Chapter 55
Wealth, Inequalities and 'Hidden Injuries' in the Global City: Educational Policy in London

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55.1 Starting with the (Global) City

> Cities are diverse: they are localities, and specific context, both economic and cultural, always matters when we are dealing with things which have a local character. However, cities are embedded within a global system and changes in that system matter for the character of the specific places. (Byrne 2001, p. 23)

One of the reasons for concentrating on London is that it is a major city. Indeed, according to Hales et al. (2014), London is second only to New York in the international index of global cities. London is already the largest city in Europe and the sixth richest place on earth. Its population is currently 8.6 million and is forecast to rise to 11 million by 2050. By 2038, it is estimated that 50 % of the population of London will be of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) heritage (GLA 2013). In this rapidly expanding and increasingly diverse setting, there is already great competition and pressure on various forms of social consumption; that is, housing, employment, schooling, and good health provision – the base components of a decent life. However London is a global city – and this means that it is at the centre of international service provision, trade, production, and innovation on an unparalleled scale. For these reasons, London is a highly desirable and attractive place in which to live, and in which to invest! Since the late twentieth century, London has witnessed unprecedented movements of international capital into the city. While London is a global financial centre, it is also a location where the secondary circuits of capitalism are in play as seen in the consumption patterns of housing and property. The accumulation of land and property by global companies, the investment in

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W.T. Pink, G.W. Noblit (eds.), *Second International Handbook of Urban Education*, Springer International Handbooks of Education,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-40317-5_55

London property by wealthy conglomerates and the super wealthy is changing the face of the city and is displacing lower paid service workers and their families.

> The fact that the London residential property market is still riding high, despite the poor performance of the UK economy, owes much to the continuing interest of wealthy overseas buyers who now dominate the top end of the market (*according to Knight Frank {a well-known estate agent/realtor}* they account for 51 % of the prime London market for sales £1 m plus). Indeed the demand is so great that, notwithstanding the vast size of London, there is reported to be a significant shortage of stock.
>
> (Fisher 2013, np my inclusion italicised).

All these developments make London a unique setting in the UK –more like New York than Manchester- with more in common with Tokyo than Cardiff.

But while London attracts the super wealthy and inward investment, it is also a beacon for many others – a place of freedom from forms of cultural and social oppression as well as a place of opportunity and work. As with other global cities, London is simultaneously a material and structural 'place' and a city of promise and excitement – a 'symbolic project' (Zukin 2003, p. 146). Pile (2005, p. 6) positions the city and urban life as a set of 'wishes and desires, anxieties and fears' as well as a place of disruption, consumption, inequality and opportunity. London attracts a wide range of consumers, entrepreneurs, investors, artists, workers, refugees, asylum seekers– all those looking for a better and richer life in an international, cosmopolitan and 'super-diverse' city (Vertovec 2007) where there is the promise of better employment and enhanced educational opportunities for themselves and their children.

There is some contestation in the literature as to whether cities like London, New York, Tokyo and Hong Kong are best seen as world cities or global cities. In this chapter I take the perspective argued by Saskia Sassen that world cities exist but that they may not necessarily be global – she cites the case of Miami. World cities like Istanbul and New Delhi are celebrated historic centres of culture and attract international tourism but cities like New York and London are global in their economic and fiscal reach and in their power. Drawing on Sassen (2005), the point of using the concept of the city as global is to foreground and centre the role being played by globalisation in material and structural terms.

> Global cities around the world are the terrain where a multiplicity of globalization processes assume concrete, localized forms. These localized forms are, in good part, what globalization is about. Recovering place means recovering the multiplicity of presences in this landscape. The large city of today has emerged as a strategic site for a whole range of new types of operations – political, economic, "cultural", subjective. It is one of the nexi where the formation of new claims, by both the powerful and the disadvantaged, materializes and assumes concrete forms. (Sassen 2005, p.40)

In a globalising world, national influence is being weakened or reduced due to the conditions of the global market place. The outcomes of these changes are seen in the moves to privatise the public sphere of social-welfare provision, in the deregulation of the corporate sector, the reduction (and avoidance) of corporate taxation made 'feasible' by cuts in public spending, the hollowing out of the state, and the

insatiable move to strengthen the conditions for neo-liberal expansion (Klein 2014). The outcomes are also seen in global cities which have more in common with one another than other cities in their national jurisdictions, for increasingly, global cities are becoming free-standing and autonomous.

55.2 London: A Divided City

What is taking place in all global cities, and in London in particular, is a massive escalation in the growth of the wealth gap and the ensuing social polarisation that characterises contemporary forms of globalisation. The highest income group has grown exponentially and incomes at the top and bottom have pulled apart dramatically (Wilkinson and Pickett 2009; Dorling 2014). This division is reflected in housing occupation trends and long term patterns of gentrification in London (Hamnett 2003). It is worth exploring this gentrification trend as it has had implications for the availability of housing for lower paid service and public sector workers as well as in shaping the competition for places in local schools in London (Hannett 2003).

In the third quarter of the twentieth century, fuelled by the baby-boomers who had larger disposable incomes than their parents' generation, London became an arena of conspicuous consumption. The baby boomers expected to become property-owners at an earlier age than their parents and they also expected to have access to a cosmopolitan urban lifestyle. Young professionals and others now looked for 'improving neighbourhoods' in London and bought up cheaper housing in traditional working class areas (Butler and Robson 2003a, b).

The new middle class fractions that moved into these older working class areas, appropriated the social space for their own cultural 'divertissement' as well as colonising local schools. Improvements in local services, for example in health provision and increased personal services such as organic food stores and yoga classes, coupled with the renovation of local buildings have tended to benefit one section of the population and indirectly enhance the 'value' of the property in these gentrifying enclaves (Butler and Robson 2003). For example, the reputations and 'value' of housing and schools in Notting Hill Gate, in the west of London, were very different in the late 1950s and early 1960s than they are today. Notting Hill Gate was an old, run-down part of London where large Victorian houses were divided up into small flats or made into bed and breakfast hotels to home new arrivals to the country (Maguire et al. 2006). The local schools were regarded as challenging to teach in, and it was difficult to recruit and retain teachers in this part of London. In many parts of Notting Hill today (as illustrated by the film of the same name) there have been massive changes; a totally revisioned and refurbished location of private accommodation, out-priced except for all but the super- wealthy. In the contemporary city, there are communities of people with shared consumption preferences who have displaced the indigenous and poorer groups. This pattern has been exacerbated by more recent moves into London property by the international business sector and the super wealthy investing their capital in housing which is often left

empty – a solid investment in turbulent economic times. Different social classes now inhabit physically parallel but equally separate worlds.

In cultural terms, cities have always been places of 'lived complexities' because, in demographic and geographical (spatial) terms, metropolitan cities include the most and least privileged and powerfully demonstrate the stark polarisation between access to and exclusion from cultural/social patterns of consumption. London contains internationally celebrated theatres, opera houses, major art galleries and wide-ranging leisure and cultural provision while the homeless sleep in the doorways and shelters of the city centre. Simultaneously, 'the city' has continued to stand as a metaphor for disruption and corruption, at least in relation to the urban working classes. For these reasons, as well as for reasons related to housing systems and access to other social goods such as education, as we shall see, it is appropriate to talk of 'divided cities'.

As an aside, although this chapter concentrates on London, the impact of globalisation for rural communities, available housing stock and access to life chances has been no less dramatic. The movement of middle class families into desirable suburban and rural settings; second-home rural ownership; the decline of work in non-urbanised settings; all these changes have combined to produce high levels of economic and social disadvantage for the rural working classes, whose experiences would also be included in the condensate of 'urban'. Some time ago, Gerald Grace (1978) recognised that there are similarities between urban and rural settings; poverty and disadvantage are not just evident in cities. However the crucial point he makes is that, 'Metropolitan cities provide the arenas for the making visible of fundamental contradictions within the wider society and of the ideological and political conflicts associated with such contradictions' (Grace 1978, p. 3). In consequence, patterns of social polarisation mark and shape the divided global city. As Lipman (2011, p.4) argued in relation to Chicago, a point that applies equally to London:

> cities of this type require concentrations of high-paid professionals and managers and legions of low-paid service workers… high stakes accountability and a system of stratified educational opportunities support(ed) gentrification, dispossession of working-class communities of color, and the production of a stratified labor force.

55.3 Wealth, Inequality and Austerity

Some time ago, Pahl (1968) highlighted a distinction between 'proximity' and 'access' in urban settings that still helps to explain the pattern of resource distribution. He argued that some people lived in less advantaged places – in areas where industries emitted harmful gases, for instance, or where there was a shortage of 'good' schools. The people living in these areas, were in proximity to reduced life changes and to increased risks. Other people were better placed to access social goods because of where they lived, or because of their capacity to travel or relocate to gain advantages – transcending space. Place and space are crucial in any struggle over consumption. Where you live can dictate which hospital you are treated in,

what dentist is available, what school you can attend. Overall, patterns of housing allocation, the availability (or not) of work, transport connections, the accessibility of public-welfare resources for example, make some places more or less attractive, and thus, inhibit or attract occupancy and raise or lower the desirability of any area.

For the last two decades, London has been recast and reconstructed by neo-liberal policies which have in turn had powerful outcomes in terms of proximity and access issues. Atkinson (2006 p. 176) has written of the 'micro-geographies of segregation' where 'the creation of apparent wider neighbourhood diversity may conceal the hyper-segregation of rich and poor'. Increasingly under the Coalition Conservative Government (2010–2015) and in the current Conservative administration (2015–2020) ambitious plans have been laid out to make significant public spending cuts through reducing state welfare benefits (O'Hara 2014). Work has been offered as the panacea to poverty – even if it is zero-hours employment. Welfare benefits have been capped. Housing costs have been raised in line with so-called market prices (Gibb 2015). Rents are 'almost twice as high in London than the national average, with nearly half of private tenants in London falling under the national poverty line' (Marom and Carmon 2015, pp. 3–4). In 2013, the Greater London Authority, the pan-London governmental agency, highlighted an erosion in an older commitment to provide social housing based on need: rather, they argued that 'those who contribute through hard work to London's success should expect a reasonable housing offer in return' (GLA 2013, p. 22).

Fuelled largely by the culture of austerity (for some but not for others), the government passed various laws designed to eliminate the economic deficit by introducing changes that Hills (2014) has characterised as being much harder on those with low incomes (see also Taylor-Gooby and Stoker 2011). Bhattacharyya (2015) argues that the project of austerity is intended to diminish expectations of what can be afforded by the welfare state through extending exclusion and normalising precarity. One move has been to 'cap' the amount of benefits that poorer people receive – a move that has led families to turn to food banks in order to survive. Perhaps the most heinous of these laws has been the so-called 'bedroom tax' where those in social housing with a 'spare' bedroom have been asked to pay more rent or move out of their homes. This was extremely harsh for those with disabilities who needed an extra room for their equipment or for their carer to be able to stay overnight. An outcome of the combination of these welfare reforms was that low income families who could not now afford the increased rent, were threatened with having to move – at the cost of their jobs, their social networks and their children's schooling (Slater 2014). This was viewed by many commentators as a form of social and ethnic cleansing (Gentleman 2012).

> Camden Council is planning the largest single displacement of poor people from London in the wake of the coalition government's controversial welfare reforms, singling out more than 700 families to be moved up to 200 miles away. Camden council said that it would shortly be contacting 761 households, comprising 2816 adults and children, because the coalition's benefit cap, will mean that they will be unable to afford their current accommodation or any other home in the south-east.

> The Labour-controlled council warns that the majority of these families have three children and, once the cap is imposed this summer, will need to find on average an additional £90 a week for rent to remain in their homes. The local authority says it has been forced to look as far afield as Bradford, Birmingham and Leicester, and warns that 900 schoolchildren – more than one child for each class as an average across the borough's schools – face having their education disrupted by the move. (Campbell 2013, np)

The 'bedroom tax' has largely been viewed as a failed policy (Gibb 2015). It was not possible to decant and move families from the global city to cheaper housing enclaves because of a lack of smaller properties as well as because of the public opprobrium that this policy met. Nevertheless it signifies a drop in commitment towards social housing for those on lower incomes, especially in London, where all property attracts a financial premium. The impact of all these related changes in housing costs, and a massive shortage in housing stock of all sorts (social and private) except for those making inward investments at the very top of the price scale is part of a complex and under-explored shift in population profile in London.

> The ingress into London of both new middle class and ethnically diverse populations is being mirrored by the simultaneous egress of white lower middle- and working-class 'natives' into the suburbs and beyond. This latter, a central but poorly understood and neglected characteristic of the recent demographic history of London, is far too substantial a phenomenon to be dismissed as a mere artefact of gentrification processes themselves. The voluntary movement out of the central city of a significant proportion of its formerly core population has complex dynamics of its own, to which neither the 'gentrification/displacement' couplet nor the simplifying truisms of 'white flight' can do sociological justice. (Butler and Robson 2003a, p.7)

The significance of all these transformations for the global city (and for education policy) need more exploration than is possible here, but the point is that London is a volatile locale that is open to complex shifts including localised forms of globalisation that are evidenced in population changes (Sassen 2005). And while, I have concentrated on issues such as housing, low income and reduced access to social consumption as these aspects contextualise what it is like for those who struggle to live in a global city, these factors also contextualise the capacity, or not, to access 'good' education.

55.4 Education in London: Choice and Access Problems

English education is characterised by 'policy overload', constant change, and the regular insertion of new forms of governance and provision. Due to the current policy 'crisis' generated by the alleged need to raise attainment in schools, there have been repeated changes to the curriculum, in assessment modes and in performance management in schools. These shifts have been accompanied by wider structural changes in the types of schools available and their relative capacity for more/less autonomy in relation to the central state. English education is characterised by its allegiance to the market form and neo-liberalism as the best ways to solve

intractable problems; ‘enterprise can succeed where the state has failed’ (Ball 2013, p. 226). In consequence, there have been various attempts to insert forms of privatisation into state maintained schools – for example, by allowing business groups and third sector providers to run new types and chains of schools (Olmedo 2013) or by contracting out in-school services such as catering and cleaning (Ball et al. 2010). For over three decades English schools have been subjected to continual reforms and innovations in the search for increased efficiency and effectiveness as measured by the results published in national and international tests and by regular in-school inspections. School results are published annually so that parents can see which schools are doing well and which schools are doing less well. This information arguably drives the parental market of school choice. In all this reforming, education has, somewhat inevitably, become increasingly commodified.

Education (like health and like housing) is a class of goods for which there is an unassailable demand. Like all marketable goods, education is packaged into different ‘brands’; thus, there are different types of schools with different costs and charges. This is because, in neo-liberal times, education is positioned (largely) in terms of its direct exchange value in the labour market. It is a commodity to be accessed or purchased in order to bring off individual advantage in an increasingly globalised labour market. As the exchange value of some education forms is high and enduring (think of an Oxbridge Degree or perhaps attending Eton), and is constructed in a hierarchical manner, a subsidiary market surrounds school provision in order to assist and accelerate the acquisition of this valuable commodity (see Koyama 2010, for a discussion of New York’s supplemental educational services). In England, and especially in London, there is an enormous array of private provision of pre-schooling, additional classes, tutorial support and coaching that swiftly changes to meet any new education reforms; what Ball calls an edu-business (Ball 2009). ‘Those who can afford it send their children, from pre-school upwards, to an array of learning activities; those who cannot, watch other children move ahead’ (Mortimore 2013, p. 1). It is not surprising then that in England, as Mortimore (2013, p. 1) puts it, ‘the struggle for an education dominates life in our society to an ever increasing extent’.

Parents are caught up in a circuit of pressure to ensure their children get into a ‘good’ school and parents are responsible for ‘choosing’ well. Schools publish a great deal of information about themselves on the web and because their continuity depends on them attracting enough new students each year who go on to do well in the national tests, they are pressured to perform well and to be able to produce a good account of themselves in terms of performance. In a setting of high stakes testing and high levels of individual school accountability and league tables, it might sometimes seem as if schools are being coerced to ‘perform’ for their own survival as much as for the children they are schooling. From a parent’s perspective, it may sometimes seem that unless they are able to help with reading, spelling and mathematics at home, that they are ‘failing’ their children and are ‘bad’ parents. However the reality is that in this pressure cooker education market, some parents are better placed than others to bring off some advantages for their own children. As Vincent (2001 p. 360) has repeatedly noted, there are patterns of advantage and disadvan-

tage in parent's opportunities and awareness and she argues that 'Working-class parents, often lacking the sense of entitlement to act, and often the same degree of knowledge of the education system' face more problems in navigating the educational system (Vincent 2001, p. 360). More prosaically, even if working-class parents have knowledge of the system and the will to act, they will not necessarily have the surplus forms of capital that are needed to access and fund extra-curricular classes or private tuition at test time. As Gillies (2005 p. 842) found:

> Parents with access to middle-class resources (such as money, high status social contacts and legitimated cultural knowledge) drew on these capitals to consolidate their power and advantage, and invested heavily in their children's education as a method of transferring this privilege.

In a setting where 'a shift towards what might be called a neoliberal model of education, in organisation and in practice is clearly discernable'(Ball 2013, p. 5) the notion that parents can 'choose' the school that they want for their children is a central motif in educational discourse. In London, the secondary schools market is complex and can be difficult to manoeuvre (there is an equally complex and hierarchical market in primary schooling and in University provision). The pressure is intensified when choosing a secondary school because of high stakes testing and subsequent admission to University/transition to the labour market. Greater London is divided into 33 boroughs of which 12 are in inner London. These 33 boroughs contain a wide range of different types of schools which have different admissions policies. Some schools are academically selective or partially selective. Others select on different criteria such as distance from the school, or whether a sibling attends the school. Some schools are faith schools with different admissions policies. Parents can apply across London and are asked to list their six preferred schools. Any application to fee-paying schools is outside this Pan London scheme.

However, the notion of parental 'choice' is illusionary because the parents and family have to 'match' the admissions criteria of the school they are 'choosing' for their child. This is the case across England, as a teacher reported recently in an anonymous blog:

> In much of the country, there aren't a huge number (of schools) within a convenient distance of our homes, and when the various religious schools for whom your child is an inadmissible heretic are stripped out, there may be only one candidate left anyway. Even in urban areas, where there are more schools to choose from, that choice is not all it seems. Nearly all schools use proximity in their admissions policy, so whether you get the school you want rather depends on how many other people with children of the same age live between you and its front gates.
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> http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/sep/23/choosing-secondary-school-teachers-guide-for-parents.

In London 'choice' is complex and competition for places in the more popular schools is acute. 'Choosing' is complicated by space/locale and where a family lives. London is so vast that it is not often possible to cross the city to access a 'good' school because the transport costs are high and the traffic is intense in the

mornings and evenings even if driving were viable. It is complicated by the type of provision in some parts of London; there may be many faith schools in one borough and less community secular schools. Areas where schools are recognisably 'good' will have seen housing costs rise exponentially in the immediate vicinity– a factor that will limit access to these popular schools to those who can afford to live in the locale (and will contribute to a further rise in house prices). Areas where there is easy access to centres of professional employment such as the law district, the business district, contribute towards the production of urban enclaves where aspirations are high and consumption patterns are very similar:

> Employment and housing are strategically central to middle-class activity and patterns of consumption and leisure are understood, particularly in the context of metropolitan heterogeneity, as representing symbolic strategies of distinction and the drawing of formal boundaries around conceptions of group identity. (Butler and Robson 2003, a. p. 26)

Here I would add 'education' to these central factors of middle-class patterns of consumption.

In a market economy where (some) parents 'choose' their children's school, the evidence is that middle class families, by and large, select schools with predominantly middle-class intakes, frequently in middle-class housing enclaves (Butler and Robson 2003a). Buying a house in the catchment area of a 'desirable' school can shore up individual privilege and ensure educational advantage. The evidence is that middle class children predominantly attend schools with a large middle-class intake that attract teachers who stay longer, that access better resourcing and recruit more pro-school students. These schools may be somewhat less heterogeneous (in terms of race/ethnic) diversity); they certainly are in terms of socio-economic status (West et al. 2009). In cases like this, it seems unremarkable to talk of divided schools in divided cities. In educational terms, the issue is not about diversity in the city but is more about the avoidance of diversity, the marginalisation of the 'other' and the reinforcement of widening gaps of inequalities; the reproduction of insiders and outsiders. Thus, class, housing zones and middle-class cultural capital can and are deployed to bring off educational advantage. Critics of these sorts of claims may argue that London schools are far more sophisticated in the tactics and strategies that they deploy in order to raise the achievement of all of their students. They may also argue that because of spatial patterns, where public/private housing can sometimes sit street by street, that London schools are far more democratic in their intake and student profile. They may argue that the new middle-classes, those 'gentrifiers' who have chosen to stay in the city, hold more enlightened social attitudes.

One study that has looked more closely at white middle-class cosmopolitan choosing has sought to move beyond any simplistic notion of middle-classness as a 'go-getting', high-flying, winners take all' approach to the social world of the city (Reay et al. 2011, p. 7). Reay et al. (2011) conducted a study into what they termed 'against the grain school choice in neoliberal times'; a study conducted in three urban areas, including London (see Crozier's chapter in this Handbook). The study focused on urban families who, somewhat counter-intuitively, chose to send their

children to their local state comprehensive schools. Reay et al. found that the parents in their study were fully aware of the reams of information that were available to them about their local schools but that they were 'dismissive of league tables of examination results' (p. 70) In a period when 'class and ethnic segregation and polarisation are growing' (p. 7), this study found that some middle class white parents were making school choices that were mediated by their commitments and values to 'to act ethically' (p. 71) and support their local schools as well as respecting the benefits and gains of diversity – social mix benefits that some of them recognised as not being present in their own schooling. However, a tension in this values-choosing was evident in the specific gains made by their children because of selecting these schools. As the researchers found, 'the ordinary school provided the right context for the young people to stand out or show their 'specialness' or 'extra-ness'' (Reay et al. 2011, p. 74). Their choice brought off access to additional resources for their children in their schools and they gained 'specific social, cultural and ideological returns from the school as a microcosm of a politically, socially and ethnically diverse society' (p. 80). The parents did choose schools that were local but they were also aware that the schools they selected were 'good enough' and not schools that were seen as 'failing'. At the end of this study, the team discussed their conflicts in exploring the values, beliefs and educational choice-making of a group that they recognised as trying to make 'an effort to reach out across social differences when many are not' (p. 167) but they also shore up the point that, inevitably, the middle-classes are best placed to bring off advantage, wherever they are placed. In this case, not only is this advantage at the expense of less privileged children, it is also based on middle class children accessing (some) social and cultural knowledge that will be an advantage to them later on in their cosmopolitan futures in the global city.

Across London there is intense pressure to access certain schools. One change is that since the international downturn in the economy, more middle class families are rejecting private schooling as being too costly and are turning to the 'good' state schools in larger numbers. The growth of 'super state schools' that are currently being selected by leading national politicians who are pressured to show their avoidance of privilege (and who are all based in London regardless of the constituencies that they represent) is a signal of this development (Herrmann 2014). Another change is that the population growth is putting immense pressure on state welfare provision (housing, health and education) and there is an increase in parental anxiety in this period of austerity about accessing 'good' schools for their children. According to Coughlan (2015), 'the pressure on places is most apparent in London, where applicant numbers are up 4 % on last year, which in turn were up 5 % on the previous year' (http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-31698086). In 2014/2015 almost one third of London parents did not get their first choice of secondary school – a highly visible conflict over scarce resources and a central contradiction in the global city (Grace 1978).

55.5 Inside Schools- the 'hidden injuries'

So far, I have tried to sketch in the ways in which housing occupancy, social class and education are inextricably interwoven in the neo-liberal global city. I have also argued that the commodification of education and the individualisation of school choice in a hyper-active form provide a contextualising backdrop to education provision in London. Now I consider some of the key in-school practices that sort and stratify students and lead to some of the 'hidden injuries' of contemporary schooling in the global city (and elsewhere) (Boaler 2005). I then unpack some of the current debates related to educational disadvantage, 'under-achievement' and attainment in London schools (Burgess 2014).

Classifying practices that sort and select students either for 'special treatment' because they have 'learning difficulties' or because they are 'high ability' or some such rhetoric of inclusion/exclusion have a long history in the English education context. Brian Simon, writing of the 1930s in England, told of how schools utilised mechanisms to select those with academic capacity, 'to pick them out early, help them along, differentiate their teaching from that of the "rest" in preparation for the move into a differentiated sphere of schooling' and at the same time designating those not chosen as 'socially inferior children' (Simon 1974, p. 226). Jackson and Marsden's study of 88 working class children demonstrated powerfully 'how savagely and sadly a school system can become a tenacious self-fulfilling prophecy, cutting talent down in the search for the chosen few' (Jackson and Marsden 1965, p. 248). While the crudest forms of some of these classifying practices may not be as much in evidence, there are more subtle ploys in place such as selecting the 'most able' students to study Latin (a mark of distinction in the English school setting), or differentiating the resource allocation offered to different 'types' of students.

Gillborn and Youdell (2000) conducted a study into the grouping practices being deployed in one London school. Using the concept of 'educational triage', they argued that schools were caught up between notions of equity and pressures to ensure that higher proportions of students were achieving a grade C and above at the key national examination point for 16 year olds. They found that the school developed differentiating practices involving educational 'rationing':

> strategies [that] often focus on pupils seen as heading towards grade D passes, where an improvement of a single grade could potentially figure significantly in the school's final results. In effect, the schools seek to convert likely grade Ds into grade Cs. (Gillborn and Youdell 2000, p. 133)

It might be argued that rationing education in this way and concentrating on a cohort of students whose success will contribute enormously to the school's reputation is a 'good thing' for the school and for those students who otherwise may have 'failed'. Gillborn and Youdell argue that this sort of 'rationing' is socially unjust and their study also shows how setting and other forms of selective grouping works to reduce opportunities for working class and Black students. Gillborn (2001 p. 2) talks of the 'losses endured by pupils in the lower groups who face teachers with

low expectations and work solely with peers who feel labelled as second-rate and destined for failure'.

Policy is a compromise between the past, present and future as 'new principles and innovations are merged and conflated with older rationales and previous practices' (Ball 2013, p. 63). Policies that classify and sort can have lasting consequences for those individuals caught up in a tension between these sorts of equity and performance demands (Whitty 2008). For example, two studies of young people in the post-compulsory education and training market in London (Maguire 2009) demonstrated that some young people at the end of compulsory secondary schooling had internalized a view of themselves as 'lacking' in some ways. Having experienced less success at doing school and being less able to construct themselves as 'good learners' meant that these young people experienced formal schooling as a time and place that spoke to their shortcomings, rather than anything more positive.

> Well, sitting in lessons every day and listening to teachers telling you what to do, that isn't really enjoyable is it? .... And finding the work hard isn't enjoyable either is it? And teachers that don't help you, don't make it enjoyable do it? So, I don't get much out of this school, do I? (Debra – student with 'learning difficulties' cited in Maguire 2009, p. 32)

In a recent study based in four secondary schools (two in inner London, one in outer London and one in a small town in the suburbs) that explored how policies were being enacted, not unexpectedly, all the schools were concentrating on raising student attainment (Ball et al. 2012). Teachers were sometimes uncomfortable with having to 'measure and compare' their students 'and attempt(ing) to find a balance between the interests of the students and the interests of the school' (p. 72). However, as a consequence of the pressure to perform, students were 'objectified as talented, borderline, underachieving, irredeemable etc.' Students were being 'branded' as 'bad' or 'good' learners in relation to their perceived capacity to attain, a judgment that had outcomes in terms of the resources and support that was given to different categories of students; Gillborn and Youdell's 'rationing'. Students in the four schools were 'set' into 'ability groups' in different subjects and so they got clear messages about their capacity for success. While streaming or tracking is unusual in English schools, setting is common, particularly in high stakes subjects such as English, mathematics and science. As Travers (2014) found, the impact of this sort of 'treatment' can be a 'hidden injury' to the person concerned:

> I think a lot of the time you got sorted into a lower set or something and it was like 'oh that's me done, I'm never going to be smart enough kind of situation'… they see it as people giving up on them more that anything. (John, working class white student, cited in Travers 2014, n.p.)

The question that needs to be addressed is the extent to which banding or setting correlates with factors of class, ethnicity/race and gender. The evidence consistently demonstrates that the so-called 'lower sets' have a disproportionate number of boys, students of specific minority ethnic backgrounds, working class students and those identified as having some form of 'learning difficulty' (Kutnick et al. 2005). Thus, it is reasonable to assume that in London schools (as elsewhere) the fact of classifying

students by 'ability' and then rationing schooling – which correlates highly with aspects of their social identities- may mean that 'ability' is masking other forms of older patterns of exclusion and oppression.

55.6 The London Challenge: Making a Difference in the Global City?

Over time, policy attempts have been made to ameliorate or change the educational outcomes of poverty and deprivation. There is not enough space in this chapter to do justice to the complex policy history of interventions into the 'problems' of urban education in general and London schools in particular (but see Brighouse 2007; Barker 2008). Pratt-Adams Maguire and Burn (2010, p. 83) argue that 'the form education policy interventions has taken has often been shaped by ideologies of differentiation, separation and segregation' where the poor and working class have been positioned as the 'problem' and this approach has generally influenced urban education reform. There have been various attempts at different times at forms of redistribution such as putting more money into city schools, proving free breakfasts and dinners for school children and, more recently in the UK, the pupil premium – additional money allocated to schools on the basis of their numbers of children in receipt of free school meals; the government's proxy for poverty.

More recently urban school policy has been shaped by an older urban education discourse –focusing on the differences between similar schools and arguing that 'poverty is no excuse' – an approach that was originally highlighted by Cicerelli in the US (1972). The argument goes that if some schools with similar intakes and difficulties are doing well – as measured by standardised tests – then similar schools doing less-well must be doing something wrong. This idea has been highly influential- not least perhaps because it has displaced a wider political analysis of poverty and a lack of social justice policies of redistribution. It is an approach that displaces issues of difference within marginalised groups and maintains a 'color blind' approach (Gallagher 2003). This type of approach characterises much of the mainstream schools improvement discourse in England (Raffo 2009). The 'problem' of urban education then becomes located in the 'achievement gap' between working class children and middle class children and schools are charged with transforming this situation through undertaking 'gap-narrowing' work (Kendell et al. 2008). In the early twenty-first century, the main focus has been with individualised in-school changes in management and leadership, more intensive tracking of student progression, and focussed preparation and coaching for tests. In many ways, drawing on a book title of the same name, it could be argued that the real problem is one of: 'So much reform and so little change' (Payne 2008).

One reform has been heralded as breaking with past policy failures and making a real difference. The London Challenge (DfES 2003) was set up to improve London secondary schools that collectively had often been demonised as some of the

poorest (academically) in the country. It was set up in 2003 and ran until 2011 – and it is worth noting that it is very rare that any policies are funded and supported for this amount of time. The Challenge brought teachers together from different London schools to share good practice and work together across schools, to improve their pedagogy. It had two well received programmes of support; the Improving Teacher Programme and the Outstanding Teacher Programme which were highly rated by teachers (Baars et al. 2014). It placed 'particular emphasis on the development of leadership capacity at school level' (Baars et al. 2014, p. 71).

> At its peak, the London Challenge programme had a budget of £40million a year, funding 'in-kind' packages of support for underperforming schools, jointly brokered by an expert adviser and officials in the Department for Education. It also invested heavily in school leadership, including development programmes and consultant heads to support leaders of struggling schools, and worked with key boroughs to ensure robust local planning and support for school improvement. During the period of the London Challenge, secondary school performance in London saw a dramatic improvement, and local authorities in inner London went from the worst performing to the best performing nationally. (Kidson and Norris 2014, p. 2)

In their report, Lessons from London Schools, Baars et al. (2014) highlight the 'remarkable' progress in educational improvement. They argue that in addition to the London Challenge other factors such as local education authority (school board) support as well as changes in school types (they cite academy schools) and new forms of teacher education have produced this dramatic improvement. They claim that this improvement is not based on variables such as gentrification 'displacing' poorer children, or on factors of ethnicity or indeed on some of the additional opportunities present in London. 'The data and research evidence does not support any of these explanations as being sufficient to explain the improvement in quality' (Baars et al. 2014, p. 9). They claim that London has been successful because of the way in which teachers worked together to solve their own problems, because of systems leadership and school-to school support. They argue that these gains have come about because education policy interventions have been sustained over time.

One of the 'tricky' issues involved in making claims about improvement and success is how is this to be measured? While some research talks about percentage increases in student attainment, or in terms of points gained, Wyness (2011) prefers to assess London's improvements in terms of a more easily understood measure – the benchmark of 5 GCSEs (the national tests taken at age 16).

> 50 per cent of pupils in London achieve five plus GCSEs including English and maths, while 48 per cent of pupils outside London achieve this. For the rather more ambitious target of the English baccalaureate, only 16 per cent of pupils in London manage this. However, again the rest of the country fares no better – with 14 per cent of pupils outside London achieving the English baccalaureate. (Wyness 2011, p. 11)

Obviously 'the remarkable improvement journey of London's schools since the turn of the century', if indeed this is the case, is a key case study for 'urban school reform' (Baars et al. 2014, p. 6). But Burgess (2014, p. 15) argues that while the London effect is real, 'pupil progress is the best measure of what schools add to their pupils and this is 9.77 % of a standard deviation higher in London', the reasons

for this gain, which is also evident in Birmingham, has more to do with the diversity of London's school students and their parents than the actions of policy-makers and reformers.

> The basis for the London performance is the ethnic composition of its school population. There is a straightforward effect: the lowest progress group, White British pupils, make up 36% of pupils in London and 84% in the rest of England. London simply has a higher fraction of high-scoring pupils. This is not by chance of course: a key part of the London effect is its attraction to migrants and those aspiring to a better life… the children of immigrants typically have a high aspirations and place greater hopes in the education system. (Burgess 2014, pp. 15–16)

Burgess does recognise that these London children typically live in poorer neighbourhoods and face various forms of exclusion and racism but he claims that the children of recent arrivals have high aspirations and expectations and that this makes the difference to their in-school attainment –although it may be argued that this is an individualising and divisive approach to take. Recent research has suggested that test improvements in London schools are more complex and that there are a raft of reasons (Blanded et al. 2015). However, most importantly, higher levels of achievement in school may not translate directly into better life-chances or greater labour-market opportunities and that is the real challenge.

It is undeniable that supporting good teachers and promoting effective pedagogy, selecting and retaining good teachers and leaders will lead to in-school improvements (Wyness 2011). If these improvements then lead to real gains for (some previously excluded) students that in turn transfer into additional life-chances, then they are to be welcomed. However, there is a need to turn back to the complexities of the wider socio-economic and political context. As Thrupp and Lupton (2006) have complained, there is often more focus on transforming children than transforming the social context that surrounds schooling. 'The problem is still seen as residing in the urban working classes, or their schools, and not in the problems that unjust structural relations present for these communities' (Pratt-Adams et al. 2010, p. 94).

55.7 Wealth, Inequalities and 'Hidden Injuries' in the Global City: Repairing or Displacing the Damage?

In 1997, Mortimore and Whitty asked a question that is still pertinent today in any discussion of (London's) education. 'Can school improvement overcome the effects of disadvantage'? Tactics like limiting the curriculum in urban schools to focus on the basic core subjects, sorting and selecting out some children for additional resources and coaching (Gillborn and Youdell's 'educational triage and rationing), micro-managing children's attainment (not learning) through data-tracking and target setting will enable a few more children from 'disadvantaged' backgrounds to cross those first hurdles at school. Mortimore and Whitty (1997) claim that what sometimes happens is the already advantaged make even more gains so that the

opportunity gap is maintained while the parameters change a bit. The question has to be, what then are the costs to those left even further behind in this individualistic, academic steeple chase? As Anyon (2014) argues, what is needed are radical changes to the systemic practices that sustain patterns of exclusion rather than merely tinkering at the edges.

In these times of austerity and massive wealth disparities, the global city is sustained by and reproduces those structural conditions that perpetuate poverty and child poverty – low wages, an increasingly casualised workforce, a lack of a living wage, benefit cuts and poor housing – producing a central core of highly privileged and wealthy individuals and a precariat round the edges (Ridge 2013). All this results in a divided city that illuminates the 'fundamental contradictions' of the wider society (Grace 1978 p. 3). London children and their families have made gains in their educational attainment but Burgess (2014, p. 16) believes that 'the basis for that success lies more with pupils and parents than it does with policy makers'. He adds that, 'a key part of the London effect is its attraction to migrants and those aspiring to a better life' (p. 16). While research indicates that London schools are doing better than they used to do, nevertheless the tactics being deployed that stratify and segregate may replicate the 'divided city' in its 'divided classrooms' and shore up the distinctions between those with more/less access to social goods. Perhaps it is simply that everybody's boat has been lifted to some degree, but other boats are lifted significantly higher, as Mortimore and Whitty argued some time ago. Perhaps what we are witnessing is a localized form of one impact of globalisation- the movements of people.

As a global city, London enjoys unparalleled advantages in its capacity to attract imaginative, creative and resilient new populations. While it would be a politics of despair to sideline the fact that London's children are doing better in school, it is important not to allow this 'success' to displace the need for broader structural analyses and changes. In these neo-liberal times, where austerity is set to continue, the dominant discourse alleges that what matters is individually located and that people should be rewarded for what they personally achieve. In this way any structural effects that shape outcomes are displaced and erased. As Baumann (2000, p. 34) makes clear, in these neo-liberal times 'individualization is a fate, not a choice'. In the global city, the policy problem resides in positioning education as an individual good, and a commodity to be exchanged for individual advantage, status and economic prosperity while failing to recognise the debilitating structural effects of policies of austerity. For these reasons, education policy on its own will not address the fundamental causes of the social problems that attach to the global city:

> Teachers, principals, and urban students are not the culprits – as reform policies that target high stakes testing, educator quality, and the control of youth assume. Rather, an unjust economy and the policies through which it is maintained create barriers to educational success that no teacher or principal practice, no standardized test, and no "zero tolerance" policy can surmount for long… macroeconomic mandates continually trump urban educational policy and school reform. (Anyon 2014, p. 5)

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