: Is There a Future Beyond 'The Competition State'? *Review of International Studies*, 32(1), 165-185.
- Garcia, D. R., Barber, R., & Molnar, A. (2009). Profiting from Public Education: Education Management Organizations and Student Achievement. *Teachers College Record*, 111(5), 1352-1379
- Gluckman, A. (2003). Move over HMOs, the EMOs Are Coming. *Dollars & Sense*, 245, 22-25, 35-37.
- Green, P. C., III, Oluwole, J. O., & Baker, B. D. (2009). No child left behind: Racial equal educational opportunity through school finance litigation. *The Journal of Gender, Race, and Justice*, 12(2), 285-309.
- Hochschild, A. R. (2012). *The Outsourced Self: Intimate Life in Market Times* (1-17; 119-130). New York, New York: Metropolitan Books.
- Holligan, C. (2010). Building One-Dimensional Places: Death by the Power of Audit. *Power and Education*, 2(3), 288-299.
- Holyoke, T. T. (2008). Dimensions of Charter School Choice. *Journal Of School Choice*, 2(3), 302-317.
- Huilan, W. (2007). Education and the Discussions on Globalization: Between "Winning the Competition" and "Social Justice." *Chinese Education and Society*, 40(1), 22-35.
- Janks, H. (2007). Critical Discourse Analysis as a Research Tool. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultureal Politics of Education*, 18(3), 329-342.
- Keddie, A. (2013). Thriving amid the performative demands of the contemporary audit culture: a matter of school context. *Journal of Education Policy*, 28(6), 750-766.
- Kelly, S. (2008). Race, Social Class, and Student Engagement in Middle School English Classrooms. *Social Science Research*, 37(2), 434-448.
- Labaree, D. (2010). *Someone has to fail: The zero-sum game of public schooling*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Larkin, B. (2016). The Relationship Between Florida's Traditional Schools, Education Management Organization Charters, and Hometown Charters Fiscal Revenues and Instructional Expenditures on Student Achievement. *Journal of Education Finance* 42(1), 79-99.

- Lingard, B., Martino, W., & Rezai-Rashti, G. (2013). Testing Regimes, Accountabilities and Education Policy: Commensurate Global and National Developments. *Journal of Education Policy*, 28(5), 539-556.
- Lipman, P. (2011). The New Political Economy of Urban Education: Neoliberalism, Race, and the Right to the City. In Apple, M. W. (Ed.), *The Critical Social Thought Series*, 43-73. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Lipman, P. (2013). Economic crisis, accountability, and the state's coercive assault on public education in the USA, *Journal of Education Policy*, 28(5), 557-573.
- Lubienski, C. (2003). Innovation in Education Markets: Theory and Evidence on the Impact of Competition and Choice in Charter Schools. *American Educational Research Association*, 40(2), 395-443.
- Meyer, H., & Benavot, A. (2013). PISA and the Globalization of Education Governance: Some Puzzles and Problems. In Meyer, H.D., & Benavot, A. (Eds.), *PISA, Power, and Policy: The Emergence of Global Educational Governance* (9-25). Oxford: Symposium Books.
- Miron, G., & Gulosino, C. (2013). *Profiles of For-profit and Non-profit Education Management Organizations, Fourteenth Edition, 2011-2012* (PDF). National Education Policy Center, Boulder: CO. Retrieved from <http://nepc.colorado.edu/files/emo-profiles-11-12.pdf>.
- Moutsios, S. (2009). International Organisations and Transnational Education Policy. *Compare*, 39(4), 469-481.
- Neiger, M., Meyers, O., & Zandberg, E. (2011). Tuned to the Nation's Mood: Popular Music as a Mnemonic Cultural Object. *Media, Culture & Society*, 33(7), 971-987.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation. (2014). *PISA Participants*. [Data file]. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/aboutpisa/pisaparticipants.htm>
- Power, M. (1994). *The Audit Explosion*. London: White Dove Press.
- Sadovnik, Alan (2011). *Sociology of Education: A critical reader* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Routledge. p. 37-70, 83-114.
- Saltmarsh, S. (2012). Storylines of Accountability. *Teaching & Learning*, 26(2), 75-88.
- Sandoloski, S. (2011). Profiting on America's Youth? A Study of Educational Management Organizations. *Ohio Northern University Law Review*, 37, 199-220.
- Servage, L. (2009). Alternative and professional doctoral programs: what is driving the demand? *Studies In Higher Education*, 34(7), 765-779.

- Sobe, N. W. (2012). Educational Accountability and Global Governmentality. In Steiner-Khamsi, G., & Waldow, F. (Eds.), *World Yearbook of Education 2012: Policy Borrowing and Lending in Education* (80-94). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Steketee, A. M. (2004). For-profit education service providers in primary and secondary schooling: The drive for and consequences of global expansion. *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, 11(2), 171-203.
- Superfine, B. M. (2011). Stimulating School Reform: The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the Shifting Federal Role in Education. *Missouri Law Review*, 76(1), 81-134.
- Suspitsyna, T. (2010). Accountability in American education as a rhetoric and a technology of governmentality. *Journal of Education Policy*, 25(5), 567-586.
- Tannock, S. (2009). Global meritocracy, nationalism and the question of whom we must treat equally for educational opportunity to be equal. *Critical Studies in Education*, 50(2), 201-211.
- Wang, L. (2014). Internationalization with Chinese Characteristics: The Changing Discourse of Internationalization in China. *Chinese Education and Society*, 47(1), 7-26.
- Weiner, L. (2000). Research in the 90s: Implications for Urban Teacher Preparation. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(3), 369-406.
- West, A. (2006). School Choice, Equity and Social Justice: The Case for More Control. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 54(1), 15-33.
- Wooldridge, A. (2006, October 7). The Battle for Brainpower. *Economist*, 1-14.
- Zajda, J. (2007). Reforms in Higher Education in the Russian Federation: Implications for Equity and Social Justice. *European Education*, 39, 20-36.

## VITA

Calli Leigh Burnett was born in Silvis, Illinois. She attended the University of South Carolina- Columbia where she received her Bachelor of Arts in International Studies, *cum laude*, in 2010. Upon graduation Burnett enrolled in the nationally recognized teaching program, Teach For America, through which she spent two years teaching three, four, and five-year-olds at Community Action Project, a Head Start program, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Following her time in the classroom, Burnett moved to Chicago to pursue her Master of Arts in Cultural and Educational Policy Studies and her Juris Doctor at Loyola University Chicago School of Law. Burnett graduated with her Juris Doctor, *cum laude*, and was admitted to the Illinois Bar in November 2015.

As an attorney, Burnett has served families by representing victims of domestic violence in divorce proceedings and helped children obtain stability through guardianship of minor children proceedings in the legal aid sector. In 2017, Burnett opened her own legal practice, Burnett Law, LLC, helping families and students get the educational services they need and deserve. Burnett is a knowledgeable, student-focused advocate, who works to understand each student's unique needs, get the school on the student's side, and education families on the spectrum of education options available. Burnett Law, LLC offers quality legal services at flexible, creative price points for the modest income client. Burnett lives in Chicago, Illinois with her husband and beagle, Nana.