Investment in Early Childhood Education in a Globalized World

Policies, Practices, and Parental Philosophies in China, India, and the United States

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Preface

The world is undergoing rapid globalization, with increased competition yet interdependence among nations. The United States has been a land of opportunity and promise, with its dominant military, economic, and cultural superpower in the world for decades. However, rapid educational and economic development in other nations lead to increased global competition, which poses as a threat to America's ascendance, undermining confidence in the government's ability to restore economic growth and superiority.

Although the US economy is still ranked No. 1, it is weakening relative to other competitors such as China and India. For instance, in the United States the GDP annual growth rate dropped from 3.77 percent in 1996 to 1.57 percent in 2016 (OECD, 2019). Although the GDP[1] growth rate slowed down in China and India as well due to the global recession of 2008, the economy in China and India did grow at a much faster rate than that in the United States. In China, GDP growth rate was 6.72 percent and that of India was 7.11 percent in 2016 (OECD). China is poised to overtake the United States as the world's top economy as early as 2020, according to a new report by the Standard Chartered Bank. India is also estimated to overtake the US economy by 2030, contributing 42 percent of total global economy (Johnson, 2019).[2]

[1] https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=SNA_TABLE1#.

[2] https://bigthink.com/politics-current-affairs/china-worlds-biggest-economy-2020.

Globalization presents potential opportunities as well as challenges to all nations. To succeed in the global race for intellectual and innovative standing, countries have to make substantial investments in human capital, starting with investing in quality education for young children. Economists argue that human capital investments are the key drivers of economic competitiveness in the long term (Eriksson, 1991; Heckman & Masterov, 2007; Schultz, 1961; Sweetland, 1996; Welch, 1975).

Using the human capital theory and cultural ecology theory as the conceptual framework, this book examines how the United States, China, and India invest in early childhood care and education (ECCE) as a strategy in response to rising expectations and fierce competition for jobs, leadership of the future, and the ultimate superpower in the globalized world. Cultural ecology theory proposes that human development is shaped by the cumulative impact of social interactions in proximal and distal settings, which are themselves influenced by social and economic forces (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Silbereisen & Chen, 2010). In other words, cultural ecology theory believes that not only is child development shaped by the activities and interactions of the child, but also by the social and cultural context in which these activities and interactions occur. Research has investigated how different cultures have impacted parenting; however, our understanding of the links between microsystem-level factors (such as parenting styles and parent-child relationships) and child development in the context of globalization is limited. Developmental studies rarely link indicators of economic change, microsystem characteristics, and child development across large-scale economic and social transitions. Furthermore, there has been a notable lack of research examining microsystem characteristics and child development outside the United States. To fill this void, this book is a comparative study, aiming to answer the main research question: How might macro-level changes impact parenting philosophies and practices in the United States, China, and India?

The reason to focus on China and India lies in the fact that both nations have a huge population, each with more than 1 billion people, representing 19 and 18% of the world's population, respectively. It is projected that the population of India is expected to surpass that of China by 2022 (United Nation Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015). Moreover, both nations present one of the most dramatic economic transitions of the past four decades. For example, China is the world's second largest economy and the largest if measured in

purchasing price parity terms. China has been the largest single contributor to world growth since the global financial crisis of 2008 (The World Bank, 2016). Since the economic reform of 1978, China has moved from being a primarily agrarian society with a centralized economy dominated by state-owned enterprises to one that is increasingly urban, market-oriented, and dominated by state, private, and foreign enterprises. India also undertook an economic reform in 1991, which reduced tariffs and interest rates and ended many public monopolies, allowing automatic approval of foreign direct investment in many sectors. By the turn of the twenty-first century, India had progressed toward a free-market economy, with a substantial reduction in state control of the economy and increased financial liberalization (Ahuja et al., 2006). For this reason, it is an ideal[3] context within which to examine the effects of economic change on microsystem processes such as family and child development.

The objectives of this book are threefold. First of all, the book examines how globalization has influenced the position and role of the United States, China, and India on the international stage and how each country is investing in early childhood/childhood education in response to globalization. Second, it examines issues such as educational attainment, academic performance, and well-being through a global tri-cultural perspective, providing a detailed account of educational policies and practices to invest in the next generation as a mechanism to alleviate poverty and inequality in the three countries and to improve their global competitiveness. Third, the book presents parents' views on investment in children to prepare them for living in a globalized world. It discusses how social changes may reflect and affect parents' philosophy of child-rearing and family involvement in child development.

This book presents a unique comparison of human capital investments in childhood development in the United States, China, and India. It further places early childhood/childhood education in a global context, with particular attention given to how the three education systems are responding to changing expectations and pressures that emerge from rapid globalization and social changes. The book questions, however, the effectiveness of current reform and practice in early childhood education and care in each country. For example, in the United States, due to the *No Child Left Behind Act*, *Race to the Top*, and *Common Core Standards*,

[3] Ahuja, S. et al. (2006). *Economic reforms in India: Task force report*. University of Chicago.

play and recess have been taken away from early childhood education and care. At all grades, children are spending more and more time on tedious, test-driven instructions. Nation's leaders and school officials urge education reforms, focusing on greater academic demands, longer school days, more technology in the classrooms, and greater parental involvement in children's education. Are these efforts promoting or hindering early learning? How may the changes affect parenting and children's learning?

The book is organized into four parts. In Part I, Chapter 1 serve as the introduction, discussing the conceptual framework of human capital theory and cultural ecology theory, providing an overviewing of early childhood care and education in the three countries; describing globalization and the changing world landscape; and comparing where each of the three countries stands on a global stage. Part II is comprised of Chapters 2–4. In this part, we present an overview of the history and development of ECCE in the United States, China, and India; the recent and current policies and practices; challenges faced by each nation; and government response to those challenges. Part III (comprising of Chapters 5–7) presents parents' perspectives on child-rearing; how globalization may have impacted their parenting philosophy and practices; educational expectations they have for their children; and how they understand policies regarding ECCE. Finally, Part IV includes Chapter 8 which concludes the book, summarizing lessons learned from the study, discussing implications for future research and policy making; and advocating to reclaim childhood and restore play in early childhood curriculum.

To our knowledge, this book is unique in its comparative approach in looking at early childhood/childhood education and parenting beliefs and practices in the United States, China, and India in the context of globalization. Furthermore, it uses human capital theory and cultural ecology theory as the conceptual framework to analyze state investment in human capital, especially in the education of young children to prepare them for the skills they will need to succeed and lead in the twenty-first century.

We hope this book will serve as a window of opportunity to researchers, educators, policy makers, curriculum planners, and parents to bring themselves into perceiving and enacting their role as a learner of local knowledge and a learner of children in both local and global context.

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Acknowledgements

This book is the result of the coming together of three early childhood educators and practitioners who were keen on breaking down cultural and geographical barriers. In this age of intense globalization, we wished to present the philosophies, policies, and practices permeating the fields of early childhood education in three countries with possibly the largest schooling systems in the world: China, India, and the United States. Our objective was to review current policies that are driving educational decisions for the youngest children in each of these geographical and cultural contexts and also provide a deeper understanding of how global and local influences might be shaping parents' beliefs, practices, and decision-making with regard to raising and educating their young children. Given the size and sociocultural-economic diversity of each of these countries, we do not claim that this book is representative of every facet of their societies. But what this book provides is an understanding of the current flux in the field of early childhood education within each of these countries, and a glimpse into how cultural worldviews and influences, both global and local, shape educational decisions of a society as well as of individual parents.

The three of us (Guangyu Tan, Amita Gupta, and Gay Wilgus) wrote alone in our own little corners within the great state of New York. What brought us together was our passion for early childhood and our desire to explore the connections between culture and education. Each of us was born and raised in the context we write about and thus have personal experiences of schooling and parental expectations within our own

particular cultures. Exploring these issues with the current generation of parents was, therefore, a natural extension of our own experiences. But the truth is that writing a book is not really a solitary venture. It entails much collaboration and consultations between the co-authors, the publisher, the editor, and other professionals. And most importantly, the authors write while living their lives amid real responsibilities to their families, to their friends, and to their jobs. Many times the book had to be prioritized at the cost of precious time with others in our lives. Acknowledgements serve to make visible the many ways in which others have contributed to the successful completion of this book. Most importantly, we wish to thank the parents who participated in this research and willingly shared their deepest beliefs about what they wished for their young children. Without their participation, this book would not have been possible.

It is also important for us to name those in our lives who allowed us to complete this project without ever complaining, but always supporting.

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Guangyu: I am thankful for my parents, Mr. Diguang Tan (谭迪光) and Ms. Yucong Yao (姚玉聪), my sister, Ms. Xiyu Tan (谭新宇), other family members, and many friends for their support. More importantly, I would like to thank my son, Luke W. Ross, who was my inspiration for this book at first place.

Gay: I wish to acknowledge the various authors whose work I drew upon heavily, for their comprehensive and insightful scholarship. These include Elliot B. Weininger, Dawn Marie Dow, Shannon Allen, Mercedes Schneider, Yasmin Alexander-Morales, Frederick Hess, and William Hayes. Their work not only provided me with extensive resources for constructing my chapters, but also made the writing experience particularly rich and pleasurable.

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Dr. Guangyu Tan is an Associate Professor at the State University of New York at Fredonia. She holds a M.Ed in Educational Psychology from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania and a Ph.D. in Cultural Foundations of Education from Kent State University. Her primary research interest is equity in education, e.g., migrant children's education, and girls' education in China. As a first-generation Chinese American, she is also interested in ethnic identity formation of immigrant children, international/intercultural education, and comparative education. She presents regularly at professional conferences at the international, national and state levels. She recently published *Missing Girls in Schools: Gender Inequality and Educational Disparity in Rural China* (2017) in International Book Series, Vol. 9, *Gender and Sexuality: Raising Awareness, Fostering Equity, Advancing Justice*. For more information, please visit her webpage: www.fredonia.edu/coe/tan.

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Gay Wilgus is an Associate Professor in the graduate program in Early Childhood Education at the City College of New York, The City University of New York. Her recent research is focused on motherhood studies and carework. Other research has centered on comparative study of the philosophical underpinnings of early childhood teacher preparation programs in Spain, France, Belgium, and Ireland. She is co-editor of *Imagining Motherhood in the 21st Century: Special Issue Women: A Cultural Review* (March, 2018) and editor of *Knowledge, Pedagogy and Postmulticulturalism: Shifting the Locus of Learning in Urban Teacher Education* (Palgrave, 2013).

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PART I

Introduction

CHAPTER 1

Globalization, Human Capital Development, and Cultural Ecology

Amita Gupta and Guangyu Tan

The world is undergoing rapid globalization, with increased competition yet interdependence among nations. The United States of America has been a land of opportunity and promise, with its dominant military, economic, and cultural superpower in the world for decades. However, rapid educational and economic development in other nations leads to increased global competition, which poses a threat to America's ascendance, undermining confidence in the government's ability to restore economic growth and superiority.

Although the US economy is still ranked No. 1, it is weakening relative to other competitors such as China and India. For instance, in the United States the GDP annual growth rate dropped from 3.77% in 1996 to 1.57% in 2016 (OECD, 2019a). Although the GDP growth rate slowed down in China and India as well due to the global recession of 2008, the economy in China and India did grow at a much faster rate than that in the United States. In China, GDP growth rate was 6.72% and that of India was 7.11% in 2016 (OECD). China is poised to overtake the United States as the world's top economy as early as 2020, according to a new report by the Standard

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Chartered Bank. India is also estimated to overtake the US economy by 2030, contributing 42% of total global economy (Johnson, 2019).

Globalization presents potential opportunities as well as challenges to all nations. To succeed in the global race for intellectual and innovative standing, countries have to make substantial investments in human capital, starting with investing in quality education for young children. Economists argue that human capital investments are the key drivers of economic competitiveness in the long term (Eriksson, 1991; Heckman & Masterov, 2007; Schultz, 1961; Sweetland, 1996; Welch, 1975).

This chapter starts with an overview of what globalization theories are and how globalization may have changed the world landscape. Using the human capital theory and cultural ecology theory as the conceptual framework, this chapter further examines how China, India, and the United States invest in early childhood care and education (ECCE) as a strategy in response to rising expectations and fierce competition for jobs, leadership of the future, and the ultimate superpower in the globalized world.

Globalization

Globalization has become a buzz word since the late 1990s and early twenty-first century, but it is by no means a new phenomenon. As Wallerstein (1998) pointed out, the current "ideological celebration of so-called globalization is in reality the swan song of our historical system" (p. 32). Wallerstein (1974) suggested that globalization as a process originated in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries in Western Europe, through which the capitalist world-economy spread across the globe. According to the world-system theory, a long-term crisis of feudalism in parts of Western Europe created a strong motivation to seek new markets and resources; technological innovations, superior military strengths, and means of transportations enabled Europeans to explore and establish economic ties with other regions that favored the accumulation of wealth in the European core (Wallerstein, 1974). By the mid-seventeenth century, the world-system became a capitalist world-economy, in which the accumulation of private capital through exploitation in production and sale for profit in a market were its driving forces. Thus, the world-system was "a system that operates on the primacy of the endless accumulation of capital via the eventual commoditization of everything" (Wallerstein, 1998, p. 10). In this world-system, the nation-states are the creatures of the worldwide systems of economic or political powers, exchange, and competition. The nation-state is thus less a bounded actor, more the occupant of a role defined by world economic and political/military competition. "Money and force, power

and interests, are the engines of global change" (Meyer, Boli, Thomas, & Ramirez, 1997, p. 147).

In the twentieth century, however, the world-system reached its geographic limit with the extension of capitalist market and the state system to all regions. It also witnessed the rise of the United States as a hegemonic power and the power shift from Europe to the United States. In the meantime, newly independent states and communist regimes challenged core control throughout the twentieth century. New crises of contraction and confrontation cannot be solved by exploiting new markets; challenges to core dominance gathered strength in the absence of a strong hegemonic power and a globally accepted ideology; polarization pushed the world-system to the breaking point. Such new developments in the twentieth century set the stage for a period of transition (Wallerstein, 1998). Although the transition has not produced a more equal and democratic world yet, it does spell the end of capitalist globalization and balance the power between the West and the East.

However, world cultural theory believes that globalization doesn't just occur in economy, but it is "the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole" (Robertson, 1992, p. 8). In other words, globalization accelerates the global interdependence and connects and stimulates awareness or consciousness of the global whole or unicity. According to this theory, the world is a single place, and therefore, how to share this space and how it must be ordered are universal questions. The answers to such questions vary, depending on the position of a nation in relation to both a system of society and the shared properties of humankind. Differences in perspectives and worldviews result in confrontations and conflicts, which means that globalization involves "comparative interaction of different forms of life" (Robertson, 1992, p. 27).

World cultural theory further argues that global interdependence and consciousness of the world as a whole precede the advent of the capitalist world-system. However, world cultural theory acknowledges that European expansion and widespread of capitalist world-system accelerated the process of globalization since the seventeenth century, especially after 1875 when international communications, transportation, and conflict dramatically intensified relationships across societal boundaries. In this process of globalization, the autonomy of nation-state and individual self was dissolved, and the position and identity of nation-state and individuals became relative. In other words, all parties involved in globalization are constrained to assume a role, to define an identity, and to interpret their existence as relative to the emerging global whole (Robertson, 1991, 1992). No nation-states and individuals can exist in separation and isolation; and therefore,

they are subject to universal standards derived from a common conception of humankind. To some extent, the common framework or conception has guided nation-states to respond to world order more consciously.

However, global consciousness does not imply global consensus and peace. In a matter of fact, globalization has turned the world order into a problem by the end of the twentieth century. The reason is that each nation-state interprets the world order differently and responds to the common predicament of living in one world reflexively, depending on the vantage point and history of the particular nation. For example, some portray the world as an assembly of distinct communities, highlighting the virtues of heterogeneity and diversity, while others view it as developing toward a homogeneous single place, representing the presumed interests of humanity as a whole. As Robertson (1992) vividly described, "globalization is a form of institutionalization of the two-fold process involving the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism" (p. 102). Thus, the comparison and confrontation of worldviews are bound to produce new cultural conflict. Religions play a special role in such cultural conflicts. The resurgence of fundamentalist groups and traditionalists with a global agenda is a case in point. A globalized world is therefore integrated but not harmonious, a single place but also diverse, a construct of shared consciousness but prone to fragmentation.

Echoing the world culture theory, the world polity theory believes that globalization is the growth and enactment of world institutional, cultural, and political order (Boli & Thomas, 1997). The world polity contains no single player or institution defining what is valuable for the world as a whole. "Instead of a central actor, the culture of world society allocates responsibilities and authoritative actorhood to nation-states" (Meyer et al., 1997, p. 169). In stateless world society, such lack of single authoritative actor, who has exclusive control over world culture, creates space for innovation and competition. The individual nation-state derives its authority from a world culture: a set of universally applicable models that define who are legitimate actors in world society, what goals they can pursue and how they can pursue them. Although world polity models define sovereign states as key actors, enabling authorities to construct collective goals and devise the means or programs to produce them, nation-states are not the only players engaged in such authoritative creation of value (Meyer, 1980). As the world cultural theory argued above, the position, identity, and existence of nation-states are relative to the world as a whole. Therefore, nation-states act as rationalized players that are systematically organized and operate according to formal

rules and the world models. For example, nation-states adopt similar constitutional forms, public education systems, policies on human rights, and the environment protection, etc., due to the pressure toward isomorphism exerted by globalization.

In pursuit of isomorphism, intense competition among nation-states arises. Meyer et al. (1997) argued, "The greater the number of entities, whether individuals, organizations, or nation-states, that pursue similar interests requiring similar resources, the more entities will come into conflict with each other and develop theories of one another as sources of social ills" (p. 170). A case in point is numerous wars fought in the name of human rights and democracy but in reality they are fueled by special interests of individual groups or nation-states.

Beyond conflicts of interests among individuals and among nation-states, there are also contradictions inherent in widely valued cultural beliefs: equality versus liberty; progress versus justice; standardization versus diversity, efficiency versus individuality. Yet these contradictions and contestations are the driving force for mobilization, innovation, protest, and social change. Events like Arab Springs, LGBTQ rights, refugee crisis, or global warming, which would be overlooked entirely not so long ago, are now of world significance.

Despite the different account for globalization and its impact by different theories, one thing is for certain, that is, globalization has changed the position and role of individual nation-state and shifted the power from Europe to North America to East and South Asia. There is no single authoritative actor on the global stage, who dictates the economic, cultural, social, and political order of the world. All nation-states engaged in the process of globalization are constrained to assume a position and define an identity relative to the emerging global whole. The following section overviews the changing world landscape as a result of globalization.

Where China, India, and the United States Stand on a Global Stage: An Overview

Economic Growth of Each Country: Overall Rank

Globalization has not established an equal and democratic world order yet. It indeed has accelerated the unequal distribution of economic growth and shifted the balance of social, cultural, and economic power. On the one hand, emerging markets and developing economies, particularly in Asia, have experienced a relatively strong economic growth and attracted

increasing financial investments. For instance, China and India posted an economic growth rate of 6.7 and 7.1%, respectively, in 2016 (OECD, 2019a). On the other hand, however, the developed economies, such as the United States, Japan, and some European countries, have witnessed a slow recovery from the global economic crisis, with decelerating growth rate and persistent high unemployment rate as well as continued financial vulnerability. In the United States, the gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate was 1.6% in 2016, and it was estimated to reach 2.9% in 2018 (OECD). In Japan, the devastating earthquake and outbreak of nuclear plant have further burdened the fragile economy and undermined investor and business confidence, casting a shadow of uncertainty over the country's economic outlook. In 2016, Japan's GDP was 0.6%, and it reached 0.8% in 2018. In Europe, where globalization was originated, high public deficit, debt levels, and continued fears of default have led to minus GDP growth. The GDP was −0.4% in 2012, and it rebounded since, reaching 1.8% in 2018 (OECD). This dismal situation in Europe has resulted in an increased vulnerability of the economy and much distress in global financial market.

Although the GDP growth rate in the United States has been declining and its share of the world economy has been shrinking, the United States remains the largest economic power with a total GDP of US$14,657.8 billion and US$47,284 GDP per capita (World Economic Forum, 2011, p. 362). Sophisticated and highly innovative US companies and excellent university systems, along with flexible labor markets and the scale opportunities afforded by the domestic economy, continue to make the United States competitive on the global stage. However, a number of escalating weaknesses, particularly the lack of macroeconomic stability and the repeated fiscal deficits, has led to burgeoning levels of public indebtedness that have lowered the US ranking in global competitiveness. According to the Global Competitiveness Index 2011–2012, the United States fell to 5th place out of 142 countries, but regained first place in 2018 (World Economic Forum, 2018). In 2010, China surpassed Japan and became the second-largest economy in the world, with an annual GDP of US$5878.3 billion (World Economic Forum, 2011, p. 148). But because of the large population of 1.3 billion, China's GDP per capita is US$4382, which is less than one-tenth of that of the United States. On a positive note; however, China is one of the world's least indebted countries, boasts a savings rate of

53% of GDP, and runs only moderate budget deficit. These factors, combined with good economic prospects, contribute to China's steady progression in the global competitiveness rankings (No. 28 out of 140 countries in 2018). Comparing to the United States and China, India still lags far behind, with a total GDP of US$1538 billion and US$1265 GDP per capita (World Economic Forum, 2011, p. 204). According to the Global Competitiveness Report 2011–2012 (the Word Economic Forum), the gap between India and China is widening: "the score difference between the two economies has increased sixfold between 2006 and today, the gap expanding from less than 0.1 to 0.6 points" (pp. 29–30). Nonetheless, because of its vast domestic market, which allows for economies of scale and attracts investors, India does possess a number of remarkable strengths in the more advanced and complex drivers of competitiveness.

Despite their global competitiveness ranking, none of the three countries invested enough in human capital. In 2018, the United States ranked 21 out of 140 countries in human capital investment, with a score of 85.5 out of 100, whereas Switzerland ranked No. 1 with a total score of 93.5 (OECD, 2018). Due to its huge population, China and India were ranked further down, taking 52nd and 104th place accordingly.

Education Achievement in a Global Perspective

At a time of increased global competition as mentioned above, each nation wonders whether its schools are adequately preparing students for the twenty-first-century global market. The ability of a nation to thrive on the global stage is greatly influenced by how the future generation competes internationally. The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) are commonly used to provide data on the mathematics and science achievement of US students compared to that of students in other countries (Mullis, Martin, Foy, & Arora, 2012). TIMSS data have been collected from students at grades 4 and 8 since 1995 every 4 years, whereas PIRLS data have been collected from only 4th graders since 2001 every 5 years (Institute of Education Sciences [ies]). According to TIMSS (2015), 4th graders in East Asian countries, such as Singapore, Hong Kong SAR, Korea, Chinese Taipei, and Japan, continue to lead the world in mathematics and science achievement. American students have improved their performance between 1995 and 2015, ranked 14th in mathematics and 10th in science. However, neither China nor India participated in 2015 TIMSS

and PIRLS, and thus the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an alternative to compare the skills and knowledge of students in these countries. PISA is a triennial international survey conducted by the OECD since 2000, which aims to evaluate education systems worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students in three key subjects: reading, mathematics, and science. In the latest PISA (2015), approximately 540,000 students completed the assessment in 2015, representing about 29 million 15-year-olds in the schools of the 72 participating countries and economies (OECD, 2018). Over the decades, PISA has become the world's premier yardstick for evaluating the quality, equity, and efficiency of school systems. Moreover, by identifying the characteristics of high-performing education systems PISA allows governments and educators to identify effective policies that they can then adapt to their local contexts.

Results of PISA 2015 indicated that compared to other 71 OECD participating countries and economies, the United States performed below the OECD average in mathematics, with a mean score of 470 and ranked No. 36 (OECD, 2018). Furthermore, 13.6% of 15-year-olds in the United States do not reach the PISA baseline Level 2 of science, reading, and mathematics proficiency (OECD).

Performance of American students in reading and science are both close to the OECD average. The United States ranks 20 in reading, and 25 in science. No significant progress has been made in these performances since 2003. Students from Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu, and Guangdong (B-S-J-G) China outperformed American students in science and math (see Table 1.1).

Comparable data on learning achievement of Indian students are unavailable, since India didn't participate in TIMSS nor PISA. However, according to a World Bank study (2006), which applied TIMSS questions to secondary school students in two Indian states, i.e., Rajasthan and Orissa (both states which are ranked lower on literacy rates compared to other states in India), the mean scores of 8th graders on the math test in the two states were 34 and 37%, respectively, compared to the international mean score of 52%. Similarly, the international mean of achievement for Grade 12 students was 57%, whereas the corresponding scores for Indian students were 44 and 38% in Rajasthan and Orissa. Although the scores of the two states cannot represent India's student performance, they did indicate how Indian educational achievement in relation to other countries. Last but not least, adult and youth literacy rates are used as indicators for educational achievement. UNESCO (2012) reported that in 2010 India had the largest

Table 1.1 Performance in mathematics, reading, and science: PISA 2015

	Mathematics		*Reading*		*Science*		*Science, reading, and mathematics*
	Mean score	*Ranking (out of 72 countries)*	*Mean score*	*Ranking*	*Mean score*	*Ranking*	*Share of low achievers in all three subjects (below level 2)*
OECD average	490		493		493		13%
B-S-J-G China	531	5	494	26	518	10	10.9%
The United States	481	36	498	20	496	25	13.6%

Source Adapted from OECD (2018). Retrieved from https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2015-results-in-focus.pdf

Table 1.2 Adult and youth literacy rate 2010

	Adult (15 years and older) literacy rate (percentage)	*Adult illiterate population (million)*	*Youth (15 and 24 years old) literacy rate*	*Youth illiterate population (million)*
World	84.1	775.4	89.6	122.2
China	94.3	61.882	99.4	1.356
India	62.8	287.355	81.1	41.275

Source Adapted from UNESCO (2012), *Adult and Youth Literacy. 1990–2015: Analysis of Data for 41 Selected Countries.* UNESCO Institute of Statistics

absolute numbers of adults, i.e., 287 million or 38% of 15 years or older population who lacked the basic literacy skills. In comparison, China had about 62 million or 5.7% of its adult population who were illiterate. China achieved almost universal youth (between 15 and 24 years old) literacy rate (99.4%), whereas India had a youth literacy rate of 81.1% in 2010 (see Table 1.2).

Human Capital Investments

As mentioned above, globalization has changed the world landscape, and redistributed economic growth and shifted economic power toward the emerging and developing nations, a trend accentuated by the recent global economic crisis. For example, emerging markets and developing economies, especially in Asia (including China and India), have witnessed relatively strong economic growth and attracted increasing financial investments, whereas the advanced economies, such as the United States, Japan, and European Union, are experiencing slow and decelerating growth with persistent high unemployment rate and continued financial vulnerability.

The shift of economic power is also reflected in global competitiveness measured by 12 indicators or pillars of the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI). Competitiveness is defined as "the set of institutions, policies, and the factors that determine the level of productivity of a country" (World Economic Forum, 2011, p. 4). The level of productivity sets the level of prosperity and determines a country's ability to sustain a high level of income and living standard. Moreover, the productivity of a country is one of the central determinants of its returns to investment, which in turn are the fundamental drivers of an economy's potential growth. In other words,

the more productive a country is, the faster its economy grows, and the more competitive it is.

Competitiveness can be measured by 12 indicators or pillars of the GCI, including institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic environment, health and primary education, higher education and training, good market efficiency, labor market efficiency, financial market development, technological readiness, market size, business sophistication, and innovation (World Economic Forum, 2011). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss all indicators, and therefore, it only focuses on the indicators or pillars that are directly related to human capital, i.e. education.

Economists have long debated on what the most important determinants driving productivity and competitiveness are. Theories engendered range from Adam Smith's focus on specialization and the division of labor to neoclassical theory of investment in physical capital and infrastructure (Schumpeter, 1942; Solow, 1956; Swan, 1956). But more recently, economists argue human capital investments, such as investments in education and training, and technology as the key drivers of economic competitiveness in the long term. Harvard University economist Gregory Mankiw (1995), for instance, has shown that in advanced countries such as the United States, human capital investment had three times the positive effect on economic growth as did physical capital investment. Moreover, he contended that educational investment was particularly important in early childhood development and learning. Along the same vein, the Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman suggested the return on investment from interventions, including prenatal care and early childhood program is higher than for virtually any class of financial assets over time. The return rates of rigorously evaluated ECCE programs range from 7 to 18% (Heckman & Masterov, 2007).

Echoing the primacy in human capital investments as the key to long-term economic competitiveness, the fourth indicator or pillar of GCI: health and primary education takes into account the quantity and quality of the basic education received by the population. Basic education is important in that it increases individual workers' efficiency. Supposing, workers with little or no basic education could carry out only simple manual tasks and would not be able to adapt to more advanced production process and techniques. Therefore, lack of basic education can constrain and deter high-technology-driven and value-intensive economic development. Well-educated workers with the necessary analytical and technical skills are much

needed in the twenty-first-century global marketplace. For example, McKinsey's Global Institute estimates that there will be a shortage of nearly 2 million educated and skilled workers over the next few years (Peterson, Woessmann, Hanushek, & Lastra-Anadón, 2011).

In this context, policymakers across the globe must put investments in early childhood education as a nation's top priority and adopt strategies of investing and promoting improved educational outcomes for children in order to strengthen their positions as highly qualified contenders in the global economy. China has been aggressively investing in its children and expanding access and quality to education. In 1978, China spent less than $2 billion on education; by 2006 that number reached $117 billion, a 58-fold increase (Cooper, Hersh, & O'Leary, 2012). As a result, by 2009, the number of Chinese children attending kindergarten was more than doubled, comparing to that of 1984, with 74% or 27 million children enrolled in ECCE (Cooper et al., 2012). Moreover, according to the GCI 2011, the quality of primary education of China was ranked 31 out of 142 countries, and primary education enrollment rate was ranked 9, with nearly universal access to basic education (99.4%) (see Table 1.3). India has made similar commitment to basic education. In 2008, India invested US$44 billion in education, four times more than that in the late 1980s. By 2017, it is projected that there will be 20 million high school graduates annually, which is five times as many as that in the United States. In the meantime, the quality of primary education of the United States was ranked 37 and the enrollment rate was ranked 77 (World Economic Forum, 2011). If this trend continues, China and India will produce a massive skilled workforce that could soon outnumber and even out-compete America's counterparts

Table 1.3 The Global Competitiveness Index 4th pillar: health and primary education

Country	*Quality of primary education*		*Primary education enrollment, net %*	
	Value	*Rank/142*	*Value*	*Rank/142*
China	4.7	31	99.4	9
India	3.4	86	91.4	84
The United States	4.6	37	92	77

Source The Global Competitiveness Report 2011–2012

in the "global jobs war," in which 3 billion people across the globe are competing for 1.2 billion jobs (Clifton, 2011).

Academic Achievement, Economic Growth, and Human Capital Investment in a Globalized World

In response to globalization, the nation's focus has shifted from investing in physical capital to human capital, starting at ECCE to remain competitive in the international stage. President Obama stated that "If we want America to lead in the twenty-first century, nothing is more important than giving everyone the best education possible — from the day they start preschool to the day they start their career" (http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/early-childhood). He further said that "Expanding access to high quality early childhood education is among the smartest investments that we can make." Research indicates that high-quality early learning programs can generate a return rate of 7 dollars or more on each dollar invested through a reduced need for spending on other services, such as remedial education, grade repetition, and special education, as well as increased productivity and earnings for these children as adults. Therefore, President Obama set a comprehensive early learning agenda in his 2013 State of the Union Address, which included *Preschool for All Initiative*, Boosting the Quality of Childcare through *the Child Care Development Fund*, Empowering Parents through *the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program*, Raising the bar for Early Learning *by Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenges (RTT-ELC)*, and Reforming and Expanding Head Start (http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/early-childhood).

Like the United States, the Chinese government has also recognized the importance of human capital investment and thus substantially increased its investments in education, health care, student nutrition, and early childhood development. For example, between 1980 and 2010, China's average life expectancy rose from 66 years to 73.5 years, and the average number of years of schooling increased from 3.78 to 7.55 years. Between 1990 and 2010, the prevalence of stunting growth among children under age 5 declined from 33.1 to 9.9%, and the rate of anemia among rural children under 24 months decreased from 38.7 to 20.8%. Furthermore, the Chinese government has committed to ensure that 70% of children have access to three years of early childhood education by 2020 (http://oecdobserver.org/news/fullstory.php/aid/3781/China:_Investing_in_human_capital.html#sthash.GfuYFC4z.dpuf). However, for

China, a country with 1.3 billion population and significant different regional disparities, innovative practices in supporting education systems and policies are much needed to improve human capital substantially and equitably, leading to a secured position on the global stage.

India is also surging ahead and has become a rising power and a driving force in the world economy. It is a country of extremes with regard to educational opportunities. It boasts of some of the best brains in the fields of medicine, engineering, and technology, but despite its exponential rate of economic growth, millions of young children still receive little or no ECCE. According to Save the Children, India has the highest number of newborn deaths in 2010. Of the 26 million children born in India every year, approximately 1.83 million children under the age of five, among whom more than two-thirds died in the very first month from preventable and treatable diseases like pneumonia and diarrhea in India, which is more than anywhere else in the world (http://www.savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpI4E/b.8726995/k.C048/India.htm). Furthermore, one-third of all malnourished children live in India. To be more specific, 48% of children under five are stunted and 43% are underweight in India (https://www.savethechildren.in/87-news-releases/130-child-mortality-in-india.html).

In order to sustain its economic growth and to meet the diversified needs of ECCE in India, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) has been providing free-of-charge Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) in the areas of health, nutrition, and education to children in rural areas, minority groups, slums, and underdeveloped areas through ECCE centers called "*Anganwadi*" (meaning "courtyard shelter" in Hindi) (MWCD, 2006). By 2011, about 38 million people participated in ICDS education programs, and about 78 million people took part in health and nutrition programs at *Anganwadi* centers (MWCD, 2011), the largest numbers in the world. Moreover, *Anganwadi* centers also provide education on childcare and nutrition for infants and toddlers to 18.4 million women who are pregnant or breast-feeding mothers to prevent detrimental effects of these mothers' poor health and literacy on the development of their babies (MWCD, 2011). The ICDS provided at *Anganwadi* centers has been acclaimed for its contribution to extensively supporting the development of infants who suffer from poor health and malnutrition. However, it also received some criticism that the main targets of ICDS are children aged between three and six, and those under three needing ICDS more

urgently are likely to miss most of the services, and that it does not provide sufficient educational content (The World Bank, 2004).

In addition, reflecting political commitments for addressing children's rights, the MWCD of India proposed in 2012 the "National ECCE Policy," "National Early Childhood Education Curriculum," and "Quality Standards for ECCE," in order to improve the government's stance of non-interference regarding ECCE and to ensure equal access to ECCE and quality. The policy describes the government's initiatives for establishing ECCE legal frameworks, such as the establishment of "National ECCE Council" to be the apex body to guide and oversee ECCE programs; establishment of state-level policy frameworks as well as legal frameworks to implement such policies; the formulation of a license registration system and setup and management standards for the system; and the strengthening of monitoring, research, evaluation, and teacher training functions. Furthermore, India's MWCD provides practical guidelines including curriculum policies applicable to all ECCE programs, teaching methods, materials, and planning of education programs for each developmental stage of infants and toddlers (MWCD, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c).

ECCE has been increasingly recognized as important in its contribution to a wide range of social, economic, and educational goals in a globalized world. Therefore, it has been a growing priority in many countries, including the United States, China, and India. As discussed above, all three governments have committed to invest in ECCE and to improve the access to and quality of ECCE. However, human capital investment only comprises one of many factors that influence child development. Culture and social context are broader macrosystems that impact child development and parent–child relationship. The following section will present an overview of the cultural ecology theory as the conceptual framework.

Culture Ecology Theory

Cultural ecology is defined as the study of the way a population uses its natural environmental influences and is influenced by its social organization and cultural values; it believes that there is a correlation between human development and the social and cultural context; the relationship between personal attributes and the behavior of its members and their environment can be found in the strategies or tasks they have devised for meeting the environmental demands, in the ways of exploiting available resources to attain subsistence goals and solve recurrent and new problems, as well as in

ways of interacting with one another (Ogbu, 1981, p. 421). Cultural ecology theory emphasizes the types of activities and interactions that occur in the lives of developing individuals, while showing how those activities and interactions are shaped both by the characteristics of the participating individuals and by the context in which the activities and interactions are occurring. Context includes not only the particular setting (home, childcare, workplace, etc.), but the interactions among the various settings, in which the developing individuals typically spend their time and the various broader contexts (spatial, social, and temporal) that provide meaning to the rest. Cultural ecology theory provides a conceptual framework for broadening our understanding of environmental or contextual influences on human competence and the way we acquire such competence.

Ogbu (1981) proposed a cultural ecology model of child-rearing with eight components (see Fig. 1.1).

The model starts with the concept of an effective environment (A), which includes the population's level of technology and knowledge, and nature of available resources. The effective environment (A) largely shapes the cultural tasks of the population (B), such as economic activities available

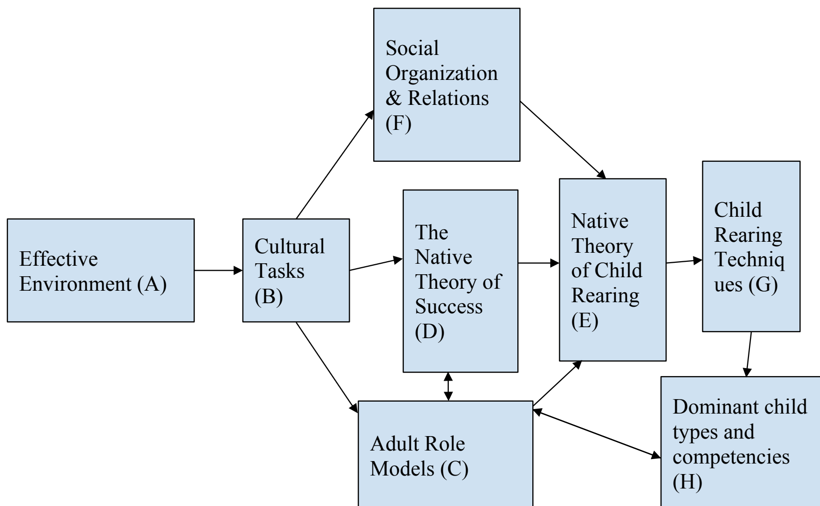

Fig. 1.1 Cultural ecology model of child-rearing (*Source* Ogbu [1981, p. 422])

to the population. Members who can competently and successfully complete the cultural tasks become the role models or adaptive adult categories (C). The images of role models are culturally buttressed and become the representatives of the "native theory of success" (D). The "native theory of success" or the concept of social mobility explains how one performs cultural tasks in order to succeed in the status system; in other words, it depicts how one "makes it." The knowledge of "making it," however, is cultural specific. Various cultures differently define culture tasks, status positions, importance, or value of status, the competencies and strategies essential to attain or perform the cultural tasks and have different penalties and rewards for failure and success (Ogbu, 1981, p. 420). The "native theory of success" greatly influences parenting philosophy and the native theory of child-rearing (E). Cultures thus differ from each other in ways of raising children. The "native theory of child rearing" describes people's beliefs about culturally appropriate ways to care and teach their children; such beliefs are based on the cultural specific notion of success, the image of role models in their culture and community, and the social organization and relations of child-rearing (F). In return, the social organization and relation of child-rearing (F) is affected by the native theory of child-rearing and the actual techniques of raising children (G). Child-rearing techniques or methods vary among cultures, and they refer to the process by which adults inculcate instrumental or functional competencies in children to ensure that they can complete cultural tasks and become successful adults. Particular techniques may be applied in particular settings, at particular times and by particular child-rearing agents (Ogbu, 1981, p. 423). Last but not the least, the outcomes of child-rearing in a given culture measured by the dominant child types and competencies (H) are the final component of cultural ecology model.

In summary, Ogbu (1981) argued the origins of human competence defined by a given population lie in the specific nature of its cultural tasks. Moreover, the child-rearing techniques and parenting philosophies are largely influenced by the native theory of success and child-rearing. Parents and other child-rearing agents tend to inculcate instrumental or functional competencies in their children based on their conception of role models and the socialization and organization of child-rearing. Finally, the theory and techniques of child-rearing are shared by the given population and culture to ensure competence and survival.

Cultural-ecological theory is about the interweaving of cultural and individual aspects of human development in the course of engaging in culturally

sanctioned activities. However, culture is not stagnant, but rather it changes as it contacts from outside the culture. Moreover, changes occur when the new generation appropriate the old traditions and transform them in the process of appropriation. Members of the new generation adopt and adapt the ways of the older generation to fit into the cultural group, as Ogbu (1981) suggested that child-rearing techniques were preordained by the given culture and remained more or less the same unless there are rapid social changes.

Conclusion

Globalization has dramatically changed the social and economic power of the world. In response to the global competition that has become the hallmark of the twenty-first century, nations have begun to focus their attention more intently on investing in human capital through quality ECCE due to its greater economic return. However, child development doesn't happen in a vacuum, but rather in a broader interrelated ecological system. The next sections of this book will provide a detailed understanding of these broader ecological systems in the context of three countries: China, India, and America. First, Chapters 2–4 will present overviews of the educational systems in each of these countries along with recent educational policies that have been passed in response to global shifts in the field of early education. Following this, Chapters 5–7 will present empirical and research-based data to explore how cultural ecology influences parenting philosophies and practices and how parents in each of these countries draw on cultural and global influences in their desire to best prepare their children to succeed in the twenty-first century.

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PART II

State Investments in Childhood Development: What Policymakers Need to Know?

CHAPTER 2

Childhood Development and Education in China: Breaking the Cycle of Poverty and Improving Future Competitiveness

Guangyu Tan

The future success of a nation's economy will depend in part on a well educated and highly resourceful workforce that is capable of adapting existing knowledge and adopting new skills in order to remain competitive in a continually changing global market. Extensive inter-disciplinary evidence indicates that adult economic productivity is greatly impacted by cognitive, social, and emotional capacities as well as educational attainment shaped by early life experiences. The zero-to-three age period, when children are at their most receptive stage of development, is vital for the production and subsequent retention of synapses; therefore, inadequate stimulation during this period can have large and lasting negative effects on subsequent development (Kotulak, 1998). Thus, intervening in this sensitive period (birth to three) has the potential to permanently alter their development trajectories and protect them against risk factors present in their early environment (Doyle, Harmon, Heckman, & Tremblay, 2009).

Similarly, behavioral research confirms that the early years are foundational for a full range of human competencies and are a period of heightened sensitivity to the effects of both positive and negative early life experiences. The most cited evidence is from the Perry Preschool Program, an early childhood education program conducted at Perry Elementary School in

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G. Tan et al., *Investment in Early Childhood Education in a Globalized World*, https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-60041-7_2

Ypsilanti, Michigan, during the early 1960s. Disadvantaged children living in adverse circumstances with low IQ scores and a low index of family socioeconomic status participated in the Perry program. Beginning at age 3, participants received active learning for two and a half hours on weekdays and 90-minute per week home visits by teachers. The treatment lasted for 2 years. Follow-up interviews were conducted when the participants were approximately 15, 19, 27, and 40 years old. The follow-up data found that individuals who participated in the Perry program scored higher on achievement tests, reached higher levels of education, required less special education, earned higher wages, were more likely to own a home, were less likely to go on social welfare or public assistance, were less likely to commit a crime, and be incarcerated than individuals from the control groups (Heckman, Moon, Pinto, Savelyev, & Yavitz, 2010).

In a parallel fashion, economists believe that the quality of the early childhood environment is a strong predictor of adult productivity and that human capital investment in early childhood care and education has a much bigger economic return than physical capital investment. Moreover, early investment in preventive programs aimed at disadvantaged children is often more cost effective than later remediation (Carneiro & Heckman, 2003). By investing early, the benefits are larger and are long term, which in turn increases the return to investment. Heckman et al. (2010) estimated the overall social rate return of high-quality early intervention programs, such as the Perry program, ranges from 7 to 10%, which is above the stock market rate of return on equity (5.8%) since World War II.

Therefore, there is an international consensus that nations have to make human capital investment in early childhood development a national priority, in order to gain an edge in the highly competitive global market. Recognizing its future lies with the children, and the high social and economic dividends that quality early childhood care and education reap for its human capital in the long term, the Chinese government has committed to increase the access to high-quality early childhood care and education for all young children under the age of six. The importance of education was clearly stipulated in the *Outline of China's National Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (2010–2020)*:

> The destiny of our nation rests on education. Education development should always be put in a prioritized position on Party and state agenda. In line with the requirements to reach out to modernization, the world and the future, and to meet the demands for building a moderately prosperous society in

> all respects and an innovative country, it is imperative to regard cultivation of people as a fundamental mission, draw strength from reform and innovation, improve education equity, carry out quality oriented education in an all-round way, push forward scientific education development from a new historical starting point, and speed up the transition from the world's largest education system to one of the world's best, and from a country with larger scale of human resource to a country rich in human resources. Only thus can we make still greater contributions to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and the advancement of world Civilization. (p. 6)

This chapter will start with the history of the early childhood care and education (1949–post 2010) in China. Then it will review the Chinese government's efforts in improving the access and quality of ECCE through policy and legal framework as well as financial investment. Moreover, it will explore the challenges facing high-quality ECCE in China. It concludes with some implications for future policy and research.

History of the Development of Early Childhood Care and Education in China (1949–Post 2010)

Since its establishment in 1949, China has experienced dramatic changes and transformations in the political, economic, cultural, and educational arenas. Intricately influenced by China's politics and economic development, early childhood care and education (ECCE) has also undergone stages of transformative development, transitioning its operation from solely governmental (1949–1957) to non-governmental or individual based (1994–2009) and to shared responsibilities among all levels of government and private sectors as well as families. *zǎo jiào* (早教) or early childhood care and education (ECCE) in China constitutes three main forms (1) nursery centers caring for children ages 0–3, (2) kindergartens, serving those ages 3–6, and (3) one-year xué qián bān (学前班) or preschool, catering to children aged 5–6. Preschools are affiliated to *xiǎo xué* (小学) or the primary schools. The goals for nurseries are mainly physical care and nurturing, and thus, the teachers are trained more as a caregiver than an educator, and they are not supervised by education authorities. However, the focus of kindergarten and preschool shifts to academics and school readiness. Children at kindergartens and preschools are introduced to Chinese reading, writing, mathematics, natural science, arts, music, English, and physical education. The development of ECCE in China can be divided into five stages based on the characteristics of each historical period.

Stage One: Golden Era of ECCE (1949–1957)

Right after its establishment in 1949, China witnessed a rapid expansion of early childhood care and education, as the new socialist regime made great efforts to promote gender equality and encouraged women to join the workforce. As more women entered full-time employment, there was a sharp increase of demand for childcare. Chinese government and employers or so-called gōng zuò dān wèi (工作单位) provided free or low-cost childcare service as worker's benefits. The curricula of ECCE were largely influenced by the former Soviet Union (Gu, 2012). Among the Soviet pedagogical theories and systems, for example, A. Kairov's Pedagogika (Educational Pedagogy) became one of the most influential and a must read for Chinese teachers. Kairov emphasized the importance of political education as the main goal for schools.

> The purpose of the school under socialism was to turn it into a weapon for Communism to transform society. It must impart to its pupils the Communist views on nature and society. It was only under the 'socialist system' that man's full potential can be fully developed. (Kairov, 1952, pp. 11, 39, cited in Hung, 2014)

Based on Kairov's ideology, Chinese government conducted political education programs for kindergarteners, reflecting nationalist agenda. The objectives of such programs were to indoctrinate patriotism and underscore the legitimacy of the Chinese Central Party (CCP) and to train a generation of loyal and faithful supporters of the newly established government (Hung, 2014). These objectives were evident in the teaching of kindergarteners to "love their motherland, people, labor, science and public property" (爱主国, 爱人民, 爱劳动, 爱科学, 爱公物), or the so-called five loves (Corter, Jannohammed, Zhang, & Bertrand, 2006). The dominant themes in the curricula included the nobility of labor, with a distinct tribute to Chinese workers; heroism, especially the heroic People's Liberation Army soldiers; patriotism symbolized by Tiananmen Square and Chairman Mao Zedong; and hatred of domestic and international enemies, particularly the *guó mín dǎng fǎn dòng pài* (国民党反动派) and the American Imperialists (*měi dìg uó zhǔ yì* 美帝国主义).

The main teaching methods in kindergartens were games, singing, and storytelling. However, none of the methods were for the sake of fun and entertainment. They were heavily focused on "historicity, nationality, and

[the concept of] class" (Galina, 1952, as cited in Hung, 2014, p. 849). For example, kindergarteners were taught to play new games like "My Beloved People's Liberation Army (PLA) Soldiers" (我热爱人民解放军). In this game, children took turns throwing balls (representing artillery shells) at toy blocks placed in a circle (representing *guó mín dǎng fǎn dòng pài* 国民党反动派 and the American Imperialists or *měi dìg uó zhǔ yì* 美帝国主义). Young children were also taught to sing songs that express group solidarity as well as to communicate political values.

I remember when I was in kindergarten, we were taught to sing *wo ai Beijing Tiananmen* (我爱北京天安门), which is still a popular children's song today. It teaches children to love the country and the leaders.

> 我爱北京天安门
> 天安门上太阳升
> 伟大领袖毛主席
> 指引我们向前进

This song literally is translated to I love Tiananmen in Beijing

> I love Tiananmen in Beijing.
> The sun is shining over Tiananmen.
> Our great leader, Chairman Ma (Zedong) directs us where to go

In addition to games and singing, Chinese kindergartens stressed the value of storytelling in a variety of forms, including traditional folk tales, fables, and fairy tales. Many of the stories had strong political messages. For example, the life story of Chairman Mao as the savior to Chinese people was repeatedly told to the kindergartners.

Extracurricular activities and field trips were also used as opportunities for political socialization. In Beijing, young children were taken to Tiananmen Square, the sacred site where the new nation was founded in 1949. Children in other cities would go to national history museums, for example, to learn how the People's Liberation Army liberated the country and how the People's Republic of China was founded.

The rapid change of education systems and the new socialist and nationalist curriculum in the early 1950s demanded the early childhood caregivers and educators to go through intensive training, so that they could gain a deep understanding of Marxism and Maoism (马列主义毛泽东思想) as

well as the current political movements. During the mid-1950s, mandatory "ideological retraining" for preschool teachers was added to regional universities.

Public kindergartens and nurseries in urban as well as some rural areas were booming. The earliest national official statistics indicated in 1950 there were more than 140,000 children enrolled in kindergarten, among whom 88,000 or close to 63% were in public early childhood education institutions (Hung, 2014). By 1957, the total number of kindergarteners in the nation had reached a record high of 1.08 million, 7.7 times more than the number recorded in 1950. This period is considered as a golden era of early childhood care and education by the CCP (Chiaromonte, 1990; Li, Yang, & Chen, 2016). However, critics argued that kindergarten education in the 1950s was completely wedded to a rigid authoritarian ideology and was utilized as propaganda to advance the CCP's nationalist agenda (Hung, 2014).

Stage Two: Dark Age (1958–1977)

However, between 1958 and 1977, China went through a series of political turbulence, notably *dà yuè jìn* (大跃进) or the "Great Leap Forward" (1958–1960) and *wén huà dà gé mìng* (文化大革命) or the "Cultural Revolution" (1966–1976). During the Cultural Revolution, any formal education was interrupted. The goals of education were realigned so as to inculcate revolutionary fervor, including the practice of military drills, the memorization of poems and quotations by Chairman Mao (Corter et al., 2006). Teachers and other well-educated professionals were considered as zī chǎn jiē jí (资产阶级) or Bourgeoisie and thus a threat to the communist regime. They were sent to rural or remote areas for láo dòng gǎi zào (劳动改造) or reeducation through laboring (Li & Wang, 2008). This is referred to as the "Dark Age" of China's education, including early childhood care and education.

Stage Three: Renaissance (1978–1993)

The year 1978, when *gǎi gé kāi fàng zhèng cè* (改革开放政策) or the "reform and opening-up" policy was implemented, marked a turning point for the development of ECCE in China. In the same year, the Ministry of Education (MoE) restored the Early Childhood Education Department, which was closed over the chaotic decade of the Cultural Revolution

(1966–1976). In 1979, a national conference on nursery and kindergarten education was held in Beijing. The purpose of the conference included developing a coordinated effort on the transition between nursery and kindergarten. It also aimed to improve kindergarten and preschool teachers' salaries and social status, to provide support to local infrastructure and ensure a qualified teacher workforce, and to improve the health of young children (Corter et al., 2006).

Marxism and Maoism (马列主义毛泽东思想) were no longer the only proclaimed philosophy. Instead, Chinese scholars and researchers were calling for more cultural plurality, reflected in the slogan: "百家争鸣,百花齐放" (bai jia zheng ming, bai hua qi fang) (Zhu, 2006). Western education theories, such as those of Piaget, Vygotsky, Dewey, Montessori, Bronfenbrenner, and Bruner were introduced to Chinese education system. Play-based learning, such as Reggio Emilia-inspired programs, Montessori schools, and the Project Approach were adopted (Li & Li, 2003). The traditional practices in early childhood education that treated children as passive learners were questioned and even criticized. The concept that children are unique individuals with their own rights, needs, and interests began to arise (Pan & Li, 2012). Therefore, the education reform in this period of time called teachers and educators to respect children as individual child and to promote each child's development in his or her own unique way. This whole-child approach was a drastic shift from the traditional collectivist approach, which emphasized responsibilities for and obligations to others, rather than individual identity and rights. Under the collectivist ideology (*ji ti zhu yi* 集体主义), individuality was oppressed, and compliance to power and authority were promoted and rewarded (Pan & Li, 2012).

In the early 1980s, spontaneous explorations and experimentations for new curriculum models emerged and were instigated by scholars in universities or in cooperation with practitioners. These non-governmental, grassroot explorations were ended when the National Education Committee (now known as the Ministry of Education [MoE]) announced the *Regulations on Kindergarten Education Practice* [Trial Version] (1989) *(幼儿园工作规程 试行)* and 幼儿园管理条例 (*Kindergarten Management By-laws*) in 1990. These *Regulations* and by-laws symbolized a government-directed, top-down propagation of early childhood care and education. The *Regulations* clearly stipulated that kindergarten curriculum should provide young children with key experiences and that the curriculum should be organized around young children's interests and experiences. The Regulations maintained that the primary goal of early childhood care and education was to

cultivate young children's subjectivity, autonomy, and creativity through active learning. Moreover, the kindergarten curriculum should be conducted through the venues of daily routine or play (Liu, Pan, & Sun, 2004; Ye, 2002; Yu, 2002). It was the first time in China that the national policy acknowledged children as unique individuals and designated play and active learning as the primary teaching methods in kindergarten and thus legally defined the prominent role of play in early childhood care and education (Pan & Li, 2012). These regulations and by-laws served as a crucial milestone for promoting quality early childhood care and education and laid foundations for further development of ECCE in China. This period is considered the Renaissance of China's ECCE (Li et al., 2016).

Stage Four: Privatization of ECCE (1994–2010)

As discussed earlier, before the economic reforms of 1978, China had a planned economic system (*ji hua jing ji* or 计划经济), in which all decisions regarding production and investment were embedded in a plan formulated by the central government. The operating costs of early childhood care and education institutions were mainly paid for by the governments, work unit, and communities, as social welfare and work benefits (Zeng, 2006). However, after the reform, with the establishment of the market economy (*shi chang jing ji* or 市场经济) in the 1990s, the allocation of goods and resources as well as the determination of prices largely depends on the market force or the "supply and demand." Furthermore, the central government encouraged non-government and private investment and implemented a so-called government retreats while private sector advances (国退民进) policy. This policy indicated a shift of the government's responsibility of funding and monitoring early childhood care and education to the private sector or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Li et al., 2016). In the Proposal on Strengthening Early Childhood Education (*guan yu jia qiang you er jiao yu gong zuo de yi jian*, 关于加强幼儿教育工作的意见, National Education Committee, 1988), it was clearly stipulated that funding for early childhood education was no longer the responsibility of the central government, but rather the duty of local governments. The Proposal on Reform and Development of Early Childhood Education (2003) reinforced this stipulation and set up the goal to promote a development pattern that would establish public kindergartens as the backbone and model of early childhood education and mobilize social forces to run kindergartens

as the main management body by 2007 (Hong & Chen, 2017). It also called for parental supports with more formal services to "provide child-care and educational services at an early stage for children aged 0–6 and their parents" (p. 2). Therefore, early childhood care and education was no longer a "public good," but rather a commodity that parents have to pay for. Without funding, many public kindergartens had to be closed down (关), suspended (停), merged (并), transformed (转), and sold (卖) (Li et al., 2016). The number of children enrolled in kindergartens dropped from 271 million in 1995 to 232 million in 1999 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2000). On the other hand, the private kindergartens were on the rise. In 2009, there were 89,304 private kindergartens, almost 61% increase from 2003. The total enrollment of young children in private kindergartens in 2009 reached 11,341,694, constituting 69.2% of the entire kindergarten population nationwide (Hong & Chen, 2017). Nurseries for children aged 0–3 became almost non-existent by the mid-1990s. The decline of early childhood care and education institutions was worse in rural and remote areas. For example, between 1993 and 2005, the number of kindergartens declined by 14% and enrollment by 6% in urban areas, whereas in rural areas, the number of kindergartens declined by 51% and the enrollment down by 25% (Corter et al., 2006).

Privatization of ECCE not only affected the enrollment, but more importantly, it exacerbated the inequality between the urban and rural areas. Moreover, the preschool teachers' quality, as well as the quality of the ECCE programs vary drastically between the state-run and the private services. These problems will be further discussed in a later section on challenges the ECCE has been facing in China. The education reform during this period time was referred as a "silent revolution" of ECCE in China (Li & Wang, 2008).

Stage Five: The Coming Spring of ECCE in China (Post 2010)

Not until 2010 did the Chinese government make universalizing early childhood care and education its national priority and perceive appropriation in ECCE as strategic investment in human capital. In July 2010, the State Council announced the *Outline of China's National Medium and Long-Term Educational Reform and Development* (国家中长期教育改革和发展规划纲要 (*2010–2020*), which set concrete goals for modernizing the Chinese education system. The *Outline* was a collective effort of the central government and public. The first draft was completed in 2009 by

a working group of eleven thematic panels. Public input and professional feedback were invited. This was the first time in Chinese history that the central government took such an open and participatory approach to education reform, reflecting its commitment to establish an education system that works for its people (Li et al., 2016). The *Outline* devoted a chapter to preschool education, including access, program quality, teacher qualifications, and its pledge to strengthen preschool education in rural areas. The *Outline* stipulates,

> By 2020, one-year preschool education should become the norm, while two-year preschool education should be basically universalized, and three-year preschool education popularized in regions where conditions are ripe. Due importance shall be attached to the education of infants aged between 0 and three. (p. 12)

The *Outline* set the target of expanding the gross enrollment rate (GER) in 3 years of preschool education from 50.9% in 2009 to 70% in 2020, that of 2 years of preschool education from 65% to 80%, and that of one year of preschool education from 74% to 95% (p. 11). As a result of the Chinese government's effort to promote ECCE, by 2015, there were 223,683 formal preschool education institutions, enrolling over 42 million children aged 0–6 years old (Ministry of Education of People's Republic China, 2015).

The *Outline* clarified the role of government in providing early childhood care and education. Even though early childhood education is non-compulsory, the *Outline* suggested that early childhood care and education shall be mainly funded, planned, and managed by the government. It stipulates, "The portion of fiscal (public) expenditure on education in GDP shall be raised to 4% by 2012 (p. 38)." Both government and non-governmental sponsors as well as families shall share the financial responsibilities. To address the affordability issue, "the national financial aid policy shall be made to work more effectively. Steps shall be taken to support preschool education for children from rural families with financial difficulties and from urban families on basic living allowance (p. 40)."

Moreover, the *Outline* put a greater emphasis on the development of ECCE in rural and remote areas, in order to ameliorate the inequality between urban and rural areas. It proposed to expand ECCE access by renovating existing kindergartens, building new ones in all levels, and making use of spare school buildings in primary and middle schools. It also focused on the importance of training to be offered to rural kindergarten principals

and teachers. The government was concerned about the well-being of the left-behind children (留守儿童), whose parents have migrated to the cities for employment and left the children behind with grandparents in their rural residence. The issue of left-behind children (留守儿童) has drawn a lot of national attention, because they tend to leave school early, eat poorly, and have little cognitive stimulation in the crucial first years of life (Normile, 2017). As a result, it is estimated that one in three Chinese children faces an education apocalypse. If interventions were not implemented, Dr. Rozelle warns, "400 million future working age Chinese are in danger of becoming cognitively handicapped (Normile, 2017)." To address this issue, the *Outline* urges universalizing preschool education in rural areas and ensures all left-behind children attend kindergartens. For the Pilot Project of Central and Western Rural ECE Advancement Programme (中西部农村学前教育推进工程试点项目), the government invested 500 million RMB in 10 provinces in the Western China to support 61 rural counties in building ECCE programs (Zhou, 2011).

To achieve the goals projected in the *Outline*, the State Council issued *Several Opinions on the Current Development of ECCE* (国务院关于当前发展学前教育的若干意见) in November 2010. This is an important document, because it was the first time in Chinese history that ECCE was treated as the nation's priority and thus was situated as an integral part of the government agenda at all levels (Zhou, 2011). The *Opinions* identified six main issues regarding the ECCE development. First, government at all levels need to increase investment, including financial investment in public early childhood education institutions. Special funding should be provided for Western China and underdeveloped areas. Second, pre-service and in-service teacher training need to be improved to ensure a high-quality teacher workforce. Third, the management for the ECCE programs and organizational leadership should be strengthened. Moreover, to address the affordability issue, the government shall regulate and manage the fees for ECCE programs. Fifth, with more school attacks in recent years, the *Opinions* highlighted the safety and security of young children. Finally, the most prominent development of ECCE is the shift from a teacher-centered approach to play-based active learning. The *Opinions* suggested play should be treated as the main activity in the ECCE program, and children learn the best through a variety of activities and in an enriched learning environment (Zhou, 2011).

Governments at all levels were required to develop a 3-year Action Plan to implement the *Outlines* and address the issues highlighted by the *Opinions*. The action plan includes four components: (1) the current local conditions, problems, and challenges in the provision of ECCE; (2) goals, objectives, and concrete steps for promoting ECCE over the next 3 years; (3) strategies to enlarge enrollment in public kindergartens, secure funding, enhance teacher training, ensure the ECCE program quality, etc.; and (4) pilot projects that may be undertaken in the next 3 years (Zhou, 2011, p. 34).

As a result of the commitment and efforts of the Chinese government, the enrollment of preschool institutions increased from 29 million in 2010 to over 42 million in 2015. The number of full-time preschool teachers almost doubled from 1,144,225 in 2010 to 2,051,021 in 2015 (China Statistical Yearbook, 2011, 2016). Not only has the quantity of ECCE programs and educators increased in this period of time, but more importantly, the philosophy of ECCE has dramatically changed. In the past, children were perceived as passive learners and play was not considered as learning. In the post-2010 era, however, children are viewed as unique individuals with his or her own rights and needs. Teachers need to let children initiate learning and respect each individual child's rights. Teachers should no longer be the authority of the classroom, but rather the facilitators of child-centered, self-guided learning. Play is now considered a legitimate learning activity and should be the focus of all ECCE programs.

These important quantitative and qualitative changes made the post-2010 era a coming spring in China's ECCE development. However, there are still many challenges that China's ECCE is facing, and there is a still a long way to go to make ECCE in China accessible, affordable, and accountable to all. The following section will discuss the current challenges and potential solutions.

Current Challenges: 3As and 2Ss

The year of 2010 marked as the beginning of Chinese government's commitment to invest in ECCE as an anti-poverty strategy and to improve the future workforce's competitiveness in a global market (The World Bank, 2011). To ensure equal access to high-quality ECCE programs, the government has implemented a 3-year Action Plan, as well as other measures to promote early education and intervention, targeting the rural areas and underdeveloped Western regions, in order to achieve the strategic goal of

"rejuvenating China through science and education" (The State Council of the People's Republic of China, 1995). Tremendous progress has been made in ECCE, in terms of the number of kindergartens, the gross enrollment rate, the financial support, and teacher qualification. For example, in 2016, there were over 240,000 kindergartens, and the national gross enrollment rate (GER) reached 77.4%. Moreover, among all the students entering the primary schools in 2016, 98.4% received some sort of pre-primary education (MoE, 2017). However, ECCE programs in China today still face the challenges of 3As and 2Ss: accessibility (access to high-quality kindergartens), affordability (the cost of kindergarten attendance), accountability (the assurance mechanisms for quality monitoring and evaluation), sustainability (the potential of the ECCE policies to survive and thrive), and social justice and equity (the equality of rights for children from all backgrounds) (Li et al., 2014). These challenges are further exacerbated by regional disparity and the urban–rural divide.

Accessibility

Accessibility refers to the ability for all children aged 3 to 6 to easily attend a nearby kindergarten (Li et al., 2014). Since the economic reforms of 1978, there was a general increase in the supply of kindergartens nationwide, and more children were able to attend kindergartens (see Table 2.1).

However, the numbers could be deceiving, because it didn't differentiate the number of children enrolled in urban kindergartens from those enrolled in rural and underdeveloped areas. China has been largely an agricultural

Table 2.1 Development of kindergarten in China

Year	*No. of kindergartens*	*No. of full-time teachers (10,000 persons)*	*No. of children enrolled in kindergartens (10,000 persons)*
1978	163,952	27.8	787.7
2010	150,420	114.4	2976.7
2015	223,683	205.1	4264.8

Source China Statistical Yearbook (2016). Retrieved from http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/2016/indexeh.htm

country for centuries; however, farmlands and rural population are shrinking due to the unprecedented urbanization since 1978. The urban population has increased from 13% in 1950 to 60.4% in 2019 (https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/china-population/). Nevertheless, the rural children account for two-thirds of the total number of children in China. Because of the scattered rural residence and lack of public kindergartens, rural children's needs and rights to access quality early childhood education have been constantly denied. For example, while the percentage of children enrolled in urban kindergartens increased from 53% in 2003 to 72% in 2012, the enrollment rate for rural children dropped from 47% in 2003 to 28% in 2012 (Hong & Chen, 2017). Moreover, the available kindergartens in rural areas declined from 49.6% in 2006 to 34.8% in 2012, compared to the increase of kindergartens in urban areas from 50.4to 65% during the same period of time. In other words, there were comparable portions of kindergartens in urban and rural areas in 2006 (50.4% vs. 49.6% and the difference was less than 1%); however, by 2012, the urban–rural gap expanded drastically (65% vs. 34.8% and the difference was over 30%) (Hong, Liu, Ma, & Luo, 2015). The enlarging disparity of access to ECCE between urban and rural areas has become the bottleneck of equitable educational opportunities and process, which eventually led to unequal educational outcomes (Hong & Luo, 2012).

In addition to the urban–rural divide in access to ECCE, there is also a severe regional disparity due to China's decentralized education financing system. The *Outline* of 2010 clearly delegated the financial responsibilities to local government and encouraged non-government sponsors and family involvement in investing in ECCE. Furthermore, since ECCE is not part of the 9-year compulsory education, it receives relatively little central government support. Although preschool enrollment accounted for 13% of total educational enrollment in 2012, early childhood education received only 2% of the national educational budget allocation (Liang, Zhang, & Fu, 2013). In this context, ECCE relies heavily on local government and private investment. There are great variances among regions, regarding economic development, which ultimately results in the local government's capability to invest in ECCE. Hong, Luo, and Cui (2013) studied the regional disparities of preschool education development. They divided 31 provinces in China into three tiers based on their geographic location and economic development status. Tier 1 included Beijing and Shanghai, and the twelve provinces in Tier 2 were Tianjin, Liaoning, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Hainan, Fujian, Jiangxi, Shandong, Hubei, Guangdong, Chongqing, and

Sichuan. The remaining seventeen provinces, located mostly in central and Western China, fell into Tier 3. Because of their geographic locations, but most importantly preferential policies, the economic growth rate in Tier 1 and Tier 2 provinces has been much higher than that of the provinces in Tier 3. For instance, in 2015, the gross domestic product (GDP) of Guangdong province was over 7281 billion RMB yuan, ranked No. 1 in all provinces. The GDP of Jiangsu and Shandong were 7011 billion RMB yuan and 6300 billion RMB yuan, respectively, ranked Nos. 2 and 3 among all regions. All three provinces belong to Tier 2. At the bottom were Tibet, Qinghai, and Ningxia, with the GDP of 102 billion, 241 billion and 291 billion RMB yuan, respectively (https://www.statista.com/statistics/278557/gdp-of-china-by-region/). These three provinces in Tier 3 are all located in Western China and have high ethnic minority population. Tibet's GDP was approximately 1.4% of Guangdong's. Economic development of the region has a direct impact on the local government's capabilities to invest in education (see Table 2.2). In 2015, Guangdong province invested more than 13 times in education than Tibet did.

Consequently, children in underdeveloped Tier 3 provinces have less opportunity to receive quality ECCE than their counterparts in Tier 2 and Tier 1 regions. According to Hong et al. (2013), the gross enrollment rate (GER) of preschool in Tier 1 and Tier 2 was 87 and 83%, respectively, whereas the GER in Tier 3 was only 52%, with Tibet having the lowest GER of 16%.

The distance to nearby kindergartens is yet another barrier to many children living in rural and remote areas. In Yunnan province, a Tier 3 province

Table 2.2 Regional disparity in GDP and education funds in 2015

Province	*GDP (in billion RMB yuan)*	*Government appropriation for education (in 10,000 yuan)*
Guangdong	7281.26	20,220,035
Jiangsu	7011.64	16,716,834
Shandong	6300.23	15,811,214
Ningxia	291.18	1,502,629
Qinghai	241.71	1,843,741
Tibet	102.64	1,507,576

Source *China Statistical Yearbook* (2016). Retrieved from http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/2016/indexeh.htm

located in Southwestern China, the average distance to the nearest kindergarten is 6 km or 3.7 miles. Some even reported the closest kindergarten was 74 km or 46 miles away from home (Liang et al., 2013). Without school buses and public transportation, many rural children had no means to go to kindergarten and thus were kept at home.

Affordability

Affordability refers to the family's ability to pay for tuition and fees of a chosen kindergarten for their child with or without the governmental subsidies (Li & Wang, 2014). The problem of affordability can further exacerbate the inequality in educational opportunities and process. Three factors contribute to the affordability of quality ECCE: government spending, the cost of kindergartens, and the family annual income (Song & Liu, 2013). First and foremost, as discussed before, ECCE has never been part of the 9-year compulsory education in China and thus received little financial support from the central government. Although the total government appropriation in education rose to 4 percent of national GDP in 2012, funding for early childhood education accounted less than 2% of the national educational budget (Hong & Chen, 2017). On a per child basis, total public spending on early childhood education and care in China equated to RMB 2623 yuan (or about US$423) in the rural areas and RMB 8132 (US$1311) yuan in the urban areas, compared to per-pupil spending of RMB 10,270 yuan (US$1656) and RMB 15,036 (US$2425) yuan in rural and urban primary schools, respectively (Zhou, Li, Hu, & Li, 2017). In comparison with other countries, China's educational budget for early childhood care and education is also at the lower end of the spectrum. The average per-child spending on ECCE across OECD countries in 2013 was USD $4300, with per child spending highest, at over USD $11,000, in Luxembourg and Norway (OECD, 2016).

In this context, ECCE depends largely on private or non-government investment as well as institution generated revenue, including fees, tuitions, and levies on parents. Institution generated revenue contributed to more than 70% of total ECCE funding in 2013, a 42% increase from 2008. Tuition hikes add further burdens to families, particularly those living in poverty. Since the majority of kindergartens in China today are private and for-profit, there are no government regulations on tuition and fees. Consequently, the tuition and fees for kindergarten have been consistently soaring. Some kindergartens even charged more than universities.

For example, in Beijing, the capital city of China, a reputable kindergarten charges approximately RMB 1000 yuan ($150) a month, whereas tuition and accommodation at Peking University, the country's best or known as China's Harvard, costs only about RMB 700 yuan ($102) a month, due to government subsidies (Ford, 2010). In addition to tuitions and fees, it is not uncommon for kindergartens to ask families to "donate" (赞助) RMB 5000–15,000 yuan per year. From the household income perspective, the annual fee for a kindergarten child could account for 8.7% of urban residents' per capita annual income and 35.2% of rural residents' per capita annual income. It is worth noting the per capita income of urban and rural household in 2015 were RMB 31,194.8 yuan and RMB 11,421.7 yuan, respectively (China Statistical Yearbook, 2016). For low-income households, their per capita disposable income was far less than the national average, with RMB 5221.2 yuan or about a quarter of the national average of RMB 21,966.2 yuan (China Statistical Yearbook, 2016). Moreover, Hong and Chen (2017) reported that tuition and fees skyrocketed from $931 million (in US dollars) in 2009 to $5.675 billion (in US dollars) in 2010, representing a growth rate of 509.89% or eight times higher than that of 2009 (p. 38).

Given the importance of the long-term benefits of ECCE, both the central and local governments have been increasing their fiscal investment, especially after the announcement of the *Outline* in 2010. During the years 2012–2013, the central government and local governments invested a total of 6.47 billion yuan to support children from disadvantaged backgrounds, including those from poor families, orphans, and children with special needs (MoE, 2014). However, the funds allotted to ECCE are still relatively lower than those allotted to 9-year compulsory education and higher education. Moreover, the provision of federal funding and local funding is still scarce and thus insufficient to support high-quality ECE programs. Furthermore, while the cost-sharing system of ECCE among various stakeholders is in place, the specific co-payment plan has not yet been clearly delineated, and families still share the most financial burden. For low-income families and those living in the margin, a quality ECCE program is beyond their affordability. The gap between the wealthy and the poor and between the "haves" and "have-nots" will be further widened.

Accountability

Accountability refers to the policy of holding the ECCE institutions and teachers accountable for children's physical and cognitive development by linking such progress with the fiscal resources provided by the government (Li & Wang, 2014). To ensure the educational equity and to hold each ECCE institution accountable, the Ministry of Education (MoE) issued *Interim Measures of the Early Childhood Education Monitoring and Evaluation* (学前教育督导评估暂行办法) in 2012. Based on the principles of development, inspiration, objectivity, and timeline, the *Interim Measures* tended to support the establishment of corresponding monitoring, assessment, and annual inspection systems. In particular, the *Interim Measures* assess the following six major areas: (1) governmental duties (management and leadership structures, planning, and planning preparation, as well as monitoring, assessment, reward, and punishment mechanisms); (2) investment of funds (financial budget and safeguard mechanism, investment mechanism, appropriation standards, and preferential policies and subvention system; (3) kindergarten construction (expansion of qualified-and-affordable resources, construction of urban and rural kindergartens, as well as improvement of facility and equipment standards); (4) teacher development and education (teacher supply and credentialing, teacher education, and training system, as well as teacher benefits and compensation); (5) standardized ECCE management system (kindergarten licensing and monitoring system, pricing management, safety and healthcare, and quality evaluation and intervention); and (6) guarantee of development (gross enrollment rate, proportion of public kindergartens, proportion of fiscal funding, proportion of teachers with certificates, childcare quality, and social satisfaction) (Hong & Chen, 2017, p. 40). For the purpose of this analysis, I will focus on the kindergarten construction, the ECCE teacher development and education, and the curriculum and pedagogy in ECCE.

The Quality of Kindergartens

The quality of ECCE programs is measured by the process quality and structural quality. Process quality consists of the various interactions that go on in a classroom between staff and children, between staff, parents, and other adults, among the children themselves, and the interactions children have with the materials and activities in the environment, as well as those

features, such as space, schedule, and materials that support these interactions. Structural quality includes staff to child ratio, group size, cost of care, and type of care, for example, childcare center or family childcare (Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute). In order to provide high-quality care and education to young children, an ECCE program must provide protection of children's health and safety; opportunity to build positive relationship; and opportunities for stimulation and learning from experience.

The most commonly used instrument for assessment is the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R), which has 43 items and 470 indicators in the systemic evaluation of 7 subscales (space and furnishings, personal care routines, language-reasoning, activities, interactions, program structure, and parents and staff). Each item is scored on a 7-point scale ranging from "Inadequate" to "Excellent." Some Chinese scholars, however, argue that ECERS-R may not be culturally appropriate and lack cultural sensitivity. For example, when using ECERS-R to assess the quality of kindergartens in Kunming, Yunnan province, only 5 out of 24 kindergartens or 20% had scores rated "minimum," while the remaining or other 19 kindergartens or 80% were categorized as "inadequate" (Liang et al., 2013). Moreover, Liang et al. (2013) found that among the 7 subscales, parents and staff had the highest average score of 3, which was the only scale categorized as "Minimum," while the remaining measures were classified as "Inadequate." The program structure was rated the lowest of all (with only 1.69 out of 7) (p. 189).

Another example would be the interactions between the teacher and the children. ECERS-R measures whether the children are encouraged to initiate the activities and are given the opportunity to learn independently. However, this philosophy conflicts with Chinese traditional belief that teachers are the authority of the classroom, and they are the expert of the knowledge. Thus, the traditional Chinese teacher–student interactions are teacher-initiated, and the children's role is to follow the instructions and obey the teachers. Along the same vein, Hu and Szente (2009) found when adopting the ECERS-R literally, the ECCE programs neglect Chinese cultural context and do not reflect the diversity of Chinese culture. For example, among 40 classrooms in 7 top-level public kindergartens in Beijing, Hu and Szente observed that although China has 56 ethnic groups, none of their culture or traditions were reflected in the classrooms. Instead,

all dolls used in dramatic play have blue eyes and blond hair. When questioned why they did not use Chinese dolls, the teachers seemed to believe that was part of the ECERS-R requirements.

In addition to the lack of culturally appropriate assessment instruments, there is no national law to regulate and monitor the quality of ECCE; thus, the quality varies greatly among regions and between rural and urban areas. For example, as discussed earlier, in 2011, the teacher–student ratio in Tier 1 region (Beijing and Shanghai) was 1:14, whereas it was 1:26 and 1:30.4 in Tier 2 and Tier 3 regions, respectively. In Guizhou, one of the poorest provinces in Tier 3 region, the teacher–student ratio was as high as 1:52 in 2011 (Hong, Luo, & Cui, 2013). Moreover, the average number of teachers per class in urban kindergartens was 1.44, comparing to that of 0.58 in rural areas (Hong et al., 2015). Teachers in rural kindergartens are also less qualified than their urban counterparts. On average, 68.77% of kindergarten teachers in urban areas had an associate or higher degree, whereas only 46.42% of teachers in rural areas had the same qualification, a stunning difference of 22% (Hong et al., 2015).

Rural ECCE in China suffers not only from the substandard "software" (number of teachers, teacher qualifications, curriculum, etc.), but also the "hardware" or the physical conditions (indoor and outdoor space, per student square footage, health and sanitation, etc.). Due to the lack of funding and public attention, most of the kindergartens in rural China have suffered from the shortage of physical space, poor condition of buildings, inadequate activity space, obsolete teaching equipment and facilities, lack of clean toilets and emergency exits, and insufficient toys and books for playing and reading.

As can be seen from Table 2.3, from 2006 to 2011, the disparities between urban and rural kindergartens in terms of physical conditions were narrowing, but the gaps nonetheless remained, and in the case of books per child, the gap was even enlarging (Hong et al., 2015). Another alarming trend is that the physical conditions seemed to have worsened in urban kindergartens, with shrinking average square meters per child (indoor and outdoor space). This could be the result of the expansion of gross enrollment rate (GER) in the urban areas. With Universal Two-Child Policy and unprecedented urbanization, the physical conditions of urban kindergartens could post yet another challenge to the overall quality of ECCE programs in China.

Table 2.3 Kindergarten conditions of urban and rural areas in 2006 and 2011

Year	*Average space per child* (m^2)			*Average activity space per child* (m^2)			*Average outdoor space per child* (m^2)			*Average book per child (in book)*		
	U	*R*	*Gap*	*U*	*R*	*Gap*	*U*	*R*	*Gap*	*U*	*R*	*Gap*
2006	5.67	2.27	3.4	2.13	0.94	1.19	4.38	3.25	1.13	4.56	2.05	2.5
2011	5.11	2.60	2.51	2.06	1.13	0.93	3.03	2.68	0.35	5.14	2.41	2.72

Note "U" refers to urban areas, and "R" refers to rural areas. The data were adapted from Hong et al. (2015, p. 9)

ECCE Teacher Development and Education

Since making early childhood care and education a government top priority in 2010, China has been taking a momentous step toward universalizing ECCE and providing equal educational opportunities to all children. However, there has been a severe shortage of qualified early education caregivers and educators, due to meager pay, low social status, poor entry qualifications, fragmented pre-service training systems, and unequal development of training institutions (Li, Liu, & Fan, 2017). The newly adopted "two-child" policy in 2016 is projected to begin to affect the ECCE in 2019 with about 66 million children being eligible for preschool education and 58 million of them going to kindergartens in 2021. To meet the demands of rapid expansion in ECCE enrollment, China will need nearly 319,500 kindergartens, 2 million more preschool teachers, and 1.37 million more childcare workers (*China Daily*, 2016). Thus, providing enough qualified kindergarten teachers, especially in rural and disadvantaged areas, is and will remain one of the most challenging problems for the Chinese government.

The severity of the teacher shortage varies in different regions. For example, in Guangdong province, there were over 240,749 full-time preschool teachers in 2015, compared to only 3183 in Tibet (MoE, 2016). Teacher shortage resulted in much higher teacher–student ratio in rural and underdeveloped areas. In Tier 3 provinces located mostly in Western China and least developed regions, the teacher–student ratio in kindergarten was 1:30.4 in 2011, in comparison with that of 1:14 in Beijing and Shanghai. Guizhou province, one of the poorest provinces in China, had the highest teacher–student ratio of 1:52 in 2011 (Hong, Luo, & Cui, 2013).

Not only is there a great disparity in terms of quantity of ECCE teachers, but also an inequity of teacher's qualification and training. While the *Teachers Law of the People's Republic of China* (1994) stipulates that "to obtain qualifications for a teacher in a kindergarten, one shall be a graduate of an infant normal school (幼儿师范学校) or upwards; (MoE, 2009)" not all teachers meet the minimum qualifications. In Beijing and Shanghai, 93% of ECCE teachers had a college or higher degree in 2011, whereas only 66% of ECCE teachers had the same qualifications in Tier 2 provinces (Hong et al., 2013). Moreover, in the urban areas, on average 83.9% of ECCE teachers had at least a two-year associate degree, 11.9% higher than those in the rural areas in 2016 (MoE, 2017). Furthermore, a significant proportion of private and rural kindergarten teachers do not have a teacher

licensure, even though the Ministry of Education (MoE) established a mandated national teacher licensure system in 2001 (Zhu and Han, 2006). In a study of the qualifications of kindergarten teachers in Kunming, Yunnan province, Liang et al. (2013) found only 57.5% of private kindergarten teachers and 37.8% of rural kindergarten teachers had appropriate licensure. Nationally, about 44% of rural pre-primary teachers have a teacher certificate (Ministry of Education, 2015).

Finally, high turnover of teachers and attrition rate pose yet another challenge to sustaining and retaining a qualified ECCE teaching force, which has suffered for a long time from meager pay, low social status, poor entry qualifications, fragmented pre-service training systems, and unequal development of training institutions (Li et al., 2017). Kindergarten teachers in China have always been considered as paraprofessionals. In fact, they are not addressed as "teachers" (老师) but as "Aunty" (阿姨). The title reflects the lower social status of kindergarten teachers and a general lack of respect to this profession. On an aggregate scale, kindergarten teachers in China are paid much less than their counterparts in primary schools and above. According to the 2010 China Labor Statistical YearBook, high school teachers received the highest annual salary, with an average salary of 47,693 RMB ($7790), followed by middle school teachers 34,169 RMB ($5583) and primary school teachers 31,037 RMB ($5071). Kindergarten teachers received the lowest salary of only 18,533 RMB ($3028). In addition, the salary of kindergarten teachers in the rural areas are lower than those of their urban counterparts, and private kindergarten teachers are paid less than their peers in public kindergartens. For instance, Liang et al. (2013) found that the urban public kindergarten teachers in Kunming, Yunnan, were paid RMB 2900 yuan per month, whereas rural private teachers received the lowest average monthly salary of approximately RMB 1600 yuan. In a survey conducted by Liang et al. (2013) in Yunnan province, almost two-thirds of preschool teachers were either "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" with their salaries. Many kindergarten teachers believed that their salaries did not reflect their workload or work intensity. In addition to lower pay and social status, ECCE teachers and caregivers do not receive benefits of medical insurance, social security, retirement, and other subsidies from the government, because ECCE is not part of the compulsory education. The poor pay and low benefits together with lower social status have contributed to relatively high rates of turnover in the workforce of ECCE teachers and caregivers.

Inadequate pre-service teacher training and in-service training post another challenge for high-quality ECCE teaching workforce. Since 2013, the Ministry of Education has initiated national pilot reforms in teacher licensure exams and periodic registration in ten provinces: Hebei, Shanghai, Zhejiang, Hubei, Guangxi, Hainan, Shanxi, Anhui, Shandong, and Guizhou (National Teacher Certificate Examination 2015). By 2015, these reforms had spread to over 28 provinces, municipalities directly under the central government, and autonomous regions. However, almost 85% of the ECCE teacher training institutions are infant normal schools or vocational schools (幼儿师范学校), enrolling nearly 90% of all ECCE teacher candidates. Most of the infant normal schools or vocational schools provide very limited formal training on child development and the best evidence-based practice (Li et al., 2017). Therefore, the challenge is how to upgrade the teacher preparation and training institutions and increase the students enrolled in normal colleges (师范学院) and universities (师范大学).

Although China has adopted a series of policies and initiatives of in-service training (such as the National Teacher Training Program [NTTP]), the Project of Exemplary Teacher Training (PETT), and the Project of Rural Key Teacher Training in central and Western China (PRKTT), to support the development of kindergarten teachers already working in the field, there are great variances of the quality of in-service training ECCE teachers receive among different regions and between urban and rural areas. Fan, Nyland, and Nyland (2016) found that the in-service training and support the ECCE teachers received largely depend on individual ECCE institutions and the administrators. Some ECCE institutions also provided teachers with supports through commercial educational products, such as textbooks, teaching materials, and online teacher training programs. These supports could be problematic, however, given the wide range of teaching materials and texts available. Moreover, while teachers from the elite kindergartens are provided resources to develop their practice, those from less privileged kindergartens are more likely to have little or no access to any in-service training and support, especially when the local governments provide insufficient guidance and kindergartens cannot afford to purchase training and resources (Fan et al., 2016, p. 42).

Despite the rapid expansion of the ECCE teacher workforce, China is still facing the challenge of improving the quality of the workforce and recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers. Three challenges are identified in the research. The first challenge is how to improve the entry qualifications for ECCE teachers. Most of the ECCE teachers have less than

a 2-year associate degree, and many have no teacher licensure. By 2020, however, an associate degree is a likely entry requirement to become a kindergarten teacher across the nation (MoE, 2015). The second challenge is how to recruit and retain high-quality ECCE teachers, particularly those who will work in rural and remote areas. It is an urgent task for the government to increase the salary of ECCE teachers and caregivers and include them in the social welfare system. Finally, it is challenging to improve the pre-service and in-service training for ECCE teachers. There needs to be a consistent quality assurance system to measure the pre- and in-service training programs and ensure all ECCE teachers receive quality and up-to-date professional trainings.

Curriculum and Pedagogy in ECCE

The ECCE curriculum in China has gone through four major changes since the first government-run kindergarten, *Hubei you zhi yuan* (湖北幼稚园) or Hubei Kindergarten was established in 1903 (Wang, 2004; Zhu, 2015; Zhu & Wang, 2005). *Hubei you zhi yuan* (湖北幼稚园) or Hubei Kindergarten was a one-year, half-day program for five- to six-year-old children, established in the aftermath of the 1898 Reform Movement. During the Reform Movement, proponents advocated reforming and modernizing the education system to salvage China from repeated defeats and humiliations by Western countries. During the first period of change (1900–1920s), the ECCE curriculum was heavily influenced by Japanese education, which had adopted the Froebelian Orthodoxy (Shirakawa & Kitano, 2005; Tang & Zhong, 1993). In addition to Confucianism, seven subjects were taught: behavior and habits, moral lesson, children's language and literature, Japanese, crafts, singing, and play. The facilities included an exploration room, library, playroom, and playground. However, the first kindergarten was only open for the wealthy and royal families.

The second period (1920–1930s) coincided with the New Culture Movement (新文化运动). Educators advocated a native ECCE model with Chinese unique characteristics, rather than imitating a foreign system. Moreover, influenced by Dewey's progressive education, ECCE curriculum shifted to learning activities that emphasized play, self-exploration, self-expression, and firsthand experience. Outdoor play and discovery learning were introduced to the ECCE curriculum (Pan & Li, 2012). Heqin Chen, a pioneer of Chinese ECCE, created the unit-teaching curriculum model,

or a Chinese version of the integrated thematic instruction model used in the West (Pan & Li, 2012).

The establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 marked a dramatic change in ECCE in China. The Western educational philosophies and theories, especially Dewey's progressivism, were denounced by the Communists as promoting individualism and exploitative capitalism and thus were prohibited (Huang, 2014). Early childhood education was perceived by the Communist Party not as a pure pedagogy practice, but rather a political ideological battlefield. Under the former Soviet Union's influence, the ECCE curriculum was dominated by Chinese nationalism. The new curriculum underscored the importance of political indoctrination as the main goal for ECCE. The purpose of the ECCE under socialism was "to turn it into a weapon for Communism to transform society." It must impart to its pupils the Communist views on nature and society. Kindergarten children were taught at a young age that it was only under the socialist system that man's full potential can be fully developed (Huang, 2014, p. 847). The curriculum during this period (1950s–1980s) emphasized nobility of labor, heroism, especially heroic Liberation Army soldiers, symbolism, and nationalism (Huang). The instruction was teacher-centered and group instruction oriented.

The economic reform of 1978 reopened China's door to Western culture and beliefs. Piaget and Vygotsky's work, developmentally appropriate practice, the High Scope approach, and other distinctly popular educational theories and practice models were translated and introduced or reintroduced into the field of early childhood education (Liu, 1995). Influenced by these philosophies and theories, educators started reflecting on Chinese ECCE curriculum and traditional practice. They began questioning the effectiveness of the teacher-centered instruction, the subject-based curriculum, and the knowledge/skills transmission-oriented approach. Early childhood educators and experts advocate child-initiative learning, play-based curriculum, and creativity and autonomy cultivation-oriented pedagogy(Liu et al., 2004, 2005; Wang, 2004).

The issuing of the *Regulations on Kindergarten Education Practice, Trial Version* (Ministry of Education, 1989) ushered ECCE in China into a new era and the fourth period of ECCE curriculum reform. The new curriculum acknowledges each child is unique and learns in his or her individual way and pace, and therefore, teachers should respect each child as an independent subject with his or her own rights, needs and interests,

and tailor instructions based on individual differences. Unlike the curriculum in the 1950s–1980s, which treated children as passive recipients who absorbed information uncritically, the reform has maintained that the primary goal of ECCE is to cultivate young children's subjectivity, autonomy, and creativity through active learning. Correspondingly, a teacher's role is to provide an optimal physical and social environment and to facilitate children's interactions with the teacher, among the peers, and with the environment (Li, 2010). Furthermore, the most prominent change in ECCE is that for the first time in China, play was designated as the primary learning activity in kindergarten curriculum. The RKEP (Ministry of Education, 1989) formally proposed that play is the primary activity for early childhood education and requires kindergartens to provide adequate time for children to play (Liu, 1995; National Education Commission, 1989). The *Guideline for the Development of young children aged 3–6* (2012) further affirmed the importance of play and direct experiences:

> Understand young children. Young children learn by play and direct experiences in daily life. Teachers must value the importance of play and daily life experiences; provide an enriching learning environment; have a daily routine, and provide support and opportunity for children to learn by doing. Advanced academic drilling is prohibited. (pp. 3–4)

Although much progress has been made in Chinese ECCE, since the latest reform in the 1980s, China still has a long way to go in order to meet the goal of universalizing high-quality early education by 2020. For example, in a study of 108 kindergarten classrooms across 11 provinces in China, Liu, Yang, Tu, and Pan (2012) found that about half of the classrooms in the cities, and only 30% in rural areas provide activity-based learning. Moreover, Liu et al. found that play materials in general were scarce. Fifty percent of the classrooms had only plastic building blocks or puzzle books. Another barrier for the ECCE reform is the traditional view of testing and the role of play. Although there is an international consensus among early childhood educators on the importance of play, play is still considered as auxiliary and not the primary learning activity. Liu et al. (2012) observed that 62% of classrooms in cities provided 30–45 minutes, accumulated or uninterrupted, of indoor free play on a daily basis. Testing has a long history in Chinese education system, dated back 1400 years ago when the imperial examination system was first established in the Sui Dynasty (随朝, pp. 581–618). The imperial examination has profoundly influenced the

Chinese attitudes toward learning and the social proclivities toward testing ever since. In today's society, academic achievements measured by various examinations are still considered as the only equal and fair way to change one's social status and achieve upward social mobility (Pan & Li, 2012). In this cultural and social context, parents want their children to start learning academic subjects, such as math and English, at a young age to give them a head start in today's fierce competition. Chinese parents would do whatever they can to have their children "win at the starting line" (赢在起跑线上). Therefore, how to change parents' minds on the role of play and let children be children, rather than a miniature of test machines, will be a challenge for ECCE in China.

Sustainability in ECCE Policies and Practice

Sustainability refers to the ability for ECCE policies and practice to be sustained and further developed (Li et al., 2017). Since the *Outline of China's National Plan for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010–2020)* was announced, ECCE has expanded dramatically. The gross enrollment rate (GER) of preschool education increased from 29.8 million in 2010 to 42.6 million in 2015, or a 30% growth (China Statistical Yearbook, 2016). With the Universal Two-Child Policy, the number of children entering kindergarten in the next few years will sharply rise. It is estimated that China will need nearly 110,000 more kindergartens, 2 million more teachers, and 1.37 million more childcare workers by the year 2021(*China Daily*, 2016). Educators and policymakers question the readiness of China's ECCE system to accommodate such a sudden increase of young children.

Moreover, the shortage of high-quality preschool teachers, especially in rural and underdeveloped areas, casts more doubt to the sustainability of ECCE. Finally, inadequate finance funding and lack of quality assurance system put the sustainability of ECCE at high risk. As discussed earlier, ECCE is not part of the compulsory education in China, and thus, it is not included in the central government's fiscal budget. The main revenue comes from the local government, which may or may not have financial capacity to fund ECCE, depending on the development of the local economy. In Shanghai, for example, the government has made it a priority to develop ECCE and devote a large amount of funding from public finance to investing in ECCE. In 2009, the Shanghai governmental input in ECCE accounted for about 8% of its annual educational budget. Consequently,

72% of the kindergartens in Shanghai are public, and the GER is close to 100% (Li, Yang, & Chen, 2016).

In contrast, the underdeveloped provinces and underprivileged areas are lagged far behind in the development of ECCE. For example, in 2015, Guangdong province allocated 202 billion RMB yuan or 2.7% of it provincial GDP to education, whereas Tibet only appropriated 15 million RMB yuan or about 7% of what Guangdong province invested in education (China Statistical Yearbook, 2016). As a result of the inequity in funding, the per-pupil expenditure varies greatly. In 2013, the annual ECCE per-pupil spending in rural area was 2623 RMB yuan, comparing to that of 8, 132 RMB yuan in the cities (Zhou et al., 2017).

The inequity in funding and resources, the shortage of high quality teachers, as well as the lack of ECCE institutions in hard to reach areas not only endanger the sustainability of ECCE in China, but more importantly, they raise the question of social justice and equality in ECCE policies and practice. The following section will address such an issue.

Social Justice in ECCE Policy and Practice

Migrant Children and Left-Behind Children

Social justice in education means all children, despite their race, ethnicity, gender, family socioeconomic backgrounds, and (dis)ability, are provided equal opportunities to high-quality education, and the distribution of educational resources is equitable and based on the needs of children (Song, Zhu, Xia, & Wu, 2014). Although the Chinese central government has started investing more on ECCE since 2010, there are still gaps between rural and urban ECCE services and among different regions. Insufficient access to high-quality early childhood services for disadvantaged children is not only a social justice and moral issue, but also an issue that is directly related to the sustained development of the economy and social stability in China. To ensure social equity and stability, the central government issued the *Outline of China's National Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (2010–2020)*, which highlights the importance of educational equity:

> **Making equal access to education a basic state policy.** Equal access to education is a major cornerstone of social justice. Equal opportunities hold the key to equal access to education. The fundamental requirement of education

> equity is that all citizens have equal rights to receive education according to law. It is key to boost coordinated development of compulsory education, and to help and support the underprivileged. The fundamental way to achieve this is to allocate education resources reasonably, give preferences to rural, impoverished, remote and border areas and ethnic autonomous areas, and to bridge the gap in education development. To ensure equal access to education is and always has been a government responsibility, but it cannot be done without concerted public efforts. (p. 8)

This is the first time in Chinese history that educational equity was posited the cornerstone of social justice. To bridge the gap between the underdeveloped rural areas and financially advanced urban areas, the *Outline* continues,

> **(7) Strengthening preschool education in rural areas.** It is necessary to universalize preschool education in rural areas, and make sure that all the children left behind by parents working away from their home villages are sent to kindergartens. Rural preschool education resources shall be replenished by all means. New kindergartens shall be built while old ones are rebuilt and expanded. Kindergarten (preschool classes) can be held by making full use of the surplus middle and primary school buildings and teachers as authorities readjust the layout of the schools. The central kindergarten in townships must playPlay a model role in guiding the village kindergartens. Preschool education in impoverished areas shall also be supported. (p. 13)

Guided by the *Outline*, between 2010 and 2012, the Chinese government has invested RMB 55.6 billion yuan to initiate the *ECCE Promoted Project of the Middle and West Country,* constructing 3149 kindergartens in central and west China. From 2011 to 2013, the central government further provided RMB 34.1 billion yuan to support the development of rural early childhood education in poverty-stricken areas. It has also sought to guarantee early education for children in families with economic difficulties and for migrant and left-behind children (Song et al., 2014). Migrant children (流动儿童) and left-behind (留守儿童) are the result of a large-scale internal migration, which is one of the most prominent by-products of the socioeconomic development of China (Tan, 2010). It is estimated that in 2016 China has over 282 million migrant workers, making up more than one-third of the entire working population (National Bureau of Statistics of People's Republic of China, 2017). When deciding to move in search of a better

life, migrant workers either leave their children behind in the countryside with their grandparents, relatives, or even by themselves, or take them to the city. An estimated 23.4 million children aged 0–5 years old were left behind, and another 9.8 million young children (0–5 years old) migrated with their parents in 2010, accounting for 36.8% of all preschool children in China (Song et al., 2014). Migrant workers have been the engine of China's spectacular economic growth over the last three decades. Due to their great contribution to China's rapid economic development, *Time* magazine named Chinese migrant workers "person of the year" in 2009 (*Times*, 2009). Despite their great contributions, migrant workers remain marginalized and subject to institutionalized discrimination. Their children have limited access to high-quality education, healthcare, and other social benefits, due to the rigid *hukou*(户口) or household registration system.

The cognitive development of left-behind infants and toddlers is more likely to be delayed, due to the absence of parents and lack of access to high-quality early education. Yue et al. (2017) conducted a survey of 1442 randomly selected toddlers and their caregivers in 351 villages across 174 townships in 11 nationally designated poverty counties in Shaanxi province. In addition to the survey, each toddler was administered the Bayley Scales of Infant Development (BSID) test. The test results indicated alarmingly high rates of developmental delay among the sample toddlers. Overall, 48% of the sample toddlers have an MDI score below 84, indicating that nearly one in two is cognitively delayed. Furthermore, 41% of the younger cohort of toddlers (18–24 months old) are cognitively delayed, compared with 55% of the older cohort (25–30 months old), suggesting an increase in cognitive delays as children age without any intervention. Left-behind children are also more likely to have some mental health issues, such as depression, low self-esteem, and aggression, due to separation from parents for an extended period of time. Scott Rozelle, a professor at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, warns that if no action is taken to address the issue of education apocalypse, 400 million future working-age Chinese are in danger of becoming cognitively handicapped (Normile, 2017). This would be China's looming human capital crisis (Khor, Pang, Liu, & Chang, 2016).

Migrant children are not faring much better than left-behind children, even though they have their parents' presence. Many of the migrant workers work long hours and different shifts in factories, and they hardly have any time to spend with their children. Depending on the parents' income, the children may or may not have access to quality childcare. As discussed

earlier, early childhood care and education in China is not part of the 9-year compulsory education, and thus, the families carry the heavy burden to pay for it. A few high-quality public kindergartens are reserved for urban residence with local *hu kou* (户口). With no access to public kindergartens, migrant parents have no choice but to send their children to private, sometimes illegal or unlicensed kindergartens. The lack of government supervisions of the private kindergartens leads to wide variations in the quality of the program. Poor ECCE program quality resulting from unregulated management, low teacher quality, and poor physical environments with potential safety hazards put migrant children's development at risk (Liu, 2012). Researchers have found that migrant children lag behind their urban peers in language, cognitive, emotional, social, and academic outcomes (Gai, 2008; Song & Liu, 2013; Yao, 2011).

In sum, migrant children and left-behind children are one of the most disadvantaged groups in China, because their basic rights to necessary care, supervision, and early education are denied. Inaccessibility and inadequate early childcare and education for these disadvantaged children is not only a moral issue but more importantly a social justice issue.

Ethnic Minority Children

Ethnic minority children are another most disadvantaged group and often times most neglected group, because of their small number and remote locations. According to 2015 Census, 55 ethnic minorities (少数民族) only accounted for 8.54% of the total population, whereas the *Han* (汉族) majority comprised 92.64% or over 1.2 billion people (National Bureau of Statistics of People's Republic of China, 2015). Most of the ethnic minorities are located in less developed, remote Western China. Because ethnic minority children reside in hard to reach regions, they have limited access to education. Even when they do, the curriculum is not culturally responsive and doesn't integrate local knowledge (An, 2017). "Local" refers to the specific context created when knowledge is generated and defended and includes the values of cultures and subcultures formed under specific historical conditions, the positions and viewpoints determined by particular interest relationships, and the interpretations of external things based on particular cognitive preferences (An, 2017, p. 16). Thus, local knowledge is a knowledge and cultural system exclusive to a specific locality, a knowledge system independently produced, enjoyed, and transmitted by the people of that place over a long process of living and developing. It

is inseparable from the history and environment in which the people of that place have survived and developed. The retention of local knowledge cannot be achieved in isolation, because if it is isolated from the natural and human environment upon which it depends for survival, then it will not be able to develop (Chen, 2008). Moreover, local knowledge is essential for the continuation of local society, and the intellectual source of local social development and progress. Such local knowledge, internalized deeply in the consciousness and thinking of local people, is not only of great significance to the harmonious development of the local society and the healthy growth of the new generation, but also has a positive meaning for the harmonious development of the whole of human society. The idea if local knowledge is aligned to the cultural ecology theory, first advocated by Bronfenbrenner (1977), suggests that local culture shapes attitudes and behaviors of members of social groups. Children are inevitably socialized by the group members and demonstrate the attitude and behaviors they observed in the ecology of their lives.

Although research has found the importance of cultural relevance in children's achievement and motivation to learn, the dominant Han culture fails to integrate local knowledge and therefore alienates ethnic minority parents and children. For example, Vong and Li (2016) studied the early childhood education for *Miao* (苗族) children living in villages of Guizhou province. They found the *Han* preschool teachers and principals had a distinctly different view of schooling from *Miao* parents. The practices in kindergartens in Miao village were neither age appropriate nor culturally sensitive. As a result, many Miao parents kept their children at home and taught them culturally specific traditions. Along the same vein, An (2017) studied the school curriculum and course content categories in Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (Gannan) and found the curriculum "is clearly incompatible with what should be the objectives and requirements for transmitting ethnic heritage through school education in minority areas (p. 12)." The lack of Tibetan local knowledge in the Gannan school curriculum inevitably led to the poor academic performance of students and a lack of motivation to learn (p. 14).

In addition to the loss of cultural heritage, many ethnic minorities have lost their native language. Mandarin Chinese (普通话) is the official language in China, and it is taught in all kindergartens and schools, whereas the mother tongue of the ethnic children may or may not be taught as school curriculum.

Under this Han cultural-centric schooling system, and the pressure to assimilate, ethnic minorities have been marginalized and have suffered a lost sense of identity. Therefore, how to integrate local knowledge, how to involve local communities to create a culturally responsive curriculum, and how to empower ethnic minorities to control and manage their education are the key challenges to the central government.

Conclusion

Since the implementation of the economic reform in the late 1970s, China's GDP per capita has grown almost 100 times from 89.5 USD in 1960 to over 8123 USD in 2016 (the World Bank) lifting millions of Chinese out of poverty. However, the rural-urban divide and the gap between regions remain wide. In 2015, the average annual disposable income in rural areas was 11,421 RMB yuan, or about one-third of urban residents' income (31,194 RMB yuan). In the Western rural areas, the per capita disposable income was the lowest (9093.4 RMB yuan). Moreover, although poverty has been greatly reduced, there are still over 55 million or 5.7% people in rural China living in poverty (China Statistical Yearbook, 2016). Economic growth alone cannot solve the problem of poverty and inequality. Chinese government has realized the importance of early life experiences, and it is vital to invest in human capital and improve access to high-quality ECCE, in order to sustain economic growth and maintain social cohesion and stability. Chinese government has endeavored to reform ECCE, aiming to universalize one-year ECCE by 2020. With the government's efforts and commitments, great strides have been made toward providing ECCE service to all children. In 2015, over 42 million or two-thirds of young children aged 3–6 were enrolled in one to three-year ECCE programs.

Despite the progress, the challenges of 3As (i.e., accessibility, affordability, and accountability) and 2Ss (sustainability and social justice and equity) remain daunting. How to make high-quality ECCE accessible and affordable to all children, and how to hold all ECCE institutions accountable, are not only questions the Chinese government has to answer to ensure a sustainable economy, but more importantly, they are issues of social justice and equity. If not addressed promptly, the divide between rural and urban areas will grow deeper and the gap between regions, between haves and have-nots will interrupt the social harmony and may lead to riots and social instability. Given the social benefits and high economic returns, the ECCE should be a national priority and a long-term strategic goal. Wu et al. (2011)

suggested that Chinese government should adopt a two-pronged, pro-poor approach. First of all, due to limited funding and resource constraints, Wu et al. believed that ECCE should be part of the government's anti-poverty program, targeting children and family living in poverty. Instead of allocating funding equally, Chinese government should appropriate more funding for the poor, underdeveloped, rural and remote areas, aiming to strengthen the capacity of the local community and integrate local knowledge to curriculum. Second, Wu et al. advocated high-quality ECCE as an expanded mainstream service and basic children's rights, rather than a luxury that only wealthy families can afford.

For China to move to a high-income and technology-based economy, there is a high demand to improve the quality of the future workforce in order to sustain the social and economic development. By improving the quality of human development, ECCE simultaneously improves the future generation's productivity and competitiveness, thereby enabling China to overcome the challenges of an aging population and remain a competitor in the global economy.

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CHAPTER 3

Early Childhood Education in India: Promises, Policies, and Pitfalls

Amita Gupta

In the years since her independence in 1947, India put into place constitutional provisions, legislative measures, policy frameworks, and public initiatives for the protection, welfare, and development of children which have served to dramatically reduce poverty and illiteracy in the country. As a result of the revamping of national economic policies in the early 1990s, India has emerged as a fierce economic contender on the global stage. Within the last two decades, India has also reformed national educational policies pertaining to pre-primary through tertiary education. But although India has made impressive progress in educational expansion and economic development, the country still confronts persisting challenges in low school attendance rates, easy access to schools, poor learning outcomes, and high rates of malnourishment, child labor, child marriage, and poverty.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the socioeconomic-cultural-political context within which the fields of early childhood education and childhood education have developed and expanded in India (it should be noted that in India the more common terms for early childhood and childhood are pre-primary and primary education, respectively, and will be used interchangeably in this chapter). The field of early childhood education (ECE) is also referred to as early childhood care and education (ECCE).

The first section of this chapter will present the sociocultural context of education in India and lay out how factors such as caste, gender, religion, and language have impacted the education of children in India. The

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second section will address the effects of globalization and the consequent socioeconomic changes in Indian society will be examined. This will be followed by a brief overview of the wide-ranging and diverse early childhood/childhood educational settings found in India that highlight the issue of educational inequity. The next sections will look at key policy reforms which impact early childhood education as well as recent attempts to provide basic education to all children in the nation. This will be followed by a discussion on the rapidly growing field of early education and the dire need to invest in early childhood teacher education and capacity building. The concluding section of this chapter will summarize the current state of the field of early education in India and some challenges it confronts in an economic and political climate marked by neoliberal globalization.

The Role of Caste, Gender, Religion, and Language on Education

India is a country of enormous socioeconomic, ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity, and the history of India reveals a segregated society and educational system influenced by factors such as religion, language, gender, and caste. A distinction needs to be made between how segregation has been presented in the early childhood and other levels of education. Early childhood education historically was not under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education in India. Primary education started kindergartens which were attached to primary schools in the government and private sectors. Preschools and nursery schools operated largely within the private sector and only affluent families could afford to enroll young children in school. For low-income communities, the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) started the custodial *Anganwadi* centers which mostly addressed young children's basic needs related to care and nutrition and were less focused on education. As a result, segregation was less prevalent in early childhood settings and more conspicuous in primary and secondary schools. However, an overview of the relationships between education and factors such as caste, gender, religion, and language is, nevertheless, needed to better understand India's sociocultural context and its influence on education in general.

Segregation Based on the Caste System

Ancient Indian scriptures from more than 5000 years form the basis of much of Indian culture and philosophy. The caste system in India

came into existence much later when texts known as Manu Smriti or Manu's Laws, books of rules and regulations, appeared in the first few centuries of the Christian era and presented detailed norms for domestic, social, and religious life in India. These texts held great significance in the lives of Hindus and laid down strict codes that still influence social life, rituals, and customs in India today. Manu's Laws forms the most "important and authoritative Hindu Law Book (*Dharmashastra*), which served as a foundational work on Hindu law and jurisprudence in ancient India at least 1500 years. Until the modern times, it was the standard reference for adjudicating civil and criminal cases by both the rulers who patronized Vedic faith and the people who practiced Hinduism" (accessed on June 17, 2019. Available at https://www.hinduwebsite.com/sacredscripts/hinduism/dharma/manusmriti.asp).

The ancient sage Manu, who compiled these books of law, was instrumental in defining the four social castes (Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra) that solidified into the controversial Indian caste system. Manu specified the exact duties assigned to members of the various castes. His texts were essentially responsible for the subsequent rigidity of the caste system and the somewhat contemptuous attitudes toward women in Indian society even today. Throughout the history of education in India, the hierarchy of the caste system has determined people's access to education. The highest caste of priests and learned scholars were labeled the Brahmins. Next highest were the kings and warriors called the Kshatriya caste. After that were ranked the merchants and traders known as the Vaishyas. And lastly was the Shudra caste which included workers in areas such as manual labor and sanitation. Educational access was readily available to the "higher" castes, and access declined down the hierarchy to the "lower" castes.

Segregation Based on Gender

Manu's Laws also defined the dependent role of the woman in Indian society in context to her relationship to the men in her life, making her first dependent on her father, then her husband, and then her son. This led to a general suppression of the female and a privileging of the male in Indian society. Male privileging in Indian society has directly resulted in encouraging access to education for boys more than for girls throughout history. It is only recently that educational policies drafted by the Indian government have sought to support education of the girl child, and these

policies have been implemented through a series of financial incentives offered by the government to rural and low-income families.

Segregation Based on Religious Beliefs

Religion too played a part in segregating schools based on religious beliefs and gender. Throughout history, four systems of spiritual beliefs have primarily influenced education in India: Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity. Each of these can be attributed to distinct periods in Indian history, and their influence on curriculum can be clearly noted (Gupta, 2007, 2013). After independence from British colonial rule, the newly drafted Indian Constitution provided many protections for minority groups as described below.

Article 29 of the Constitution of India expressly forbids discrimination on the basis of race, religion, caste, and language, in admitting individuals to educational institutions run by the state or receiving aids from the state. This means that the doors of all educational institutions run by government or receiving funds from the state are open to all groups of Indians regardless of religious backgrounds. Students from linguistic, religious, or ethnic minority groups cannot be denied admission to such educational institutions.

In Article 30 of the Constitution, minority groups have been given the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. The state also cannot discriminate against educational institutions established and managed by the minorities in matters of granting aid to the institution. Such educational institutions must, however, receive state recognition. The state educational authorities have the right to regulate such educational institutions because the "right to manage does not include the right to mismanage."

Article 25 of the Indian Constitution guarantees freedom of religion to every individual. This article of the Indian Constitution ensures that the members of the religious minority community have the unhindered right to follow their own religion. The state regulates the practice of a religion only when and to the extent it disturbs public peace. Minority groups not only have the right to follow their own religion but they also have the right to propagate it.

All three articles thus protect and allow for the free establishment of schools based on diverse religious beliefs. Nevertheless, the notions of gender roles are also determined within individual religious systems, and these

ideas are called into play with regard to schooling. For instance, the segregation of males and females is observed to a greater extent within Islamic communities, and this shows up in schools that are set up for Muslim children specifically. Gender segregation in education varies also with Indian sub-cultures and geography as it is seen to occur to a lesser extent in some Central Indian cities like Mumbai and Pune as compared to some cities in northern and southern India.

Segregation Based on Linguistic Groups

India is a country of vast linguistic diversity. According to the latest Census 2011, more than 19,500 languages or dialects are spoken in India as a mother tongue (NDTV, 2018. Accessed on June 17, 2019. Available at https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/more-than-19-500-languages-spoken-as-mother-tongue-in-india-census-1876085). The borders of India's states have been essentially drawn on the basis of linguistic groups, and each state can be viewed as a linguistic territory. Therefore, a state may be identified by the language spoken by those native to that state or region. The official and administrative languages in the central government are Hindi (spoken by about 40% of Indians) and English (which had been the official language in India during the British colonial rule). The existing policy on language of instruction in all schools in India follows the three-language formula adopted by the Education Commission in 1964. The three languages that students are required to learn during their school careers are (1) their mother tongue or the regional language of the state in which they reside; (2) English, the official language of India, and/or Hindi, the national language of India which is spoken by about 40% of the Indian population according to Census 2001; and (3) a modern Indian language which may be one of the 22 dominant regional languages spoken in India and recognized as official. In theory, this strategy aims to teach students English and/or Hindi and two other Indian languages (NCERT, 2006a). About 96.7% of the country's population call one of the 22 official languages as their mother tongue. In support of this multilingual system, the Constitution requires all states to publish books in up to a dozen or more languages (Saini, 2000). Most school-going children are exposed to multiple languages as a result of this policy and grow up speaking more than one language. The second language is introduced as early as kindergarten in most schools.

In an attempt to counter some of the inequities described above, the Indian government has adopted an aggressive affirmative action policy where a high percentage of seats (up to 70% in some instances) in government schools and government offices are reserved for those belonging to marginalized communities and castes. The more recent educational policies are also working to improve access and inclusion for disadvantaged gender groups, linguistic groups, and individuals with disabilities.

Globalization's Impact on Socioeconomic Changes in Indian Society

Urban Centers and Global Cities in India

Globalization as a phenomenon has existed since the very first explorations and trade routes were established. The latest form of globalization is neoliberalism which allows the entry of foreign investments and foreign corporations into the national markets of emerging economies (Chatterjee, 2016). The influence and assimilation of "foreign" ideas and practices into local contexts are certainly not a new phenomenon as seen in the histories of colonialism. A form of neocolonialism is fostered by neoliberal globalization as economic and political hegemonies of dominant powers are established in nations considered to be weaker and emerging economies. Although the waves of globalization flow in both directions, globalization per se has served prominently as a channel for bringing dominant "western and Global North" influences into the "non-western Global South." Globalization of education is the impact that worldwide discussions, processes, and institutions have upon local educational practices and policies (Spring, 2009). Policy very well may be created and implemented in a highly contextualized manner, but due to globalization, it tends to travel globally and rapidly impacting decisions in far-away places (Rui, 2007). Globalization can thus critically influence core educational decisions such as "what counts as responsive and effective education, what counts as appropriate teaching … and who benefits from it throughout the world" (Apple, 2011, pp. 222–223).

Globalization is rapidly changing the landscape of India due to an increase in urbanization, westernization, and commercialization. Urban India refers not only to the large metropolitan cities in the country but also to smaller cities and towns that may be densely populated. William Dalrymple noted that "the speed of development is breathtaking…I have

seen the country change at a rate that was impossible to imagine…new housing estates springing up, full of call centers, software companies, and fancy apartment blocks rising on land that only two years earlier had been virgin farmland" (Dalrymple, 2009, p. xii). Against this framework, the following description of India's capital city of Delhi offers a snapshot of what a globalized, urbanized, and westernized India looks like.

Located in northern India, Delhi (which includes New Delhi and Old Delhi) is the nation's capital and one of the four largest cities in the country. The population of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCT) is about 16.8 million people spread over an area of approximately 1500 square kilometers. The urban areas juxtaposing Delhi comprise the even larger Central National Capital Region with a population of 26 million as of 2016, making it the world's second largest urban center. Gupta (2013) presents a vivid description of modern-day urban metropolitan India: The city of New Delhi is a busy, congested mix of residential areas reflecting both palatial mansions in affluent neighborhoods and poor hutments in sprawling slums; commercial districts that combine large department stores, private offices in glittering corporate high-rises, and also small roadside stalls; government offices housed in colonial as well as modern buildings; broad, sweeping flyovers, and freeways but also dirty, narrow streets and alleyways; billboards depicting clever and colorful advertisements of products, places, and services, as well as garish paintings of famous Bollywood faces announcing upcoming films; hundreds of sprawling bazaars and marketplaces where one can buy anything from small-scale indigenous handicrafts to Louis Vuitton luggage; thousands of educational institutions from day cares and nursery schools to colleges and universities; places of worship on almost every street, which include Hindu temples, Muslim mosques, Christian or Catholic churches, and Sikh gurudwaras; countless food shops and restaurants reflecting cuisines from all over India and the world; millions of people speaking in hundreds of languages; vehicles that outnumber the people who own them; hundreds of thousands of phone booths, Internet cafes, and call centers for multinational corporations; and giving it all, background music is the incessant noise of traffic, people, and music.

Globalization and westernization can be specifically seen in the quick mushrooming of fast-food franchises such as McDonald's, Pizza Huts, Domino's Pizza, and Dunkin' Donuts; on-going constructions of glitzy malls filled with branded stores from economically developed countries; construction of multiplex cinemas; widespread usage of ATM banking and credit cards; Gap and Levi stores in the marketplaces juxtaposed with the

Indian sari and jewelry shops; Indian editions of several American popular magazines and "glossies"; availability of most American television shows on Indian television; school students being taught songs from PBS television shows like "Barney" and from Disney's musicals like The Lion King; MTV-influenced ITV channel on cable television; and the production of Indian versions of American television shows such as Sesame Street, Who Wants to Be a Millionaire, and American Idol, and many more.

Along with these changes, the neoliberal climate has brought job opportunities in multinational corporations leading to a dramatic increase in earning capacities of ordinary families. Where once the middle class was a thin sliver between an enormous poor population and the small affluent population, it has rapidly grown into what has become a vast middle class of almost 400 million (more than the total US population). This includes the lower-middle-class and upper-middle-class families belonging to a wide range of social and occupational groups such as those employed in the government service; doctors, engineers, lawyers, and other such professionals; well-to-do merchant families in the business and trading occupations; school teachers and college faculty in large urban centers; those working in journalism and media; those who are partially or fully educated among the middle-level peasantry in rural India; white-collar workers in the private sectors; policymakers and legislators in government; and a considerable population of university students. It is estimated that by the year 2025 this middle-class population will total 550 million people (Varma, 1999).

Recent Changes in India's Education Sector

India also has a relatively young population: one in three of the 1.3 billion people under the age of 14 years. Another statistic places 47% of Indians under the age of 20 years making it the Youth Bulge of the world. The emphasis on higher education in India is demonstrated by the number of universities currently present in India. As of February 2017, there are 789 universities, 37,204 colleges, and 11,443 stand-alone institutions in India (Universities in India, 2019. Accessed on June 23, 2019. Available at http://www.indiaeducation.net/universities/). But although only about 12% of Indian school graduates proceed toward higher education and though India has a large number of universities and colleges, it is still inadequate to accommodate all the students in the country. Thousands of the brightest minds have been opting to leave India to pursue higher education in countries like the United States, the UK, Canada, and Australia.

This gap in higher education along with increasing global competition has rapidly resulted in a concentrated effort by the Indian government to transform the area of higher education in India. The Indian government just released a draft national education policy in June 2019 which calls for a fundamental restructuring of India's higher education system, enhancing its research capacity, aiming to double the gross enrollment rate from 25 to 50% by 2035, and increasing spending on public education (Redden, 2019).

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (2004–2014), the National Knowledge Commission recommended that a national campaign be launched in India to attract the best young minds for careers in teaching at all levels and also to conduct academic research. According to Kapil Sibal, then Education Minister, 800–1000 new universities would be needed in the next 10 years to increase the number of students attending college from 12 to 30%. Under the 11th five-year plan (2007–2012), 14 innovation universities were to be set up in India by the Education Ministry to focus on various research areas with some of the universities in collaboration with leading American and British institutions. The 14 innovation universities were to be centers of excellence along the lines of Harvard and Oxford (Mishra, 2010). The program under which India planned to set up theme-based universities, promote research, train teachers, and brand a group of leading educational institutes as the Indian Ivy League was called the Obama-Singh Twenty-First Century Knowledge Initiative. These plans resulted from the direct effects of neoliberal globalization and India's goal to position herself as a competitive player on the global stage of higher education. The focus of recent national policy reform has been on increasing access, inclusion, and equity at all levels of education in India.

Under recent influences of globalization and internationalization, there is also emerging a form of neocolonialism. The viewing of English as a global language tends to lead to linguistic imperialism, and the compulsion to learn and teach English, as well as the compulsion to adopt a western discourse of ECE, can be seen as forms of colonization leading to handing over control of local forms of knowledge production and research. The perception of English as a global/international language and its spread are very apparent in India. It is relevant to note the significant attempts being made to promote the English language in education and teacher education in India and across many other countries in Asia (Gupta, 2014). In large urban centers, small hill towns, rural villages, and along narrow

roads through the vast countryside can be seen frequently appearing hand-painted signs, commercial signboards, and fliers plastering alley walls, lamp posts, bus stands, and buildings which advertise private classes and tutoring agencies claiming to teach spoken English. The most striking occurrence is the visibly rapid mushrooming of schools that are described as "international," "world-class," or "global," with the push for teaching and learning of the English language, particularly emphasizing spoken English. English classes and the rapidly growing "international schools" are widely marketed as being necessary to level the playing field by preparing children across Asia in the language and skills prioritized by the global job market. As a consequence, there is currently a widespread demand as parents seek out early childhood schools that are "western"—this primarily means that English is used as a language of instruction, and the curriculum follows a western progressive educational approach that encourages the teaching of knowledge, skills, and behaviors that are most privileged by the west (Gupta, 2013, 2014).

In the following sections, the field of ECCE in India will be examined as that too has changed since the Government of India launched its change policies within the National Knowledge Commission.

Diverse Early Childhood Settings in India

Historically, the field of early childhood in India has been housed within the jurisdiction of health and human development rather than within that of education. Thus, ECCE was framed within an early years provision discourse (to include care and education) rather than an early childhood education discourse. This resulted in educational policy that excluded the nation's very young children and mostly addressed only primary, secondary, and tertiary education. Although ideas on the care and education of very young children in India can be traced back to ancient texts and scriptures (Gupta, 2013), the field of early childhood care and education received due importance and official recognition in national policy discourse only after the establishment of the National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1986.

As a former colony of the British Empire, pedagogy and curriculum in Indian schools were largely controlled by the British administrators in India. If schools were to be recognized and supported by the British government then curricular decisions made by the British government, including text books and teaching methods, were to be followed by each school. Thus the predominant system of formal education in most schools in India, government and private,

has until very recently followed the pre-independence, British colonial model characterized by a tightly prescribed content-based curriculum; a strong focus on reading, writing, and arithmetic dominated by rote learning; children seated most of the time at rows of desks; and with large amounts of homework assigned to students every day. This model trickled down into primary and pre-primary education as well, and a teacher-directed structured classroom with rows of desks was a typical classroom at all levels in education.

However, it must be noted that an experiential and play-based approach to teaching young children had been promoted by several prominent Indian preschool educators such as Gijubhai Badheka, Tarabai Modak, and Anutai Wagh (in the 1920s and 1930s) and by philosophers such as Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, and Jiddu Krishnamurti during the first half of the twentieth century (Gupta, 2011). Although these educators and others established schools based on learner-centered educational philosophies, their educational philosophies and pedagogies could not be replicated widely across other schools in colonial India due to curricular mandates determined by the British rulers.

It was the establishment of the National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1986 and its subsequent modification in 1992 that accorded a great deal of importance to ECCE as an independent field and recognized its critical role in the development of human resources. The development of ECCE programs was seen as not only providing the young individual child with care and education, but also releasing women for other activities besides childrearing, and facilitating school attendance by older girls who would have been otherwise providing sibling care.

A wide range of early childhood settings are seen to be available in India. The differences may be largely attributed to whether the setting is funded and managed by the government or by the private sector; whether schools are located in rural villages or in urban centers; whether the settings function as day care centers or nursery schools; whether they are religious or secular in nature; and so forth.

Nationally, the most widely available early childhood care and education centers are the *Anganwadi* centers run by the centrally sponsored Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and the *Balwadi* centers run by the state government or local bodies, established in 1975. The goal of ICDS is to empower underprivileged children under the age of six years and primarily in rural areas to fight malnutrition, childhood mortality, and gender inequality. These centers have worked to provide food, preschool

education, and primary healthcare to young children and their mothers. Academically, the ICDS has typically geared curriculum to encourage rote learning and teaching of the 3Rs (reading, writing, and arithmetic). A member of the community would be selected and trained for the teacher's job, indigenous materials that are easily available would be utilized, and extensive community participation would be encouraged; this would compensate for the lack of funding, resources, and teacher training (Gokhale, 2005). Historically, the ICDS centers have not had remarkable success in meeting their original goals, and there has been a revamping of its curriculum in many states.

Another widely seen type of early childhood setting is when an early childhood center is sponsored by an NGO. A 2015 report by Bain & Company estimated that there were almost 2 million NGOs in India with a large percentage of these in the education sector (available at https://www.bain.com/insights/india-philanthropy-report-2015/. Accessed on January 25, 2019). NGOs have played a critical role in advancing childcare and educational services for underprivileged and economically disadvantaged families in India, with their unique capacity for fund-raising and mobilizing local communities to bridge the gap between the government and the people. NGO-sponsored education centers may be found primarily in low socioeconomic urban settlements and in rural districts.

The independent private nursery schools are also a common sight in urban commercial and residential centers. Usually, these schools were started as a small business by stay-at-home middle-class wives, either in a portion of their own homes or in a separate residential building. Such schools are small and most often offer a curriculum to prepare children to be admitted to larger private schools. In recent years, however, such nursery schools have taken on a more professional quality as they are being established and developed by more qualified and experienced professionals. Western nursery school and preschool franchises are also actively establishing centers for young children in countries like India.

Yet another early childhood setting is the nursery or kindergarten grade housed within a larger, comprehensive, private school in large urban centers and metropolitan cities. Often such competitive private schools might be seen to interview parents before admitting their children. Admission into some of the more elite schools can be expensive and hard to come by.

The mobile crèche is also a setting for young children and is essentially a temporary structure setup at a construction site to care for the children of migrant workers, and it is managed by the Central Social Welfare Board.

The children cared for in a mobile crèche are usually zero to three years of age, with the primary focus being on the child's biological rhythm, alternating sleep, feeding, play, and rest.

There is also the urban day care or early childhood center which is a setting that is usually run by voluntary and governmental organizations such as the Central Social Welfare Board for disadvantaged families.

In rural India, it is quite common to have outdoor schools under a tree, with an adult member of the village taking on the teacher's role and instructing a group of children in the outdoors, equipped with only a portable chalkboard and chalk; the children use slates and chalk as substitutes for notebooks and pencils.

The last few years have seen additional ECCE centers operate under the government initiative of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (education for all) where a pre-primary class may be housed in and attached to a government school whereas previously government schools provided only primary and not pre-primary education.

The Eighth All India School Education Survey Report (2009) gives the figure of 655,493 as the number of pre-primary institutions in the country. This includes a range of institutions listed above: *Balwadis, Anganwadis*, early childhood centers, pre-primary schools, and unrecognized schools with pre-primary classes (accessed on January 25, 2019 and available at (http://ncert.nic.in/pdf_files/8th_AISES_Concise_Report.pdf). According to a UNESCO Report, the total number of pre-primary aged children enrolled in schools in India in the year 2016 was about 73,790,000 (available at http://uis.unesco.org/country/IN and accessed on January 25, 2019).

Policy Reforms Impacting Early Childhood Education in India

After the country gained her freedom from British rule in 1947, independent India's Constitution was drafted and went into effect in 1950. Although the Constitution mandated free and compulsory education for all children 6–14 years of age, the Indian government is still working to achieve that goal. Many nation governments, including the Indian government, came under renewed pressures to develop and improve early childhood education from the Education for All (EFA) movement originally launched by UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, UN Development Program, and UN Population Fund in the 1990s, and the MDGs (Millennium

Development Goals) and EFA goal of providing free and compulsory primary education and expanding early childhood education in every region of the world by the year 2015. This was followed by the UN's more recent SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) 2030 in which Article 4 specifically focuses on early childhood education and teacher preparation. The need for a nationally and professionally organized field of early childhood education is thus currently a high priority on the policy agenda of the Indian government. Equally important is the need for the professional preparation of early childhood teachers, and the Indian government is working on creating university-related degree programs to this end. This is a shift from an earlier mindset that teachers of young children did not require a university degree in education.

Some of the most significant policy documents and initiatives in India that impact primary and pre-primary education include the National Curriculum Framework (2005), National Focus Group Position Paper on Early Childhood Education (2006), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2002), Right to Education Act (2009), National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009), and National Policy on ECCE (2013). These policies collectively constitute significant and sweeping changes in attempting to formalize the field of early education in India and move school pedagogy toward a more learner-centered model.

A detailed discussion and analysis of each of these policy documents warrants another book and is not in the scope of this chapter. However, a brief description of the policies mentioned here is provided below as each marks a significant turning point in the trajectory of India's educational system.

National Curriculum Framework 2005 (NCF 2005)

Changes in India's educational policies have been informed to a large extent by the government agency known as the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) through revisions made to the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) in 1975, 1988, 2000, and 2005. These documents provide the framework to determine curriculum and pedagogy for schools in India. NCF (2005) is significant because of its recommendations to steer the Indian educational system away from the centuries old colonial and rote memorization-based pedagogy toward a more learner-centered pedagogy. This policy document was drafted by a National Steering Committee and supplemented with 21 National Focus Group Position Papers

on a range of topics related to school education, including one on early childhood education.

The recommendations made by NCF 2005 were based on the following principles to guide curriculum and teaching strategies in schools: (1) connecting knowledge to life outside the school; (2) ensuring that learning shifts away from rote methods; (3) enriching the curriculum so that it goes beyond textbooks; (4) making examinations more flexible and integrating them with classroom life; and (5) nurturing an over-riding identity informed by caring concerns within the democratic polity of the country (NCF, 2005).

The document acknowledged that the pedagogic efforts to ensure primary education for all children depended largely on the planning and expansion of early childhood care and education (ECCE) as a national field. The document emphatically stated that "*Knowledge needs to be distinguished from information, and teaching needs to be seen as a professional activity, not as coaching for memorisation or as transmission of facts. Activity is the heart of the child's attempt to make sense of the world around him/her. Therefore, every resource must be deployed to enable children to express themselves, handle objects, explore their natural and social milieu, and to grow up healthy*" (NCF, 2005, p. viii). This was in stark contrast to the colonial approach to school education which had so far been rigidly academic, textbook-centered, and examination-oriented. It was the Indian government's hope that with the mandate of NCF 2005 all private and state-run schools in India would move further in the direction of learner-centered education.

NCERT National Focus Group Position Paper on Early Childhood Education (2006)

This document was one of the 21 Focus Group Position Papers that emerged from the guidelines of NCF 2005 and was specifically crafted by a fourteen-member Focus Group on ECE. This comprehensive report comprised of five main sections on the following topics: *A Global Perspective on Early Childhood; The Indian Context: Situational Analysis and Appraisal; Critical Issues, Social Realities, and Policy Implications; Moving Ahead: Changing Policy Paradigms; and Curricular Framework for ECCE.* The document makes references to global research and trends in ECE, specifically to neuroscience and developmentally appropriate practices which are "Western" discourses that closely shape approaches to early

childhood education and development by international and world organizations such as the UN and the World Bank.

Three broad objectives were identified for the Early Childhood Care and Education Curriculum Framework: holistic development of the child, preparation of the child for schooling, and providing support to women and girls. While addressing these overarching objectives, the curriculum was to be guided by the recognition of the following ideas across all domains of child development: viewing learning as play-based and art-based; valuing characteristic features of children's thinking; valuing experience over expertise; incorporating the familiarity and challenge of everyday routines into learning experiences; blending formal and informal interactions; blending the textual (basic literacy and numeracy) with the cultural; using local funds of knowledge; demonstrating a developmentally appropriate practice and flexibility; and emphasizing health, well-being, and healthy habits (NCF, 2005).

Briefly, this comprehensive document presented a description of the existing practices in the diverse settings of ECE seen in India and clearly mapped out a revised and integrated early childhood curriculum as per the recommendations of NCF 2005. This Position Paper also made note of the fact that the play-based approach to teaching young children was not totally new in India but had been proposed and enacted by several prominent Indian preschool educators as mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2002)

The Constitution of India that was drafted immediately following the country's independence included Article 45 that sought to provide free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of 6 and 14 years within ten years of the writing of the Constitution. The 86th Amendment to India's Constitution in 2002 inserted an article into the Constitution that free and compulsory education for all children between the ages of 6 and 14 years would be considered a fundamental right. As a result, the program called Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was launched in 2002 (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, NCERT, 2006b) by the Indian government in its efforts toward achieving Universal Elementary Education by providing free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of 6 and 14 years. However, this still excluded a large population of young children who were below the age of 6 years.

Right to Education Act (2009)

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act of 2009 was the resulting legislation of the above Constitutional Amendment to ensure that every child had the right to full-time quality elementary education which satisfied basic norms and standards (Government of India, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Framework for Implementation, 2011). The RTE Act (2009) went into effect in April 2010 and thereafter changes were made to the existing SSA vision, norms, and strategies to more closely align SSA with RTE 2009. As per the Government of India's document on the SSA Framework for Implementation (2011), the revised SSA guidelines emphasized the following: (1) holistic view of education as recommended by NCF 2005; (2) equity to facilitate school enrollment, attendance, and retention of disadvantaged groups of Indian society; (3) access and deeper understanding of the educational needs of excluded and disadvantaged groups of children including girls, minorities, and children with special needs; (4) gender concern to bring about a fundamental change to the status of girls and women in Indian society; (5) centrality of teacher to be responsible for the creation of an inclusive classroom culture; (6) moral compulsion and greater accountability imposed upon teachers, parents, educational administrators, and other related stakeholders; and (7) integrated system of educational management. These features were based not only on the recommendations of RTE (2009), but also on the earlier child-centric recommendations of NPE 1986/1992 and NCF (2005). The revised SSA guidelines provided a broad framework within which individual states might determine the details of approaches and strategies that were more appropriate within the cultural, social, economic, and institutional contexts of individual states. However, RTE 2009 still did not include younger children below the age of 6 years. This is a lingering result from the history of the field of ECE in India being located within the jurisdiction of human development rather than within that of education.

The availability of universal quality early childhood education for younger children, in fact, must be considered as a pre-requisite for India's efforts to ensure that all children 6–14 years of age are provided with free, compulsory, and quality education. Two recent policies that did suggest the importance of early education were the National Plan of Action for Children (2005) which includes the universalization of early childhood care and education (ECCE) as one of the goals and the National Curriculum Framework (2005) which emphasizes the need for 2 years of preschooling

based on a play-based developmentally appropriate curriculum. As an outcome of these events, there have been demands to mandate the extension of the RTE Act to all preschool children between the ages of three and six years that will allow schooling to begin at the age of three years. This will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

Clearly, this has highlighted the urgent need for capacity building and the establishment of quality degree programs for the preparation of early childhood teachers.

National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009)

Policy recommendations for a more child-centered pedagogy can only be effectively implemented by teachers who have been appropriately trained in this new pedagogy and are able to work with culturally diverse children in their classrooms. Given that the current teacher education system in India has thus far been a colonial legacy that excluded the field of early or pre-primary education, the task of adequately preparing teachers who would be confident to implement the recommendations of a new curriculum framework is in itself a critical need in India. In the NCFTE 2009 document, there is a section devoted specifically on preparing teachers and teacher educators for ECCE, recognizing that ECCE must aim for the development of the whole child in a learning environment that should be joyful, child-centered, play, and activity-based. Teacher education programs must therefore prepare ECCE teachers to implement a pedagogy that is developmentally appropriate and based on child-centered, play and activity-based experiences. Chapter 1 of the document also urges teacher education to provide opportunities for teachers to reflect upon and critically engage with curriculum and syllabi; broaden the curriculum so as to include different traditions of knowledge; and help develop in teachers a social consciousness and finer human sensibilities.

National Policy on ECCE (2013)

A national policy for ECCE was adopted by the Government of India in 2013 "to reiterate the commitment to promote inclusive, equitable, and contextualized opportunities for promoting optimal development and active learning capacity for all children under the age of 6 years" (Resolution, Ministry of Women and Children, Government of India, 2013). According to the 2011 Census, there are about 158.7 million children

between the ages of 0 and 6 years in India. The policy reiterates a quality and holistic approach to ensure optimal education, care, and development, recognizing the interdependent relationship between health, nutrition, psycho-social, and emotional needs of each child. The policy is applicable to all ECCE programs: private, public, and non-governmental organizations and which may be termed creches, play schools, play groups, preschools, nursery schools, kindergartens, preparatory schools, Anganwadis, Balwadis, home-based care, etc. The quality standards address the issue of capacity building and targeting a staff that will be adequately qualified and trained in developmentally appropriate practices and assessment procedures. The policy recognizes the shortfall in the availability of trained human resources and recommends the development of a plan to strengthen existing teacher training agencies for early childhood development such as National Institute for Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs), District Institute of Education and Training (DIETs), and Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). These would focus on building capacity for early childhood care, development, and education in addition to capacity for the primary and secondary levels. Regional Child Development Resource Centers would provide continuous support to ECCE personnel including helplines, assessment centers, counseling centers, capacity development centers, and advocacy hubs. A parallel initiative for family education would be implemented to inform parents and caregivers about best practices related to infants and young children on play and early education. Links between policy, research, and practice would be strengthened and funds allocated for early childhood research. Policies and programs across diverse areas such as water, health, education, nutrition, sanitation, labor, and finance would be revised and realigned with the policy on ECCE. The policy notes that these decisions have been based on evidence that indicates highest rate of returns on investments made to improve child well-being in the early childhood years, and the policy will be reviewed every five years. The field of ECE has finally taken center stage in the national arena, thus elevating its professional status.

With regard to the state of where things need to change, Madhav Chavan (ASER, 2018) emphasizes that "India is a country where everything has to happen on a massive scale. Developing one successful model and replicating in state after state is one possibility. A decade ago this was attempted with Activity-Based Learning (ABL). The original ABL model left something to

be desired and the replication was probably done without much conviction. In the current phase, the emphasis seems to be coming from goal setting and assessment rather than specific models of teaching-learning or teacher training." He calls for all stakeholders—the private sector, the government, and the NGOs—all working together in consonance for any measurable scaled change to happen in a huge educational system as in India.

The Goal to Provide Basic Education to All Children in India

An examination of the trajectory of the educational rights discourse in India helps to better understand its currents status. It is important to clarify that most educational policy discourse in India has largely addressed elementary grades and up. But this discussion is still relevant since grades K-2 span elementary education (EE) and early childhood education (ECE).

The moral imperative that all children regardless of race, gender, culture, language, religion, or ability have access to formal education has been a long struggle for the Indian government. As explained earlier, Article 45 of the newly drafted Indian Constitution included a provision for free and compulsory education for all children 6–14 years of age. Ever since the Constitution was adopted in 1950, the Indian government has attempted to meet this goal (Govinda, 2007), and 70 years later, it still has not been able to accomplish this objective.

After the UN proposed the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1989, it was ratified by India in 1992. Thereafter, in 2002 the Indian Parliament voted to support the 86th Constitutional Amendment which declared the Right to Education as a fundamental right. It was only after the UN established the 2015 deadline for Education For All, also known as EFA 2015, that the Indian government began to pay urgent attention to early childhood education (ECE), and how it could be made accessible to the nation's youngest children. Widespread recognition for ECE in India gained further traction due to socio-political forces as the global children's rights movements promoted local political action and middle-class aspirations that recognized its benefits for children's well-being (Aruldoss & Davis, 2015; Pattnaik, 1996). Nevertheless, the field of ECE in India has remained mostly unregulated marked by a large work-force that is formally unqualified and exhibiting massive disparities across various ECCE service providers (Prochner, 2002).

The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE Act) was adopted and implemented in 2010 after it was added to the Indian Constitution as Amendment 21A. The RTE Act, approved by the president of India in August 2009 came into force in April 2010. This put the right to education at par with the right to life (Puar, 2012, pp. 27–28) making India one of the 135 countries to recognize education as a fundamental right for its citizens. RTE's core principles viewed schools as inclusive spaces, teachers as key change agents, communities as being more empowered in the running of schools, and institutional infrastructure and governance as being strengthened (UNICEF-India). The hope was that this policy would work toward ensuring greater school access for more children.

The RTE Act binds parents, schools, social institutions, and state and central governments as stakeholders in collaborating to provide free and compulsory education to children 6–14 years old. This was seen as a significant step toward the universalization of elementary education throughout the country. However, nearly 16 years after the right to education was elevated to a fundamental right, a large number of children in India are still out of school as reflected in the 71st National Sample Survey (NSS) carried out in 2014 (Dubey, Pankaj, & Mitra, 2018). The total number of out-of-school children aged 6–18 years were estimated to be more than 450 million or 16.1% of all children in India in this age group, most of them being from rural areas, from marginalized classes and castes, and girls (Dubey et al., 2018).

RTE's major shortcoming is that it omits all children under the age of 6 years. According to the recent National Early Childhood Care and Education Policy, the stage of early childhood in India includes children between the ages of 0 and 6 years, and the term early childhood provision combines childcare and early childhood education (NECCE Policy, 2013). Within this framework, the government established the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) on a national level in 1975. ICDS programs provide comprehensive health, social, and educational services to all children below the age of 6 years and may be considered India's equivalent to the American Head Start program. Robust voices have been urging the Indian government to include the very young in the RTE policies, and both public and private sectors have been rapidly developing and working to professionalize a distinct ECE field in India.

School access for all children is only one of the many inequities encountered, and there are other roadblocks that stand in the way of the goal of

providing quality education for all children. Widely diverse school experiences are to be found in a country where approximately 260 million children attend all levels of school, and disparities in schooling can be seen across government, non-profit, and private sectors. Factors that cause inequitable schooling experiences include student enrollment and retention issues; quality of public education; quality of private-sector schools; public expenditure patterns; household expenditure on schooling; and varying initiatives by state governments to support access, retention, and quality (Mehrotra, 2006). Young children in India can experience schools in vastly different ways from each as a result of factors such as institutional infrastructure, pedagogy, curriculum, geo-socioeconomics, social class, and public and private sectors (Gupta, 2019).

In trying to address these issues and create a more equitable educational system, recent government policies have placed an emphasis on promoting the education of children from marginalized groups in India, with regard to gender and caste. Historically, caste and gender issues have featured prominently in whether access is allowed, or not, to children from marginalized groups such as girls and socioeconomically disadvantaged classes and castes. The new policies have been offering various monetary incentives to families from such groups in order to encourage them to allow their children to be enrolled in schools and complete their schooling.

Dire Need for Capacity Building and Investing in Teacher Education

Some of the most significant policy documents and initiatives in India that impact early childhood teacher education, with regard to both professionalization and professionalism, include National Curriculum Framework (2005), National Focus Group Position Paper on Early Childhood Education (2006), Right to Education Act (2009), the previously discussed NCFTE (2009), and the National Policy on ECCE (2013) all of which have been discussed earlier in this chapter. These policies have several implications in the course of their implementation.

In the practical application of RTE 2009, all schools (including those considered to be private and independent) are now required to reserve 25% of each admitting class for children who belong to economically disadvantaged communities (known in India as Economically Weaker Sections or EWS). These trends have led to a rapid rise in school enrollment numbers in India which now include a large group of children from sections of Indian

society that have historically been economically and socially marginalized. In particular, classrooms in private and elite schools now house children from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds who have thus far remained segregated and separated in Indian society with regard to schooling. Teachers who have been prepared in existing teacher education institutions are largely unfamiliar in differentiated curriculum and pedagogy when teaching children from diverse backgrounds and/or with varying abilities in the same classroom. There is a tremendous backlog in the availability of well-trained, qualified, and experienced teachers. Prejudices against poor children and their families may be commonly found among school staff and teachers. Neoliberal globalization and commercialization of the field have added to the crisis by increasing the number of private schools for children while the acute shortage of qualified teachers remains. The shortage of teachers has in turn led to a rapid emergence of private establishments and institutions for teacher training that may often be sub-standard in quality. Further, the lack of qualified teachers has impeded improvement in students' learning outcomes. According to the national assessment survey in India, although more than 96% of children between the ages of 6 and 14 years are enrolled in school, evidence indicates that there has been no significant improvement in children's ability to read since the RTE was passed, and they continue to struggle with basic math (ASER, 2013 [2014]). Such classroom challenges that have emerged as a result of policy changes in a global and neoliberal climate have created a dire need for teacher education programs that will prepare teachers more adequately and appropriately for the realities of twenty-first-century classrooms.

Recent Emphasis on Capacity Building

As a response to the fact that capacity building and pre-primary teacher training have recently come under the national spotlight, a study was conducted jointly by Ambedkar University and the Council for Teacher Education in 2010, the findings of which were shared in a report titled Preparing Teachers for Early Childhood Care and Education (year unspecified, available at http://www.teindia.nic.in/e9tm/Files/Preparing_Teachers_for_Early_Childhood_care_and_Education.pdf. Accessed on January 31, 2015).

The Report highlighted the following findings with regard to the current status of pre-primary teacher education in India: (1) There was inadequate

availability and inequitable distribution of ECCE teacher education institutions across India; (2) there was decreasing availability of institutions which offered teacher education programs that were at least of 2 years duration as per the current mandates and regulations; (3) ECCE teacher education programs specifically affiliated with colleges and universities were more professionally delivered but were few in number (only six of the 83 programs surveyed in this study were housed in higher education with 3 programs offering ECCE diplomas and 3 offering ECCE degrees); and (4) there was increasing dominance of the private sector with over 50% of the ECCE teacher education institutions privately managed, followed by a substantial number managed by NGOs, and only a very few offered by government agencies.

The above report, in underscoring "that engagement with higher learning institutions will enable teacher education to become more 'professional' through strengthening of the knowledge base and reflection capacity in the process of teacher preparation" (p. 98), recommended the expansion of equitably distributed high-quality ECCE teacher education institutions to prepare competent and professional teacher educators and ECCE professionals. Recommendations also urged NCTE to review and revise its norms and specifications for improved professional standards for ECCE teacher education in consonance with the NCFTE (2009); improve facilities in schools such as physical environments and learning resources that would support the newer pedagogical practices in which the new ECCE teachers would now be prepared; and require that there be a core faculty in each ECCE teacher education institution of ECCE teacher educators who were well-grounded in academic course work and who were prepared intentionally in child-centered and learner-oriented pedagogies.

It was further noted in the report that despite there being "a greater awareness… about the need for appropriate practices in ECCE… market forces appear to be diluting efforts of practitioners and experts to make ECCE a more professional field" (p. 108). Finally, a push was made in the report for "institutions like NCTE and other national and state level institutions, universities, as well as teacher education institutions to enable and promote the development of a common vision for ECCE that will support change, develop an indigenous knowledge base in ECCE, raise capacities of individuals and institutions for professional development of the field of ECCE" (p. 108).

While India as a country works to reconceptualize and reform its teacher education programs, it is incumbent on all educators to draft new policies in

accordance with what is best for the child first and foremost, and not what is best for the nation's economy. The effects of neoliberal globalization on these issues is examined next, with a reminder to protect the narrative that most values the child.

Protecting the Narrative of ECCE

Over the last two decades, appropriate and quality ECE has come to be acknowledged as a priority in the global educational agenda. In 2000, 164 nations agreed to UNESCO's Dakar Framework for Action which mandated the coordination of UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, and the World Bank to ensure Education for All by the year 2015. The first of its six goals was "Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children" (accessed on June 14, 2019. Available at http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=22012&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html). As part of this goal, world organizations and nation governments have been working relentlessly toward ensuring the development of quality ECE around the world. The efforts in South Asian countries have, to a large extent, been informed by the early childhood discourse that is dominant in western countries like UK and the United States. This discourse is rooted in two primary views: (1) the child-centered ideas of developmentally appropriate practices (a phrase that emerged within the American ECE discourse in 1987) and (2) a view of the child from a human capital perspective with the provision of quality early education as an investment in the nation's economy—a view that emerged first among leading economists in the west and that has since been embraced by world organizations that are working to develop early childhood education across emerging economies (Gupta, 2012). This neoliberal approach opened up the field to influences that encouraged privatization of ECCE centers as well as ECCE teacher education institutions in countries across Asia. One needs to be wary about profit valuing bodies where the quality of training might be compromised and reduced to a factory model of quick turnaround supply of "teachers" who might lack passion or commitment to teaching and may be swayed by incentives that position teaching as a gateway to a more lucrative career industry. Goals-driven education has wide appeal in a neoliberal climate that encourages competition and for-profit privatization. Education trends in the United States, where teacher education programs are being increasingly

shaped by standards-based accountability reforms and teacher candidates are taught how to deliver curricula-specific lessons to comply with specific assessment systems (Mayer, Luke, & Luke, 2008), are having a global impact elsewhere. Under the influence of NGOs and international organizations such as the World Bank, teacher education and education in general are being framed as regulated markets governed by neoliberal policies, centered on high-stakes tests that are assumed to yield a reliable, unproblematic measure of both student performance and good teaching (Mahon, 2010). An example of privatized teacher education can be found in the expanding focus on Teach for India where graduates from elite universities are recruited to go into high-needs schools for a two-year stint in teaching and supposedly are making a difference. This image of the professional teacher as an elite recruit who will learn to teach in five weeks, spend two years in high-need schools, and then move on to a leadership position in another job industry goes against the traditional image of the teacher as a "guru" within the Indian cultural worldview (Blumenreich & Gupta, 2015) which focused more on a longer term relational aspect between teacher and student and conducive to a more effective teaching learning process. Hence within this tension between the local and the global, cultural conceptualizations of the child and the teacher need to be borne in mind as government policies approach teacher education reform to ensure cultural and contextual appropriateness.

In conclusion of this chapter, the next section examines some issues in the field of early education that remain unresolved as India drafts and implements new policies in this area.

Where Are We Now with Pre-primary and Primary Education in India?

Persisting Challenges Regarding Access and Quality

The global momentum to develop the field of ECE was set in motion by the UN's MDGs and now SDGs, urging nation governments around the world to make every effort to achieve these goals by the year of 2030. Ohara (2013) notes that in addition to the global momentum, there have been several local factors leading to recent efforts in developing the field of ECE in India specifically. Firstly, child mortality under the age of five years is one of the highest in India than anywhere else in the world. According to Save the Children, 1.83 million children under the age of 5 have died in India

as of 2008, and Kaul and Sankara (2009) note that approximately 46% of children under the age of three years were found to be underweight. It is expected that holistic ECCE programs which offer health and nutrition services will improve the physical conditions of young children and promote their development. Secondly, it is believed that a well-organized ECCE field will promote the intellectual and social development of young children, thus reducing the number of children dropping out at the stage of early education and improving the quality of early education programs. Thirdly, it is expected that setting up of ECCE centers for infants and toddlers will support not only the participation of women in the workforce but also the participation in education of poor children (especially girls) who babysit their young siblings.

Recent Indian government initiatives like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA, an educational scheme that targets children in grades 1–8) in support of the universalization of education and the global children's rights movement have sought to alleviate the fundamental challenge of access to primary schools (Iyengar, 2010). Other attempts have included offering programs in teacher training, establishing resource centers, providing materials and supplies to marginalized children, and constructing new classrooms. However, in 2018, the government merged the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan with Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, the secondary education scheme for Classes 9 and above, and the central scheme for teacher education. The government said the merged scheme, called Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, aimed to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels of school education" (Roy Chowdhury, 2019). The concern here is that the merger will move funds away from the education of younger children and into higher levels of education.

The latest ASER statistics available on the state of pre-primary and primary education in India are quite troubling. ASER stands for Annual Status of Educational Report and is currently the only annual source of information on children's learning and outcome in India. According to the ASER website:

> This is an annual survey that aims to provide reliable estimates of children's enrolment and basic learning levels for each district and state in India. ASER has been conducted every year since 2005 in all rural districts of India. It is the largest citizen-led survey in India…Unlike most other large-scale learning assessments, ASER is a household-based rather than school-based survey. This design enables all children to be included – those who have never been to

> school or have dropped out, as well as those who are in government schools, private schools, religious schools or anywhere else…Approximately 7,00,000 children in the age group 3-16 who are residents in these households are surveyed.… Information on schooling status is collected for all children living in sampled households who are in the age group 3-16. Children in the age group 5-16 are tested in basic reading and basic arithmetic. The same test is administered to all children. The highest level of reading tested corresponds to what is expected in Std 2; in 2012 this test was administered in 16 regional languages. (http://www.asercentre.org/NGO/assessment/learning/education/outcomes/primary/reading/p/133.html)

The 2018 ASER Report sheds light on the latest school enrollment status of young children. According to India's national policy, all children 3 years of age should be in an ECE program. The situation is different across all the states but the Report indicates that the state of Gujarat comes closest to universal schooling with almost 90% of children in some form of preschool, whereas in the state of Uttar Pradesh almost 67% of children are not in any ECE setting whatsoever. At age 4 years, the percentage of children enrolled in school rises substantially across India, for instance in Rajasthan about 25% of all 4-year-olds are already in primary school. At age 5 years, fewer than 10% of the children nationally are not enrolled in a school or preschool, and about 33% of all 5-year-olds are already attending a primary school. Although all 6-year-old children are expected to be in primary school, it was found that the national average of 6-year-olds who were not in primary school was about 30%. The numbers of course vary with individual states.

The Report also revealed that less than 2.8% of children are out of school in India, the first time the figure has fallen below 3%. This brings the total school enrollment up to 97.2%. The proportion of girls out of school across India has also dropped from 6% in 2010 to 4% in 2018. Many of these achievements are attributed to the Right To Education Act 2009 (RTE) legislation, which mandated free and compulsory education for six- to 14-year-olds and is credited with reducing "inequalities in access between states" and "beefed up infrastructure in government schools."

Such improvements, however, mask latent issues in the country's rural school network, where numeracy and literacy standards remain sub-par and in many instances lower than standards recorded 10 years ago in 2008. The fact remains that more than 85 million children between the ages of 5 and 6 years still don't go to school due to financial constraints (*Times of India*, January 13, 2019. https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/education/news/8-crore-indian-children-still-dont-go-to-school/

articleshow/67515425.cms). Banerji (2019) reports that in the past few years, the discussion among academics and researchers, practitioners or policymakers on the subject of learning outcomes has intensified in India. Although there may be debate on the different methodologies used in the ASER measurement, "there is consensus on the fact that years spent in school do not satisfactorily translate into years of learning."

Additionally, after five years of schooling, at age 10–11 years, just over half (51%) of students in India can read a grade 2 level text (appropriate for 7–8-year-olds). This figure is lower than in 2008, when 56% of grade 5 students could read a grade 2 level text. The results for arithmetic ability show a similar picture: Just 28% of grade 5 students are able to do division, compared with 37% in 2008. Thus, despite some improvements, India is still struggling with basic literacy and numeracy. "This means that not only are we not creating a sufficiently literate population, but that most of our population is functionally illiterate," said the report. "We are far from becoming an educated nation" (T. Sanghera, Jan 15, IndiaSpend, 2019).

Another concern the report highlighted is that the gap between learning outcomes at government and private schools is widening. Private school enrollment increased from 18.7% to 30.8% between 2006 and 2014. Given below are examples of challenges that individual states in India are currently facing.

In the state of Gujarat, a survey conducted by the Gujarat Education Department found that of 32,772 government schools, 12,000 schools are run by just one or two teachers. Official records show 8673 (26% of total schools) government schools have less than 51 students, and 6498 (20%) schools have less than 100 students (K. Dave, *Times of India*, January 7, 2019).

In Hyderabad, an absence of pre-primary grades in government schools has forced parents to enroll their children in private schools. Meanwhile, hundreds of preschool franchises have rushed to fill this gap leading to a boom in high-fee-charging private EC centers (*Times of India*, October 3, 2018) "In every nook and corner, there are multiple schools functioning out of dingy residential buildings with no proper ventilation or safety mechanisms. Such schools are making huge profits and the department of education has not been able to regulate them, or provide their own preschools" (http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/66048511.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst).

In Goa, the Directorate of Education recently decreed that new pre-primary schools will be registered only if they meet all the infrastructure requirements such as adequate toilet facilities, proper ventilation, and electricity and water connections (*Times of India*, June 17, 2018. https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/goa/new-preschools-must-have-independent-premises-doe/articleshow/64486064.cms). Following this, a new set of regulations for pre-primary schools will also be implemented by other states.

Recently in Delhi, the local government launched the Happiness Curriculum in October 2018 across 1000 government schools involving 800,000 students from K through 8, and 18,000 teachers. The curriculum comprised of a daily 45-minute class in mindfulness and meditation to counter the academic stresses of Indian schooling by promoting values like gratitude, harmony, justice, love, and respect. "India is the only country that can bring together modern education and ancient Indian knowledge," said the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan Buddhist leader and a Nobel Peace Prize winner on launching the Happiness Curriculum. His remarks drew on ancient Indian educational philosophies and practices according to which education broadly included three steps in the learning process: *shravana* which refers to the process of listening to one's teacher and learning the oral tradition on which Hindu religion is based; *manana*, which is an intellectual process whereby one begins to think and reflect upon the meaning of what one has learned; and *nididhyasana*, which is the process of meditation to realize truth and consciousness (Mookerji, 1969). This recent policy focus on explicitly nurturing children's well-being is the result of the more global initiative on children's well-being that world organizations are supporting.

In summary, despite efforts to develop and improve the state of pre-primary and primary education in India, problems still persist with regard to quality of education, access to schools, and unequal treatment of children within the diverse national schools systems (Bajaj, 2018). The progress of RTE is constrained by several factors including the absence of quality physical and social infrastructure; an absence of mechanisms to check for accountability; institutional and budgetary protocols that are problematic in order to utilize and process funds; the still largely excluded population of children 0–6 years of age; inadequate availability of trained teachers and staff; the absence of a complete and national ban on child labor; and mostly, an overall absence of political will (Jha & Parvati, 2014).

Other social, pedagogical, and curricular roadblocks to better quality of education may be summarized as the following: Teachers and students

come from very different castes and classes, and teachers are not fully prepared in multicultural, culturally responsive, and sensitive teaching practices; teacher preparation is still inadequate with regard to not only deeper cultural awareness of students backgrounds but also greater rigor in the teaching of developmental and learning theory; increased privatization of educational institutions and market economy forces continue to put profit before child at every level; a clear definition of the term "educational quality" is lacking, and neoliberal globalization has influenced the notion of good quality as being defined mostly based by western parameters.

It would benefit educators to keep in mind that "Quality is not a universal concept but depends on national curricula and cultural priorities. The outcomes deemed important in children's development will relate in different ways to the many measures of quality" (Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford, & Taggart, 2006, p. 51). Sriprakash (2009) found in her study on "quality of education" conducted in rural Indian primary schools the implications of introducing child-centered pedagogic principles in rural, low-income Indian contexts. Her study examined a program called "Joyful Learning" as an example of child-centered pedagogic reform. Her findings indicated that social control of knowledge acquisition can remain hidden and unchallenged by the rhetoric of child-centered pedagogy (Sriprakash, 2009). Even the understanding of child-centredness differs with context because of the varying cultural worldviews on how the child is located within the child–adult continuum. As India moves toward achieving UN's Target 4.2 under the 20130 SDGs which states that "by 2030 countries should ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education," it should be kept in mind that quality universal education can only be achieved by a view of pedagogy that is more complex, more nuanced, and more contextually layered as opposed to the dichotomous view of pedagogy being defined by either direct instruction or joyful learning.

Neoliberal Incursions on Education

The current influence of globalization on education has not all been beneficial especially given that the latest waves of globalization are defined by neoliberalism and for-profit market economics (Gupta, 2017). The impact of neoliberal globalization through the sponsorships of world organizations is evident in the policies outlined earlier. Bodies such as the World Bank, the IMF, and the UN were established in and by Euro-America and work

largely to help the development of emerging economies. Their approach to education development has been closely defined by a child development narrative rooted in Euro-American research on neuroscience, behavioral science, and developmentally appropriate practice (Mahon, 2010), emphasizing a future-oriented rationality that views the child as human capital in the making (Dahlberg & Moss, 2008). So investing in children has become fundamental to the organizations' larger social and economic policies and investment projects. In other words, a neoliberal narrative has succeeded in positioning education and teacher education as regulated markets where student outcomes as well as teacher performances are required to be measured in quantifiable terms. Teachers are measured by students' test performances rather than by their own professional knowledge (Brown, 2009), and teacher candidates are taught how to deliver standardized and regulated curricula and comply with specific assessment systems (Mayer et al., 2008).

Leading economists like James Heckman have demonstrated the economic returns of investing in quality ECE, an idea which has defined the policies of world organizations (World Bank, 2015). Another study by the Committee for Economic Development also supports a heavy investment in high-quality preschool education (CED, 2006). Policies taking this approach are based on the recommendation that good early learning programs for younger children reduce costs later in life while enhancing the nation's economic growth; thus, high-quality ECCE experiences can help break the cycle of poverty. This urging has led to the regulation of the early childhood sector and the shaping of ECCE policy decisions. Neoliberalism has thus shifted the main purpose of education from preparing all children to participate effectively in society to now preparing students for future employment (Baltodana, 2012). Education has become an "adjunct of corporate control" (Giroux, 2015, p. 123 as cited in Sims & Tiko, 2016). The influence of the western ECE discourse is evident in the recommendations that are included in the 2018 ASER Report based on international research which really implies western research: "Extensive international research in disciplines as varied as neuroscience, psychology, and economics shows that early childhood—defined internationally as the age group of 0–8 years—is a critical period during which the foundations of lifelong learning are built. 90% of all brain development takes place by the age of 6. Giving children the kind of inputs and experiences they need in the early years has been proven to have positive effects" on their academic performance (Bhattacharjea & Ramanujan, ASER, 2018).

The policy shifts in India and other countries of the Global South clearly demonstrate the influence of a neoliberal market economy on early childhood schools and teacher preparation institutions: significantly increased emphases on issues such as standardization, teacher capacity, stricter regulations, fee-based programs, assessments linked to student outcomes, more rigid qualifications to enter teacher education which often are not enforced, and widespread privatization and creation of franchises. Interestingly, Oberhuemer (2005) notes that "against a background of globalization it seems that new economic, social and knowledge contexts are having contradictory effects on education systems" (p. 33). While nation governments exert more control over school curriculum and classroom teaching, there is simultaneous evidence of increased privatization and decentralization, and systems of education in turn respond to the global economic agenda by prioritizing competencies such as test-score-based school readiness (Oberhuemer, 2005; Pearson & Degotardi, 2009).

Spikes in privatization of educational institutions have created a system of a range of fee-charging private schools. Families in any socioeconomic bracket now have access to private schooling: "as the field of education is redefined as a marketplace… the parents and children/students are reconfigured as consumers while educational programs are commodified" (Lee, 2012, p. 31). Through privatization, neoliberal policies might seem to offer increased choice and improved school experiences to all children. However, "this 'freedom to choose' is socially constructed and economically reconfigured to transform our common sense while prescribing a particular way of being, acting and behaving" (Lee, 2012, p. 39)—this is not a real choice, and the quality of education many children receive is questionable. Simultaneously, it is troubling that quality assessment of early childhood programs is measured against "western" standards which exclude pedagogies that may draw upon culturally relevant local traditions (Gupta, 2014).

Further, to keep education competitive in the context of globalization, scholars, teachers, and principals from countries like India are sent on study tours to western countries like the United States and the UK to study and develop innovative skills; these western ideas of education are then brought back to their home countries and presented as models of exemplar and appropriate practices.

In summary, the globalized and neoliberal climate is in itself working to create inequities and cultural incursions in education. Because neoliberal and market economy structures are shaped by capitalist values of a Euro-American "west," they promote an increased individualism and decreased

collectivism which has a debilitating impact on public policy. Many franchises that are being established are found to be unregulated and of substandard quality. The increased enrollment of children in schools is a good thing, but the short supply of schools and teachers is resulting in overcrowded classrooms. Further, teachers are inadequately prepared to handle the increasing and widely varying socioeconomic diversity in their classrooms and are equally unprepared in the new global pedagogies that are recommended in the national policies. Most importantly, cultural and colonizing incursions are often seen to occur in classrooms and schools as evident in the points detailed above. Thus, as Indian educators move ahead to develop the field of early education in India, it would behoove them to take precautions on two fronts: to protect the ECE narrative of nurturing and educating the whole child while moving away from the neoliberal image of the child as an economic investment only, and to be wary of the western training of teachers and teacher educators which only serves to westernize the local context and perpetuate the colonized condition.

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CHAPTER 4

From *A Nation at Risk* to *No Child Left Behind* to *Race to the Top*: The US Response to Global Competition

Gay Wilgus

Introduction

Globalization and global economic competition have been the impetus for much of the present-day phenomena and dynamics of everyday life in the United States. As Cooper, Hersh, and O'Leary (2012) describe,

> …technological advances in telecommunications and transportation, as well as skills development in the developing world, are dragging more U.S. industries—including computer programming, high-tech manufacturing, and service sectors—into international competition. This development is feeding a mounting demand for high-skilled labor around the world. (p. 4)

But on the positive side, "…rising growth and incomes in other countries present potential new opportunities and markets for American workers and companies" (Cooper et al., 2012, p. 3).

In a quest to effectively take advantage of these opportunities, US policymakers have endeavored to determine the measures necessary for ensuring that children in the United States, as they enter adulthood, have received an education that effectively prepares them for a place in the global economy (Cooper et al., 2012, p. 3). China and India, who run neck and neck with the United States where efforts to take advantage of these global economic

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opportunities are concerned, have initiated "ambitious national strategies of investing and promoting improved educational outcomes for children to strengthen their positions as contenders in the global economy" (Cooper et al., 2012, p. 3). Moreover, "…results from international school achievement tests in many nations has heightened awareness about educational competition with other nations" (Baker & Letendre, 2007, p. 261).

Education, coupled with human capital, has been identified as primary "drivers" of long-term economic viability (Cooper et al., 2012). Here, "human capital" is defined as "the sum of the capabilities of a workforce" and "includes the health, education, skills, and talents that allow people to produce, create, and innovate their way to success—for their families and for the nation as a whole" (Cooper et al., 2012, p. 13). If the United States is to continue to occupy a prominent position as contributor to the sort of innovative thought and leadership that fuels the global economy, then substantial investments are warranted, not only in education but in research and infrastructure as well.

Significantly, "human capital investment has had three times the positive effect on economic growth as did physical investment" (Cooper et al., 2012, p. 4) for advanced countries like the United States. Moreover, according to growth economists, "educational investment is particularly important in early childhood development and learning…" (Cooper et al., 2012, p. 4). In fact, Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman found that "The return on investment from interventions such as prenatal care and early childhood programs is higher than for virtually any class of financial assets over time" (Cooper et al., 2012, p. 4).

Other important considerations stem from studies that track educational attainment and achievement gaps related to income, race, and ethnic groups. These have become progressively more worrisome. Because "groups with disproportionately lower education achievement and poorer health…will soon comprise a majority of American children" (Cooper et al., 2012, p. 5), these gaps do not portend well for future US efforts to continue to occupy a respectable slot on the global economic ladder.

With such concerns foremost in mind, the past few decades in the United States have witnessed a number of educational reform initiatives aimed at re-establishing the United States' position as a primary contender for seizing a sizeable slice of the pie of economic opportunities served up by an increasingly globalized economy. These have included America 2000, Goals 2000, the No Child Left Behind Act, Race to the Top, Common Core of State Standards, and the Every Student Succeeds Act.

The Roots of 20th Educational Reform in the United States: A Nation at Risk

The early 1980s in the United States saw large-scale complaints from the business community about the current state of American schooling. As globalization produced increased economic competition, and jobs on assembly lines in manufacturing diminished, the demand for better-educated workers with both basic skills and a modicum of technological ability mounted. The existent education system in the United States was held responsible for the loss of America's advantage to other nations—Japan in particular—in the automobile and steel industries and other technological areas (Hayes, 2004). A number of business leaders complained about the amount of training in communication and math skills they were obliged to provide in order for new employees, to remain competitive. Business-Higher Education Form's *The American Competitive Challenge: The Need for Response* argued that the nation's falling productivity signaled a need for workers to be better schooled in science, math, verbal expression, and critical thinking skills (Sadker & Sadker, 2003).

Diane Ravitch identifies "The sustained assault on academic curriculum in the late 1960s and early 70s" (Hayes, 2004, p. 2) as a major culprit in this apparent decline in schooling quality. As Hayes (2004) explains, "During the 60s as high schools made a conscious effort to accommodate the increasing student pressure for increased "relevance"…many schools added electives… Classes in ecology, drama and dance were added…Increasing numbers of students spent time in high school learning vocational skills such as beautician training and auto mechanics" (Hayes, 2004, p. 2). In fact, a study of 22 schools in nine states revealed that students were being given academic credit for courses like cheerleading, student government, and mass media. Moreover, students in the "average" school had only 3 hours of instruction (Hayes, 2004).

As Hayes (2004) notes,

> During the 20th century, the emphasis in schools moved like a pendulum between those who support student-centered learning for critical thinking and those who believed that the primary function of schools is to teach basic content and skills in English, math, science, history and foreign language. The introduction of progressive education by Dewey and others at the beginning of the 20th century began a debate that continues.…The student centered learning so evident in the schools in the 60s and 70s was seen by many as a failure in the 80s. (pp. 4–5)

At the politically conservative end of the pendular swing, E. D. Hirsh argued that

> …the common knowledge characteristically shared by those at the top of the socioeconomic ladder in the US should be readily available to all citizens because people who lack it suffer serious handicaps. This 'core knowledge' is needed for productive communication and establishing fundamental equality as citizens. (as quoted in Hayes, 2004, p. 5)

At the opposite end of the pendular swing, John Holt, author of *How Children Fail* (1964), shot back

> …the idea that it is the duty of schools to get as much "essential knowledge" as possible into children is absurd, harmful nonsense. Children quickly forget all but a small part of what they learn in school. It is of no use or interest to them. (Hayes, 2004 p. 5)

Ronald Reagan entered the White House in 1981 and appointed Terrell Bell Secretary of Education. Bell requested a commission to study the state of the nation's schools (Hayes, 2004). When his concerns were rebuffed, he established a National Commission on Excellence in Education. Although Reagan's conservative cronies wanted only Republicans on the panel, Bell aimed for a "balanced group," including a black college president, Norman Francis and Dr. Francisco Sanchez, a Hispanic superintendent. The group had only 18 months to write a final report (Hayes, 2004).

A Nation at Risk, published in 1983, comprised ideas from several reports and publications in the early 1980s, for example, Mortimer Adler's *Paideia Proposal,* "a philosophical defense of a liberal arts curriculum as the basis for the uniform education of all students, grades 1-12" (Hayes, 2004, p. 37). The recommendations of A Nation at Risk focused on teaching students "effective study and work skills," giving more homework and "firm and fair codes of student conduct…" that were "enforced consistently." Alternative classrooms were to be created for persistently disruptive students (Hayes, 2004, p. 32).

The report also advocated for making teaching a "more rewarding and respected profession" via higher performance-based salaries. Teacher evaluations involving peer review were likewise recommended. Career ladders that distinguish between beginning experienced, and master teachers were

to be put in place (Hayes, 2004, p. 32). Grants and loans to entice exceptional college students into the field of teaching were also recommended.

Textbooks were to be updated with more challenging content. Collaborative work between community members, school leaders, and parents, both at the local and state levels was encouraged. Parents were charged with "model(ing) in their own lives a commitment to continual learning" and "instill(ing) the importance of intellectual and moral integrity" (Hayes, 2004, p. 34). All the while, the federal bureaucracy was expected to be "… unobtrusive and place a minimal amount of administrative burden on schools" (Hayes, 2004, p. 33). Finally, *A Nation at Risk* proclaimed, "We firmly believe that…It is by our willingness to take up the challenge, and our resolve to see It through, that America's place in the world will be either secured or forfeited" (Hayes, 2004, p. 35).

Critiques of a Nation at Risk

William Buckley characterized the recommendations of A Nation at Risk as "unimaginative and banal" and "call(ing) for nothing new" (Hayes, 2004, p. 44). Noted educational historian Lawrence Cremin (1989) adds,

> American economic competitiveness with Japan and other nations is to a considerable degree a function of monetary, trade and industrial policy, and of decisions made by the President and Congress, the Federal Reserve Board, and the Federal Departments of the Treasury, Commerce and Labor. Therefore, to conclude that problems of international competitiveness can be solved by educational reform, especially educational reform defined solely as school reform, is not merely utopian and millennialist, it is at best a foolish and at worst a crass effort to direct attention away from those truly responsible for doing something about competitiveness and to the lay the burden instead upon schools…a device that has been used repeatedly in the history of American education. (pp. 102–103)

Education policy researcher, Gerard Bracey, described A Nation at Risk as "a golden treasury of selective and spun statistics" (Hayes, 2004, p. 45). In his "The Propaganda of 'A Nation at Risk,'" Bracey presents challenges to several "indicators." He maintains that the only reason a decline in science achievement test scores by American 17-year-olds was included in the report was that "it was the only one of nine trend lines that showed a dramatic decrease." Meanwhile, the science scores of nine- and thirteen-year-olds were inching up (Hayes, 2004, p. 45).

Bracey (1999) also questions the report's assertion that "international comparison of student achievement completed a decade ago, reveal that on 19 academic tests, American students were never first or second, and in comparison with other industrialized nations, were last 7 times" (as quoted in Hayes, 2004, p. 45). Bracey maintains that the studies on which this statement is based had "fundamental methodological flaws" and that "the Commission could have chosen to report on other studies that prove American kids are above average in science, average in math, and second in the world in reading" (as quoted in Hayes, 2004, p. 45).

The federal government was even charged with concealing good indicators where the schools were concerned. For example, Bracey wrote,

> The most egregious example of suppression – that we know about – was the suspension of The Sandia Report. Assembled in 1990 by engineers at Sandia National laboratories in Albuquerque the report concluded that while there were many problems in public education, there was no system-wide crisis. (as quoted in Hayes, 2004, p. 46)

Deputy Secretary of Education and former Xerox CEO David Kearns told the engineers who compiled the Sandia report, "You bury this or I'll bury you." Sandia's Vice President who supervised the Sandia engineers verified that the report had been deliberately and definitely suppressed (Bracey, 1993).

As Hayes (2004) points out, this move

> presented the opportunity for those on the right in religion and politics to take control of schools…only with national and statewide curricula could ultraconservatives be assured that disquiet local voices – advocates of gay rights, abortion rights and birth control, for example – could be kept out of schools" so that schools to return to 'the good old days. (Nelson, Palonsky, & McCarthy, 2004, p. 160)

Others maintained that the report was "comparing comprehensive American schools (schools which include students from all levels of the socioeconomic, linguistic and ethnic spectrum) with limited –population elite schools in Germany and Japan" (Pulliam & Van Patten, 1991, p. 198).

In sum, critics of the Commission on Excellence's A Nation at Risk maintained

> …the case for a serious 'decline' in American educational programs was based on …weak arguments and poor data…Neither the decline in test scores, the international comparison, nor the growth of high tech employment provided a clear rationale for reform. (Hayes, 2004, p. 47)

Despite this criticism from respected experts in the field, A Nation at Risk "drew conspicuous attention…. and spurred a series of influential state-level reform efforts… in Texas, Tennessee, North Carolina and Arkansas" (Hess & Petrilli, 2009, p. 13). Recommendations for a number of measures, like boosts in teacher pay, extending the school year and more rigid measures of teacher performance followed (Hess & Petrilli, 2009).

SETTING THE STAGE FOR "NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND": AMERICA 2000 AND GOALS 2000

Having won the 1988 election, George H. W. Bush, aspiring to be "The Education President," invited the governors to attend the nation's first summit on education in Charlottesville, Virginia. The governors agreed on the priority of establishing national educational goals which took the form of six goals, intended to be accomplished by the year 2000 (Hess & Petrilli, 2006). Collectively referred to as "America 2000," the goals demonstrated a conspicuous desire for national standards, constituting a precursor for the 2010 Common Core of State Standards (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 392–393). The goals portended to "hold national standards separate from state standards and were not to serve as an automatic (nor coerced, nor mandated) replacement for state standards" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Location 393–400).

"America 2000" avowed that by the year 2000, (1) all children would begin school "ready to learn", (2) the national high school graduation rate would reach at least 90%, (3) students would master five "core subjects" before leaving grade four, grades eight and twelve, (4) American students would "lead the world" in math and science, (5) all adults in America would be literate, as well as "prepared for work and citizenship", and (6) every school would be safe and drug-free. Bush established a National Goals Panel, responsible for tracking schools' progress toward these six goals (Hess & Petrilli, 2009).

Bush's America 2000 was eventually transformed into Clinton's Goals 2000, likewise derived from a conviction that American children were insufficiently educated, especially in the "three Rs" (Hess & Petrilli, 2009).

"Goals 2000" mandated that by the year 2000, all states would create "performance-based accountability systems" based on explicit academic standards, paired with tests that determined how well students and schools were meeting those standards (Hess & Petrilli, 2009). Moreover, "Behaviorist 'accountability' mechanisms that would assign rewards and provide for interventions or sanctions based on test outcomes" (Hess & Petrilli, 2009, p. 14) were also to be put in place. Hence, the stage was set for the eventual creation of No Child Left Behind.

Nonetheless, no means were put in place to allow the federal government to ensure that "Goals 2000" was enforced. Thus, by 1999, "…only 36 states issued school report cards; 19 provided assistance to low-performing schools, and 16 had the authority to close down failing schools" (Hess & Petrilli, 2009, p. 17).

THE EVOLUTION OF GOALS 2000: NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

An important element of George H. W. Bush's 2000 presidential campaign platform included educational reform based on national use of the standards-based accountability program from his native Texas (Hess & Petrilli, 2009). In a like-minded vein, the democratic nominee, Vice President Al Gore, maintained:

> Every state and every school district should be required to identify failing schools, and work to turn them around with strict accountability for results, and strong incentives for success. And if these failing schools don't improve quickly, they should be shut down fairly and fast, and when needed, reopened under a new principal. (Hess & Petrilli, 2009, p. 18)

A few days after he took office in January 2001, Bush sent a blueprint for his proposed educational reform, "No Child Left Behind" (NCLB), to Capitol Hill (Hess & Petrilli, 2009). NCLB was primarily intended to address the nation's "achievement gap," specifically "the disparity between the performance of white and Asian students…between African-American and Latino students…" (Hess & Petrilli, 2009, p. 24), and between "disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers" (Abernathy, 2007, p. 4). As Hess and Petrilli (2009) explain,

> In 2000, the average African-American 12th grader was reading and performing math at approximately the same level as the average white 8th grader, a fact that leaders of both parties deemed morally unacceptable and a threat to American competitiveness in the global economy. (p. 24)

Bush referred to the nation's apparent complacence over "… sustained low levels of performance among black, Latino, and poor children" as "the soft bigotry of low expectations" (Hess & Petrilli, 2009, p. 24).

Like the educational reform plan for Bush's home state of Texas, NCLB is built on four "common-sense pillars": (1) accountability for results; (2) emphasis on doing 'what works' based on scientific research; (3) expanded parental options; and (4) expanded local control and flexibility" (O'Neill, 2004, pp. 1–5).

NCLB's goal of equality in educational *outcomes* was "radical" compared to desegregation's and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's (IDEA) goals for equality in educational *access* (Abernathy, 2007). One innovation involved the creation and implementation of "…an assessment regime with significant consequences for those who fail by holding schools, local educational agencies, and States accountable for improving the academic achievement of all students" (Abernathy, 2007, pp. 3–4). Previous educational reforms like America 2000 and Goals 2000 had no provisions for the imposition of significant sanctions for schools where a significant percentage of students scored below grade average on standardized math and literacy tests (Abernathy, 2007).

These innovations derived from a conviction that "…local education politics are fundamentally broken," such that "…only strong, external pressure on school systems, focused on student achievement,[would] produce a political dynamic lead(ing) to school improvement" (Hess & Petrilli, 2009, p. 23). Ultimately, NCLB was intended to encourage superintendents and school personnel to

> take controversial and difficult steps to root out mediocre teachers and administrators, shift resources to poorer schools, challenge collective bargaining provisions regulating teacher transfer and inhibiting efforts to link pay to teacher quality, and overhaul central office processes. (Hess & Petrilli, 2009, p. 23)

NCLB's rigorous accountability requirements established it as "…the most invasive federal education policy ever in US history" (Mencken, 2009, p. 50).

The Four Pillars

Assurance 1: Accountability for Results

NCLB mandates that schools conduct annual state assessments in reading and mathematics in grades 3–8 and that those scores be made public in school and district "report cards." Fourth and eighth graders are examined on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in reading and mathematics (Bejoian & Reid, 2005).

The heart of NCLB's testing and sanctioning regime is "adequate yearly progress" (AYP). AYP is based on the results of students' scores on standardized tests administered once a year. Achieving AYP means either that a sufficiently high percentage of the students in a school or district meets the state's standards for academic proficiency or that the school or district is demonstrating, "continuous and substantial academic improvement for all students" (Abernathy, 2007, p. 5).

In addition to looking at test results "in aggregate for all of the students in a grade level," results are examined according to eight subgroups: Five involve racial and ethnic identifiers—white, black, Hispanic, American Indian, and Asian or Pacific Islander. The other three are students: (1) eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, (2) with limited English proficiency, and (3) who qualify for special education services.

For students with disabilities, achievement is measured according to the same state standards as the achievement of students without disabilities. Regarding children of immigration, any student who has been in school in the United States for at least three consecutive years is required to be measured by the same proficiency tests, even if English is not the student's first language.

Significantly, as Abernathy (2007) points out, failure in only one subgroup in one subject in one grade triggers AYP identification for that school or district. Thus, the more "subgroups" a school has, the more chances it has to fail. This means large schools with diverse populations are at a significant risk in terms of failing AYP, regardless of how the school rates in "producing high-quality educational service or how successful it is with other subgroups of students" (Abernathy, 2007. p. 6).

Consequences for schools who fail to make AYP for successive school years are as follows:

> 2 years: Identified as "in need of improvement;" school officials must develop a school improvement plan; spend at least 10% of Title I funds on professional development; allow parents to transfer their children to successful schools in the district; notify parents of their options under this plan.
> 3 years: All consequences from previous years; school officials must implement improvement plan; provide supplemental educational services for students.
> 4 years: Corrective action-this may include replacing staff, overhauling the curriculum, reducing management at the school level, hiring outside experts, or lengthening the school day and/or year.
> 5 years: Plan for restructuring – either by reconstituting school as a charter school, replacing all or most of the school personnel, contracting out for private management, state intervention or other restructuring efforts.
> 6 years: Initiate restructuring. (Abernathy, 2007, p. 8)

Assurance 2: Focus on What Works

Federal monies were to be made available for practices and programs "proven effective" through "scientific research"—for example, class-size reduction and commercially available programs. A primary element of this piece involved advancing children's math and reading performance in preschool and kindergarten through second grade. "Incentive awards" were to be granted for "teacher excellence," reflect through test score gains (Bejoian & Reid, 2005, p. 222).

Assurance 3: Expanded Parental Options

Each school served under this part shall jointly develop with parents for all children served, a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State's high standards. (NCLB, 20 U.S.C. §6318(d)) An important piece of this involves school choice, "implemented through a voucher system for parents of students attending persistently low-performing schools" (Bejoian & Reid, 2005, p. 223).

Assurance 4: Reduced Bureaucracy and Increased Flexibility

> Schools may now blend federal funds to operate school-wide Title I programs in schools whose poverty threshold is 40% (reduced from 50%). Since one of the major goals of NCLB is to allow greater fiscal flexibility, up to 50% of the funds may now be transferred among programs. (Bejoian & Reid, 2005, p. 222)

Bejoian and Reid (2005) explain the benefits of such flexibility, namely that it allows for states to locate the most suitable means for improving teacher performance. Notably, this includes removing students "perceived to be violent or persistently disruptive" (p. 222). Although this might be beneficial for student performance and for the school's overall performance, it raises questions as to the eventual fates—educational and otherwise—of such "persistently disruptive" students.

However, increased flexibility also makes it possible for schools to sponsor practices that are research-based and have been proven to be effective, for example, after-school programs sponsored by community groups. Other possibilities include having schools initiate partnerships with institutions of higher education, for example, for math-science programs.

CRITIQUES OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

Abernathy (2007) relays that "The little empirical evidence that exists on the achievement effects of NCLB is mixed" (p. 11). In March of 2005,

> 72% of school districts reported that academic achievement was improving on the state-designed tests. School district personnel uniformly reported that they were 'aligning curriculum and instruction with standards and assessment (99%) and providing extra or more intensive instruction to low-achieving students (99%). (Abernathy, 2007, p. 11)

Twenty-three states saw evidence of improvement of math and reading scores between 2001–2002 and 2003–2004. Nonetheless, "…recent year-by-year growth in student test scores had declined since NCLB was put into place" (Abernathy, 2007, p. 11). And, importantly, a national assessment report documented that "…the number of schools identified as failing has increased since NCLB" (Stullich, Eisner, McCrary, & Roney, 2006).

Other critics have pointed to "the challenges of measuring anything as complex as student achievement with any set of standardized tests - no matter how thoroughly or thoughtfully implemented" (Abernathy, 2007, p. 12). The fact that these tests and the scores students receive on them have significant consequences for school curricula, for students, and for the fate of schools in general makes this realization all the more poignant. As Abernathy (2007) notes,

> Decisions about what to include on these tests are themselves highly political and often result in watered down consensus curriculum that fails to make any real cognitive or evaluative demands on students. (p. 12)

The general concern is that "…in their single-minded desire to improve test scores, schools and teachers have damaged the breadth and quality of the curriculum" (Abernathy, 2007, p. 12).

Another problem with NCLB centers on the General Accounting Office's early finding that there was a great deal of variance in how well states were measuring academic proficiency. For example, California required that only 14% of its elementary students be proficient and Colorado required 78% proficiency in the same year (Abernathy, 2007, p. 15). Thus, as New Jersey Representative Scott Garrett noted, although NCLB was intended to raise educational standards,

> …what we've accomplished is a proverbial race to the bottom. The states understand all too well how to game the system … and they realize that if they simply lower their standards, then they could say, "Hey, we met our goal and we get our funding, and we don't have any of the additional restrictions". (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 520–525)

Thus, as Schneider (2015) points out, NCLB provided an incentive for states that once had a good standard to set that standard much lower (Schneider, 2015).

A 2012 report by FairTest, entitled "NCLB's Lost Decade for Educational Progress," recounts:

> A review of a decade of evidence demonstrates that NCLB has failed badly… It has neither significantly increased academic performance nor significantly reduced achievement gaps, even as measured by standardized exams. In fact, because of its misguided reliance on one-size-fits-all testing, labeling and sanctioning schools, it has undermined many education reform efforts. Many

> schools, particularly those serving low-income students, have become little more than test-preparation programs. After 5 years of NCLB—with its test-driven consequences—NAEP scores remained flat. (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 532–547)

Although NCLB was due to be reauthorized in 2007, in spite of the passing of several election years, legislation for reauthorization did not materialize.

Big Business Gets a Stronghold on Educational Reform—The Genesis of the Common Core

"Achieve" Establishes Itself

Business-interested parties were heavily represented at both of the above-described educational summits—George H. W. Bush's 1989 educational summit and the 1996 National Governor's Association (NGA) educational summit—that anticipated the development of the Common Core (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 577–580). The 1996 NGA summit proposed a "national nonprofit organization allied with states and business interests that could serve as a clearing house for information and research on standards and assessment tests" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 577–580). This not-for-profit "clearing house" was allowed to accept "tax-deductible donations from businesses and philanthropies with interests in influencing the development….as well as the subsequent implementation and related products of standards and assessments" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 588–589). This meant that as it collected and distributed information on educational standards and assessments, the "clearing house" was "…vulnerable to…the wishes of individuals and groups providing the tax-exempt donations it accepted" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 596–599). This clearinghouse came to be known as "Achieve, Inc" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Location 599) and eventually played a major role in the Common Core's creation and promotion (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 599–602).

Achieve's board, consisting of governors and businesspeople, was chaired by IBM CEO Louis Gerstner Jr. (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 605–606). As Schneider points out, "Notice who still is not seated among this intended decision-making group: the teacher practitioner"

(Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 607–608). At a 1995 meeting, Gerstner told governors that "an 'urgency' was placing national security squarely onto the American public school classroom, that the solution was a set of national standards" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 816–818). By way of establishing his qualifications for spearheading this work, Gerstner noted that he had "spent a lot of time on education." He continued,

> So have many of you. We all have scars to prove it…Not actual, practical, classroom-teaching 'scars.' Just those top-down, shape-the-system-from-the-outside "scars". (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 612–616)

Thus, Gerstner revealed his perspective that "running America's schools is like running a company." His statement, "But I've also spent a lot of time helping troubled companies get back on their feet" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 617–618), reflects a perception that reforming an educational system was synonymous with helping a business get back on its feet.

Making matters worse, Gerstner "…campaigned for 'a fundamental, bone-jarring, full-fledged 100 percent revolution that discards the old and replaces it with a totally new performance-driven system'" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 620–627). Frighteningly, he insisted that "all of us would be held accountable for the results. Now. Immediately. This school year" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 620–627). And then, Gerstner's crowning zinger: "We cannot be side-tracked by academicians who say it will take five years just to set the standards" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 627–629).

Clearly, from Gerstner's perspective, academicians, individuals who actually conduct in-depth, substantial research into educational issues, and policy and implementation of these have no place in this project. As Schneider notes, Gerstner's demanding "national standards 'now'" obviates his cluelessness with regard to the complexities of developing national standards; most conspicuously, that this necessitates, first and foremost, "…care in organizing teacher practitioner involvement for planning, drafting, review, testing, modification, and voluntary adoption" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 641–642).

Achieve got its foot in the door with the 2008 publication *Out of Many, One* report, focused on a "common core of standards" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 1109–1113). In this 2008 report, Achieve wrote:

> While state standards….share a common core, they are not identical… The common core discussed in this report came about organically, through action by individual states, working in their states to identify what their high school graduates need to know. The common core reflects the reality of the world—that there is fundamental knowledge in English and mathematics that all graduates must know to succeed and that is not bound by state lines—but the common core also respects the traditional role of state decision making in education. (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 1094–1100)

Thus, "Achieve set the stage for the creation of CCSS—a single set of K–12 vision for 'standards unity' across the United States" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 1613–1615). The National Governors Association (NGA), Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and Achieve's 2008 publication, "Benchmarking for Success: Ensuring U.S. Students Receive a World-Class Education," clearly set out to justify one set of standards for K-12, for all US states and territories (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 1634–1636). Here, "benchmarking" refers to "comparing standards to those of competitors—in this case, to the standards of other states and countries—and to the bottom line of assessment results" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 661–667). Achieve was careful to note that this "common" standards effort need not involve the federal government and could, in fact, be led by the states. However, also noted was that "…getting the governors of 50 states plus a number of U.S. territories…to agree on… a "common core of standards" would prove quite a feat" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 661–667).

Other Business-Oriented Parties Join the Push for the Common Core

Student Achievement Partners (SAP)

SAP was founded in 2007 by David Coleman and Jason Zimba. Coleman had started SAP "…with an eye on writing national-level standards" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 2392–2393). Coleman, having no background in classroom teaching or in writing educational standards, became recognized as the "architect" of CCSS (Schneider, 2015). He was introduced at a 2011 meeting as

> a man who has been involved in virtually every step of setting the national standards, and he doesn't have a single credential for it. He's never taught

in an elementary school…He's never edited a scholarly journal, but I think he has written scholarly papers. And a variety of other things that have, you know, everybody here has done some of, he hasn't done. (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 2433–2437)

Enter Bill Gates

It soon became obvious that the establishment and implementation of a national CCSS would cost millions, if not billions (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 1613–1615). In the summer of 2008, the President of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), Gene Wilhoit, and the national-standards-writing-company-turned-nonprofit Student Achievement Partners (SAP) founder and CEO, David Coleman, asked billionaire Bill Gates and his wife, Melinda, if they would foot the bill (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 1616–1623). Notably, the above-mentioned report, "Benchmarking for Success: Ensuring U.S. Students Receive a World-Class Education" was used as the "sales brochure" for getting Gates to invest in the CCSS (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Location 1638).

The report detailed a *standards-dependent* package of reforms in the form of five "action steps":

> 1. have states adopt "the assumed upgrade," i.e., the "as yet-unwritten CCSS" 2. bring all textbooks, digital media, *curricula, and assessments* [italics mine] in line with CCSS. 3. revise state policies" regarding teacher and administrator recruitment and preparation to reflect the human capital practices of top-performing nations and states around the world. 4. hold schools and systems accountable… to ensure consistently high performance—presumably on standardized tests. 5. use international standardized tests to "ensure" U.S. superiority to compete in the 21st century economy. (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Location 1638)

Thus in agreeing to fund this standards-dependent, 5 pack of reforms, Gates was, in effect, advocating for a common core of state standards.

THE COMMON CORE OF STATE STANDARDS APPEARS

The official push for a set of common standards came at a Chicago summit of the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State

School Officers in 2009 (Gewertz, 2015). The 1990s educational reform initiatives—America 2000, Goals 2000, and No Child Left Behind—had reputedly failed to produce any significant improvement in student achievement on standardized tests (Gewertz, 2015). Studies demonstrating that "1 in 5 college students [had] skills too weak for credit-bearing coursework" were considered by state leaders as evidence that "the K-12 system was falling short in preparing young people for the post-secondary work that leads to good jobs" (Gewertz, 2015). Employer surveys revealed "…widespread dissatisfaction with the literacy and math skills of young job applicants" (Gewertz, 2015). Anticipating the federal government's response to this situation, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) volunteered to compose national standards in November 2007 (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Location 559–560).

The 2009 meeting of the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers created "work groups," composed of university professors, leaders of education advocacy groups, and "experts" from testing companies, tasked with creating a set of common standards for K-12 aged children. Teachers of K-12 were added only as an afterthought and only in response to pressure from the teachers' unions (Gewertz, 2015). That is to say, those who worked most closely with the students for whom the standards were written were given a last minute, negligible role in deciding the criteria according to which curriculum and assessment for these students would be devised. These work groups' drafts for a set of common standards were then shared with state departments of education and other evaluation panels for review and feedback (Gewertz, 2015).

The Common Core State Standards

The end product, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), describes skills students are expected to have in English/language arts and math, at each grade level, by the time they finish high school. The standards do not outline detailed, day-to-day curriculum; rather, the CCSS provide "a broad outline of learning expectations from which teachers or district leaders craft a curriculum" (Gewertz, 2015). The English-language arts component of the CCSS emphasizes

> students' ability to read complex literary and informational texts, and cite evidence from them in constructing arguments and interpretations. It also

> envisions a new, distributed responsibility for teaching literacy, asking teachers of all subjects to teach literacy skills that are unique to those disciplines. (Gewertz, 2015)

For example, it sets out the expectation that by the end of 2nd grade, students should be able to explain how images in an informational text contribute to its meaning. By the end of 6th grade, they should be able to build a coherent analysis of a text, citing evidence to back up their arguments (Gewertz, 2015).

Existent research contended that US math curricula were "a mile wide and an inch deep"; accordingly, the (93-page long) math standards aspired toward "a deeper focus on fewer topics" (Gewertz, 2015), and on "build(ing) a coherent sequence of topics and concepts across grades." Students are expected to develop "procedural skill and fluency," as well as "mastery in applying math skills and in understanding math concepts" (Gewertz, 2015).

The official Web site for the Common Core explains the standards as follows:

> Building on the best of existing state standards, the Common Core State Standards provide clear and consistent learning goals to help prepare students for college, career, and life. The standards clearly demonstrate what students are expected to learn at each grade level, so that every parent and teacher can understand and support their learning. http://www.corestandards.org/read-the-standards/

As Porter, McMaken, Hwang, and Yang (2011) summarize,

> The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) of 2010 represent a new chapter in the 25-year history of standards-based reforms (SBR)... attempt(ing) to bring the system back to the principles of its founding—more rigorous, focused, academic content and performance expectations collectively embraced by the nation. (as quoted in Massell & Perrault, 2014, p. 197)

And

> The new standards depart significantly from existing practice, especially in their high level of cognitive demand, topical range, and curricular sequencing...their focus on depth of content over breadth...their cognitively

> demanding content (and) …their emphasis on higher-level cognitive skills such as demonstrating understanding and analysis. (Porter et al., 2011 as quoted in Massell and Perrault, 2014, p. 197)

The Common Core's official Web site maintains the standards are:

1. Research and evidence-based,
2. Clear, understandable, and consistent,
3. Aligned with college and career expectations,
4. Based on rigorous content and the application of knowledge through higher-order thinking skills,
5. Built upon the strengths and lessons of current state standards,
6. Informed by other top-performing countries to prepare all students for success in our global economy and society. http://www.corestandards.org/read-the-standards/.

The Web site further assures us:

> The standards draw on the most important international models, as well as research and input from numerous sources, including educators from kindergarten through college, state departments of education, scholars, assessment developers, professional organizations, parents and students, and members of the public. http://www.corestandards.org/read-the-standards/

And,

> Because their design and content have been refined through successive drafts and numerous rounds of state feedback, the standards represent a synthesis of the best elements of standards-related work in all states and other countries to date….http://www.corestandards.org/read-the-standards/

Finally,

> …the mastery of each standard is essential for success in college, career, and life in today's global economy. http://www.corestandards.org/read-the-standards/

In the Spring of 2009, fifty-one states and US territories signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU), committing them to the development and adoption of a common core of "internationally benchmarked"

state standards in English-language arts and mathematics for grades K-12 (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 1686–1693).

The Common Core Phase II: Development of Assessment Tools

The second phase of the Common Core involved the design of assessments aligned to the standards that would be used to determine whether students and schools were meeting the Common Core Standards. This would be followed by the design of curriculum aligned to the assessments. And hence emerged the intent to standardize curriculum (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Location 1717–1724).

In 2010, the Department of Education awarded contracts totaling $360 million to two groups—the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). In November 2010, forty-five states and the District of Columbia consented to use the assessment tools that either SBAC or PARCC were slated to design. Moreover, PARCC and SBAC expressed an intent to make the scoring systems for their assessment tools comparable, making nationwide comparisons of students' performances by state possible (Gewertz, 2015).

STATES' RESPONSE TO THE COMMON CORE

As Gewertz (2015) notes, the Departments of Education's contracting exclusively with PARCC and SBAC amounted to a "locking in of shared standards with only two, federally funded tests nationwide." This move "….deepened the perception that the 'feds' were dictating what students should learn." Opposition to this kicked in when PARCC's and SBAC's assessment tool was field-tested in 2014. Parents, teachers, and students, as well as policymakers, expressed exasperation over the realization that the tests took 7.5–9 hours, not to mention the hours of "teaching to the test" that seemed necessary to prepare student to do even moderately well. These hours, it was believed, could have been more profitably utilized to engage students in more meaningful learning.

Ultimately, when the PARCC and SBAC tests debuted in 2015, despite 45 states' having initially agreed to use them, only half of the states actually did. The rest of the states had designed their own tests or had bought off-the-shelf exams (Gewertz, 2015). Additionally, in the spring of 2015,

an "opt-out" movement emerged, in which tens of thousands of students boycotted the first administration of the PARCC and Smarter Balanced tests (Gewertz, 2015).

PROBLEMS WITH THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Educators, educational researchers, and policymakers have taken issue with a number of aspects of the Common Core State Standards. These include, but are not limited to the following:

> Flying in the face of Porter et al.'s (2011) previously cited assertion that the CCSS comprise "cognitively demanding content" and an "emphasis on higher-level cognitive skills such as demonstrating understanding and analysis, Massell and Perrault (2014) argue that the CCSS has generated instructional programs and teaching strategies that comprise anything but "more challenging academic content" and that do not encourage higher-level cognitive skills" (p. 198). Massell and Perrault (2014) maintain that this is an "artifact of the procedures states routinely use for aligning assessments with standards, and teaching strategies to instructional programs" (p. 198). Their procedures "…do not necessarily lead to a coherent sequencing of ideas" and "elude higher-level cognitive skills and academic content with both breadth and depth" (Massell & Perrault, 2014, p. 198). What they have produced instead are "… long, isolated lists of facts to be covered"; moreover, they have missed the connections between these. The result: a "mile-wide and inch-deep curriculum that standards-based reform (SBR) has struggled against since its inception" (Daro, 2011).

A second problem with the Common Core was generated by the unprecedented avalanche of curriculum and assessment resources derived from the CCSS, enabled by "new technologies that enable open-source development" (Massell & Perrault, 2014, p. 198). As O'Day (2002) explains, this created a situation in which "teachers and schools move chaotically from one demand or source of information to another, with insufficient focus and time to learn" (pp. 300–301).

A third set of problems for the Common Core stems from that fact that individuals and organizations that have no meaningful experience with education and its concomitant, historically recurrent problematic issues have managed to seize far too much power and control over the design of the Common Core. As Schneider (2015) proffers, one need

> consider the degree to which a group of predominately middle-aged, almost exclusively White male leaders (such as those who participated in the two summits responsible for initiating the CCSS)…is able to provide informed leadership regarding systems dynamics (such as those that affect minority members of society) that might complicate a seemingly clear connection between standards and assessments. (Kindle Locations 706–712)

Moreover, in 2014, the Achieve board of directors continued to consist solely of white, male members, excepting one Black member. There were no women (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 706–712).

Gates, Pearson, the CCSSO, and the Common Core

As alluded to previously, a second group—businesspeople who were interested primarily in turning a profit, not in students' learning and well-being—has enjoyed a heavy hand in the design and implementation of educational reforms in the United States in recent decades.

Speaking to the CCSSO in November 2010, Bill Gates expressed his unqualified support and obvious investment in the Common Core. He announced:

> The Common Core builds a foundation for defining and measuring excellence—and that will give traction to many reforms that follow. Others have asserted standards before, but yours are better. They are more relevant—because they're based on the knowledge and skills people need. They're clearer—so you can test whether a student knows them. And they're consistent across the states that adopt them, so educators can work together to improve our schools…. Aligning teaching with the common core—and building common data standards—will help us define excellence, measure progress, test new methods, and compare results…we will apply the tools of science to school reform…. It's implementing common core standards that will let us measure student achievement, identify great teaching, and rebuild the budget based on excellence. You can lead this change, but you can't be expected to do it alone. You'll need friends in business and philanthropy to stand with you. You can count on me. (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 3259–3265)

In February 2011, Gates paid the National Governors Association $1.3 million, directly naming CCSS in the grant explanation:

> to work with state policymakers on the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, with special attention to effective resource allocation to ensure complete execution, as well as rethinking state policies on teacher effectiveness.

Then in June 2011, Gates paid the CCSSO $9.4 million "to support the Common Core standards work." In July 2013, Gates added another $4 million "to develop high quality assessments to measure the Common Core State Standards" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 3259–3265).

In June 2012, CCSS were integrated into the Gates Foundation's funding for the American Federation of Teacher's (AFT) Innovation Fund (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 3179–3184). Gates' funding information specifically stated: American Federation of Teachers Educational Foundation, Date: June 2012, Purpose: to support the AFT Innovation Fund and work on teacher development and Common Core State Standards, and Amount: $4,400,0004 (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 3184–3214).

Nonetheless, when Washington Post Reporter Lindsay Layton asked Gates in a June 2014 interview:

> How about the…notion that because you're funding so much of the … Common Core, and charter schools, and, and the teacher evaluation… that you have become…a very powerful figure in K–12 education right now, but you're unelected. Some people say that's undemocratic. (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 3215–3218),

Gates' response was:

> We are not a factor in…those races or speaking out in those races. They'll pick … what they choose to do…Our voice is not there when the final choice is made… that's a governor, a superintendent, a school board, who decides all of that. (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 3220–3221)

Gates said this to Layton the day after he dined with 80 senators and other legislators. As Schneider notes, "It seems that he believes his dinner-time interactions with elected officials could not possibly influence their decisions on state and national education issues" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 3221–3228).

Pearson Enters the Scene

Pearson, a for-profit group with business interests in education and international media, despite its impressive history of blunders in all aspects of testing (Kindle Locations 3997–3999)—was given a primary role in the implementation and administration of the CCSS (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 1720–1722). Incorporated in 1897, Pearson operates in over 70 countries, and its services include test creation, administration, and processing, as well a teacher development and school software (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 3993–3999).

In 2009, Pearson's nonprofit branch, the Pearson Charitable Foundation (PCF) which also happens to be funded by the Gates Foundation, awarded the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), co-license holder, along with the National Governor's Association (NGA) of the Common Core of State Standards a $100,000 "grant" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 4005–4011) PCF awarded CCSSO two additional "grants" in 2010 ($340,000) and 2011 ($100,000). That is to say, by way of its nonprofit, PCF—which is primarily funded by Pearson's "for-profit" branch—and which Gates also funds—Pearson paid over half a million dollars to the CCSSO—one of the two organizations that holds the license for CCSS (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 4005–4011). The upshot: Pearson gained an unearned role and disproportionate power, not only in the assessment procedures for the Common Core of State Standards, but ultimately, in the design of a curriculum that "fits" the assessments that have been designed to measure the CCSS. And hence, another business—rather than education-oriented and qualified player—gets sentinel control over the design of Common Core Standards, tools to assess the standards, and curriculum to fit the assessments. And as Schneider (2015) laments, "The more desperate the district is for high test scores, the more likely that district will "find" the money to purchase Pearson curriculum to accompany Pearson-developed tests" (Kindle Locations 4155–4160).

Again, this power was bestowed upon Pearson despite its impressive history of blunders in all aspects of testing: design, administration, and scoring. For example, in September 2013, FairTest enumerated some of Pearson's questionable practices, testing errors, and resultant subsequent lawsuits and fines. Schaeffer documented 38 incidents, among them,

> 2000 Minnesota—45,739 misgraded graduation tests leads to lawsuit with $11 million settlement—judge found "years of quality control problems" and

> a "culture emphasizing profitability and cost-cutting"; 2012 New York—More than 7,000 New York City elementary and middle school students wrongly blocked from graduation by inaccurate "preliminary scores" on Pearson tests; 2013 New York—Pearson makes three test scoring mistakes blocking nearly 5,000 students from gifted-and-talented program eligibility. (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 4027–4044)

Moreover, Pearson offered to "help" states in determining how they would set "cut scores," that is, the scores according to which schools and students are determined to have passed or failed to meet the CCSS. In doing so, Pearson seized power in determining state passing rates—or failure rates. As Schneider (2015) points out,

> Assisting states in reducing the number of "failing" students creates yet another market for Pearson to exploit. So what if Pearson has an established record for botching the assessment process and negatively impacting the lives of thousands of students? (Kindle Locations 4155–4161)

Revealing Pearson's naked and blatant money-making orientation toward its role in educational reform via the Common Core, Freestone, one of its executives stated:

> The important point is that once we get through (the initial) period of investment … incremental revenue per student then becomes very profitable. And these are long-term contracts with high renewal rates…. As we transition from print to digital, we move from a license to a subscription selling, with revenues spread over multiple years. This reduces revenue and margin short term, but it gives us a more visible business and greater market opportunity in the long term. And as we reach scale, the benefits again are very significant indeed. (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 4226–4232)

Returning to the list of problems with the Common Core of State Standards, a fourth set of problems stem from the Common Core's involving a heavy component of "benchmarking," that is, "money-centered practice…about profits versus costs, and assets, and net worth…about assets minus liabilities" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 773–776). As Schneider (2015) points out, this practice likely construes teachers and student as "assets or liabilities—to the school's profit venture" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 773–776), not as living, breathing human beings.

A fifth problem centers on questions over whether national standards are even realistic, desirable, or feasible, for example: Is a set of standards that portends to accommodate every bit of the diversity within individuals, ethnic, religious, and cultural groups, within 50 United States, desirable or even possible? (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 702–703). Local educational agencies (LEAs) and state educational agencies (SEAs) have the most "accurate," up-to-the-moment, on-the-ground information about what individual schools and districts need in order to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of the children in those schools and districts. Thus, it is LEAs and SEAs who are best positioned to make decisions about educational reform—about how efforts and monies can best be allocated for their children, teachers, and administrators.

A final concern with the Common Core, which emerges from the above is as follows: What do standardized tests which claim to assess students' meeting of "national standards," of mastery of a universalized, "one size fits all," thus necessarily watered down, homogenized, devoid of local color and culture, curriculum, actually measure? Do they authentically measure whether students have "mastered knowledge they can translate into real-world situation?" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 866–868).

RACE TO THE TOP: AN EXTRA PUSH FOR THE COMMON CORE

As mentioned previously, in the Spring of 2009, fifty-one states and US territories signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU), committing themselves to the development and adoption of a common core of "internationally benchmarked" state standards in English-language arts and mathematics for grades K-12 (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 1686–1693). As Schneider (2015) notes, the CCSS Memorandum of Understanding (CSSO MOU)

> provided the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) with a convenient document to include as part of its upcoming Race to the Top (RTTT) funding competition—one in which states were expected to show evidence of "common standards" and associated, consortium-developed assessments in vying for possible millions in federal education dollars. (Kindle locations 1696–1703)

In fact, “the Obama administration specifically named the CCSS MOU as an acceptable verification of a state’s commitment to needed reform” (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 1696–1703).

Race to the Top appeared as a response to the realization that the precedent educational reform initiative, No Child Left Behind, had been overly reliant on achievement-based assessments and had been holding schools responsible for what happens to students, even when they were not in the classroom (Downey, Von Hippel, & Hughes, 2008 as quoted in Childs & Russell, 2017, p. 237). Moreover, NCLB’s approaches for evaluating school performance, for measuring student learning, and mechanisms for improving schooling outcomes had been found to be impractical (Manna, 2010 as quoted in Childs & Russell, 2017, p. 240). Worse, NCLB had been held responsible for creating a scenario which encouraged if not obliged states and local schools to lower standards for student performance in order to achieve “Adequate Yearly Progress,” (Childs & Russell, 2017, p. 240).

Race to the Top intended to simultaneously retain certain aspects of NCLB, for example, a focus on (1) achievement gaps related to race, (2) accountability, and (3) standards (Au, 2009) and in the meantime, put an end to the NCLB practices of

> 1. punishing schools with low test scores and 2. forcing certain subjects that are not tested, e.g. the arts, out of school curricula, and 3. forcing teachers to “teach to a test”. (Hourigan, 2011, p. 60)

The funding for Race to the Top appeared in February of 2009, when Congress signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) into law. ARRA allocated $787 billion in tax cuts and economic stimulus spending, $4.35 billion of which was earmarked for a competitive grant system (Howell & Magazinnik, 2017, pp. 502–505).

Race to the Top is structured as “a grant competition in which states and local school districts (depending on the particular grant program) are rewarded based on their reform efforts” (Hourigan, 2011, p. 61). Four areas of reform were taken up by RTTT—teacher quality, student performance, college readiness, and charter schools (Hourigan, 2011, p. 61). The plan moreover calls for increases in funds for preparation, recruitment, rewards, and retention for America’s teaching force (Whitcomb, Borko, & Liston, 2009). The announcement for the Race to the Top competition was as follows:

> **Funding Opportunity Description Purpose of Program:** The purpose of the Race to the Top Fund is…to encourage and reward States that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform; achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, improving high school graduation rates, and ensuring student preparation for success in college and careers; and **implementing ambitious plans in four core education reform areas**:
>
> (a) Adopting internationally benchmarked standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace,
>
> (b) Building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals in how they can improve their practices,
>
> (c) Increasing teacher effectiveness and achieving equity in teacher distribution,
>
> (d) Turning around our lowest achieving schools" (Overview Information: Race to the Top Fund; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2010, p. 74).

Forty-six states and the District of Columbia competed against one another in two rounds for a limited number of large one-time grants, with 12 in total winning millions of dollars for their education reform agendas (Kolbe & Rice, 2012). There were three phases of the Race to the Top competition.

As Howell (2015) explains:

> Both Phase 1 and Phase 2 included specific education-policy priorities on which each applicant would be evaluated. States were asked to describe their current status and outline their future goals in meeting the criteria in each of these categories. (p. 59)

The Department of Education offered states technical assistance workshops, webinars, and training materials, to help them in writing their RTTT applications. In addition, "nonprofit organizations such as the National Council on Teacher Quality published reports intended to help states maximize their likelihood of winning an award" (Howell, 2015, p. 16). However, it was far from clear to states how, precisely, applications would be evaluated (Howell, 2015, p. 61).

Howell, (2015) notes,

> Forty states and the District of Columbia submitted applications to Phase 1 of the competition. Phase 1 winners Tennessee and Delaware were awarded

> roughly $500 million and $120 million, respectively, (which amounted to 10 percent and 5.7 percent of the two respective states' budgets for K-12 education for a single year). (p. 60)

> In June 2010, thirty-five states and the District of Columbia submitted applications to Phase 2 of the competition. Ten winners were awarded prizes between $75 million and $700 million. (Howell, 2015, p. 61)

In 2011, Congress allotted funds for a third phase, in which only losing finalists from Phase 2 could participate. A higher percentage of applying states won in this round, but the amounts of the grants were considerably smaller, ranging from $17 million to $43 million (Howell, 2015, p. 61).

States that won Race to the Top grants were obliged to undergo rigorous monitoring, including annual performance reports, site visits, and accountability protocols. Drawing down of funds was contingent upon a state's demonstration of its ability to meet the timelines and goals it had outlined for itself (Howell, 2015).

PROBLEMS WITH RACE TO THE TOP

Howell and Magazinnik (2017) characterize Race to the Top as "one of the most ambitious and creative enterprises in the modern history of U.S. federalism" (p. 502), where "federalism" is defined as "the strategic exercise of executive powers to promote major changes in state policies" (Gais & Fossett, 2005, as cited in Howell & Magazinnik, 2017, p. 507). This characterization emerges from the fact that state education agencies (SEAs), not the federal government, have historically been organized to fulfill two primary responsibilities: (a) effectively funnel state and federal funds to local districts and schools (Turnbull & Anderson, 2012) and (b) ensure local compliance with federal education policy (Hanna, 2014, cited in Childs & Russell, 2017, p. 240).

However, during the era of No Child Left Behind, state educational agencies "sought to transition from being organized as compliance monitors to occupying roles as intermediaries and implementers of education reforms" (Reville, 2007). Race to the Top fueled this fire, in that it required states that won grants to devote a least 50% of their funds to local education agencies (LEAs) for advancing school improvement efforts. These were to include

> 1. providing direct support to schools and districts; 2. addressing the teacher and school leader labor market; 3. strengthening connections between early childhood, K-12, and higher education; and 4. creating pipelines that would lead students into science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers. (USDOE, 2013)

Failure to Demonstrate Improvement in Student Achievement

Hess reported that despite Race to the Top's efforts to spark improvements in student achievement, "Every one of the dozen states has come up short on its promises" (Hess & Weiss, 2015, p. 53). And, "As early as June 2011, the U.S. Government Accountability Office reported that the dozen Race to the Top winners had already changed their plans 25 times" (Hess & Weiss, 2015, p. 53). Moreover, as of 2015, nearly 15,000 schools were still identified as "low-achieving" (Council of the Great City Schools, 2015). Interestingly, almost 67.9% of these schools were located in urban areas (Hurlburt, Carlson Le Floch, Bowles Therriault, Cole, & Wei, 2011) that disproportionately serve students of color (Wallace & Chhuon, 2014).

Race to the Top Opens the Door for Federal Interference at the Local Level

Although RTTT portended to support state governments' independent efforts to address problems within their educational systems, in fact, RTTT grants were mostly awarded to states whose RTTT applications demonstrated a willingness to adopt specific policies for which the Department of Education and the president were advocating (Howell & Magazinnik, 2017). For example, the Department of Education maintained that ensuring schools a sufficient number of "highly effective teachers"—that is, ones whose students achieve at high rates—was key to improving student performance. Importantly, this assertion implies a presumption that teacher effectiveness can be "accurately" evaluated on the basis of "student growth" measurements, i.e., scores on standardized tests. Thus, RTTT applicants did well to include an evident espousal of the presumption that teachers' effectiveness could be "accurately" measured by their students' performance on standardized tests (Hourigan, 2011, p. 61). The ultimate consequence for states who did this was an automatic commitment and

obligation to continue the use of standardized testing, rather than their being at liberty to utilize other, more authentic means of assessment of student growth. As Howell and Magazinnik (2017) point out, by engaging in such moves "Obama and the federal Department of Education situated themselves… in a domain that historically had been the subjects of state and local control…" In so doing, they placed themselves "…in the center of [educational] legislative and administrative policymaking processes" (p. 528).

Thus, although RTTT supposedly encouraged independence at the state and local level where the design and implementation of new policy were concerned, in fact, the specific terms of the reforms were, ultimately, largely dictated by the federal government via the Department of Education. Moreover, as Haynes (2009) contends, the federal government wielded additional control over states' RTTT initiatives when it failed to award states the financial resources to build the human capital they needed to implement their RTTT goals (Center on Education Policy, 2007; Childs & Russell, 2017, p. 241; Haynes, 2009).

Another problematic issue raised by Raise to the Top centered on the following: In awarding RTTT grants based on state proposals' compliance with national standards (the Common Core), the federal government created a situation in which states are not really encouraged or frankly, not allowed, to conduct in-depth analysis of the problems within their specific states, within their specific contexts, on the micro-level of the cities, towns, and villages within which individual schools with their individual cultures, students, teachers, and administrators function. This is a set-up for failure—one cannot feasibly and effectively address issues within specific schools, within their specific contexts, without understanding the all-important structural features and details of those contexts. Firsthand knowledge of the day-to-day experiences of the students, teachers, and administrators in schools is key here. Establishment of standards for learning needs to be, to a large extent, the work of local educational agencies (LEAs), of the people who observe and participate in the day-to-day, ground level lives of the children in schools. Individuals and organizations that function on a distant, grand scale level, far and away from the schools for which they presume to create policy are in no position to do this work.

Further complicating the situation, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act had offered states monies for grant writing assistance. As Hess (2015) explains,

> The demands were so onerous that the Gates Foundation offered $250,000 grants to 16 favored states to help hire consultants to pen their grant applications. Racing to meet program deadlines, states slapped together proposals with empty promises. States promised to adopt "scalable and sustained strategies for turning around clusters of low-performing schools and clear, content-rich, sequenced, spiraled, detailed curricular frameworks." Applications ran to hundreds of jargon-laden pages, including appendices replete with missing pages, duplicate pages, and everything from Maya Angelou's poetry to letters of support for anyone who might sign a paper pledge.... As one reviewer said, "We knew the states were lying. The trick was figuring out who was lying the least. (p. 53)

Moreover, in pushing states to adopt evaluation systems that used test results to gauge teachers and to do so rapidly, Race to the Top "…ensured that many not-ready-for-primetime systems would be hurriedly rolled out" and that many policies would be poorly executed (Hess & Weiss, 2015).

Finally, chaos was created when some of these less-than-well-thought-out RTTT evaluation systems were rolled out at the same time as the Common Core and the standardized tests associated with it. The chaos resulted in backlash, including an "opt-out" movement in New York, whereby parents refused to have their children subjected to standardized testing (Hess & Weiss, 2015).

THE PLUSSES OF RACE TO THE TOP

Weiss contends that on the positive side, as a result of Race to the Top, "Forty-three states and the District of Columbia have new, higher standards pegged to college career readiness" (Hess & Weiss, 2015, p. 52). As states began to aim for higher targets, there was a simultaneous ratcheting up of proficiency bars. Weiss (2015) explains, "Virtually all (states) are replacing their old fill-in-the-bubble test of basic skills, tests that contribute to low expectations for student learning and bad teaching practices, with significantly stronger assessments" (p. 52). And

> A January 13 (2015) report from the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing confirms that the majority of questions funded by Race to the Top gauge such higher order thinking skills as abstract thinking and communication.... (Hess & Weiss, 2015, p. 52)

Moreover, "Thirty-eight states revised their evaluation of teacher effectiveness to include multiple factors, not just student test scores" (Hess & Weiss, 2015, p. 53). Weiss maintains that states that did not win Race to the Top grants, even though they applied, "…could easily have reverted to their previous educational policies…." but "…overwhelmingly chose not to" (Hess & Weiss, 2015, p. 52).

Howell and Magazinnik (2017) add,

> In the aftermath of RTTT, states aggressively enacted policies that were explicitly rewarded under the competitions….winning states adopted RTTT policies at significantly higher rates than both losing and non-applying states. And both winning and losing states were especially likely to adopt policies on which they made explicit promises in their RTTT applications. (p. 527)

In fact, "…in the five years following the RTTT competitions, states accomplished what would have taken several decades to accomplish, had they proceeded at previously established rates" (Howell, 2015, p. 62).

Howell and his research team noted that although states on average enacted about 10% of reform policies between 2001 and 2008, from 2009 to 2014 states enacted 68% of such policies (Howell, 2015). Educational reform policy adoption rates additionally increased each year between 2009 and 2014.

Weiss contends,

> RTTT helped fund a new generation of high quality, online assessment designed by states and educators to evaluate students' progress toward college and career readiness. And it helped states fund strong new curricula, instructional materials, and professional development resources tied to these new standards, all now freely available to educators across the country. (Hess & Weiss, 2015, p. 56)

And finally, as Howell and Magazinnik (2017) point out

> the policy activity spurred by RTTT constitutes a major accomplishment for the Obama administration. With a relatively small amount of money, lacking formal constitutional authority in education, and without the power to unilaterally impose his will upon state governments, Obama managed to jumpstart policy processes that had languished for years in state governments around the country. (p. 528)

THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA)

Faced with a tidal wave of criticism and pressure to rid the country of No Child Left Behind, in December 2015, the 1061-page Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law (Bellamy, 2016). Designed to go into effect in the 2017–2018 school year, the plan is portrayed as giving states "significant leeway in a wide range of areas" and scaling back the federal role in accountability and school improvement (Klein, 2016).

Although ESSA has been characterized as "a U-turn from No Child Left Behind (NCLB)" (*Education Week*, January 4, 2016), this might well be an exaggeration. States are still obliged to submit their plans for accountability to the Department of Education. Although states are now, in principle, free to define both their long-term goals and smaller, interim goals, ESSA still requires them to include (1) proficiency on tests, (2) English-language proficiency, and (3) graduation rates within these. The goals must moreover "set an expectation that all groups that are furthest behind close gaps in achievement and graduation rates." Although "Up to seven states can apply to try out local tests for a limited time, with the permission of the U.S. Department of Education," states must still test students in reading and math in grades 3 through 8. Although ESSA allows states to create their own testing opt-out laws, and states decide what should happen for schools that miss targets, the law maintains the federal requirement for 95% participation in tests. Such features clearly prevent ESSA from qualifying as "a U-turn from NCLB."

There are, however, several features that appear innovative and just might pave the way for fruitful change. For example, states must now feature "at least one additional indicator of a very different kind." Possibilities for such indicators include school climate/safety, educator engagement, student engagement, access to and completion of advanced coursework. Moreover, data on these indicators are to be included on school report cards, where they can be easily accessible to parents (Klein, 2016).

Although it is up to the states to decide how much each indicator will count, "academic factors" such as graduation rates and tests "… will have to count 'much' more as a group than the indicators that get at students' opportunity to learn and post-secondary readiness." Again, characterization of ESSA as a U-turn from NCLB is challenged. Moreover, "While districts and schools aren't required to use the information to figure out how to fix persistent problems….many will want to" (Klein, 2016).

Other persistent NCLB features include state and district responsibility for identifying "subgroups" of students, for example, English-language learners are struggling. But states must now for the first time provide test scores for certain "vulnerable" groups, including homeless children, children in foster care, and students from military families (Klein, 2016). If one of the vulnerable groups, including minority students and special education is falling behind the district must come up with an "evidence-based" plan for addressing this, to be monitored by the state.

Similarly, for schools scoring in the bottom 5% according to accountability measures, districts have to work with teachers and school staff to come up with an "evidence-based plan." These "turnaround" efforts will be monitored by the state. In schools that continue to do poorly for four years, the state will intervene with a plan of its own for improvement. The state can also take over a persistently failing school. It can fire a principal or turn the school into a charter. Districts can also provide parents with public school choice for schools that are seriously low-performing (Klein, 2016).

While states are expected to adopt "challenging" academic standards, this does not have to be the Common Core State Standards. Interestingly, "The U.S. Secretary of Education is expressly prohibited from forcing or even encouraging states to pick a particular set of standards (including the Common Core)" (Klein, 2016). This represents potential progress in granting those who work closest with individual groups of students in particular cultural contexts, those who are familiar with what the students in their schools need, with some agency in making decisions about what their students will learn. Nonetheless, as Bellamy (2016) points out, the ESSA has left control of the Common Core State Standards and hence the standardized tests "primarily in private hands: the Council of Chief State Officials, the National Governors' Association, educational service companies such as Pearson and McGraw-Hill, and the big venture capitalist foundations that provide funding and direction" (p. 6). Thus, states who do decide to continue to use the Common Core as the basis for their academic standards will, by default, continue to be subject to and feed into the inappropriate and disproportionate control that big businesses have wielded where US educational policy is concerned.

Other ideological and logistical problems persist: For example, states can include the test scores of English-language learners (ELLs) after they have been in the United States for only one year. This fails to take into consideration important factors like the child's age at immigration. As anyone

vaguely familiar with the research literature on—or with practical experience with—ELLs knows, children who immigrate at a very young age and experience second language immersion at school tend to become proficient in the second language much more quickly than do children who immigrate when they are older. Thus, a child who immigrates at, say, the age of 11 is much less likely to become English proficient within a year than would a child who immigrates at the age of 6 or 7. Hence, the requirement that the 11-year-old's test scores count toward the school's rating after a single year appears problematic. Yet another problem with test score reporting emerges in the requirement that only 1% of students can be given alternative tests. This percentage only accounts for about 10% of students in special education.

On a positive note, "the ESSA enshrines the Preschool Development Grant program in law," focusing it upon "program coordination, quality, and broadening access to early-childhood education" (Klein, 2016). Another high note is that funds are reserved for arts education and notably. But perhaps most notable, states will no longer be required to conduct teacher evaluations using student outcomes: NCLB law's "highly qualified teacher" requirement is, happily, no longer.

Universal Design for Learning

A particularly promising feature of ESSA is its advocacy for the use of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). References to UDL, "an instructional strategy that supporters think has enormous potential for reaching learners with diverse needs" (Samuels, 2016), are sprinkled throughout the ESSA. Samuels (2016) explains, "….the strategy encompasses a wide set of teaching techniques, allowing multiple ways for teachers to present information and for students to engage in lessons and demonstrate what they know." And, although

> Universal design for learning is for any student…it is seen as particularly important for students with disabilities, English-language learners, and others who might struggle with more traditional methods of teaching and testing. (Samuels, 2016)

Interestingly, "…UDL has been a defined practice since the 1990s" yet, "many people still don't have a deep understanding of the approach and

how it can work in their classrooms" (Samuels, 2016). UDL is not a prepackaged curriculum; however, curriculum developers are using it to find new ways of presenting information. Rather, UDL is "an educational process that weaves itself throughout a school" (Samuels, 2016).

UDL encourages teachers to, for example, let students.

- Complete assignments that are alternatives to traditional essays and tests, such as illustrations, songs, or PowerPoint presentations.
- Develop their own goals for learning, broken down with teacher support into short-term objectives.
- Use assistive technology such as spellcheckers, text-to-speech software, or calculators.
- Take part in self-assessment strategies such as role-playing, video reviews, and peer feedback. (Samuels, 2016)

One school official noted

> Teachers are excited about those kinds of things because they are different. They're not reading 100 essays…I've heard submission of assignments has increased as an result….teachers are learning more about their students this way… They get to see where students would prefer to put their energy. (Samuels, 2016)

In sum, the ESSA represents much less than "U-turn in the No Child Left Behind Act," hanging onto key NCLB features like the requirement for standardized math and literacy testing for grades 3 through 8, 95% school participation rates for test-taking and pre-emptory testing of English-language learners. Nevertheless, there are features which allow one to hold out hope: Key among these are the efforts to return at least some of the control over "what happens in schools" to the local and state levels. As argued previously, decisions about curriculum, assessment, and accountability for any given school or district are decisions best made by local educational agencies (LEAs), by the people who work with and observe the children in specific schools and districts on a ground level, day-to-day basis.

Also key among ESSA's promising features is its advocacy for the use of Universal Design for Learning. This move appears an acknowledgment of the importance—previously, categorically ignored by NCLB—of taking into consideration children's individual learning styles. Recognizing that no two children are alike with reference to learning styles appears a possible

first move toward having children's individuality recognized by large-scale policymakers and the policies they create. Optimistically, this might lead to children's being recognized as the social and emotional beings they are. Such recognitions could open possibilities for meaningful experiences and progress in children's schooling and achievement.

Conclusions

American initiatives for educational reforms of the past few decades have been premised on an overly general, importantly fallacious assumption. This centers on a belief that if the qualities and abilities that enable students in other countries to perform better than US students on international tests can be identified, then educational standards that can get American students to emulate these qualities and abilities can be established. Getting American students to meet these standards, it is assumed, will position them to outscore students in other nations on international tests. And this, it is assumed, will establish American superiority, in turn establishing "international economic security" for the United States (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 1678–1683).

As Schneider (2015) has summarized, the "grand flaw" of the push for a set of common educational standards for all children in all US states—and I would add, to other standards-based reforms in recent decades—centers on an "…overarching goal of directing education into the narrow, business-serving direction of knowledge and skills most demanded by higher education and employers." This has made for a situation in which "…learning for the sheer joy of learning—learning for learning's sake—" has been "…scrapped in favor of a market-serving perspective" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 900–901). Tying educational goals for children to business interests "…creates a twisted, corporate-feeding distortion" in that it sends the message that "…education is ultimately valuable only if it receives the nod of approval from business." Moreover, "Creativity, innovation, invention, risk, self-expression…are life-enriching qualities that prove difficult to benchmark—and much more difficult to measure on standardized tests" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 900–901).

Such assumptions make all too apparent, a profound lack of understanding, if not wholesale obfuscation of what meaningful, useful education involves—of what "mastering knowledge that can translate into real-world situations" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 866–868) entails.

And if students aren't being educated in a way that enables them to master knowledge and to translate that knowledge into real-world situations, then it is roundly unrealistic to expect students to become the academically proficient, imaginative, productive, idea-generating, but also emotionally competent, self-regulating individuals a nation requires in order to function effectively economically—let alone to move an economy to a new and innovative phase.

Thin, Non-substantive, Curricula

This essential belief in a more rigorous standards as the rightful source and director of educational instructional approaches has moreover led to the development and promotion of "mile wide and inch deep curriculum" (Massell & Perrault, 2014, p. 196) by Standards-Based Reformists (SBR) like Achieve, State Achievement Partners, Gates, and other advocates and architects of No Child Left Behind, the Common Core, and Race to the Top. As Tanner (2013) elaborates,

> The narrow focus of the school curriculum on academic basics at times of economic crisis is an appealing route to school reform; it is simple minded, inexpensive and perfectly suited to electronic multiple-choice testing for accountability, economy and efficiency. But aside from the modern computer technology, the retrenchment to basic academic skills is a throwback to the skill–drill–kill curriculum of the nineteenth century. (p. 5)

As Condron (2011) points out, where teachers formerly aligned tests to the curriculum, there has been an "about face": Now the standards determine the tests, and the tests, in turn, determine the curriculum. And teaching to the test becomes inevitable.

This scenario, incidentally, harkens back to a moment in 1940s America, specifically to Ralph Tyler's enthrallment with "scientific" approaches to education, derived from the notion that "knowledge" could be broken into "discrete parts"; that "standardized materials" for teaching these discretely parceled bits of knowledge could then be devised. The next step was seen to be devising standardized assessments for evaluating how well children had digested the parceled bits of knowledge (Wilgus, 2013). And hence the birth of the notion that children's intellectual and academic abilities could be (literally) chalked up to a tidy little numerical value—namely their

scores on standardized tests. And hence, in turn, the beginnings of the phenomenon of what Taubman (2017) refers to as "Death by Numbers."

Nonetheless, as Tanner (2013) points out,

> Academic success is based on multiple factors, not the least of which is the motivation of the learner to develop the powers of sustained inquiry and application. Such learning cannot be captured by the convergent thinking style of the multiple choice test, but is idea-oriented and requires hypothetical thinking, time and patience. (p. 6)

Few elements could steer learners further away from thoughtful learning that generates problem-solving and hypothetical thinking than "mile wide and inch deep" curriculum which demands a "skill-drill-kill" pedagogical approach. And the current US educational system's large-scale resignation in this regard has produced a scenario in which "the power of the learner to deal intelligently with emergent problems is diminished" (Tanner, 2013 p. 5). Although possibilities for designing tests that encourage and evaluate "emergent learning and growth in critical thinking" (Tanner, p. 5) have been established, creating a climate in which such tests may prevail to any significant degree first requires a "…radical change in the mindset of the test makers and marketers in an entrenched and influential industry addicted to the multiple-choice structure" (Tanner, 2013, p. 5).

In fact, possibilities for assessment protocols of this nature have already been described. Marzano, Pickering, and McTighe (1993) outline one such protocol in their 1993 Assessing Student Outcomes: Performance Assessment Using the Dimensions of Learning Model. Marzano et al. (1993) begin by referencing the "academic and nonacademic competencies" identified in a 1991 Department of Labor report as "necessary for the modern workplace" (p. 9). These include creative thinking; decision making; problem-solving; learning how to learn; collaboration; and self-management. They go on to describe an assessment protocol based on the "five dimensions of learning," namely (1) positive attitudes and perceptions about learning, (2) acquiring and integrating knowledge, (3) extending and refining knowledge, (4) using knowledge meaningfully, and (5) productive habits of mind (Marzano et al., 1993, pp. 1–3). As is evident from the terminology used to name the dimensions, this protocol advocates for the assessment of student abilities, qualities, and skills that sharply diverge from those assessed by standardized literacy and math tests. These dimensions moreover refer to abilities, dispositions, and habitus for learning which, if

cultivated, are likely to result in substantive, lasting, and meaningful learning—as well as an ability to continue to learn. It is doubtful the same can be said of the abilities, dispositions, and habitus for learning promoted by the use of standardized tests to assess student learning.

Standard-Based Reform's Neglected Factors: "Non-academic Attributes," Families, Socioeconomics, School Climate, and Children's Socio-Emotional Well-Being

Although academic test scores are widely considered to be a reliable predictor of children's eventual occupations, incomes, and health status (Moore, Lippman, & Ryberg, 2015), a significant amount of research likewise recognizes the pivotal effects of certain "non-academic attributes." These include "…personal attributes not thought to be measured by IQ tests or achievement tests" (p. 10) that can either undermine or positively contribute to educational achievement. In adulthood, personal attributes, in turn, can either ultimately undermine or positively contribute to an individual's potential for success in the labor market (Almlund, Duckworth, Heckman, & Kautz, 2011; Lippman et al., 2014).

Moore et al. (2015) have identified several non-academic attributes considered critical to success. These include "social skills, social competence; positive relationships with family and peers…emotional well-being," as well as "physical health and special health care needs; activities, such as sports, art, and music;…environmental stewardship" (Moore et al., 2015, p. 1). Ashdown and Bernard (2012) additionally found that children considered to be "at-risk" for academic difficulties displayed significantly lower levels of competence in the areas of confidence, persistence, and organization. And interestingly, Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1993) found that "affective…-factors had greater influence on school learning than school culture and classroom instructional methods" (Ashdown & Bernard, 2012, p. 398).

In a related vein, Cohen, McCab, Michelli, and Pickeral (2009) have pointed to the significant body of empirical research that demonstrates how a "safe, caring, participatory, and responsive school climate fosters greater attachment to school and provides the optimal foundation for social, emotional, and academic learning (Blum, McNeely, & Rinehart, 2002) and is associated with…school success" (p. 181). Moreover, "One of the fundamentally important dimensions of school climate is relational and involves how 'connected' people feel to one another in school" (Cohen et al., 2009,

p. 185). Accordingly, recent research has focused increasingly on the importance of children's attachment to "at least one caring and responsible adult" (Cohen et al., 2009, p. 185) at school.

Guhn, Gadermann, Almas, Schonert-Reichl, and Hertzman (2016) add that "Children who enter school with greater levels of adaptive behaviors such as being cooperative and helpful to others" are more likely to "develop positive attitudes toward school, adjust more successfully to school, attain higher achievement, and be more academically engaged" (Guhn et al., 2016).

Pianta, Barnett, Burchinal, and Thornburg (2009) point to the ultimate significance of the above, namely that

> Effective teaching in early childhood education requires skillful combinations of explicit instruction, sensitive and warm interactions, responsive feedback, and verbal engagement or stimulation intentionally directed to ensure children's learning while embedding these interactions in a classroom environment that is not overly structured or regimented. (p. 398)

The recent educational reform initiatives in the United States have demonstrated a wholesale neglect of the crucial role of such factors in children's academic trajectories.

REROUTING EFFORTS AND MONEY: Transforming the Obsession with Standardized Tests and High Stakes Accountability to a Focus on the General Well-Being of Young Children and Their Families

What emerges in crystal lucidity from the above is as follows: Inordinate amounts of time, energy, and dollars have been squandered on a misguided and driven obsession with pinpointing a set of national educational standards for all children in all school in the United States, regardless of the local contexts in which they and their families live their day-to-day lives. This obsession is immediately succeeded by one focused on identifying assessment tools can be "perfectly" aligned to these standards. From these assessments, it is assumed, curriculum that will assure the successful performance on the assessments, of all students, in all the nooks and crannies of the United States, can be derived. As Tanner (2013) has neatly summarized,

> The narrow focus of the school curriculum on academic basics at times of economic crisis is an appealing route to school reform; it is simple minded, inexpensive, and perfectly suited to electronic multiple-choice testing for accountability. (p. 5)

What I wish to argue here is that the architects of the above-discussed educational reform initiatives have, for decades, been barking up the wrong tree. It is not only crucial but urgent that their fixation on locating a set of ideal standards with "perfectly aligned" assessments and, in turn, "perfectly aligned" curriculum, be redirected to intense focus on research that addresses issues of children's general well-being. Particular focus needs to be devoted to research on the relationship between children's social-emotional well-being and their experiences and performance at school. The above-cited studies—Ashdown and Bernard (2012), Cohen et al. (2009), DiPerna and Elliot (2002), Heckman and Kautz (2013), Moore et al. (2015), Pianta et al. (2009), and Wang et al. (1993)—open a promising door for beginning this project. Exploration of the findings herein is likely to uncover productive and functional inroads for addressing the obstacles young children and their families encounter in their attempts to access substantive and pertinent educational experiences in schools—experiences that will encourage and position them to, in Tanner's (2013) words, "develop the powers of sustained inquiry and application," and "growth in critical thinking," to become "productive, idea-generating" individuals, as described previously. Such a move just might yield educational reform initiatives that justify the expenditure of the billions of dollars, not to mention the considerable amount of time and labor that nationally initiated educational reforms have typically, historically demanded.

As an additional step in this direction, it might be profitable to continue the efforts of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), taking a more in-depth look at "non-academic attributes," giving non-academic attributes their due weigh, and continuing to collect data on the relationship between non-academic attributes and children's educational experiences and performance. The NCES has already included several non-academic attributes—including social and emotional behaviors—in educational surveys (Moore et al., 2015). Nonetheless, as Moore et al. (2015) have pointed out, "the importance of children's relationship quality is often overlooked in national surveys" (p. 4). And as Tanner (2013) reminds us, "No education reform can succeed if the curriculum ignores or violates the psychosocial nature of the learner…" (p. 9).

Focus might likewise be profitably drawn to addressing large-scale issues of socioeconomic inequities, specifically in access to (1) quality health care for young children and their families, (2) food and housing security, (3) resources for disability within families, (4) neighborhood safety, and (5) sanitation and other elements that determine children's well-being, and their consequent ability to effectively profit from the educational experiences offered them. Additionally, as Cooper et al. (2012) point out, workplace policies in the United States are "ossified and inflexible, making it difficult for modern parents to be with their children when their children need them most" (p. 5). All of these "outside school" elements largely determine children's ability to become educationally engaged, to develop academic self-efficacy, as well as their ability to develop social skills, social competence, and positive relationships with family and peers (Moore et al., 2015).

Unfortunately, as Abernathy (2007) points out, "…the US has a very unequal and class-stratified society" (19). And "However ambitious, [educational reform initiatives] have done nothing to address…long-standing resource inequalities in the US and its educational system" (Abernathy, 2007, pp. 19–20). I would argue that such "resources" and their unequal distribution include "out of school" elements, like those named above—access to quality health care, food and housing security.

Appearing to address these issues, at least tangentially, George H. W. Bush proclaimed as his first national goal for America 2000: "By the year 2000 all children in America will start school ready to learn" (Tanner, 2013, p. 13). As Tanner (2013) notes,

> Common sense would tell us that this goal would require that no child would be living in poverty and suffering from inadequate nutrition and poor health, inadequate housing and other forms of neglect, and that all children would be growing up in a safe and nurturing environment. (p. 13)

But as Tanner (2013) further notes, "Unfortunately, the president's first national goal was never matched by the necessary programmatic plan and federal funding" (p. 13).

In fact, a 2012 report funded by the Center for American Progress entitled "The Competition that Really Matters: Comparing U.S., Chinese, and Indian Investments in the Next-Generation Workforce" found that

> More than a quarter of U.S. children have a chronic health condition, such as obesity or asthma, threatening their capacity to learn. 2. More than 22 percent of U.S. children lived in poverty in 2010, up from about 17 percent in 2007. 3. Only 11 percent of workers in the U.S. have paid family leave, making it increasingly difficult for dual-earner and single-family households properly care for children. (Cooper et al., 2012, p. 6)

Moreover, "Children whose parents were classroom volunteers and created enriching home environments were more likely to score well on aptitude tests, get a college degree, find work, and earn more money" (Cooper et al., 2012, p. 9). In the meantime, China, India, and major European countries are making significant investments in children and families while simultaneously reforming their education systems (Cooper et al., 2012, p. 9). They provide "more generous social and pro-family policies including paid maternity and paternity leave, paid child care and other government directed cash payments, and tax breaks for families with children" (Cooper et al., 2012, p. 9).

We might, for example, gainfully take note of how in the UK, universal free preschool, combined with one of the most innovative family support models in the world, has led to integrated family services and early intervention in community-based "children's centers." Begun in the late 1990s, "…these investments in early childhood and pro-family services have improved child social behavior, boosted learning skills, and promoted home settings more conducive to learning" (Cooper et al., 2012, p. 11).

The United States might moreover powerfully benefit from international models of educational programs specifically geared toward directly addressing children's socio-emotional development, growth, and health. For example, children participating in a program in schools throughout Australia, called "You Can Do It!" (YCDI), demonstrated "greater gains in their levels of reading achievement than the students in classes that did not experience the formal curriculum focused on social emotional competencies" (Ashdown & Bernard, 2012, p. 404). This curriculum additionally demonstrated notable effectiveness with children from diverse cultural backgrounds (Ashdown & Bernard, 2012).

Concluding Remarks and Implications

If educational reformists could see their way clear to questioning the appropriateness of awarding priority to the construction of a set of national standards, assessment tools "perfectly aligned" to these, and curriculum whose primary focus is to assure children's success on the assessment tools, then the existent scenario in which children are first subjected to "mile wide inch deep curricula," taught by "skill-drill-kill" pedagogies, then to standardized tests which cause them disturbing levels of emotional and physical distress just might be successfully interrupted. And as Holt (1964) has recognized, "Most children in school fail…because they are bored… because the things they are given and told to do in school are so trivial, so dull and make limited and narrow demands on the wide spectrum of their intelligence, capabilities and talents" (p. 174).

But as Cooper et al. (2012) have pointed out with brutal accuracy, "…the problems in the U.S. are not due to a lack of understanding of how to improve and focus our school system. The problems are related to the political will to do it" (Cooper et al., 2012, p. 11). More precisely, as Apple (2007) contends, currently in the United States "…any money spent on schools that is not directly related to…economic goals is suspect" (p. 196). From a neoliberal viewpoint, "As black holes, schools and other public services as they are currently organized and controlled waste economic resources that should go into private enterprise" (Apple, 2007, p. 196).

Finally, as Kozol (1985) pointed out, oh so long ago, "…the primary answers to the issues raised in "A Nation at Risk" will not come from Washington. They will be provided in our communities and neighborhoods. The enemy remains our own shortsighted sense of class advantage at the cost of national well-being…" (p. 74). This presents a clear argument for making local educational agencies (LEAs) the primary voice and ultimate decision makers, when it comes to determining what reforms and initiatives will best benefit the administrators, teachers, and children in specific schools in their districts. This is far from a new argument; nonetheless, what children have experienced in schools in recent decades as the result of the latest educational reform initiatives demands its re-iteration—loud and clear.

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PART III

Parental and Family Involvement and Investments in Young Children: Parents' Perspectives

CHAPTER 5

One Child, Only Hope? No More: The Evolution of China's Population Control Policy and Its Impact on Parenting and Childcare

Guangyu Tan

Implemented in 1979, China's One-Child Policy is one of the most significant, yet controversial, programs of planned fertility. It emerged as a panacea for the country's many pressing social problems, including population crisis, poverty, inflation, agricultural stagnation, inadequate school facilities, and unemployment (Chow & Chen, 1989). The One-Child Policy was designed to restrict population growth, thereby advancing economic prosperity in China. Since the inception of the One-Child Policy in 1979, it has allegedly decreased the total population by 400 million people compared to the population that the country was predicted to reach without the policy (Liao, 2013). This reduction in fertility has eased some of the pressures on communities, the state, and the environment in a country that still carries one-fifth of the world's population. Moreover, because of the low fertility rate, China can focus on developing its economy and raising the living standards of its people. Since 1979, an unprecedented 150 million people have been lifted out of poverty (Potts, 2006). As Greenhalgh (2003a) suggests, the One-Child Policy has served as a means for China to accelerate its industrialization and modernization, catch up with the West, and achieve its rightful place in a global stage.

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Despite these positive effects, China's one-child population policy has been highly controversial and it has been criticized by the Western world as "totalitarian," "coercive," "barbaric," and "uncivilized" (Fong, 2016; Ebenstein, 2010; Greenhalgh, 2003a; Li, 1989; Wasserstrom, 1984). While the focus of the debate is on the nature of the One-Child Policy (e.g., whether the policy is humane, or whether the policy violates the basic human rights of individual freedom), the impact of such population control program on Chinese parenting philosophy and practices is understudied. Although the Chinese government has replaced the One-Child Policy with a Universal Two-Child Policy since 2015, the legacy of the One-Child Policy, which has affected millions of people for over 30 years, continues to be of great interest (Wang, Cai, & Gu, 2012; Zhang, 2017).

This chapter begins with a historical overview of China's family planning policies, including the One-Child Policy, and the Universal Two-Child Policy, elucidating the historical, social, and political context of the implementation. It discusses the effects of the family planning policies on human capital investment. This chapter further explores how parenting philosophy, expectations, and practices have changed in response to globalization. It concludes with the findings from the current empirical case study.

Family Planning Policy: Historical and Political Context

For thousands of years, the traditional ideal Chinese family was patriarchal in authority, patrilineal in descent, and patrilocal in residence (Huang, 1982). The feudal ideology, which values fecundity and favors male offspring to maintain paternal lineages, has dominated Chinese culture and family life. It was commonly believed that the more sons one had, the more good fortune a family would have, as the old Chinese saying goes, "*duō zi duō fú* (多子多福)." Birth control was conflicted with such cultural values and thus was a foreign concept in Chinese society before the People's Republic of China was established in 1949. Soon after the founding of the People's Republic of China, improved sanitation and medicine prompted rapid population growth which was initially seen as an economic boon, after a century of wars, epidemics, and unrest. Founding father of China, Chairman Mao Zedong proclaimed in 1949, "Of all things in the world, people are the most precious." The communist government condemned birth control and banned imports of contraceptives (Fitzpatrick, 2009). Before long,

however, population growth was taking a toll on the nation's food supply. In 1955, Chinese leaders introduced the novel concept of state-controlled family planning as "an irrefutable task of the socialist state" (Greenhalgh, 2003b, p. 201). Any unregulated or unplanned human reproduction was considered anti-socialist and contrary to the fundamental interests of the Chinese state (Greenhalgh). In keeping with this idea, births were planned by the state on the basis of the collective good, and state-planned birth control has been placed at the center of China's approach to population control to this day. However, the efforts to control population growth were reversed during the Great Leap Forward movement ("*dà yuè jìn*") in 1958, which attempted to rapidly convert China into a modern industrialized state. The slogan was, "China's economy would surpass the British and catch up with the U.S.A in 10 years (*chāo yīng gǎn měi* [超英赶美])." Manpower was once again considered as an asset to economic growth.

The Great Leap Forward movement not only failed to improve China's economic growth, but also resulted in a massive famine in 1962. It was estimated that 30 million people died during that time. After the Great Leap Forward movement of 1958–1959, the Chinese government shifted its focus from overpopulation to the shortage of manpower (Freeberne, 1965). As a result, China's fertility rebounded significantly, and China's total fertility rate reached more than six births per woman in the early 1960s (Banister, 1987). Unrestrained population growth, a falling mortality rate, and concurrent improvements in health care resulted in a demographic explosion in China that taxed the country beyond its economic and political resources. China's population grew from 500 million in 1947 to 800 million in 1970, and was close to one billion in 1980—approximately 22.7% of the world's population (Rosenberg & Jing, 1996). If the trend had continued, the three-child family would have produced a projected population of 1.414 billion by the year 2000; of 2.923 billion by 2050; and of 4.260 billion by 2080 (Goodstadt, 1982, p. 39).

In response to this population crisis, the Chinese government launched a birth-control campaign from 1971 to 1979. In July 1973, the State Council established the Leading Group for Family Planning, which was responsible for calling a national birth planning conference in December that year. That conference advocated, "Later, Longer, and Fewer" advising its citizens to marry late, to have children spaced at longer intervals, and to have fewer children (Chow & Chen, 1989). The term "Later" meant late marriage requirements of 23 years for women and 25 years for men. "Longer" signified a birth planning rule of more than three years between the first and

second child. "Fewer" implied that a couple could have two children at most. This family planning campaign was successful, and China's overall fertility rate declined by half between 1971 and 1978 (Zhang, 2017).

This campaign, "Later, Longer, and Fewer," laid the groundwork for the one-child per married couple policy instituted in 1979. The One-Child Policy was also a result of the government's effort to improve population quality and individual living standards. After decades of political turmoil (especially ten years of destruction of "Cultural Revolution" from 1966 to 1976), China's economy was stagnant, and people were living with bare necessities. Determined to overcome the sluggish economic growth and low living standards, the new regime under Deng Xiaoping's leadership launched an economic reform in 1979, placing the development of "market socialism" and the transformation of China into a modern nation within decades as a top priority (Greenhalgh, 2003a). As economic goals were expressed as per capital gains, population control was the key to this new reform agenda. Muhua Chen, vice premier and head of the State Council Birth Planning Leading Group, stated,

> Under present conditions in China, whether or not to control population growth is definitely not merely a question of having fewer or more children, but a serious question related to the development of our social productive force, to the realization of the four modernization, to socialist construction, and to the strategic transition to communism. (Greenhalgh, 2003b, p. 203)

Between the mid-1970s and early 1980s, discursive elements from various sources were drawn and elaborated into a complex conceptual framework that served to legitimize and, later, in the 1980s and 1990s, guided the enforcement of the One-Child Policy. This discourse established the basic goals, rationale, and measures of birth planning and control. The One-Child Policy generally allows one child per couple under normal circumstances (Yang, 2007). However, depending on the provincial economic development, population size, location, and to some extent, fertility desires, the One-Child Policy has varied at the provincial and local levels. To battle the patriarchal belief of "the more sons, the better," the Chinese government offered four major rationales for planned fertility and few children: better health care for both children and mothers; better social conditions for raising future generations; increasing work efficiency and political awareness; and promoting gender equity (Huang, 1982).

With the introduction of the One-Child Policy, the Chinese government undertook tremendous efforts and a number of measures, including education, persuasion, and media promotion coupled with economic rewards or sanctions (Chow & Chen, 1989; Greenhalgh, 2003a; Huang, 1982; Rosenberg & Jing, 1996). Government policy emphasized education about modern methods of contraception, eugenics, maternal care, and childcare. Furthermore, the government dispensed free birth-control pills and devices and legalized abortion. Couples who complied with the mandate would receive an honorary certificate along with monetary awards and privileges such as extended maternity leave, free nursery care, free medical care, and special access to education and job opportunities (Chow & Chen, 1989; Rosenberg & Jing, 1996). Parents who violated the One-Child Policy were severely penalized or disciplined with economic sanctions commonly known as "social compensation fee [SCF]." Those unable to meet the state mandate of "one child per couple" were liable to forfeit their social benefits (Chow & Chen, 1989; Huang, 1982).

Enforcement of the One-Child Policy wavered in the mid-1980s, as resistance to the policy, particularly in the rural areas, grew stronger. Given the practical difficulties, the central government relaxed the policy to make it more feasible in the rural areas during 1984–1985. A list of the 14 types of cases eligible for second-child permits was drawn up, with the most important rule being that rural couples with only one daughter could have a second child. China's fertility rebounded considerably from 1984 to 1986. In 1986, the State Council reiterated the One-Child Policy and re-tightened the policy across the country. As a result of the One-Child Policy, the total birth rate decreased from 2.9 per mother in 1979 to 1.7 per mother in 2004, with a rate of 1.3 per family in urban areas and just under 2.0 per family in rural areas (Hesketh, Li, & Zhu, 2005). Moreover, the policy is estimated to have reduced the total number of births by over 400 million since 1979 (Zhang, 2017); however, the impact of the One-Child Policy is beyond population control. It has far-reaching effects on Chinese social structure, women's rights in production and reproduction, children's development and well-being, and parenting philosophies and practices in China. It is beyond the scope and purpose of this chapter to discuss all of the impacts of the One-Child Policy, and therefore, the following section will focus on the effect on parenting philosophies and practice in changing China.

One Child, Only Hope: The Investment in Human Capital

Since its implementation in 1979, the One-Child Policy (dú shēng zǐ nǚ zhèng cè, 独生子女政策) has been criticized for its human cost, such as forced late-term abortion and sterilization, increasing gender ratio imbalance, and aging population (Fong, 2016).

However, it is undeniable that the One-Child Policy (OCP) has dramatically decreased the number of Chinese population. Liao (2013) estimated that the One-Child Policy has prevented about 400 million births in three decades. As a result, the quality of its people, measured by health, education attainment, gender equality, and human capital investment, has increased. According to Becker and Lewis (1973), the trade-offs between quantity and quality of children were predictable and causal. Holding the family resources constant, the increase in quantity of children will result in a decrease in available resources allocated to each child and thus reduce the quality of each child. This is referred to as a "dilution effect" (Blake, 1989).

A substantial empirical literature has examined Becker and Lewis' framework of quantity–quality (Q–Q) trade-offs. Earlier evidence consistent with such trade-offs had been found in a variety of settings (e.g., Blake, 1981 and Hanushek, 1992 in the United States; Knodel & Wongsith, 1991 in Thailand; and Rosenzweig & Wolpin, 1980 in India), suggesting that fertility decline can be an important precursor of better access to health care (Bredenkamp, 2009; Zhong, 2014), increasing investments in children's human capital, such as their educational attainment. More recent studies in other contexts have confirmed such relationships in developing countries such as China (Qin, Zhuang, & Yang, 2017; Rosenzweig & Zhang, 2009), South Korea (Lee, 2008), and Costa Rica (Li et al., 2014). Li, Dow, and Rosero-Bixby (2017) even expanded these results to 48 countries in Latin America and Asia. Their study provided overwhelming evidence of a negative association between the number of siblings of a child and his or her educational attainment. Li et al. (2017) found children in larger families were less likely to have any secondary education in a variety of countries in Asia and Latin America. One additional sibling in the family reduced the probability of secondary education by an average of 6 percentage points for girls and 4 percentage points for boys.

One unintended Q–Q trade-off unique to Chinese social context, however, is the empowerment of girls and improved gender equality (Bian,

1996; Fong, 2002; Lee, 2012; Tsui & Rich, 2002; Veeck, Flurry, & Jiang, 2003). The following section will discuss the impact of reduced fertility (quantity) on children's quality, measured by parents' human capital investment in children's education, as well as empowerment of girls and improved gender equality.

One-Child Policy and Human Capital Investment

Then, One-Child Policy has a great impact on how much parents invest in their children's human capital, measured by education attainment. Parents make strategic decisions on their investment in children as an old-age security. According to Confucianism, the dominant philosophy in China, *xiao* (孝) or filial piety is the root of all virtues. The practice of honoring parents, including providing material means of supporting them in old age, is therefore inextricably ingrained in the moral fiber of Chinese society (Ho, 1996). However, taking care of the elderly has become more than just an informal social norm since 1950s when Marriage Law of 1950 and Chinese Constitution of 1954 have formally codified it as a legal obligation for children. The revised Marriage Law of 2001 further emphasizes this responsibility and endows elderly parents with the right to sue children for support if they fail to provide assistance (Ren & Yang, 2015). Therefore, family has always been the primary care provider of the nursing needs and financial support for the aging parents. Parents invest in children and in return, the children, particularly the sons, are supposed to take care of the parents when they grow old. This Chinese parental philosophy is reflected in the old saying, "yǎng er fánglǎo 养儿防老." The traditional role of family in eldercare, however, is fraught with new challenges, due to the lower fertility rate and greater labor mobility. Before the One-Child Policy, parents could rely on multiple children for eldercare. Since the implementation of OCP in 1979, most parents have only one child, who becomes their only hope to carry on family lineage and to care aging parents and grandparents. Not surprisingly, parents would invest more in their singleton child.

In an early study, Bian (1996) investigated how the One-Child Policy affected Chinese parents' monetary investment in children's human capital in three provinces and the capital city of Beijing. Based on the quantity–quality (Q–Q) interaction model (Becker & Lewis, 1973), Bian used the Chinese Children Survey of 1990 to examine how Chinese parents invested differently in their children, depending on a child's gender, birth order, family structure, and residence locality. Results indicated that the number

of children in a family was negatively related to the parents' total monetary investment, child expenses, and total child expenditure in the family income. Echoing Bian's results, Lee (2008) argued a smaller number of sibling size had positive effects on per child investment in education. She found that between 1981 and 2001, the fertility rate decreased from 2.6 to 1.3, due to the One-Child Policy, whereas the per child investment in education in terms of the proportion of the total household expenditure increased fourfold for the same period.

More recently, Zhu, Whalley, and Zhao (2014) estimated parents spent about 23% of household income on childcare and 32% on education. To enhance their only child's labor and marriage market competitiveness, parents also spend more on hiring private tutors and enrolling their children in extracurricular activities, such as piano lessons, dance, chess, and English. In recent years, overseas summer camps have gained popularity among middle and upper class in China. The most popular destinations are mainly English-speaking countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, or the UK. Although the prices vary, depending on the destination and the duration of the program, these trips cost around 20,000–30,000 RMB (or US3000–4500) (Xin, 2017). An article titled "*A Monthly Salary of 30,000 RMB (or $4500) Is Not Enough for a Child's Summer Vacation*" ("月薪三万, 还是撑不起孩子的一个暑假") has gone viral on Chinese social media, describing how a mom with a well-paid job hardly earns enough money to pay for her 5th grade daughter's summer vacation in Guangzhou City. The extravagant summer programs highlighted in the article include a ten-day study tour through the United States, a daytime nanny, piano lessons, swimming classes, and summer classes in English language, Olympic maths, and writing. In total, the mother spent at least 35,000 RMB (or about US $5240) on her daughter's summer vacation. The reason behind parent's heavy human capital investment is because they firmly believe that they should never let their only child lose at the starting line (shū zài qǐ pǎo xiàn shàng 输在起跑线上) (Xin). In addition to the investment in extracurricular activities, there is a new trend of parental investment in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) classes. As a result, China's STEM learning industry is projected to reach 15 billion dollars in 2020 (Chen, 2016).

In terms of human capital return measured by educational attainment, Rosenzweig and Zhang (2009) found in both urban and rural settings, singleton children were more likely than twins to attend school longer and to enter college. The urban sample indicated that doubling family size

reduced the expected probability of attending college by 14% and years of schooling by 4.1%, respectively. The rural sample suggested that decreasing family size by 50% would increase the probability of college attendance by 6–27% and schooling progress by 4.6–13%, implying elasticities of educational outcomes with respect to family size of between 12–54% and 9–26% (p. 1170).

Along the same vein, Zhu, Whalley, and Zhao (2014) argued that the One-Child Policy (OCP) promoted the accumulation of human capital and increased per capita outcome.

> All estimates show that the output and human capital in 2025 would be significantly lower without OCP. If OCP weren't implemented, the output in 2025 would decrease by 9.13%, 4.41%, and 2.17% under different estimates. The decrease in human capital would be much bigger, which reached 17.43%, 8.63%, 4.29%, respectively. Taken together, the results indicate that young adults will increase the investment in their children's education and then the future human capital when the OCP comes into effect. To ensure their retirement consumption, the more strictly the policy is implemented, the fewer children young adults will have and the more they will invest in their children's education. The behavioral response of substituting quantity with quality (education) will offset the OCP's negative influence on output. (p. 282)

Ren and Yang (2015) acknowledged the increase in parental human capital investment in children's education as a result of reduced fertility rate; however, they argued parents' motivation was altruistic, rather than the traditional belief of filial piety or an old-age security. With pension expansion and medical reform of 1997, parents do not have to depend on their children for monetary support and elderly care, although it is common for elderly to co-reside with their children or live in close-by community. In spite of the motivation, parents have invested more human capital in their children and thus improved children's quality (Li et al., 2017; Li & Zhang, 2017; Qin et al., 2017). Girls, particularly girls in the urban settings, are the biggest beneficiary of the One-Child Policy.

One-Child Policy and Gender Equality

One unintended outcome of the One-Child Policy was the improvement of women's status in the family as well as in the society. China has been influenced by a patriarchal ideology rooted in Confucianism that has deemed

women inferior to men and limited the role of women to their households. According to Confucianism, women had to obey their fathers and brothers before marriage; obey her husband and in-laws after marriage; and obey her sons after her husband died. This was so-called three obediences or *sān cóng* (三从). Parents considered educating women as a waste of family resources. These ideologies, together with China's labor-intensive agricultural economy, convinced parents that investing in daughters was a waste of money (Tsui & Rich, 2002). As a result, parents usually placed higher value on sons than daughters. In addition, the traditions of co-residence with sons and son-dominated old-age care also prompted parents to invest in sons as long-term insurance (Hannum, Kong, & Zhang, 2009). The gender bias has led to inferior intra-household status for daughters and, consequently, to the biased allocation of household resources. The huge gender gaps in the literacy rate and educational attainment were examples of the consequences of such gender bias. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, gender inequality has been reduced due to the government efforts to educate and empower women. In the late 1970s, several institutional changes further improved the status of women. The market-oriented economic reform beginning in 1978 transformed China's economy from an agricultural economy to a manufacturing- and service-based economy, creating a large number of employment opportunities for females, particularly educated females. This change in gender-specific labor market conditions improved the intra-household status of women and inspired more investments in the schooling of girls (Lee, 2012). Women are empowered to transform the social relationship from a traditional patrilineal, patrilateral, patrilocal to bilineal, bilateral, and neolocal ones (Fong, 2002).

Another institutional change in the late 1970s that has improved the status of women and narrowed the gender gap is the One-Child Policy (OCP), because it has reduced women's reproduction burden, entailing fewer responsibilities in childcare, and thus indirectly providing the possibility for women to pursue more employment and education opportunities (Liu, 2016). Lee (2012) argued that the OCP had inadvertently improved the status of female children and enhanced their share of intra-household resources, thereby contributing to greater equality between the genders. Since the implementation of the OCP, most parents were allowed to have only one child, and thus, parents have no choice but treasure the only child regardless of his or her sex. Therefore, singleton girls may receive more resources, parent attention, and education opportunities and enjoy better

intra-household status than they would have experienced in the presence of other siblings, particularly male siblings (Fong, 2002).

Along the same line, Tsui and Rich (2002) argued that the One-Child Policy, along with the rapid social and economic development in China, contributed to greater equality between the genders. Drawing on data from 1040 only child girls and only child boys in the eighth grade in Wuhan city in China, Tsui and Rich explored the impact of gender on parental expectation and investment in their singleton children's education, children's own educational aspirations, and mathematics performance. Contrary to the known intra-family discrimination against girls commonly found among families of pre-one-child generations and still common among contemporary rural families with more than one child, Tsui and Rich found there were no gender differences related to education between single-girl and single-boy families in modern urban China. Moreover, they found equally high educational aspirations and similar mathematical performance for male and female only children.

As an unintended outcome of the One-Child Policy, singleton girls are empowered by the support of parents with no sons to favor, and they are able to defy detrimental norms and take advantage of the education opportunities, making strides in gender equality. According to the Report on China's Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2000–2015) published jointly by China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UN presence in China in July 2015, China has achieved gender equality in primary and secondary school education. Literacy rate for young females aged 15–24 reached 98.5% in 2000 (The World Bank, 2019).

In addition, the gap between boys and girls in terms of the years of basic education was narrowed from 1.3 years in 2000 to 0.8 years in 2014. Not only have girls participated more in basic education, but also they have outperformed their male peers in academics and higher education enrollment. By 2017, females surpassed males in tertiary enrollment (56.2 vs. 46.4%). Furthermore, more women choose STEM in college. For example, there are over 21 million women working in science and technology areas, making up around 40% of the total number of Chinese workers in those fields (Xinhua, 2015).

Despite the intended and unintended benefits (controlled population growth, reduced poverty rate, improved gender equality), the One-Child Policy has long-term impacts. After three decades of strict population control, China is facing the challenges of irreversible population aging, labor shortage, and economic slowdown and stagnation (Cai, 2010b). Due to

the drastic decline of fertility and mortality rate as well as the increased life expectancy, China has become the largest aging nation with population over 60 years old. In 2015, its population aged 60 or older was 209.2 million, accounting for about 15% of the total population. This proportion is expected to reach 358.1 million or 25.3% of people by 2030 (Global Age-Watch Index, 2015). As a result of the aging population, China may face a severe labor shortage as early as 2021. With the expanding aging population and shortage of labor force, China's economy has dramatically slowed down. The economy grew 6.9% in the second quarter of 2017, which was the slowest in 26 years (Reuters, 2017). If this trend continues, China may be at risk of its own version of financial meltdown, like the 2008 financial crisis that plunged the United States and EU to recession (Gough, 2016).

Ending of the One-Child Policy and the Beginning of Universal Two-Child Policy

Under such pressure, Chinese government has started reviewing and revising the One-Child Policy. Changes came in 2007 and the process of phasing out of the One-Child Policy took three steps. It began in 2007, all provinces (except Henan, which followed in 2011) had started to permit couples who were both only child to have two children (Zeng & Hesketh, 2016). In November 2013, a relaxation of the One-Child Policy was announced at the 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee. The new provision, entitled dān dú èr hái (单独二孩), gave permissions to couples to have a second birth if one of the spouses was a single child. The third phase allowed all couples to have two children, marking the end of the One-Child Policy and the beginning of a new era of Universal Two-Child Policy (Wang, Gu, & Cai, 2016). The objectives of the Universal Two-Child Policy are "to promote long-term balanced population development, help to optimize the population structure by increasing labor supply and slowing down population aging, to promote sustainable economic and social development and ultimately achieve the goal of a moderately prosperous society and social harmony" (Xinhua, 2016).

Universal Two-Child Policy (UTCP) is the Chinese government's emergent response to the aging population, labor shortage, and economic slowdown caused by the One-Child Policy. However, this effort may come too late, as Wang et al. (2016) argued, "The Chinese public has been thoroughly indoctrinated by the Malthusian fear of unchecked population growth and by a social discourse that has erroneously blamed population

growth for virtually all of the country's social and economic problems" (p. 48). As a result of such indoctrination, parents gradually came to the politically conscientious and finally embraced the One-Child Policy (Greenhalgh, 2012). Moreover, researchers contend that low fertility is more of a personal choice based on individual's socioeconomic status than of the consequence of the One-Child Policy (Attané, 2016; Cai, 2010b). Fertility intention is associated with the economic, social, and cultural environment with which the fertility awareness is cultivated, including family needs, motivation, intention, and preference (Xu et al., 2017). Thus, the Universal Two-Child Policy may not be enough to give a new impetus to fertility and to overcome the above-mentioned challenges.

There are limited data on the UTCP, since it was only adopted in 2016. However, the available statistics indicate that the relaxation of the One-Child Policy since late 2013 did not achieve great success in population growth. By the end of 2014, among the approximately 11 million couples who were eligible for a second child, only 1.07 million or less than 10% had filed a request for permission to have a second child. In September 2015, the number increased slightly to 1.76 million or 16% of eligible couples who took advantage of the dān dú èr hái (单独二孩) policy (Attané, 2016).

Xu et al. (2017) identified a few determinants for second birth, including the mother's education and family income. They found the better educated the mother was and the more family income the family had, the less likely the family would have a second child. The findings are in line with the survey results that indicate couples in more developed metropolitan cities are less likely to have more than one child, if any at all. In Beijing, for example, a survey by the Municipal Bureau of Statistics had shown that while 37.7% of couples wished to have two children, only 9.6% of eligible couples filed an application to do so between February 2014 and September 2015. In Shanghai, fertility remains extraordinarily low at 0.7 children per couple in 2014, despite the government's active effort to encourage couples to have a second child since 2009 (Attané, 2016). Therefore, it is projected that the population increase under the new Universal Two-Child Policy will be relatively small, peaking at 1·45 billion in 2029, and the effects of the UTCP on the shrinking workforce and rapid population aging will not be evident for two decades (Zeng & Hesketh, 2016). Nevertheless, the new Universal Two-Child Policy will have long-term effects on fertility, population aging, workforce and economic development, sex ratio, health and health system, natural resources and environment, and others (Zeng & Hesketh, 2016).

The potential effects of the Universal Two-Child Policy on fertility may be minimum to moderate, due to the high cost of raising children, especially the investment in education, the preferred lifestyle, and women's career. Zeng and Hesketh (2016) projected that the total fertility rate would rise from current 2.01 in rural areas to 2.15 or 7% increase, and 1.24 in urban areas to 1.67 or 35% increase in the next decade. The combined rural–urban total fertility rate was 1.2 in 2010 and is estimated to be 1.81 in 2030 (Zeng & Wang, 2014). The modest increase in childbirth will not immediately ameliorate the problem of aging population; however, the problem will be more severe if the One-Child Policy remained unchanged. Zeng and Wang applied a ProFamy extended cohort-component model to project the population growth trend. They estimated that if the One-Child Policy remained unchanged, the proportion of the elderly people aged 65 or older in 2050 and 2080 would be 28.6 and 37.2%, respectively. However, with the implementation of Universal Two-Child Policy, the proportion of elderly aged 65 or older would be estimated to be 25.9% by 2050 and 31.2% by 2080. Moreover, Zeng and Wang projected that the challenge of aging population in rural China would be more daunting than in the urban area, due to urbanization and internal migration. It is estimated more than twice as many as elders aged 65 or older would reside in the rural areas than in urban areas in 2050, and the proportion of elders living in empty-nest households in rural areas in 2050 would be considerably more than twice as high as that in the urban areas (Zeng & Wang, 2014, p. 263).

Universal Two-Child Policy would not boost labor force in a short term; however, it is projected to ultimately lead to substantially larger workforce. If the One-Child Policy (OCP) were to continue, the working-age population aged 18–64 would quickly shrink from 910 million in 2030 to 730 million (or 20% decrease) in 2050 and 470 million (or 48% decrease) in 2080 (Zeng & Wang, 2014). Furthermore, under the OCP, the proportion of "old workers" aged 55–64 among the total working-age population would rise quickly from 16.4% in 2010 to 25.2% in 2030 and 29.7% in 2050. In contrast, under the Universal Two-Child Policy, workforce is estimated to increase by 30 million in 2040, 60 million in 2050, and over 200 million in 2080 (Zeng & Wang, 2014).

In addition, the Universal Two-Child Policy is projected to make significant contributions to reducing the sex ratio at birth (SRB) in China, although it may not normalize it for many years to come. As discussed earlier in this chapter, because of the tradition of son-preference and the One-Child Policy, there has been an imbalanced SRB. For example, the

2000 census data show that in areas with a strict One-Child Policy, the SRB was as high as 125 (Zeng & Hesketh, 2016); however, after the relaxation of the OCP in 2013, the national SRB dropped to 105 in 2015, with the highest of 120.43 in Tianjin and the lowest of 100.45 in Liaoning (China Statistical Yearbook, 2016).

The Universal Two-Child Policy may have other effects on health, healthcare system, and environment and resources; however, the policy has only been implemented for a few years, and it is too soon to judge its effectiveness in solving the acute problems caused by the One-Child Policy.

Competition: From Global to Local

China's family planning policy has lasting impact on the population growth and labor force. Labor shortage has resulted in higher demand for workers and thus a higher pay demand from the workforce, which combined post-challenges to China's role as the workshop to the world. Some labor-intensive industries, such as textile and garment makers, are forced to move to neighboring nations, like Vietnam. In addition, China lags behind other nations in density of automation usage. For instance, currently, the density of automation usage is 68 robots per 10,000 industrial workers, compared with 631 bots for every 10,000 manufacturing staff in South Korea, 488 robots per 10,000 workers in Singapore, 309 robots per 10,000 workers in Germany and Japan, all have higher densities of automation than China.

This does not bode well for China's economic growth prospects and will impact China's global competitiveness. To solve the problem of labor shortage, China has launched "Made in China 2025" initiative, focusing on innovation and investing more in automation and robotic technology as well as other strategic industries, including artificial intelligence (AI), aviation, transportation, new materials, new generation information technology, agricultural equipment, bio-medicine, and green energy. For example, the Guangdong provincial government offered 943 billion yuan or 139 billion US dollars in subsidies between 2015 and 2018 to help local manufacturers automate. In Zhejiang Province, local authorities have set aside 800 billion yuan or nearly 120 billion US dollars to spur 36,000 enterprises to automate or develop robotic technology by 2020 (He & Chen, 2018). Under this ambitious multi-billion dollar top-down approach, the number of industrial automations operating in the country is estimated to expand tenfold to 1.8 million robotic units by 2025, among which 70% would be "Made in China" (He & Chen, 2018). It is projected that China's gross

domestic product (GDP) will be boosted by 20% in 2030, replacing over 112 million workers (Mankiya et al., 2017; Wood & Pak, 2018). China's labor market must be well prepared to adapt to challenges brought by the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation. Thus, work must shift from being labor-intensive to innovation-driven. Repetitive work will be replaced by AI and robots.

To meet the challenges and to transition labor force from predictable and repetitive physical activities to more creative and innovative, government must invest in human capital, starting from early childhood care and education. The current education system that focuses on standardized testing and drill, remote memorizing will fail to prepare the next generation for the AI-dominant workforce. The skills needed for the future jobs are social and emotional skills and more advanced cognitive skills, such as problem-solving. In such a social and cultural context, how has Chinese parenting changed? That is the central question that the following sections tend to answer.

Chinese Parenting Practice: The Concept of *Guan* (管) and *Guan Jiao* (管教)

The concept of *guan* has evolved from the basic relationships and virtues defined by Confucianism, especially the virtue of *xiao* or filial piety. In the hierarchy *fu-zi* or father–son relationship, parents have absolute power and control over the children. The subordinate children are required to display loyalty and respect to the parents and the elders, who are supposed to responsibly and justly govern, teach, and discipline (Chao, 1994). In the process of *guan* or control, parents cultivate and reinforce a high standard of conduct to ensure the familial and societal goals of harmony and the integrity of the family (Lau & Yeung, 1996).

Chen-Bouck, Duan, and Patterson (2017) expanded the meaning of *guan*. Through interviews with 22 middle-class mothers and their adolescent children, Chen-Bouck et al. found that *guan jiao* (管教) was adopted by modern, urban moms, who not only control their children's behaviors, but more importantly reason with the child, explain the consequences of the behavior, and guide the child to behave appropriately through modeling. Chen-Bouck et al. found urban parents believe their own actions and behaviors have great influence on their children, and consider modeling the desired behavior a more effective way to teach children than simply control them. Another unique parenting practice in China is for parents to utilize

xiu chi (羞耻) or shame as a mechanism of socialization. When a child does something wrong, the parents would shame or humiliate the child publicly. In addition to humiliation, shaming contains the elements of expressions of disappointment, warnings of punishment, and anger intonations that center on child's inferiority and shortcomings (Yu, Cheah, Hart, Sun, & Olsen, 2015). By inducing shame felt by the child, shaming draws children's attention to how inappropriate their behavior or performance is in comparison with their peers and/or with referent group norms and expectations (Fung, 1999). Thus, shaming helps parents socialize their children to be attuned to how others view them, so that they will be more likely to behave in culturally appropriate modest, tactful, and respectful ways (Chao & Tseng, 2002; Fung & Chen, 2001).

The importance of shame in Chinese culture is reflected in its emphasis on face or *mian zi* (面子), criticism, and evaluation in interpersonal relationships (Gabrenya & Hwang, 1996; Ho, 1986). The notion of *Xiu chi* (羞耻) or shame has deeply rooted in Confucianism. Confucianism is oriented toward shame through its emphasis on social norms and its reference to moral ideas as models of behavior. In this tradition, a virtuous man often means a man who knows shame (Fung, 1999). Therefore, in Chinese culture, children at young age "are strongly socialized to be aware of what others think of them, and are encouraged to act so as to maximize the positive esteem they are granted from others, while trying to avoid incurring their disapproval" (Schoenhals, 1993, p. 192). For example, Shaver, Wu, and Schwartz (1992) found Chinese children acquire shame-related terms earlier than American children. When mothers of preschoolers in mainland China and the United States were asked to report which emotion words their children learned the earliest, 95% of the Chinese mothers claimed that their children understood *xiu* (shame or shyness) by age three. In contrast, only a small number of American mothers reported that their three-year-olds could understand embarrassed (16.7%) or ashamed (10%) (pp. 197–199). Along the same lines, Miller (1992, 1995, 1996) found that the use of narratives as a didactic resource to enforce sensitivity to shame has started by age two and a half in Taiwanese families. Other examples of shaming behaviors include guilt-laden warnings of punishment, turning the whole body away from the child, making unfavorable comparisons to the child's peer or sibling or explicit statements about being disappointed, embarrassed, and ashamed of child misbehavior (Losoncz & Tyson, 2007).

Although generally shame is viewed as negative in Western accounts of parenting, in China it is seen as serving an important moral function

in teaching children to pay attention to social norms and requirements and to internalize these perspectives to regulate their behavior. Moreover, Fung (1999) contended that even though, on the surface, shaming was filled with threats of ostracism and abandonment, what the Chinese parents intended to do was to transmit the cultural values of discretion shame, therefore protecting the child from disgrace shame, particularly from being condemned by people outside the family, or by society in general. In other words, parents engaged in shaming for the purpose of teaching children how to be part of society, to include them rather than to set them apart.

Shaming is only one of many disciplinary measures routinely practiced by Chinese parents. Other methods include guilt induction and love withdrawal. Yu, Cheah, Hart, Sun, and Olsen (2015) defined guilt induction as a mechanism of parental control that centers on pointing out how the child's misdeeds have affected others, including parents, by arousing feelings of guilt, thus helping children acquire empathy and become more sensitive to the thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of others (p. 286).

Barber (1996) defined love withdrawal as a discipline method that involves the manipulation of the love relationship between the parent and the child as a means of controlling child behavior (p. 3297). More recently, Yu et al. (2015) conceptualized love withdrawal as a "love-oriented" method of child-rearing, which focuses on manipulating feelings of parental acceptance by the threat of or actual temporary withdrawal of love and attention, to correct children's misbehavior in order to increase the likelihood of compliance to parental and societal demands (p. 286).

In addition to above-mentioned psychological controlling (such as shame, guilt induction, and love withdrawal), some Chinese parents also discipline their children by harsh corporal punishment. Corporal punishment is defined as "the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain, but not injury, for the purpose of correction or control of the child's behavior" (Wang & Liu, 2013, p. 1130). Traditional Chinese cultures tend to interpret corporal punishment as an indication of parental involvement, concern, and love, as indicated by the Chinese saying, "*Dǎ mà shì ài de xiàngzhēng* (打骂是爱的象征)" or tough love (Chao, 1994; Simons, Wu, Lin, Gordon, & Conger, 2000). It is not uncommon for Chinese parents to adopt corporal punishment as a means to assure their children to comply to the authorities and to achieve high academic, social, and moral goals as well as the culturally valued goal of *xiao* or filial piety (Chao, 1994; Lin & Fu, 1990; Tang, 2006). For instance, in a community study on parenting in Hong Kong, Tang (2006) interviewed 1662 Chinese

parents and found 57.5% of the parents used corporal punishment. Along the same line, Wang and Liu (2013) surveyed 2615 Chinese families with at least one child between the ages of 3 and 15 years in a urban setting in mainland China. They found over 53% of mothers and 48% of fathers reported that they used corporal punishment in the previous year. Boys were more likely to be physically punished than girls, due to the traditional cultural belief that boys are expected to continue the family line once they reach adulthood and become primary providers for their own families and caregiver for aged parents (Wu, 1996). Thus, there is a stronger tendency for parents to implement harsh discipline to ensure boys' satisfactory performance (Ho, 1986; Wu, 1996). Parents endorsing the use of corporal punishment are depicted as tiger parents. Chua (2011) in her controversial book, titled *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*, portrayed tiger parents, particularly mothers, as being highly controlling and strict, uncaring about their children's feelings and self-esteem, and highly restrictive of their children's free time and extracurricular activities in order to ensure high levels of success. Contrary to Chua's (2011) claim that children with tiger parents are more successful in academic achievement, Kim, Wang, Orozco-Lapray, Shen, and Murtuza (2013) found tiger parenting did not result in the best educational attainment or the best academic achievement; instead, it resulted in children experiencing a higher level of academic pressure.

Continuity and Change in Chinese Parenting

The world has increasingly become more urbanized and globalized, and social changes are inevitable. China is a case in point. Since 1978, China has implemented a large-scale economic reform that adopted many aspects of capitalism, such as privatization and free market. The Chinese government describes this newly reformed economy as "a market economy with Chinese characteristics." The reform that expanded the market systems to include various sectors has led to major social and economic changes in China in the past four decades. For example, there are substantial increases in individual and family income, massive migration of the population, decline in the government control of social welfare and protection, and rapid rise in private enterprises and competition (Zhang, 2000). According to China Statistical Yearbook (2016), the annual per capita disposable income of household has significantly increased in both urban and rural households. For example, in 1978, the average per capita income of urban and rural households was RMB 316 yuan and RMB 113 yuan, respectively. The

number grew to RMB 31,195 yuan for the urban households and to RMB 11,422 yuan for the rural households in 2015. With rising income, millions of people were lifted from poverty and the poverty rate is dramatically reduced. In 1978, over 97% of the rural households were considered as living in poverty; however, by 2015, the poverty rate was down to 5.7% (China Statistical Yearbook, 2016).

Along with the economic reform, other changes have happened. For instance, Chinese people, particularly women, are better educated than they were four decades ago. In 1978, there were only 598 higher education institutions (HEIs) in the whole country, and 856,000 people graduated from college. By 2015, the HEIs quadrupled to 2560, and over 260 million people had a college or higher degree (China Statistical Yearbook, 2016). Women accounted for 51% of all the college graduates in 2015. Among people with a master's or doctoral degree, women took up 67% and 42%, respectively. More women have participated in the workforce, and by the 1960s, over 90% of working-age women in cities were employed. However, in recent years, the female labor force participation rate has been decreasing. By 2014, the rate dropped to 64% (International Labor Organization, 2015). There are many reasons that contribute to the declining participation rate of women in the workforce. One reason is the resurgence of the Confucius' perception that men are the breadwinners and women are homemakers (男主外女主内). By choice or by default, women return to family and take on the traditional gender roles of a good wife and mother (相夫教子) (Erdenebileg, 2016).

Besides public perception, family-friendly policies have also eroded. Systems in place to aid working mothers, such as subsidized health care, largely disappeared after the economic reforms of the 1990s. While 72% of mothers between the ages of 25 and 34 with children under the age of six are employed, economic reforms in the 1990s have reduced the number of options available to working mothers. In particular, government support for subsidized childcare has significantly decreased. According to the 2006 Chinese enterprise social responsibility survey, less than 20% of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and 5.7% of all other enterprises surveyed provided childcare for employees (Erdenebileg, 2016).

Despite the *Law on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women* (1992), Chinese women are discriminated against in workplace based on their sex and age. The All-China Women's Federation (ACWF) survey found that 72% of women believed that they were not hired or passed over for promotion because of their sex; 75% believed that they were fired

because they either were married or became pregnant. In terms of age discrimination, women are mandated to retire by the age of 50 or 55, depending on the type of employment. Many job descriptions clearly state the maximum age that a female can apply for a job.

In addition, there is a prevalent gender pay gap in China. On average, women earn 35% less than men for the same or similar work. This places China 91st out of 145 countries on the World Economic Forum's (WEF) 2015 Global Gender Gap Index. In urban areas, women's average annual income is equivalent to 67.3% of men's income; in rural areas, it is only 56% (Erdenebileg, 2016). The gender inequality may continue to proliferate because women are severely underrepresented in leadership roles in China. The 2015 Global Gender Gap Index ranked China 73rd out of 145 countries in terms of female political empowerment. In 2015, the female-to-male ratio for enrollment in tertiary education (beyond high school) was 1.15. However, the ratio for positions in parliament was 0.31; for ministerial positions, it was 0.13; and for years with head of state positions within the last 50 years, it was 0.08. No woman has ever been a member of the nine-member Politburo Standing Committee of the Communist Party, the leaders of China's government (Erdenebileg, 2016).

In this inauspicious or even hostile working environment, Chinese women prefer to stay home, if they could afford to do so. Wu (2017) reported that close to one-fifth of women surveyed would opt out of the labor force to become a full-time mom.

These dramatic and extensive social and cultural changes may have posed challenges to families and parents as they experience the unfamiliar and uncertain situations and strive to meet the demands in the new environment, while trying to maintain their cultural heritage. Moreover, with the transition to a market economy in a globalized marketplace, Chinese parents have had to adjust their parenting practice and expand their repertoire of desirable characteristics focusing on the notion of *sù zhì* (素质) or qualities. Some examples of the desired qualities include leadership, independence, obedience, autonomy, self-confidence, caring, and social skills (Fong, 2007). The shift of parental child-rearing attitudes was also noted in the study by Chen and Chen (2010). They found Shanghai parents scored higher on parental warmth and autonomy support, and lower on power assertion in 2002 than they did in 1998. Along the same vein, Chen-Bouck, Duan, and Patterson (2017) interviewed 22 mother-adolescent dyads in mainland China to explore how urban, middle-class Chinese mothers have adjusted their parenting in a changing society. The findings indicated that

unlike the stereotype of Chinese parents, depicting them as harsh, lack of affection, and controlling, the participating mothers demonstrated high levels of warmth and concern in their relationships with their adolescent children. Rather than strict focus on academic success, the middle-class mothers were also concerned about their children's physical and psychological well-being, as they often mentioned they would want their children to be "happy."

The transition from state socialism to market economy in China has, furthermore, created anxieties for parents over their children's character, skills, and psychological quality (xinli suzhi) that could meet the heightened demands for academic success (Anagnost, 2008). Chinese parents—spurred on by popular media discourse—fear that their children will be unprepared for the new kind of future that values individual initiatives, emotional intelligence, and practical knowledge. The dizzying economic changes as well as the One-Child Policy have reconfigured the affective life of the Chinese family dramatically within one generation. Parents' beliefs about autonomy and social relations have shifted considerably as China has transitioned from state-controlled economy (centered on state-sponsored occupations with guaranteed lifetime employment and benefits) to market economy focusing on competition and meritocracy (Yoshikawa, Way, & Chen, 2012). Among the parents, there has been an increase in attention to children's socio-emotional competence as well as real worries about what it would take for their only children to be able to provide post-retirement housing, health, and economic securities for their parents.

Change of Parental Goals

Another example is how parents' perceptions of certain virtues may have changed over time as a result of the ecological change. Traditionally, obedience and shyness rooted in the Confucian virtue of *xiao* or filial piety were considered as preferred traits among Chinese children. However, obedience and shyness are perceived less conducive to success in a capitalist economy (Chen & Chen, 2010; Yoshikawa et al., 2012). In a competitive market-driven economy, it is important for children to acquire the individualistic skills of assertiveness, self-reliance, and autonomy (Chen & Chen, 2010). Therefore, parents are encouraged to help children become self-expressive, self-directed, and self-confident individuals who are flexible and adaptable in a market-oriented society. Chen-Bouck et al. (2017) found that instead of demanding obedience, urban, middle-class mothers

adopted a child-centered parenting approach, in which they valued their children's opinions and feelings, and they involved their children in decision making. They also expressed their willingness to become friends with their children, rather than being perceived as the authority.

The shift in values also reflects in the daily language usage. Zeng and Greenfield (2015) selected 16 Chinese words that represent either individualism or collectivism, and utilized the Google Ngram Viewer to analyze the frequency of such words used in different historical period. They found between 1970 and 2008, individualistic values (indexed by words "choose," "compete," "get," "private," "autonomy," "talent," "innovation," and "fair") increased in importance along with the sharp rise of urban population, household consumption, and tertiary school enrollment, whereas collectivistic values (indexed by words "communal," "obedience," "effort," "help," and "sacrifice") declined. The findings also indicated that individualistic values have stepped onto the stage at an increasing rate since the economic reform, accelerated by the emergence of younger generations who have grown up in a wealthier urban environment with more opportunity for higher education and more exposure to Western cultures. These young people tend to advocate individual rights in challenging the authority of parents and in failing to exercise traditional bonds of filial obligation. Along the line of ideological shift from self-sacrifice for kinship or collective needs to self-realization and self-interest, family obligation and filial sentiments have been substantially weakened (Cheung & Kwan, 2009).

Despite the changes in the structures or patterns of family obligation and filial piety, Qi (2014) argued that the family obligation would continue to play an important role in family life in Chinese society. The reciprocal family obligation "encompasses emotionally and spiritually attending to one's parents out of gratitude for their efforts in having raised one, and physical and financial care for one's parents as they age and when they die for the same reason" (Yeh & Bedford, 2003, p. 216). Parents continue to instill a sense of indebtedness to their parents and family in young children. Thus, Chinese children experience a familial and social milieu in which the sense of obligation to return their parents' love and "sacrifice" is so deeply imprinted that it becomes part of their mentality. In this way, "a sense of obligation for all that parents had already done for one, as well as ties of affection, was expected to make the care of parent seem 'natural', an inescapable aspect of the parent-child bond" (Ikels, 1993). The sense of "sacrifice" and "indebtedness" that comes to function as cultural meanings not only carries emotional weight but in becoming internalized serves a larger cultural script that has pervasive social influence (Ferree & Merrill,

2000). In this context while adult children may have more individualistic attitudes and beliefs than their parents, they carry on family obligations and filial support (Whyte, 2005).

Generation X and Millennial Parents in China

According to the UN Population Division (2018), Millennials have outnumbered baby boomers for more than 25 years and are the most populous generation globally. In China alone, there are 351 million Millennials, which is more than the entire population in the United States. In accordance with the global trend, Millennials in China are mostly city dwellers. From 1990 to 2010, more than 250 million people moved from the countryside to China's cities. This mass migration had a large effect on the lives of China's Millennials. By their early 20s, Chinese Millennials are nearly three times more likely to live in cities than previous generations at the same age 30 years ago (Tilford, 2018).

Like their counterparts worldwide, Millennials in China are less interested in getting married and raising children. For instance, among those in their 20s, the proportion of the Millennials married at least once fell by over 33% between 1982 and 2010 (Tilford, 2018).

For those married Millennials, they tend to have children later or even to choose not to have children at all. In China, couples who choose not to have children are called *Ding Ke Jia Ting* (丁克家庭). It is estimated that in capital city, Beijing, *Ding Ke Jia Ting* (丁克家庭) makes up 10% of all families, and in Shanghai, the rate is even higher at 12.4%. There are many reasons why the number of *Ding Ke Jia Ting* (丁克家庭) is trending in China. According to a survey conducted by the Chinese Census Bureau (2018), there are five main reasons. First, the couples prioritize their own career over having children. Second, for Millennials, they prefer to focus on the marriage rather than dividing their attention to their children. Third, the couples believe it is exhausting and expensive to raise a child. Moreover, some of the couples are uncertain about their own future, in terms of finance, stability, health care, retirement, and quality of life. Finally, Millennials challenge the Chinese tradition of "the more children one has, the more fortune one has" (多子多福). They don't believe children would necessarily bring happiness.

In addition to the *Ding Ke Jia Ting* (丁克家庭), some couples want to have children, but cannot afford. For example, in the mid-1990s, over 90%

of kindergartens in China were publicly run and either fully funded or partially sponsored by the government. Parents would pay a nominal tuition fee. But in 1994, under a policy of "government retreats and private sector advances," the government withdrew early childhood education funding, forcing many public kindergartens to close down between 1994 and 2009. The business of private day care and kindergartens has been blooming ever since. Between 2010 and 2016, the number of early childhood education and care facilities increased from 15 million to almost 24 million, and the enrollment increased from 56.6% to 77.4% (https://www.jiemodui.com/N/93893.html). In 2016, among the facilities, 15.42 million or 64.3% are private. The tuition for private day care and preschools could be as high as $660 per month, compared to $102 per month for the country's top college (Ford, 2010). It is estimated that the cost of early childhood care and education makes up 26% of the family income (Ren, 2018). The expense is prohibiting for couples from having children. Due to the more widely accepted concept of *Ding Ke Jia Ting* (丁克家庭) along with the high cost of raising children, the infant births reduced to 6.3 million from 2016 to 2017 in China, even though the couples are allowed to have two children (The Daily Chinese Business News, 2018, August 17). For those who do have children, ECCE is a luxury not a basic right. It is not uncommon for parents to keep young children at home until they reach school age. If both parents work, they would have the grandparents take care of the children full-time. If a family can afford, one parent, mostly moms, will stay home and take care of the child.

Staying-at-Home Moms in China

Women's status has been greatly improved since the People's Republic of China was established in 1949. China has proclaimed that women enjoy equal rights with men in the political, economic, cultural, and social spheres as well as in family life. As a result, Chinese women have been actively participating in national development and made important contributions to agriculture, science, culture, education, and public health. By the early 1990s, the female labor force participation rate was over 70% (The World Bank, 2018).

However, in recent years more urban well-educated women choose to quit their jobs to stay at home full-time. For instance, a survey conducted by Tencent (腾迅) and *Changjian Daily* (长江日报) in 2010, *asking* over

20,000 Chinese women across the country about their professional ambitions, found overwhelmingly 40% expressed their desire to ditch the 9–5 p.m. formal work schedules (Chen, 2011). The main reason for them to quit their job is the inability to balance work and family responsibilities, such as raising a child or taking care of aging parents. In the following section, I will introduce three stay-home moms and explore their parenting philosophy and their expectations for their children in today's world.

Taken together, these profound economic changes have wrought changes in child development, in particular through the crucial exosystems and microsystems of parents' work experiences and parenting styles. Research suggests that the changing political, economic, and social context in a globalized world evokes considerable anxieties and ambivalences among Chinese parents over how to parent. In the clash of globalization and tradition, what are the most important cultural values that parents will hold on and continue to cultivate in their children? What will they let go? What are the new ideologies and practices that parents would be willing to adopt? How will the abolishment of "one-child" policy impact parenting? How will Generation X and Millennial parents perceive childhood and provide childcare differently from previous generations? These are the central questions the current empirical case study intends to answer.

Meet Generation X Staying-Home Moms: Case Studies

I spent over three months (January to early April 2018) in China collecting data for this qualitative research on Chinese parenting philosophy and early childhood care and education. Before I went to China, I started an online questionnaire and distributed through WeChat asking about the demographics of the participants, for example, age, gender, education, employment, annual family income, number of children, and age of the children. All participants were recruited through snowball sampling. Furthermore, the questionnaire explores parenting philosophy and their expectations and concerns about their children's future life. After the survey data were collected, I chose three families as case studies and did observations and interviews with the parents. All questions on the survey and follow-up interviews were in Mandarin Chinese. It was a small sample size ($n = 26$) and the participants were all from urban middle class. Therefore, the results from the survey do not represent all parenting philosophies in China. The purpose of this qualitative study is simply to give a snapshot of how globalization

may have impacted Generation X and Millennial parents, and how their parenting may be different from previous generations due to the interconnectedness to other cultures and changing worldviews. To protect the identity of the children, only their Chinese nickname is used.

Case Study One: Pao Pao's (跑跑) Family

Pao Pao's parents were born in the 1970s and both have a college degree. When asked about the generational differences regarding parenting, Pao Pao's mom, Ning (宁), shared her struggles with her parents growing up.

> 我父母的关系并不是很和谐, 我母亲比较强势, 对我非常严格, 凡事喜欢安排和掌控, 而我个性比较敏感, 自我意识也很强, 所以在整个青春期我内心都对他们充满了抱怨, 觉得他们只关心成绩而从来没有真正在意过我自己的想法, 遇到问题也不会向他们求助。从中学时代起, 我就开始致力于脱离母亲的掌控, 并因此做出了一些有可能影响人生走向的选择。比如为了离开他们, 中考后放弃离家近且更好的中学而执意选择就读可以住校的学校, 大学毕业后坚持自己找工作, 一年后又瞒着他们辞去国企的"铁饭碗"进入一家刚进入内地的台资企业, 后来又跳到了一家名义上是合资其实算是民营的私企, 从事的是与大学食品工艺与设备专业毫不相关的营销策划, 希望接触不同的行业, 去不同的地方, 认识不同的人, 也通过自己的努力做到全国市场部经理的职位, 负责公司整体市场的营销策略、媒介发布和活动推广工作。几次转折之后, 我的工作、婚姻、孩子教育, 我父母基本上很难也很少干涉了。.
>
> *My parents do not have a harmonious relationship. My mom is dominant in the family. She is very strict, and likes to take control of everything. But I have a very strong sense of independence and I am very sensitive (to her macro and micro management). Therefore, growing up I had much complain (about their parenting style). I felt that they didn't care about me nor what I thought. The only thing they cared was my academic performance. I would never ask them for any help. Starting from middle school, I was trying to escape from my mother's control, which may have impacted some important decisions of my life. For example, in order to leave home, I determined to go to a boarding school. After I graduated from college, I insisted finding my own job (without my parents' help). A year after I had 'tie fan wan' (铁饭碗 or a guaranteed job) with a State company, I quit my job without telling my parents. I changed jobs a few times over the years, and did things that had nothing to do with my college degree. I want to have different working experiences, and I desire to go to different places and meet different people. Depending on nobody but myself, I had a successful*

career. My parents eventually gave up trying to control my life and intervening in my decision making, such as my job, marriage and my child's education.

As discussed in early chapters, it is not uncommon for Chinese parents to make all decisions, regarding their children's life without consulting them, due to the traditional mentality that children are the property of the parents rather than equal participants in the family functioning. These macro- and micro-controls last for a lifetime, even when the children grow up to adulthood. For generations, in order to be *xiào shùn* (孝顺 or filial piety), children, young or old, have obeyed their parents' wishes and followed the path that their parents planned for them, even though that may conflict with their own wish and may prevent them from pursuing their own dreams. But for Generation X and Millennials, self-interests may triumph over filial piety.

When asked the follow-up question on how her experience of authoritarian parenting style may have impacted her own parenting philosophy, she responded,

因此我很早就告诉自己, 一定不要成为像他们那样的父母, 我要有自己的幸福小家庭, 要跟我的孩子成为最好的好朋友…我要让我的孩子在有爱的家庭中成长, 要真正"看到"我的孩子、成为她无话不说的好朋友和最坚定的支持者。.

I told myself from an early age that I would never want to be a parent like them. I want to have a happy family and I will become the best friend of my child…I want to shower my child with love, and I will truly 'see him/her'. I want him/her to share with me their life, tell me about their day, their problems, their emotions, and pretty much everything. I will be his/her strongest supporter and cheerleader.

Ning (宁) attributed her change of parenting philosophy to her own experiences, but more importantly the access to more information on Western parenting styles.

生跑跑前后, 我有意识地看了一些心理学方面的书籍, 也上了一些相关的课程, 内心逐渐和我父母、尤其是我妈妈和解了。我能体谅到她这一代人在方方面面的不容易, 体会到他们未宣之于口的情绪和爱, 同时也更明确了自己对未来亲子关系的想法。.

When I was pregnant with Pao Pao, I started reading some parenting books, such as (children's) psychology, and took some prenatal classes. I could appreciate my parents better and made peace with them, especially my mom. Now I understand how hard it must have been to raise children in my parents' generation. I understand that even though they never said aloud 'I love you, ' they do. Meanwhile, I know for sure what kind of relationship I want to establish with my child.

After Pao Pao was born, Ning (宁) returned back to work, but soon found it was challenging to balance work and parenting. To keep her own promise of being her child's best friend and spending more time with Pao Pao, Ning (宁) quit her job and became a stay-at-home mom.

因为"希望和孩子成为最好的朋友"是我的执念, 当我发现以前频繁出差的工作让我无法陪伴她成长后, 为了不让自己留下遗憾, 我并没有太多犹豫就决定放弃之前还算喜欢的职位和不错的收入。辞职后也在朋友的推荐下找过其他工作, 和过去的领导谈过一些传统创业的项目, 但始终无法找到能在工作和家庭之间达成平衡的工作方式。同时, 我也希望对我过去的工作和生活进行梳理和总结, 想清楚自己究竟想过什么样的生活。.

My former job required a lot of traveling and business trips. The busy work schedule often took me away from my daughter, from spending time with her and witnessing her growing up. Because of my wish to be my child's best friend and my fear of missing out the experience of being a mom, I quit my well paid job. I tried to do something else that has more flexible working hours, but just could not balance work and family. I started reflecting on my life and trying to figure out what I really want from this life.

One fixed income could barely make ends meet, especially with a newborn. Therefore, Pao Pao's father, Xi (希), quit his job as well and started his own advertisement company. As a starter entrepreneur, Xi (希) worked long hours and endless weekends. He hardly spent any time with Pao Pao in her first two years of life. He didn't give much thought on the father-daughter relationship and took it for granted. But one incident changed his view and made him quit the business. He recalled what happened that day:

I didn't have much to do for the business that day, so I decided to surprise Pao Pao by picking her up from the daycare. I expected that Pao Pao would be so excited seeing me and would run to my arms and give me a big hug. She heard me calling her name, and turned around and saw me. Instead of running to

me as I imagined, she turned away and continued playing with her friends. At that moment, I felt I lost her. I questioned myself what the purpose was for me to work so hard, if I had to pay the price of losing my relationship with Pao Pao. So I sold my business and became a stay-at-home dad.

Xi (希) has become one of the most devoted fathers that I have met. He takes Pao Pao on field trips to the aquarium and the Panda bear habitat. They go camping, biking, kayaking, and hiking together. The outdoor activities rebuild the father-daughter relationship and bond them closer. As a family, they also volunteer in the communities, for example, visiting the senior home, cleaning the streets, and passing hot drinks in winter to the on-duty policemen. These kind acts are aligned to Ning and Xi's parenting philosophy and their expectations for Pao Pao.

Ning recounted her expectations this way,

我怀跑跑的时候,我们在小区里种了一棵树,我当时想,希望这个孩子能够身心健康,有自己的想法,不需要太听话,长大了能遇到真心爱她的人,交到真正的朋友,过上自己想过的生活。跟成绩相比,她的身体和心理健康更重要,希望她能拥有爱和幸福的能力。毕竟学习是一辈子的事,而童年的时光却很短暂。能让她的童年多一些有趣又有爱的回忆,这大概也算是我们作为父母能留给她的一份人生礼物吧.

When I was pregnant with Pao Pao, we planted a tree. At that time, I thought I just wish my child to be physically and psychologically healthy. I wish she has her own mind. She doesn't have to be obedient. When she grows up, she can find her true love, make real friends, and live a life that she wants. Her health is more important than the academic performance. I hope she has the ability to love and to pursue happiness. …Learning is lifelong, but childhood is fleeting. I want her to look back and feel that she has a fun, loving childhood. That is our gift to her life.

What I found surprising in Pao Pao's case is that her parents do not focus their attention so much on preparing her for school, but rather on her well-being, even though the society places so much pressure on children to succeed in academics. Ning and Xi believe that learning doesn't just happen inside of the classroom but rather it is a lifelong journey. What children learn outside of the classroom (e.g., exploring the nature and interacting with the local community) is much more profound and authentic than traditional schooling. However, Ning did mention that since Pao Pao started elementary school, she would sometimes unconsciously compare

Pao Pao's academic performance to her peers. If Pao Pao had a good score on the test, as her mom, Ning would be happy and feel proud. She called this feeling as "*xue ba qing jie* (学霸情结)" and had to constantly remind herself of not being emotionally attached to the test scores. This so-called *xue ba qing jie* (学霸情结) is prevalent among the families I have studied. Yo Yo is one of the examples I am going to discuss in the next case.

Case Study Two: Yo Yo's (悠悠) Family

Yo Yo (悠悠) is a mom of two boys, one aged 8 and the other is 3. I met Yo Yo last year on a tour bus trip to Yellowstone National Park. She was traveling with her 7-year-old son in the United States for 2 weeks. Yo Yo strikes me as someone who is very social, and she could start a conversation with anyone on our bus. She is friendly and kind, but she can be very strict with her 7-year-old son and tries to keep him in check all the times. I remember one day we came back from Yellowstone National Park, the bus stopped at a Chinese buffet for dinner. I saw Yo Yo and her son took a table, but until my family finished and it was almost time to get back on the bus, I still didn't see Yo Yo and her son eat. On the way to the bus, I saw Yo Yo was talking to her son, and she seemed very upset. I walked over to check on her. She said she was furious with her son because he left her purse on the dining table unattended while he went for food. "There are our passports and my wallet. What if someone took it? We would be stuck in this country! I have told him many times that he has to be careful in a foreign country and be my helper. But he just doesn't listen." She had tears in her eyes and called her husband in China to complain about their son. Her son looked ashamed and you could tell that he felt guilty that he let his mom down. This one incident was a manifestation of Yo Yo's parenting style and philosophy. In the interview, she kept saying how much she was torn between her ideal parenting and the reality of being a parent in China.

> *That is why I am torn. I want to be a good mom, a nice good mom. But I also have expectations for him. If I don't (discipline him), if I just let him be, he would not form good habits, and he would not be a sophisticated person.*

> *That is why I am torn. On one hand, I want to love him more. But on the other hand, I wish him to do well in the future and I wish he would not have too many bumpy rides in his life. I think most Chinese parents have the same expectations.*

> *That is why we have the conflict. I really do want to give him more love, but I am worried and stressed in real life.*
>
> *Under the da huan jing (大环境 or socio-ecology) it is hard for me to follow my heart. That is why I am torn. My own beliefs are conflicting with the reality, which causes my suffering. If I agreed (with the traditional parenting philosophy), I would not be torn. I don't want to (be strict to my son), but I am forced to. That is the root of my struggle and suffering.*

Through our conversation, it was apparent that Yo Yo was torn between her wish of being a gentle, kind, loving "good mom" (好妈妈) and the reality of being a strict, mean "tiger mom (虎妈妈)." She attributed this conflicting feeling to China's *da huan jing (大环境 or socio-ecology)* and the trending family structure of "widowed family (丧偶式家庭)." Yo Yo explained it to me, "What is 'widowed family (丧偶式家庭)?' It means only the mothers are taking care of the family and children, whereas the fathers are absent from family functions."

This term of "widowed family (丧偶式家庭)" paints a gloomy picture of Chinese family structure and parenting. Moreover, it indicates the reverse in the progress that has been made in women's equality in China. For thousands of years, Confucianism has deeply influenced gender roles in China. It is rooted in Chinese belief that men should be the breadwinner, whereas women should stay home and take care of family (男主外女主内). Not until 1949 when the People's Republic of China was established were women liberated from the traditional shackles. Women have received education and have had equal rights to participate in politics, business, decision making, and other social activities. As a result, the number of women in the workforce has greatly increased. By the early 1990s, the female labor force participation rate was over 70% (The World Bank, 2018). Women also outperformed their male counterparts in higher education. In 2016, women accounted for 52.5% of college students, and 50.6% of postgraduate students were female. In politics, the ratio of female deputies to the 12th National People's Congress, the top legislature, reached a record high of 23.4%, and women accounted for 39.9% of the members of boards of directors in 2016, compared with 32.7% in 2010 (http://en.people.cn/n3/2017/1028/c90000-9285962.html). However, these progresses have not changed the rooted mentality that a woman's place is in the family and her job is to take care of the husband and their children. Because of this

mentality, many professional Chinese women "choose" to quit their jobs and become a full-time staying-at-home mom. That was what Yo Yo did.

Yo Yo has a bachelor's degree and worked in the advertisement industry for over 10 years. She found her job challenging yet satisfying her ego. After giving birth to her first child, she stayed home for a year and returned to work. But as many working moms, Yo Yo found it was near impossible to balance her career and family. After a year, she quit her job and became a stay-at-home mom. When Ge Ge started first grade, Yo Yo bought an apartment that is close to a quality elementary school in the city. During the weekdays, Yo Yo takes care of Ge Ge, and only on weekends, they return to their home in the suburbs. Only on weekends, Yo You gets to see her younger son and husband. Only on weekends, Ge Ge gets to see his father and brother. I vividly remember Yo Yo told me on our trip to Yellowstone National Park how much she missed her younger son, who was a little over one at that time. After a year of separation, Yo Yo took the younger son, Di Di, to the city during the week as well. With two children (one is 8 and the other is 3) and no help from her husband, Yo Yo had to compromise her care with Ge Ge and kept him in school for longer hours. A typical school day for the 8-year-old boy was from 8 a.m. to 6 pm, ten hours away from his parents.

> *Since we came back from the States, Ge Ge started the 2nd grade, and I decided to have the younger brother live with us. But they have different schedules. Ge Ge needs a nap in the afternoon before the second half of the school, but Di Di may be too excited to take a nap. So I have to keep Ge Ge in school for lunch and nap. When Ge Ge is done with school, Di Di may be napping and he won't get up until 5 or 6 pm. So Ge Ge stays after school for sports and I pick him up after Di Di's nap, around 5 or 6 p.m… We go home in the suburbs on weekends. During the school day, Ge Ge goes to school and stays after school, while I take care of Di Di.*

This is apparently a "widowed family (丧偶式家庭)," although Yo Yo tried to defend her husband, "I*n our family, my husband does try to be involved (in raising our children), but he just doesn't know how.*" Yo Yo attributed this lack of knowledge to his career and the patriarchal traditions. "*Men have careers. Some of them still hold the patriarchal ideas, and they pay little to no attention to their children. They have no idea of their children's life.*"

As much as she tried not to label her husband as an absent father, Yo Yo acknowledged that she was the one who read the books on parenting and attended various seminars on early childhood care and education, such as Montessori education. She was also the one who set high standards and expectations for Ge Ge, and who disciplined him when he failed to meet the expectations by scolding him or even corporal punishment. She admitted that she was strict to Ge Ge and sometimes could be mean.

In terms of parenting, I think my working experience requires me to meet certain standards, such as how to interact with colleagues, and how to solve problems. These experiences translate to my parenting. I set up standards for my children and demand them to meet the standards and my expectations…My close friends and family think I am mean. After all, Ge Ge is only 7 years old, and he will be 8 on June 7th. He cannot meet all my standards and expectations… I think I treat him more like an adult.

These conflicting ideas of letting her child be child and treating him like an adult came from Yo Yo's expectations for his future.

在孩子还小的时候，我们对于孩子的期望很简单，希望他们做纯真快乐的人，健康平安。但在上小学之后，接触越来越多关于求学、小升初、中考、高考等新形势, 感觉所谓的纯真快乐真的很难, 担心孩子将来能否上一所好的初中、高中以及大学, 很焦虑, 希望让孩子尽早学习更多的东西, 不输在起跑线，能逐渐形成学习的好习惯。虽然，有时候自己都觉得这很违背孩子的天性, 但又不得不去"逼"孩子, 其实还是害怕他会失去将来社会竞争力。.

*When Ge Ge was little, my expectations were simple. I wanted him to be happy, safe and healthy. But once he started primary school, I learned more about how intense the competitions are in schools, and how difficult the standardized tests are. It is hard to be simply happy. I am worried whether he could go on to a quality middle school, high school and even college. I want him to start learning earlier and to acquire more knowledge. I don't want him to lose at the starting line of the competition (*输在起跑线*). I expect him to form good studying habits. Although sometimes I know this is against the natural process of child development, I am compelled to force upon him the expectations, because I am afraid that he would lose his edge in the future competition.*

It is a common motto for Chinese parents that "Don't lose at the starting line of the competition (不输在起跑线)." Because of the fear that their children would not be adequately prepared for the increasingly fierce competition, Chinese parents invest much time and family resources for early

childhood education. In 2017, Chinese parents spent over 200 billion yuan or 31 billion US dollars on early childhood education, and it is estimated the number could reach 300 billion yuan or 48 billion US dollars by 2020 (The Ministry of Education, 2019). Ninety percent of children aged 0–6 participated in some sort of early childhood education, and the cost took up 26% of family annual income in 2017 (*White paper on Chinese Family Expenditure on Education, 中国家庭教育消费白皮书*, 2017). Moreover, parents, particularly the Millennial parents, are willing to invest in early childhood education. For example, over 65% of the parents spent between 2000 and 8000 yuan (about 300–1300 US dollars) per month on early childhood education and care. Over 12% of families even spent over 10,000 yuan ($1600 US dollars) per month. Although most of the investment (58%) was in extracurricular activities that the children may be interested, such as music, sports, and arts, thirty percent went to academic enhancement, like Chinese literacy, mathematics, and science. Yo Yo was one of those parents who were willing to pay a price in order to give her son an edge in the competition and thus enrolled him to different extracurricular activities and academic enhancement classes.

> *On Mondays, he has physical training for an hour and a half. Weather permitting, he would play outdoors. Wednesdays, he spend 2 hours playing basketball after school. Thursday and Friday evening, he has two hours of math and English, respectively. I just have him start learning Oracle (甲骨文), its origin, history and influence to modern Chinese. The course on Oracle is inexpensive, because it is through a youth organization. For one class per week for 15 weeks, the cost is about 1,200 yuan. Math and English are more expensive. For 2 hours per week, the annual cost is 12,000 yuan for each subject.*

Chinese parents try to give their children an edge in the competition so that they will not lose at the starting line of the competition (不输在起跑线), even though the price tag for such “edge” could be inhibiting and beyond the means of the family. According to the White paper, 29% of the family believed the cost of early childhood education was expensive but they would make sacrifices in other areas of family life to prioritize early childhood education.

Yo Yo is not only willing to pay a hefty price, but also move her whole family so that her son would attend a quality school. As soon as Ge Ge started first grade, Yo Yo bought an apartment close to a quality public school. Her family owns a house in the suburbs. As mentioned earlier, Yo

Yo and her kids spend weekdays in the city and go back to the suburbs on weekends. When asked the reason, Yo Yo answered, "*It is an investment. The real estate market is closely linked to the school quality.*" Similar to the United States, the price of the housing in China is greatly influenced by the neighborhood and the quality of schools. For example, in Beijing, the price for a house in a good school district is 20% higher than that in a mediocre district. Moreover, the value of the house could increase 5–40% over the years. In Yo Yo's case, the value of her house has doubled in 2 years.

But the more important reason for Yo Yo to purchase a second property in the city is to give her son another opportunity to go to a high-quality middle school. In China, now, there is no entrance exam from the primary school to the middle school. Students automatically move on to the middle school in the same school district. If the parents want to change school, they have to pay a hefty fee, so-called *ze xiao fei* (择校费). Depending on the quality and reputation of the schools, the fee could be tens and thousands of yuan. For instance, in Beijing, *ze xiao fei* (择校费) for jing shan elementary school (景山学校) is 250,000 yuan or about 40,000 US dollars. But *ze xiao fei* (择校费) is only part of the price parents have to pay. They also have to build social network and bribe the gatekeepers in schools, such as the principals. Comparing to the expensive *ze xiao fei* (择校费), and complicated social network, parents would rather invest in a property in the school district. Yo Yo explained her decision to purchase a house in the current school district,

> *We consider this as an investment. We bought the house for less than 45,000 yuan per square meter, but now even though the price is down a little bit, it is still worth of 80,000 yuan per square meter. Besides the financial return of the investment, our main purpose (of buying this house) is for my son to have another chance and option to go to a quality middle school. If his academic performance is not okay, he would have the opportunity to enter a school lottery. Going from the elementary to middle school (小升初), students are evaluated based on their academic performance in the fifth and sixth grade. The private middle schools have an advantage preparing students for the entrance exam to a better high school. So many parents want their children to go to private schools. But China has the 9 year compulsory education, and parents don't have to pay tuition for public schools. If one chooses to go to the private schools, they have to pay and the tuition is very expensive. It could cost over 100,000 yuan (or 16,000 US dollars) for three years of middle school. Or the alternative is for one to win the school lottery.*

When parents have to pay a fortune for their children's education and sacrifice so much of their own life in order for the children to have a better future, they have higher expectations for their children. Yo Yo further explained her expectations for Ge Ge:

My expectations are twofold. Regarding his habits and personality, I want him to be sophisticated, be polite, be self disciplined, and not to be messy. I want him to have a sense of time and be punctual. He needs to have a clear goal for his life and have a plan to reach his goal. In terms of academics, I hope he would not waste his talent. I don't expect him to be a genius, but I want him to reach his own full potential. I ask him to try to be the best of himself, not comparing to others. As long as he tries his best in the process, I can accept whatever the end result is.

Although Yo Yo claimed that she would "accept whatever the end result is," as long as her son tried his best, she also acknowledged the natural law of "survival of the fittest" (优胜劣汰;适者生存) and mediocracy would fall out of the competition. In order for him to be the "fittest" who has a chance to even compete, Yo Yo "forced" herself to be strict with him and pushed him to his edges. Yo Yo called this kind of parenting as "在爱中夹着棍棒 或者说在棍棒中夹着爱" (to express our affection by being strict, even using physical punishment). She was torn between being affectionate and being strict. But she believed whatever she did was for his benefit.

On the one hand, I wish him to be happy. But the reality is if you were good-for-nothing, you would face more challenges in the future. It would be harder (for him) to accept his failures than our way of parenting, "在爱中夹着棍棒 或者说在棍棒中夹着爱" (to express our affection by being strict, even using physical punishment).

These conflicting ideas about parenting took a toll on Yo Yo's mental health and on her relationship with her son.

That is why I am torn. On the one hand, I want to love him more. But on the other hand, I wish him to do well in the future and I wish he would not have too many bumpy rides in his life. I think most Chinese parents have the same expectations. That is why we have the conflicts. I really do want to love him more, but I am worried and stressed in real life. Now my son and I communicate far less than we used to. In the past, he would tell me everything and I understood his world. But now, I don't know what is going on in his world.

Yo Yo also expressed her frustration about the *da huan jing* (大环境 or socio-ecology) in China and felt powerless to change the situation. The so-called *da huan jing* (大环境 or socio-ecology) refers to the education system in China that only values the standardized test scores. Schools and teachers teach to the test, and rank students based on their test scores and make the ranking public to all students and their parents. Teachers also treat students differently based on their ranking. For example, the best seats in the classroom are reserved for the top-ranking students. Students with the lowest scores are placed in the back of the classroom, and teachers pay little attention to them. Under this *da huan jing* (大环境 or socio-ecology), parents have no choice but to enroll their children in all kinds of tutoring and academic enhancement classes in the hope of improved test scores and better ranking. Children are deprived of their childhood, play, and physical activities. They spend long hours in schools and on extracurricular activities or academic enhancement classes. In the case of Yo Yo's son, who was 7 years old and a second grader, he spent three and a half hours on extracurricular activities and five and a half hours on academic enhancement classes per week after school. A typical Friday night for him is to go to math tutoring from 4:10 p.m. to 6:10 p.m. and then take the subway to the Youth Center and take Oracle from 7:15 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.

Yo Yo further explains what the *da huan jing* (大环境 or socio-ecology) is and how it functions in China:

> 中国的国情决定了很多国家的政策。高考中考小升初，甚至现在的幼升小，还是需要各种考考考看成绩。教育环境还是有很多不能满足现实需求的情况，比如说在广州这个地方，中考就有近百分之五十的孩子上不了高中，因为没有那么多的高中学位可提供，本地户籍生与外地户籍生在升高中时在某些学校会有不同的甚至悬殊的分数线，外地户籍生会更艰难上高中。.
>
> 在北上广深等大城市，从幼升小阶段就已经在各种超前教育和激烈竞争，因为一个好的幼儿园可能能帮助孩子升小学阶段有更好的印象分，孩子本身具备更强的竞争力;而一个好的小学，能大概率帮助孩子进入一个好的初中，一个好的初中能帮助孩子大概率进一个好的高中，最终高考能大概率考进一所好的大学，进入社会的起步能更高。.
>
> 中国人多，然而僧多粥少，优质的教育资源仍然稀缺，所以才会倒逼着家长和孩子们要从早入手从小抓起，再多的课外技能，最终还是需要能有拿得出手的成绩分数。.

> *Many of the (education) policies are determined by the current situation of the Nation. Children are judged by their test scores, be it* 高考 (*gao kao or the* entrance exam to college*),*中考 *(zhong kao or the* entrance exam to high school*),* 小升初 (*xiao sheng chu or* continuing education from elementary to middle school*), and even* 幼升小 (*you sheng xiao or from kindergarten to the primary school). The education resources can not meet the demand. For example, in Guangzhou, about 50 percent of children cannot move on to high school, because there are limited funding. It is even harder for the children who are not local residents and don't have a local registration. There are different requirements for resident and non-resident children. Often times the difference could be huge. In Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen, the competition (for educational resources) starts as early as* 幼升小 (*you sheng xiao or from kindergarten to the primary school), because a good kindergarten may better prepare the children for a good elementary school, which may help them enter a quality middle school, then a quality high school and finally a key university. These children would have a higher start point (than the children who don't have the same resource). China has a giant population, but the education resources are scarce. To compete for the resources, parents have no choice but start their children early at a young age in order to prepare them for the fierce competition. No matter how many skills one has, he/she is only valued by his/her test scores."*

Yo Yo expressed her helpless and powerless under the *da huan jing* (大环境 or socio-ecology).

> *The da huan jing (大环境 or socio-ecology) and the changing family structure have a great impact on my parenting. It is very hard, if not impossible, to carry out your own parenting philosophy. It is much easier to go with the flow and influenced by others.*

> *Under the da huan jing (大环境 or socio-ecology) it is hard for me to follow my heart. That is why I am torn. My own beliefs are conflicting with the reality, which causes me suffering. If I agreed (with the philosophy), I would not be torn. I don't want to (be strict to my son), but I am forced to. That is the root of my struggle and suffering.*

Due to such pressure to achieve, Chinese parents would rather send their children to study abroad than for them to take various standardized tests. According to the White paper on Chinese family education expenditure (2017), 70% of parents surveyed, most Generation X and Millennials, expressed their interests sending their children to study abroad.

Among those parents, 40% were willing to pay 100,000 to a quarter million yuan (16,000–40,000 US dollars) yearly. As a result, the number of children going to the United States for secondary education has dramatically increased from 433 in 2003–2004 to 2,6919 in 2012–2013, or a 62 times increase in a decade (The Ministry of Education, 2018). By November 2015, it was estimated that 34,578 Chinese children were enrolled in American elementary and secondary schools, making up 52% of all international students at that age (The Ministry of Education, 2018). Although the number of children studying abroad has increased, it is still a luxury for a small percentage of family who can afford. For the rest, like Yo Yo's family or Dou Dou's case that I will discuss next, they have to face the reality and adapt to the *da huan jing* (*大环境 or socio-ecology*).

Case Study Three: Dou Dou's (豆豆) Family

Dou Dou's family is a typical "widowed family (丧偶式家庭)." Her dad, Lei, constantly changes jobs and moves from city to city for employment, while her mom, Xinyu, wants stability for Dou Dou and proximity to the grandparents who can help with childcare. Since Dou Dou was born until she started primary school, she and her mom lived with her grandparents. It is not uncommon to have three generations live together or so-called linear families in China. In fact, 49% of families surveyed were linear families (http://en.people.cn/200307/16/eng20030716_120372.shtml). Xinyu stayed home and took care of Dou Dou until she turned two, and then went back to work. Her job required her to take business trips and sometimes she was away for months without seeing Dou Dou. Like many working mothers that I have talked to, Xinyu found it was challenging to balance work and family.

> *I didn't really want to go back to work, but my parents, especially my dad, would complain that I was wasting my talent. He would say, 'I didn't send you to college for you to be a stay-at-home mom.' They would even suggest me to take a job as a cashier at Walmart. They just wanted me to get out the house and do something, anything. The first job I had after giving birth was to help my husband's company to liquidate other smaller companies. I stayed at a hotel in Wuhan for the job and Dou Dou was with her grandparents in Chengdu for a whole month. I was paid very little, 1,500 yuan a month. After the adjustment of cost of living, the hotel and meals I had to pay, there wasn't much left. It was*

not worth of my time and efforts. Then we moved to Shenzhen, because Lei had a new job there. I didn't want to leave Dou Dou again, so I took her with us. My parents came to live with us as well. I was paid much higher salary, 5,000 yuan a month. Back then, in 2008, it was a lot of money. But Dou Dou got sick a lot in Shenzhen. I would get calls at work from my parents, telling me that Dou Dou was not feeling well and I had to take her to see the doctor. I took a lot of time off work, and I got to a point that I questioned my decision to go back to work. So I quit. Fortunately, Lei was making enough money so that I had the option to stay at home and be a full-time mom.

When asked about "widowed family (丧偶式家庭)," Xinyu admitted that she was the solo parent who takes care of Dou Dou and makes all decisions regarding her education.

When Dou Dou was little, I wish he (Lei, Dou Dou's father) could give me hand and share some of the responsibilities. But because of his personality, I know that I could not count on him. In terms of Dou Dou's education, I'd rather to make all the decisions by myself. When Lei is involved, there is one more opinion and it is hard to have an agreement. Our child would not know who to listen to. So I prefer either I make the decision or he does. But he has not spent much time with Dou Dou and doesn't know her life at all. Besides his busy work schedule, his personality is not suitable to take care of Dou Dou. He himself is like a child who never grows up. Some of his ideas are radical and irrational. I don't want him to have a negative influence on Dou Dou. That is why I prefer to be the solo decision maker. But he likes to tell me what I should or should not do in terms of caring Dou Dou and her education. It drives me crazy and I get furious about him when he is pointing fingers at me. We would argue in front of our daughter. When it happens, Dou Dou always takes my side, and wants her dad to leave. Now every time he is home, he wants to take her out shopping or go out to eat. He is willing to pay big money to provide the best things for Dou Dou. But he has learned not to get involved in Dou Dou's education.

Solo decision making is quite common in China. According to the White paper (2018), in 60% of the families with young children aged 0–6 years old, moms make the decisions regarding children's care and education.

Like Yo Yo, Xinyu felt torn when it comes to her expectations for Dou Dou.

I am torn. On one hand, I hope her to be healthy and happy. But on the other hand, I wish she is superior to her peers, and she can outperform other kids. I want to provide Dou Dou a life that doesn't have too much stress, and she has

> *certain freedom and autonomy. I never set a goal for her to go to an Ivy League university, such as Qinghua University or Beijing University. I 've never told her that she has to pursue certain career, either. But I do expect her to try her best and utilize her wisdom and potentials. I expect her to be the best of herself. If she studies hard, she will have more opportunities in the future. As long as she is happy and she feels life is good, I am satisfied.*

Even though Xinyu claimed that she would be satisfied as long as Dou Dou tried her best, she told me anecdotes that she could treat Dou Dou rather harsh when Dou Dou didn't have a perfect score on tests. For example, Xinyu tore up Dou Dou's test because she made some "careless mistakes." Another time Xinyu pushed Dou Dou out of their house and shut her off outside for hours as a punishment, because she had a A- on the test. "*I was hysterical and furious at her. She could have a perfect score. If she didn't know the answers at all, I would not blame her. But she knew the answers, but because she was careless, she made mistakes. This is not the first time that she makes the same careless mistakes. I had to punish her so that she would learn.*"

This type of "tough love" parenting is vividly described as "tiger mom and wolf dad" (虎妈狼爸). As discussed in Yo Yo's case, China's education system has put great emphasis on standardized test scores. Children are evaluated and categorized by their test scores. If one is categorized as the "dumb" student, the teachers would give up on him/her, instead of providing more support and help. The pressure to outperform their peers, the intense relationship with teachers, along with the tough love relationship with parents have negative impact on children's mental health. According to the Child Development Center in Beijing Medical University, 2.6 to 32% elementary and secondary Chinese students had some mental health issues in 2018 (http://www.sohu.com/a/231992438_286635), such as depression, anxiety disorder, and insomnia. More appalling, however, is the number of children who committed or attempted to commit suicide. It is estimated that more than 100,000 children and youths die of suicide every year. In other words, 2 children committed suicide every minute, and 8 have attempted, making China the deadliest country for youth. In Shanghai, 24.39% of elementary and secondary school children had the thoughts of committing suicide; 15.23% had seriously considered it; 5.85% had plans to commit suicide; and 1.71% actually attempted (http://www.sohu.com/a/231992438_286635).

Xinyu expressed her concerns about how the test scores and her parenting affected Dou Dou's mental health.

> *One day Dou Dou came back from school, and she was reluctant to get in the house. She said to me, 'Mom, I am sorry I didn't have a good grade on the test…I..' she didn't finish her sentence, but I knew something was wrong. So I ran down five flight of stairs and met her at the door and walked her home. Later I asked her what she was going to say, she responded that she was planning to run away from home, because she felt that she didn't have a good grade and I would be disappointed. That incident shook me up.*

Xinyu was aware of the mental health issues among Chinese children and worried about Dou Dou's social and emotional development. However, Xinyu felt helpless in the current *da huan jing (大环境 or socio-ecology)*. She further explained that the reason why parents emphasize so much on their children's academic performance evaluated by test scores is to "save face" (面子).

> *I think now in China, it is impossible for parents not to focus on their children's test scores, because test scores are the only evaluation method. No matter it is a quiz or the midterm and final exams, the grade and rank will be distributed among the parent group. All parents can see it. So it is a matter of 'saving face.' If your child had a good grade, other parents would praise the child and approve you as the parent. But if your child bombed a test, they would question you, 'what is wrong with you child? How come she is falling behind?' So I am constantly being scrutinized as a parent based on Dou Dou's test scores. Moreover, the test scores dictate the children's school life. If you failed a test, the teacher would scold you. The decisions about whether you would be selected to be the leader, to receive the Excellent Student Award, or even to carry the flag during the ceremony are all made depending on your test scores.*

It is a recurring theme among my conversations with the moms that they feel torn between ideal parenting and the reality in the *da huan jing* (*大环境 or socio-ecology*). Xinyu recounted her parenting experience,

> 现在对于大多数的中国家长，其实是非常纠结很矛盾的一种心情。他们即希望孩子能健康快来的成长, 同时又希望她不要在社会的大潮流中掉队, 希望她能够不输在起跑线上。她能够做最优秀的自己。这样他就很矛盾。因为现在社会的确变化也很快。孩子们的心情也比较脆弱，不断出现孩子离家出走自杀。这对于家长，就是顾虑。他怕管的话呢，管严了,孩子会出现问题。他要不管的话呢, 像小树一样, 她就歪长了, 也害了她。所以对于中国的家长来说就很矛盾。.

> *Most Chinese parents feel torn. On one hand, parents wish their children to be happy and healthy. On the other hand, they also wish them not to fall behind and lose at the starting line. Parents wish the children to be the best of themselves. That is why the parents are torn. The society has changed greatly, and nowadays the children are very fragile. There are a lot of cases that children ran away from home or even committed suicide. It is parents' biggest concern. They worry that if they push the children too hard, the children would have a (mental) meltdown. But if they just let the children be themselves without discipline, like a little tree, the children would grow wild or even crooked, which could hinder them and harm them in a long run. That is why we are torn.*

Conclusion

For thousands of years in patriarchal China, children, particularly boys, were considered as "good fortune," and thus, the more sons one has, the more good fortune a family would have ("*duō zi duō fú* [多子多福]"). There was no birth control or family planning until the People's Republic of China (PRC) was established in 1949. However, the new government had inconsistent population policies in the past seven decades. Between 1949 and the mid-1950s, population growth was initially seen as a necessary means for economic development, and the government encouraged couples to have more children (Fitzpatrick, 2009). As a result, the population increased dramatically. Such population growth took a toll on the nation's economy and food supply. In 1955, Chinese leaders introduced the concept of state-controlled family planning (国家计划生育) and it has been the center of China's approach to population control (Greenhalgh, 2003b). Reproduction was planned and controlled by the state on the basis of the collective good. However, the efforts to control population growth were reversed during the Great Leap Forward movement ("*dà yuè jìn*" 大跃进) in 1958. A large population was once again considered to be an asset to economic growth. As a result, China's fertility rebounded significantly. Unrestrained population growth, a falling mortality rate, and concurrent improvements in health care resulted in a demographic explosion in China that taxed the country beyond its economic and political resources. In response to the population crisis, Chinese government launched a birth-control campaign and implemented the One-Child Policy (OCP) (独生子女政策) in 1979. Although it has been controversial, and drawn many international criticisms, the One-Child Policy (OCP) has dramatically decreased the number of Chinese population. Moreover, the One-Child Policy (OCP) has

promoted the accumulation of human capital and increased per capita outcome. Finally, the One-Child Policy has unintentionally empowered singleton girls and narrowed the gender inequality gap (Liu, 2016).

After three decades of One-Child Policy and strict population control, however, China is facing the challenges of irreversible population aging, labor shortage, and economic slowdown and stagnation. Under such pressure, Chinese government implemented Universal Two-Child Policy or so-called *quán miàn shuāng zǐ zhèng cè* (全面双子政策) granted all couples the right to have a second child (Wang, Gu, & Cai, 2016).

Both the One-Child Policy and the Universal Two-Child Policy have profound impact on family investment in children's human capital and parenting. Contrary to baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) or even earlier generations, which are infamous for intra-family discrimination against girls, Generation X and Millennial parents tend to invest more human capital in the only child regardless of the child's gender. Unlike the previous generations, Generation X and Millennial moms are more likely to stay at home and be a full-time mom and wife. In the cases I discussed earlier, all three moms tried to go back to work but found it was challenging to fit in after they left their job for a couple of years. The job they had was demanding and time consuming. It took away the time and energy they would rather spend with their children. In Pao Pao's case, both parents quit their jobs and started an online business, so that they would have a flexible schedule to raise Pao Pao. In Yo Yo and Xinyu's case, they become full-time moms, taking care of their children and making all decisions by themselves. This is so-called widowed parenting (丧偶式教育).

When asked about parenting philosophy, all moms talked about how torn they felt in China's social and cultural environment. On the one hand, they wish their children to be happy, be healthy, and be themselves; but on the other hand, they were "forced" to push their children to their edge, so that they would not lose at the starting line. They wish their children to have a playful childhood; however, the fierce competitions starting at an early age make it impossible to let children be children. As Yo Yo reflected, she sometimes treated her 7-year-old son as an adult, even though she acknowledged that was against the science of child development. The moms I interviewed all expressed their helplessness under China's education system, which emphasizes so much on the test scores.

When it comes to the impact of globalization on parenting, the parents admitted that they have not thought about it. However, all children in

my case study are taking English lessons, either online or in after school programs. The parents also indicated that they would be open to send their children to study abroad, which is aligned with the survey results by Sina Data Center. Finally, comparing to the previous generations, Generation X and Millennial parents rely more on the Internet for educational resources and information. Furthermore, Generation X and Millennial parents spend more on electronic devices and Apps for their children. Chinese children are introduced to technology at a younger age and in a faster pace, which may or may not serve them in the global competition. The new generation growing up online may be familiar with technology, but they may live in an isolated virtual world and lack social skills to interact with people.

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CHAPTER 6

Early Childhood Parental Philosophies and Practices in Urban India: Education, Care, and Well-Being of Young Children in a Society Shaped by Traditional and Global Forces

Amita Gupta

Introduction

It has been well documented that the parent–child relationship is a critical factor in the social development of children and in the shaping of behaviors, beliefs, values, and attitudes that the child will learn. Bush and Peterson (2013) note that the family socialization process which consists of "interpersonal dynamics within families provides the means for transferring important values to the young, constructing shared meanings, and providing models for instilling psychosocial outcomes in children." Children are seen to internalize societal values and expectations that are valued by families and other social institutions (Inkeles, 1968; Parsons & Bales, 1955; Peterson & Hann, 1999). Children are, in return, instrumental in influencing institutions and individuals within their ecological contexts and culture groups (Crosnoe & Cavanagh, 2010; Kuczynski, 2003; Trawick-Smith, 1997).

Two concepts will be seen to run through the findings and discussion in this chapter: Bourdieu's *embodied cultural capital* which "takes the form of

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long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body" (Bourdieu, 1987, p. 47). This will be clarified in the section that undertakes the discussion of how value has been placed by Indian parents on education. The second concept is *habitus* which is described by Grenfell and James (1998) as, "social inheritance…implying a habit or unthinking-ness in actions and dispositions…to act in a certain way, to grasp experience in a certain way, to think in a certain way" (pp. 14–15). This concept is further clarified in the section which discusses the priority Indian parents give to behaviors such as family bonding.

Parental beliefs and practices in India are best understood when contextualized within the socio-cultural-economic climate of Indian society, taking into consideration the influences of age-old traditional philosophies as well as the current forces of globalization. Scholars over the years have consistently argued that childhood is a social construction shaped by a society's history, economics and institutional structures like schooling (Aries, 1962), and the understanding of childhood needs to be situated within a social and cultural context (Corsaro, 2005). A deeper understanding of children and childhood guided by the representation of childhood in mythology, cultural history, spiritual history, art, literature, and education results in an image of the child that symbolizes any cultural group's deeper assumptions regarding human nature, human forms of knowledge, and the meaning of the human life cycle (Kennedy, 2000). These understandings of how children and childhood are socioculturally constructed have implications on the day-to-day relationships between adults and children, on parenting and teaching practices. It is, then, first necessary to clarify how concepts like childhood and motherhood are conceptualized within these systems of socio-cultural-spiritual beliefs that form the foundations of much of the Indian worldview. Although traditional images of the child continue to prevail through Indian society, the current impact of globalization is also clearly visible especially on families who have been exposed to western education and the technology of social media.

This chapter will include an overview of urban middle-class parents' perspectives on the care, education, and well-being of young children in urban India and conclude with a discussion to examine how parents' beliefs and practices square with the forces of globalization and India's recent educational policy reforms. A brief description of the research design will be followed by a discussion of findings that will serve to illustrate how parents' perceptions of their children might fit into traditional sociocultural

constructions of childhood and adult–child continuity; Indian parents' attitudes with regard to the education of their young children; and the influence of globalization on their parental beliefs and practices.

Research Methods

A survey-based inquiry was conducted to gather information on the beliefs and attitudes of Indian parents toward child-rearing and education. The broad objective of the study was to gain insights into Indian parents' perceptions on adult–child relationships including those with extended family; parents' attitudes with regard to the education of their young children; parents' preferences for the skills and behaviors which in their view were important for their children to learn; and the impact of globalization, if any, on their parental beliefs and practices. The survey consisted of open-ended questions to which parents could provide narrative and descriptive responses. The survey questionnaires were distributed electronically, accompanied by consent forms explaining the purpose of the study and assuring participants of the confidentiality of their responses and asking for their written consent. Participants could return the signed and completed surveys either electronically or by mail.

Participants

For this study, a small but diverse sample of parents was recruited by word of mouth and was required to have at least one young child between the ages of 1-8 years. Parents were required themselves to have been born and raised in India. Surveys were sent out to potential parent participants of 35 families of which a total of twenty-two families responded. Of these, seventeen families were currently living and raising their children in India; five families were currently living and raising their children in the United States but had immigrated to the United States after having completed their schooling in India.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to collect information about early childhood care and education (ECCE) practices as well as parental philosophies concerning early care and education by surveying parents of young children on specific topics such as values and traditions they had learned from their

parents that they would like to, or not, pass on to their children; the role of the extended family in caregiving and child-rearing; how they described their parenting styles and how it might be different from that of their own parents; educational expectations they had for their children; qualities they most wanted their child to develop; the most important educational expectations they had for their child; how they viewed the influence of globalization on their parenting practices; skills and knowledge they would like their child to learn most to succeed in a global economy. The end goal was to understand current perceptions of Indian parents with regard to the early childhood education and care of their young children in an age of globalization within densely populated and competitive urban hubs in India.

Demographic Backgrounds

Demographic responses to the survey indicated that the participants included families living in large cities in northern India (6), central-western India (6), eastern India (1), southern India (4), and those living in the United States as recent immigrants (5). The languages spoken by the families included English, Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada. The primary languages spoken by the families at home were English (12), Hindi (6), Bengali (2), Tamil (2), Telugu (1), and Kannada (1). Socioeconomically, the participants identified themselves as being from middle-class and upper-middle-class backgrounds. Middle class in India refers to a sizeable population in the country constituting about 400 million people and includes families from a wide range of social and occupational groups as described in Chapter 3 of this book. In most of the families included in this study, both parents were educated with professional degrees. Parent participants who worked professionally were either doctors, engineers or employed in the finance, management and technology industries. One parent was a professional chef, and another worked in Human Resources. Religions observed by the participant families included Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism. The age of the mothers and fathers ranged between 27 and 40 years. All the participants listed being married and responses indicated that all families were traditional two-parent families with a mother and a father. This family pattern was not by design but reflects the structure of the majority of families in the larger Indian society.

Findings based on data analysis illuminated Indian parents' perceptions, beliefs, and their child-rearing practices in the following categories: the

adult–child continuity; the value placed on knowledge, learning, and education; the importance given to strong character development and well-being; and the parents' perceptions on the influence of globalization on their parenting. The data also provided evidence to support the concepts of childhood and motherhood as being culturally constructed within the context of Indian society. These topics will be discussed in more detail below, starting with the last as it will provide a background context for examining the other topics.

Contextualizing Childhood and Motherhood in India

Childhood

Indian society has traditionally been one in which the "child has often enjoyed a certain dignity…a clear touch of divinity" (Nandy, 2004, p. 68). According to the 5000-year-old tradition of Ancient Indian medicine, *Ayurveda*, life begins at conception rather than at birth. The Hindi phrase commonly used for raising children is *palna-posna*, the meaning of which encompasses the notions of cradling, nurturing, and protecting. This presents quite a different connotation when compared to the English terms of "bringing up" or "raising" a child.

The young Indian child enjoys a long period of infancy stretching from birth to almost five years which excludes other developmentally defined subdivisions. The traditional Indian idea of the child being born twice is still widely acknowledged and observed, with the two births being marked by ceremonies across several Indian communities. The first birth is the actual "biological" birth of the infant. The second "social" birth is marked at any time between the ages of five and ten years. The "social" birth symbolizes the child's separation from the adult–child unit and his birth into the larger community as an individual member of society. This extended period of childhood results in a general acceptance of a developmental continuum in which infancy and childhood are recognized for a longer duration of time. Kakar (1981) has described the young child seen within the Hindu worldview as a gift from God: energetic, mischievous, charming, lovable, intelligent, competent, and playful. Until the age of five years, it is very acceptable for this infant-child to be suckled, carried around, crooned to, snuggled, fed, clothed, and cleaned by the adult caregivers, filling the child with the belief that the elders in her world love and protect her. The

school-going child is further told that her teacher is a very important and highly respected adult in her life. It must be noted here that although this traditional view of the child is generally widespread in Indian society there are exceptions and instances of child abuse and neglect can be seen in individual families across all socioeconomic groups.

Motherhood

A similar divinity has been attributed to the concept of motherhood in Hindu society where the notion of motherhood is revered as a moral and religious ideal (Kakar, 1981). The words for mother (*ma*) and strength (*shakti*) are often used in juxtaposition implying that a powerful force is associated with a mother's love energy. The Indian baby is born within these conditions and is nurtured and protected by the strength of not only a biological mother, but all the other mothers in the extended family as well. The Indian woman in her role as mother focuses all of her energies on her child, from the fury of her wrath directed toward any who would harm her child, to the tenderness of her love directed toward the child itself (Kakar, 1981). In the absence of the mother, the child's grandmothers, aunts, older sisters, and even maidservants are allowed to readily slip into the mother's role. The Indian mother spends a lot of time in close physical contact with her child through activities like breast-feeding, daily massages, and co-sleeping. The child is rarely ever left alone and is carried around by the mother or another caregiver as they go about their work.

Against the backdrop of this general understanding of how childhood and parenthood (especially motherhood) have been traditionally viewed in Indian society the perceptions of some modern-day Indian parents were obtained from a survey-based study. The above images of childhood and motherhood were revealed in many of the responses to what the participants found to be most meaningful in their parenting experiences:

Manvi: …even when the kids were babies – I used to enjoy the chores involved & used to feel a sense of accomplishment – in putting them to bed or feeding them a meal etc. I love to see the learning process - & observe how the kids learn from their outside world. Life is more meaningful when you have little ones around!

Prerna: Watching them grow with love, providing healthy meals, being there for them! Sharing my culture with the little ones, sharing foods, festivals, clothing, helping the little ones understand the family tree and our journey.

Surekha: Care and Friendship. My girls should be able to see home as an environment full of love and trust. They should be able to share all their thoughts and experiences with their parents.
Meera: The MOST meaningful aspect is to create a safe, loving and harmonious atmosphere at home.

The mother–child bond was also clearly reflected in the responses to the survey questions. To begin with, eighteen of the twenty-two surveys were completed by mothers. In seven of the families, one parent stayed home for childcare despite having a professional degree, and of these six were stay-at-home mothers and only one was a stay-at-home father. This is a realistic reflection of Indian middle-class families even today where the responsibility of home and children is mostly taken up by the mother even if she is a working mother. For Indian mothers, staying at home is important in order to best support their children's education and development, and it is a valued and prioritized within the Indian community (Chanderbhan-Forde, 2010).

Other mothers alluded to the strong bond between mother and child, and the life-altering experience of motherhood in their reflections on the most meaningful parts of parenting:

Humera: The sense of caring so deeply and responsibly as one hasn't before, which is reinforced by the complete faith and love that someone so small and vulnerable places in you.
Ishita: Experiencing unconditional love, laughter and emotional connect with the child…Caring for a child in a way that's very different from any other experience before.
Manya: Having the opportunity to shape and mold young minds and hearts of our boys. Having unconditional love for our children…
Nitya: Unselfish love
Meghna: The bond that we make
Shakun: the unconditional love and happiness it has given me.

There was also the commonly held view of motherhood being a gift, and many mothers in the study expressed feeling blessed at having this opportunity. The participants approached the role and responsibility of parenting with a high degree of seriousness:

Bijoya: Patience makes everything better… motherhood taught me this… I feel blessed and very happy to have a kid like my daughter… every day I learn.

Kalpi: …the word parent itself is a gifted one where everyone will not have those experience and opportunity. Being a parent is a role that can bring you great joy and happiness as well as challenges. Taking care of their discipline, character and their needs.

In the next section, I will discuss the findings related to the notion of adult–child continuity.

Adult–Child Continuity Across Generations

In a culture that is strongly group-oriented, collectivist, and interdependent, the Indian family is a key social institution and the hub of all activity in a child's life from the moment of birth (Tuli, 2012). Multigenerational living allows for adults and children to physically be a part of each other's worlds more intimately and for a longer period of time. The family extends laterally and the community is almost always included in the definition of the extended family. There are, of course, exceptions which are shaped by variations in the sociocultural contexts of individual families and communities given the diversity of India. But, by and large, children are seen and heard throughout the house, running in and out of rooms freely even if there is a gathering of adults in session. Parents happily allow their children to sleep with them until the age of five years or even longer. Typically, mothers go about doing their daily chores, holding onto their young children on their hip. It is also quite common to find 3–4 generations of the same family living together as a joint family or close-by, and interacting closely with each other on a regular basis. Children's socialization is influenced not only by parents but also by the regular interactions and shared experiences with grandparents, extended family, neighbors, as well as members of the larger community and other diverse aspects of the child's immediate environment and broader social context (Bornstein & Sawyer, 2006; Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). A change that is noticeable in parenting roles is that the millennium dads are stepping in actively as engaged caregivers of their children thus challenging the gender stereotypes among Indian parents.

In this study, when asked to identify the primary caregiver for the child, fourteen families listed both mothers and fathers, three families included

grandparents, and eight families listed the mother. Despite the central role that Indian mothers play in child-rearing, the raising of children is definitely observed to be a shared experience with family, friends, and neighbors (Chaudhary, 2004; Seymour, 1999). Even as family size decreases due to increasing social and urban mobility as young parents move out of their ancestral homes to take up out-of-town jobs, the essence of the family continues to be defined by a sense of "jointedness" (Tuli, 2012). In response to the question on the role of extended family, the findings indicated close intergenerational relationships. There was almost a 100% response rate suggesting that being close to grandparents and extended family was very important to them. Many of the parents considered the bonding of their children with extended family to be critically important and went out of their way to create opportunities for such experiences. In several cases, the parent participants had made a conscious decision to relocate closer to where grandparents lived, and even plan their family vacations so that time would be spent with extended family.

Proximity and Availability of Grandparents

Of the twenty-two families surveyed, five were recent immigrants in the United States and did not live close to grandparents and immediate family. Of the seventeen who lived in India, thirteen had grandparents living in the same city; six families were joint families living in the same house; and four families had grandparents living within two miles of their homes. The remaining four out of the seventeen families in India had grandparents living in another city but extended family like aunts, uncles, cousins lived nearby and helped out whenever needed. Most grandparents and extended family members helped out with childcare, and other household chores. Every participating family acknowledged the immense value of grandparents' help as evidenced in the sample responses below:

Jasmine: Maternal Grandparents, though working, live about 6 blocks away but have been the sole support systems for the parents.

Kanika: We have made a conscious choice to live close to extended family, primarily as this allows us (parents) to travel for work, and also find time for leisure. Both sets of grandparents live about 30 min away. They pitch in as and when required

Meera: Grandmother is a great support in our family. Without her support it would be extremely difficult to raise my children. My children are very close to their grandmother and other relatives.

Ruchira: We live in an extended family with granddad and a great-grandmother in our home. Grand-dad does help in taking care of both the children

Shared Experiences with Grandparents

Another survey question asked parents to describe some of the experiences their children shared with their grandparents. There was no one common activity mentioned that the children shared with their grandparents but experiences ranged from playing games, reading books, watching films, shopping, going to the park, eating meals together, chit-chatting and family discussions, going to museums, other family outings, helping with homework, observing traditions and holiday celebrations, etc. In almost all cases, the responses implied that merely being in the presence of each other led to greater bonding across generations. The following responses illustrate these sentiments:

Bijoya: My daughter just loves d presence of her grandparents… she become super excited to play with them…. She shows all her toys to them… when she put on any new dress… if her Nana Nani (maternal grandparents) is at home … she will show them first…This is very important for me… that is why I keep calling my parents and my mother in law to stay at our place for at least a week or two… as grandparents also plays a very imp. role in overall development of child…

Kanika: Having family close by… is a big advantage for our child as he learns many 'old world' values from his grandparents… This is very important to us as parents…because time with grandparents creates the opportunity for the kinds of experiences that only grandparents can provide; stories of family history, what the child's parents were like as children etc.…At a deeper level, it is the first step for our child to feel like an integral part of something bigger than his immediate family unit.

Jeeti: He (child) gets very excited to see them in a week or maybe in 15 days, whenever we meet our family…he touches their feet to take blessings from them. That is the best thing he learnt from our family that how to respect their elder and their loved ones… He is very fond of his grandparents and uncle and aunt as well.

Sustaining Long-Distance Intergenerational Relationships

Even when extended family members lived in another city, or a far-away country as was the case in the five families who had emigrated to the United States, parents made a conscious decision in maintaining regular contact with the rest of their family. In many instances, parents and grandparents appeared to go the extra mile to ensure that the intergenerational relationships were sustained, and often parents recognized that the bond was important and beneficial to all generations involved.

> *Ishita*: Since all of the extended family is spread across cities, it is difficult to spend regular time with extended family. However face time, family photos and phone calls are used to familiarize the child with extended family. It is very important for us to make sure that child knows family members, grandparents, aunts and uncles so we also try to plan vacations in a way that we can meet and spend time with different members of the extended family.
>
> *Prerna*: Skype calls on weekends, will show a new dance learned on the video call, will chat for some time, but not extensively. Maybe talk a few minutes about their vacation or a new school. Very important in the absence of frequent visitation.
>
> *Surekha*: Kids are able to meet and play with two of their cousins and Aunt/Uncle approximately every other month. Facetime with the rest of the extended family in India. We try that they meet them at least once every year. Interaction with extended family is very important to us.
>
> *Manvi*: We visit India once a year and then the kids get to meet all of their aunts and uncles and cousins – and it's a very busy time. Kids usually play outside and we plan fun outdoor activities together. The kids treasure the time they spend in India and often talk about it at home – it has been very important for them to spend that time with their family in India.

In a study by Jambunathan, Burts, and Pierce (2000) on ethnic minority groups in the United States, the researchers found that ethnic minority mothers professed the importance of extended family in terms of caring and supporting each other. This was also the case with the respondents in this study and most emphasized the involvement of the extended family.

Preserving Family Culture and Heritage

The importance given to family bonding was highlighted when parents were asked the question "What family traditions or rituals that you learned

from your parents do you want to pass on to your child/children, and why?" Responses included a range of traditions but the most frequently mentioned were eating meals together as a family (12), and celebrating festivals and birthdays together (13). Passing on the family's cultural heritage with regard to faith, language, and cuisine was cited as a significant reason for family bonding. Specific holidays mentioned by the parent participants included a diverse range of religious celebrations such as *Diwali, Raksha Bandhan, Durga Pooja, Gur Purab, Sankranti*, and summer vacations with grandparents.

Bijoya: Rituals like celebrating all d festivals.. birthdays together with family… because I think these are d ways through which you get connected with ur near and dear ones….and u understand relationships better… which ultimately makes u understand humanity…

Humera: I would like my child to inherit an understanding and appreciation of my Sikh heritage, which has been a strong influence in my life through my parents and grandparents.

Ishita: Celebrating traditional festivals like Durga puja, and some of the family rituals around them…Respecting elders in the family; Knowing how to converse in the mother tongue (Bengali) with family members and enjoying Bengali food and music; having meal together as well…

Jeeti: Our Indian traditions and rituals I learnt from my parents and I want my baby to carry in his future…like guru purav..diwali..rakshabandhan..which is very imp…

Manvi: We try to eat dinner together most days and on the weekends – we do long lazy lunches at home. We also celebrate birthdays and festivals such as Diwali, Rakhi etc. at home. We want to pass these on to the kids as these traditions inculcate and show love, value of family time and a sense of connectedness to their Indian roots.

Practices of child-rearing in India may appear as though they encourage children to depend too heavily on the help of adults, and it may seem that children in India may not become as independent at as early an age as their American counterparts. But in fact, children allow their parents and grandparents to do things for them because of the pleasure it brings to the older generation (Gupta, 2006, 2013). This is recognized and honored, so early dependency is not viewed as being negative. The larger picture of the human life cycle in India presents the adult–child relationship as one of interdependency. People believe that their lives are physically, emotionally and financially connected across generations, and that there exists a cyclical relationship between a child and an adult. Even after having grown

up, children of most Indian families maintain their intimate connections to their parents, looking after them and providing for them in their old age. This concept of interdependency seems to lead to closer family bonds and stronger relationships within families and communities. Importantly, although interdependency is promoted in the home environment between family members, the child is encouraged to develop independence and self-reliance outside of the home and family.

In the next section, the emphasis and value placed on education in the Indian culture will be contextualized, examined, and discussed with regard to the research findings.

Knowledge, Learning, and Education Given a Priority

Education, knowledge, and learning have, for centuries, been held in high regard within the Indian cultural worldview. Ancient Indian texts and scriptures strongly emphasized these concepts, documenting the widespread prevalence of *gurukuls* or forest schools. In fact, the term *guru* is the Sanskrit word for a master teacher in Ancient India. Later in Indian history, there was an importance given to formal institutional examination-oriented schooling under the impact of European colonization. And more recently, in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, formal school and college education has been seen as essential for success and social mobility in India's overcrowded and competitive job market. Being educated and literate in English were important assets in India's struggle for independence under colonial rule, and after independence national and state governments heavily emphasized education as a way to modernize and improve the newly independent nation of India (Bhattacharya & Schopeley, 2004).

Chanderbhan-Forde (2010) also lists specific factors that are seen to influence Indian parents' beliefs about education which include: (1) the encouragement and support they got from their own parents; (2) the need to achieve high academically in order to be successful in the face of high level of competition for a limited number of places at good schools and colleges; (3) the circumstances in Indian society with regard to overpopulation and economics making education a necessary prerequisite to obtain the kind of job that would be required to maintain a good standard of living in India; (4) India's struggle against colonialism and the belief that only education could help equalize the colonized with the colonizers; and (5) indigenous educational traditions in which India's system of education dating back

thousands of years and derived from the Vedic scriptures has shaped the Indian reverence for education (Chanderbhan-Forde, 2010, pp. 82–88).

The last point needs further elaboration as it might be the most unfamiliar to the reader. For thousands of years, the learning and acquisition of knowledge has been highly valued in Indian society and has a spiritual basis rooted in ancient Hindu scriptures such as the *Veda* and the *Upanishad*. According to Hindu philosophy, the purpose of life is to learn about one's Self, and about the universe. This implies opening up the mind and expanding its cognition of the universe. In other words, this kind of knowledge acquisition is not based on rote learning but rather on comprehension. According to the Upanishad texts "*sa vidya ya vimuktaye*," which means proper knowledge is only that which frees the mind from bondage and leads it to liberation. Ancient Indian educators laid great emphasis on the acquisition of all knowledge and believed that an individual should be accorded honor and respect based on, in order of importance, erudition, work, age, and wealth (Achyuthan, 1974). There are multiple instances in the ancient texts where concepts such as the intellect, intelligence, knowledge, the process of learning, and so forth are discussed specifically and thoughtfully in great details.

The term intelligence itself has been variously defined in Ancient Indian texts. Kautilya, a prominent scholar and advisor to an emperor in the fourth century B.C., considered intelligence to be the capacity for work. In his historically famous book on policy, *Arthashastra*, Kautilya listed the qualities of the intellect as including inquiry, hearing, perception, retention in memory, reflection, deliberation, inference, and steadfast adherence to the conclusions. Another scholar Vishnumitra, authored the famous *Panchatantra* tales written prior to the sixth century B.C. that later became the model for the more modern Aesop's Fables; its stories are a staple of childhood written and oral literature in India even today. In his writings, Vishnumitra defined intelligence as the power that gives us control over the world. These conceptualizations of intelligence with its multiple dimensions are clearly related to the notion of the intellect. Additionally, it was believed that the intellect was influenced by both hereditary and environmental factors. Schools as special places where knowledge is imparted and learning is encouraged have been in existence in India for more than 3000 years. One of the social rites of passage performed when the child was twelve years old was to mark the time when the child became a student and embarked on the educational stage of life that would be lived in the *gurukul*, the forest

or community school of the *guru* or teacher (Achyuthan, 1974; Altekar, 1965).

The development of other cognitive abilities such as concentration, focus, self-reflection, and memory was important educational ideas as well in Ancient India. Memory was considered to be an innate attribute of the human mind and an important first step in the learning process. Even thousands of years ago, the concept of memory was described in Ancient Indian texts as consisting of four distinct cognitive steps in the learning process: *avagraha*, when a general knowledge of an external object is obtained through contact with sensory organs; *iha*, when we desire to have detailed knowledge of the object by comparing its similarities and differences with other known objects; *avaya*, when we desire to get the knowledge corroborated; and *dharana*, when the permanent impression of an object assists our knowledge (Vyas, 1981).

With education being so highly valued in Indian society since ancient times, it is not surprising that generations of families have imbibed this value and typically invested heavily in their child's education. It is common to see Indian parents across all socioeconomic classes aggressively save finances in order to be able to spend on the best education they can afford for their children. In a society that is marked with the rigid hierarchy of a caste system, there is a conscious effort on the part of families from socioeconomically marginalized communities to want their children to do better in life. They view it as an investment and recognize a good education to be a requirement for a way out of poverty and toward upward social mobility.

Bhattacharya and Schopeley (2004) emphasize the seriousness with which Indian parents take the responsibility of caring for and educating their children: "*Dharma* refers to rules that depict virtuous and appropriate behavior. The duty of parents to care for their children is based on the belief that God has entrusted the parents with the care of those children; the reciprocal duty and honor due to parents from children arises from the belief that the parents are acting as God's earthly representatives" (p. 85). Obligation to family is a foundational value of Indian society, regardless of class and caste… "in examining parental expectations and children's compliance with these expectations among Indian families, it is important to understand that concepts from the Hindu religion play a role in creating expectations" (Chanderbhan-Forde, 2010, p. 11).

Parent participants were asked in the survey what they expected their children to learn. Going to school and becoming educated was a non-negotiable goal parents had for their children. Not surprisingly, knowledge

and learning were taken for granted and assumed as end goals. In addition, socio-emotional and moral development of their children was also important objectives for the parents. Some responses to the question are presented below:

Humera: I expect my child to absorb and enjoy knowledge from a range of different sources including school, but also reading, other media, social interaction, etc. I look at knowledge as an eclectic mix of information derived from a range of interest areas for the child.

Meghna: My child shall understand everything by thinking on his own, have the ability to analyze and not just mug up to score marks.

Prerna: Want them to absorb knowledge, not learn a text book by rote, understand importance of history, arts and culture on humanity, for them to understand human rights, for them to have an interest in learning and problem solving, critical thinking and making conscious choices, be independent and responsible, decent individuals.

Sucheta: To understand the concepts of teaching at school. To have high emotional stability.

Ruchira: Eating meals together, it's not about eating food, it's all about the bond we create with the family members. After work, everyone sits at the table and shares their day and everybody adds on to the conversation. Teaching my child to wait for everyone to be at the table and eat and wait for all to finish before you leave the table.

Shakun: eating all meals together and waiting on the table till everyone finishes…

Nitya: We want to develop good values and let them decide what they want to be. We can steer them in right direction but can't force on them to be what they don't want.

Twentieth-century Indian philosophers and educators like Tagore Gandhi and Krishnamurti have also placed a high value on knowledge—not just rote memorization of facts but the kind of knowledge that expands and diversifies one's understandings of the human condition and the nature of the universe—the real goal of education should be to ensure that schools will prepare the child for both outer and inner goodness. According to Krishnamurti (1974), current education seems to focus more on helping individuals know so much about other things but they know so little about themselves; and yet, this learning about the self by traveling inward is not only a much harder journey than going to the moon, but it has to be done alone, without the guidance of books and theories.

Findings from the survey revealed that even as most parents placed an emphasis on non-academic learning as being most important for their children, their frequent use of terms like education, academics, success, and hard work, seems to suggest that schooling was taken very seriously and parents expected their children to learn formal academics in school.

Aalam: We want Amina to learn how to learn in school. We don't care if she gets straight A's. We would rather she can write better papers and do research, think critically and be curious about things through school that will help her choose her path going forward.
Keshav: We want our child to learn values. Academics does matters which the child can learn thru formal schooling system.
Manvi: I want my kids to learn and grow and go through formal education…
Manya: That's not to say that we don't want our children to focus on their academics. Of course we want them to learn and grow.
Shakun: my child should give her best. Put her best foot forward. That does not mean she needs to come first but it means she needs to be focused on the things she does small or big. I should see effort being put and not a last minute breeze thru attitude.
Kanika: We expect our child to be happy at school, to enjoy the experience of learning, and to meet his potential, whatever that may be. If in doing so he does well academically, then that is an added bonus.
Ishita: Sound education is extremely key- which is quite similar to what our parents expected as well. Except that now, children would be expected to be more well-rounded in terms of academic qualifications as well as developing other interests.
Jasmine: However I just want my baby to know everything. For me, it's not important to excel but to learn everything you can with clarity…

Bhattacharya and Schopeley (2004) note that Indian parents openly express their expectations of their children, including academic achievement, in terms of fulfilling family obligations and enhancing family pride and prestige (p. 85). Based on the survey findings, most parent participants did equally prioritize the formal and informal education of their children, with the hope that their children would develop holistically and multidimensionally. In a study by Chanderbhan-Forde (2010), Indian parents were seen to value education as being essential for achieving success in life because education could ensure financial security and make for a better person which were the goals they had for their children.

Children's Well-Being Linked to High Moral Character

The interlocked system of ancient Indian philosophy and psychology is based on the assumption that there is enormous potential hidden in the human mind to seek answers to fundamental puzzles such as the purpose of life, the meaning of being human, the causes of suffering, the secret to a happy and peaceful life, the relationship between human energy and the universe, and so forth. Within the Indian worldview, the notion of one's well-being is often associated with spirituality—the idea that human beings attain a state of well-being if they live by the rules and codes of conduct that have been highlighted within their particular culture. These rules pertain to a wide variety of daily habits that refer to one's physical, mental, social, emotional, moral, and intellectual growth.

Most parents desire for their children to be healthy and feel secure. However, the specific definitions for this universal goal may differ from culture to culture. "For example, in many Asian countries, a parental goal is to socialize a quiet, compliant, reserved child. Such a goal, if met, appears to ensure the acceptance of adults and peers in the child's social community. And yet, in North America and Southern Europe, such a goal, if met, would result in peer rejection and difficulty in the social world. Consequently, North American and Southern European parents appear to have as a parenting goal, the socialization of the potentially gregarious, outgoing child" Rubin and Chung (2006, p. vii).

Many ancient Indian spiritual texts have outlined specifics about diet, physical exercise, social roles and responsibilities, codes of conduct, and so forth. Asa result, Indian parenting is often seen to be a values-based parenting. Adults in India still draw upon these cultural ideas as guidelines to providing for their children and helping them achieve a state of well-being in terms of love, friendships, high character values, and a sense of morality. "People are bound up by their duty to family, to parents, to children, and to society. Parents are to be honored and cared for. The community is seen as the extended family. Values of interdependence and community are promoted. It is expected that one will live up to one's family name, and also fulfill one's *dharma* (duties) to the family and to the community. Norms of personal chastity and modesty in private and social behavior is reinforced. The practice of self-control is central to character formation" (Kulanjiyil, 2010).

When parent participants in this study were asked to respond to the survey question of "What qualities would you MOST like your child to develop as he/she grows up into an adult?" their answers were reflective of the Indian cultural worldview and the most cited qualities were:

Holding religious values, faith in God;
Eating meals together;
Being self-confident and independent;
Being respectful of others;
Being able to prioritize hard work/study;
Being honest;
Being caring, kind, and compassionate;
Having a positive attitude;
Being a good and moral human being;
Living within one's means and never borrowing;
Other terms mentioned were for the child to be happy, patient tolerant, curious, responsible and adaptable, love learning and have a clear focused mind.

It was evident by the survey responses that several parents emphasized the importance given to the formation of strong character and good habits. Presented below are examples of preferred character traits and habits that were expressed by the parent participants:

Anila: -Eating meals together, praying daily, celebrating important milestones and small achievements, doing your personal work on your own and not depending upon others, importance of studies, importance of speaking the truth, persisting and working hard to achieve your goal despite failures.

Keshav: Respecting elders, knowing the right thing, doing the right thing, celebrating each moments together with family. Because these makes a human being better social person plus it gives insights about how to live in a society.

Meera: I have learnt forgivingness and to be respectful to others from my parents. In my growing up years, my parents insisted that we keep a daily regular schedule, join the family at dinner and enjoy and play in free time. We used to be very happy when some guest or relative used to come to our house. I believe that with good habit good character is formed.

Jasmine: Just be a good human, love everyone, spread happiness and everything else follows. I believe in karmas and i feel every good thing i do, i

may not get it back as a karma but im filling a bucket for my baby with happiness n well being, which eventually he will get!

Bush and Peterson (2013) note that in most societies "parents have the primary responsibility for socializing children to demonstrate culturally acceptable qualities that at least, in part, foster children's successful functioning within and conformity to societal norms" (p. 285). Parents in this study viewed the idea of successful functioning in society as an indication of a successful and a well-lived life. There was a sense that well-being was related to how well a life would be lived by upholding moral values and developing certain behaviors favored by Indian communities.

Bijoya: I hope my daughter may full fill all her dreams… but one thing which I may wish from her is that she should remain 'Down to earth'…
Ishita: Self-confidence; Humility; Ability to adapt to different situations.
Ruchira: Clear mindset, not confused in life. Enjoy their work and life
Surekha: Self-Confidence, Focus, Contentment
Keshav: Moral human values and social etiquettes

This kind of priority given to character development occurs not only in children's homes but also in schools. There is a link between education and well-being as, according to Hindu philosophy, education was considered to be one of the most powerful channels through which an individual could attain self-knowledge, and its final goal was to uplift human character through a process of self-renewal and self-development (Nanavaty, 1973). Schools in India are often seen to promote character development in an informal curriculum that runs parallel to the mandated and prescribed academic curriculum, and many of the qualities mentioned by parents in this study are also found to be emphasized by teachers in schools (Gupta, 2013, 2014).

In the next section, we examine how Indian parents perceived the current effects of globalization, and whether it had any impact on changing their parental beliefs and practices.

The Influence of Globalization on Parental Perspectives

As described previously in Chapter 3, globalization has served prominently as a channel for bringing dominant "western" influences into the "non-west." The effects of globalization can be clearly seen in all facets of Indian society—in the westernization of media and television shows; implementation of modern banking processes; establishment of fast-food chains; specialty restaurants offering global cuisines; availability of global luxury brands for clothing, accessories; increased leisure-related travel to international destinations; availability of the latest technology in electronics; and an embrace of Euro-American educational curricula and pedagogical ideas, among others.

The survey questionnaire sought the perspective of Indian parents on their understanding of globalization by asking the parent participants what they understood by this term, and how globalization had influenced their parenting, if at all. Their responses indicated their understanding of globalization as including:

> Increased interactions, more awareness, and information;
> Increased economics and liberalization;
> Increased diversity and cultural awareness;
> A smaller world, more connectivity;
> Increased collaboration and cooperation;
> Enhanced technology and communication.

Some participants held a dual perspective on globalization as a phenomenon. For example, one of the mothers in the survey, Kanika, responded:

> Globalization has meant different things at different times; right now, I think it stands for big corporations and commodification of most public goods and services. But it also comes with some good stuff like internet access and open source access to information.

Manya, another mother, concisely summed up her understanding of globalization as being:

> Instant access to information, ability to travel easily, staying connected with others across the globe, knowledge about different cultures, lands and languages.

When asked if globalization had influenced their parenting in any way, a total of eighteen of the twenty-two parent participants expressed an explicit "yes," and only 4 wrote "no." Based on their descriptions, the influence of globalization was perceived to be mainly a kind of "westernization" that encompassed a range of western-influenced beliefs and practices: *learning specific parenting techniques* (such as using reasoning and time-outs as disciplining measures rather than scolding or spanking their children); *parenting attitudes* (behavioral expectations for children, and increased involvement of fathers in child-rearing as opposed to the more traditional hands-off role of Indian fathers); *selection of educational settings* based on western play-based learning methods for their children; and *using safer, child-friendly equipment and toys* as done in the west (such as car seats, cribs, strollers, as opposed to the widely prevalent practice in India of carrying and holding one's child).

The parent participants' responses below provide a more detailed description on whether, and how, globalization has had any role in shaping their parenting beliefs and practices:

Aalam: Certainly. We followed a routine for Amina prescribed by a British Nanny called Gina Ford. It was very effective and successful for us. She was sleeping through the night in the first 6 months. We've read about French children and how they grow up. Some development books by American authors have given us better insight.

Meera: Globalization and modernization has heavily influenced our parenting style. We try to take more initiatives to have healthy relationship with children. Fathers are becoming more nurturing and involved.

Shakun: yes for sure. The concept of not hitting one's children is a foreign method and to raise one's child by explaining and reasoning with them, rather than hitting them. Children in India have grown up getting hit.

Sucheta: Yes. I read books and parenting tips on internet at times which makes me correct myself and do better as a mother.

Humera: Yes - one absorbs influences from various things one sees, hears about and is exposed to, and applies to one's parenting techniques as well, including diet, playtime activities, music, grooming and various other things.

Ishita: Yes it is has – in terms of the resources that are now available to us on know more about child behavior, and parenting. The sort of books, toys

we can get as well as the behavior and food habits we inculcate. And how we stay connected with far flung members of the family.

Aalam: due to globalization parenting props - e.g. cribs, pacifiers, gadgets, books, toys, car seats and all kinds of stuff is available from around the world which really helps us in our parenting gig.

Globalization also influenced the parent participants by deepening their awareness on a host of other issues related to parenting practices: The adoption of global cuisines after being exposed to multiple cultures; selection of nutritional diets for their children; the use of advanced and safer technologies for their children; travel to different countries with their children; and selection of global books and music for their children. A higher level of connectivity with family members despite increased mobility over greater geographical distances was also attributed to better access through global technology.

Anila: Yes… we are much more informed, socially and technologically aware and connected and influenced by multiple cultures, cuisines and outlook.

Bijoya: Yes a lot… through this I got to know about different cultures, their lifestyle, eating habits, foods, dress. I do try to include the best of them into my lifestyle and will try to pass on to my future generations.

Keshav: Yes it has impacted us a lot. We are planning to migrate to another developed country (e.g. Canada) which is more developed in terms of providing basic requirements to its citizens. And early affordable education is one of them.

Nitya: Yes, there is more awareness for bully, suicide and forcing studies. Parenting books are more readily available

It is quite apparent that through global interactions young urban parents in India are being introduced to new and alternative perspectives on child development and education which they seem to integrate with the traditionally Indian practices based on ancestral wisdom. They are then able to draw on their new schema of parenting as and when required. Realistically speaking, young parents find themselves operating in two worlds—a more "Indian" world at home, and a more "western" world outside the home. They project that duality into their parenting as well—desirous of raising children who will uphold traditional Indian values, and at the same time also be skilled to navigate their social and business worlds which reflect western values.

In the next section, I will address firstly the issue of the large population in India, and how it relates to the competitiveness that is inherent in Indian society and which, in fact, is becoming more acute as the economy continues to globalize; and secondly, parents' perceptions of the skills that they think their children will need in order to succeed in this environment.

Navigating Global Competitiveness in India

India's Historically Competitive Educational System

In a nation where the population has crossed 1.3 billion, one finds people jostling for space and time everywhere in India, physically and metaphorically. In any given urban area, large numbers of people are seen in close proximity whether in homes with joint or extended families; on crowded streets whether in large cities, small towns, or villages; in the markets, bazaars, and departmental stores; in classrooms on school and college campuses; in the fierce job market; in cinema houses and malls; in all places of worship; in offices and other workspaces. Crowds are woven into the very fabric of Indian society and define the basic context of human existence. A space with a few human bodies would be an atypical feature. One of the first things that strike a visitor to India is the crowds and the sheer numbers of people everywhere. Personal space is defined in a very different way when living and working in crowded environments, and people get accustomed to having others in and around their personal space all the time. Most children in Indian society grow up to live with crowds and competition at home, and in educational settings. Indian children are not raised in sparsely populated towns, homes, families, and communities. Their growth happens in a context that has a high degree of social interaction dominated by intense peer and intergenerational experiences (Gupta, 2006, 2013). Children learn to wait for their turns, and to share their toys and books with siblings, cousins, and neighbors; and in schools children learn to value commodities that are scarce such as picture books, art and craft materials, and so forth.

India was ruled by the British for almost two centuries. One of the deepest and longest-lasting legacies of British colonialism was seen in the field of education. In the mid-nineteenth century, the colonial administrators implemented a new bureaucratic format for the educational system in India and required all schools supported by them to deliver instruction in the English language. The new educational system would go on to be

governed by a bureaucracy that would tightly control all aspects of schooling such as language of instruction, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and administration. This academically rigid and competitive educational approach in which students were tested, publicly ranked and admitted or promoted based on their academic scores continues to linger in the Indian school system even today despite the recent student-friendly policies.

The English language-based, test-book centered, rote memorization and examination-driven system of competitive education became largely a means whereby a class of Indian clerks and low-level bureaucrats were produced to fill key administrative positions for British officers (Saini, 2000). The impact of colonization is the complex and inexplicable cultural transaction that occurs between the colonized and the colonizers. The colonized yearn to transform themselves in the image of the colonizers. Thus, it was seen that native Indians tried hard to dress, speak, and conduct themselves like their British rulers in order to gain social privilege. Those who could afford it sent their children to schools that would educate them to be and speak like the British. Sharmila Sen writes about the pressures of growing up in India in the 70s. "Most middle-class parents tried very hard to enroll their children in private schools because state-run schools were considered inferior to even the most mediocre of private schools. In a country where jobs are scarce, enrolling one's child into the 'right' school by the age of four easily balloons into an existential crisis" (Sen, 2018, p. 15). There was a huge gap but a precarious balance between the privileged and those not so privileged, and the privileged had to try hard to maintain their status of privilege. Sen belonged to a middle-class family and lived in a middle-class neighborhood close to a *basti* or slum that contained a population living in abject poverty and hunger, who performed menial jobs of cleaning other people's filth. "The *basti* was a silent reminder of where I would end up if we slid downward. If I did poorly at school, if I married the wrong man, if my father lost his job, or if the Indian economy tilted in the wrong direction, we could end up on the other side of the garbage heap" (Sen, 2018, p. 37).

Sen's descriptions capture perfectly the ethos of competitive aspiration that generations of parents and children in India have experienced with regard to educational accomplishments, and it holds true even today. With globalization, the sphere of competition has grown, running over from

the local onto a global plane. Indian educators and parents now are influenced greatly by global methods of education as they buy into western discourses of early childhood education with its emphasis on child-centered approaches.

Parents' Perceptions

In this survey, parents were asked to respond to a question on what skills and knowledge they would like their child to learn MOST to succeed in a global economy. Responses revealed their views on living and raising a child in a globalized society and a global job market. Six of the 22 parents specifically expressed the global economy as being a competitive job-driven market. The skills mentioned by the parent participants included both knowledge-based skills and soft skills:

Diversity of thought, broader perspective, awareness, curiosity;
Flexibility, adaptability, openness to different thought processes;
Critical and analytical thinking;
Innovation and creativity;
Cross-cultural communication, clear articulation;
Self-confidence, independence;
Advanced Technology;
Research skills, willingness to learn;
Foreign language;
Entrepreneurship;
Understanding the value of things earned;
Ability to work hard;
Being respectful;
Patience and tolerance.

Details of parents' responses convey their thinking about how they would like to see their children prepared for the current world we live in, and how this may be quite different from the way they themselves were prepared in school:

Aalam: I don't think knowledge is important in a global economy. What's important is exposure and openness to different thought processes and to develop the skills to find out, research and learn new things quickly. This is not very different from the skills we really need today, however it is completely different from the skills we were taught in school.

Anila: Very similar to the current scenario…. Child should be able to have a broader perspective on all aspects of the problem at hand and be flexible

enough to retrace the path being followed if the desired results are not obtained.

Humera: I would like my child to value and develop technical skills, be entrepreneurial, comfortable with technology and innovative. These were not really the focus of our education.

Ishita: I think the one major difference in skill sets between our generation and that of our children is coping with disruptions in technology and that is something the next generation will have to necessarily cope with to stay competitive and succeed in most fields.

Jasmine: Yesterday, today or tomorrow, only a confident soul can survive the competition.

Kanika: The knowledge of at least one foreign language besides English… how technology works, and how to use it to one's advantage. How to be an effective communicator, across cultures. These skills were an added bonus in our generation, but I feel that these are now becoming essential to career success.

Nitya: Think smart, be vocal about your ideas, work hard

Prerna: To understand value of something – family, friends, food, clothing, money, choice, education, value of having something vs not having and what it takes to earn and maintain any of these

A follow-up question on the survey was "What are your dreams or goals for your child's future?" Responses to this question revealed that most parent participants were deeply committed to their child's education and would invest heavily—both emotionally and financially—in ensuring that their child got the kind of education that would allow them to succeed in a world that was sure to be competitive and challenging:

Bijoya: My husband and me are preparing ourselves to become strong financially…so that we can full fill our kids interests.

Humera: To be able to provide her with the very best of opportunities and choices at each step

Ishita: I would like my daughter to…learn and grown in an environment which gives her the opportunity to hone her skills and interests. Obviously like any parent, this would mean trying to provide her with the best education, we can afford…Grow up into a rational, confident and kind individual who is not afraid of dealing with life's many challenges.

Jasmine: …I feel everything is pre destined, he will be what he has to be, he will do what he has been born to do but the only thing I can do is to make sure he gets there and i will always be his guiding light and guarding angel.

Kanika: That he is able to find happiness with whatever life brings him. Our job as parents is to prepare him as best we can, and to model as best we can.

Keshav: Want to see her settle well in life, her choice of life.

Manya: Most importantly, we want our children to grow up to be good human beings…But we don't want them to join the rat race. If they can pick something they are truly passionate about and make that their careers, we will be thrilled.

Nitya: Be smart, kind and successful

Surekha: If it was up to me they would both be doctors. I want them to follow their dreams and find a profession which they enjoy.

Shakun: my children should be well educated and should be financially independent with their jobs.

The question, then, is what are the specific skills and attitudes that will allow urban children in India to succeed and live competently in the globalized and densely populated towns and cities of the nation? And how would teachers approach teaching in situations with large class sizes? In an earlier study which examined the perceptions and practices of early childhood teachers in urban schools in India (Gupta, 2006, 2013) the early childhood classrooms included in the study were found to have class sizes of 30–40 students with 2 teachers in PreK and then 1 teacher in grades K and up. One of the PreK teachers in that study referred to Indian society as "*such a competitive world. Everybody wants to become something. Probably that's why they put so much pressure on their children—there's so much competition. I don't blame parents also. It was so much easier to get admissions earlier—jobs. Now it's so much tougher. Cut off marks [minimum scores for entry into professional colleges] are also so much higher. But still I don't pressurize my children so much. Theek hai [okay]—there's a limit. You do your best and that's it*" (Vasudha in Gupta, 2006, 2013).

When working with large numbers, maintaining some semblance of order becomes key for any activity to be productive and constructive. However, although the 40 students in a classroom were physically restricted in terms of space and were all engaged in working on one activity or lesson at the same time, there were no apparent signs of submission, cowering, fear, or inertia in the room. Rather, observations of classrooms revealed high levels of energy in the form of general enthusiasm and eagerness in the rapid raising of hands as students excitedly vied for a turn to answer questions and give comments; jumped to their feet in their eagerness to participate in the conversations with teachers; walked up to the teacher to

clarify assignments without any hesitation; chattily discussed the content of the lessons with the teachers; expressed their own opinions and offered their own solutions to situations. The students, their faces bright and their eyes sparkling, were alert and quick to respond, and there was, amidst a sense of humor and frequent laughter, a tangible feeling of comfort, ease, and energy on the part of the teachers as well as the students (Gupta, 2006, 2013).

Shifting Parental Styles

Based on findings of a study on ethnic minority groups in the United States by Jambunathan et al. (2000), the parenting practices of Indian parents in the United States were found to incorporate the importance of familial bonds, strong religious beliefs, and familial solidarity values. In traditionally patriarchal joint families, the mother was seen to be the primary caregiver and nurturer, while the father was perceived to be the dominant and stern parent (Ross, 1967 as cited in Jambunathan et al., 2000, p. 405). Although historically Indian families have often lived in multigenerational units in one house as a joint family (Roopnarine & Hossain, 1992), recent decades have witnessed a high degree of mobility and families have gradually moved away from large joint family structures toward more nuclear units as individuals have moved across cities and countries in search of better jobs. Among Euro-American families, on the other hand, authoritative parenting can be seen to occur widely (Hamner & Turner, 1990). This style makes use of inductive reasoning with children; allows choices for their children; encourages children to be independent, open, honest, active explorers and problem solvers; and uses a high rate of verbal language (Jambunathan et al., 2000, p. 396).

Based on the survey with Indian parents, the influence of globalization and westernization was quite evident as parents expressed their desire for children to be more independent, to have more freedom in exploring their interests and making career choices based upon their individual passion and interests. A generation ago this might not have been the case and parenting in India would have been more authoritarian (strict and coercive) as influenced by the centuries-long British colonial rule. Shifts in parenting styles were somewhat evident as the parent participants reflected upon their interactions with their own parents:

Kanika: We use time-outs, firm voice and most often a discussion about what has happened and why it should not have happened. It was common for my mother, as well as my husband's parents to smack/spank us. We have taken a conscious decision not to hit our child.
Keshav: In our time our parents used to scold us a lot if any mischief is done. Sometimes slapped as well. However we don't want to do that with our kid.

From some of the responses, it seemed that Euro-American progressivism had influenced Indian parents in their child-rearing practices. The parent–child relationship was perceived differently where the parents viewed the child as an adult, reasoned with them, gave them opportunities to explain themselves. Several parents used phrases that indicated this influence:

"respect my child & his feelings"
"Listen to them and respect their opinion"
"explain the rationale behind a decision"
"I use Playway method to teach my kid everything"
"sending her off to a thinking corner (similar to a time out)"
"they get time out"
"a reward chart at home that we use for rewarding good behaviour & tagging bad behavior."

Terms such as respecting feelings and opinions, time-outs, reward charts, thinking corner, and reasoning strategies are very western terms and couched in Euro-American discourses of behaviorism and progressive education. When asked about disciplining approaches, at least 8 parents specifically used the term "timeout," 7 parents used the term "reason" to discuss or explain a wrongdoing with their child, and 6 parents used some form of reward or deprivation. Almost none of the respondents utilized spanking as a form of punishment. This was different from parents a generation ago who, under the influence of British colonialism, often treated children as separate from adults, and used capital punishment more in line with a rigid Puritan view of needing to beat the evil out of the child that followed colonialism. The following mothers sum up this generational difference in parenting:

Manya: Our parents got angry, raised their voice, and sometimes even slapped us…Our children are growing up in a world of negotiating – "if I do my homework, will I get candy; if you take me to the doctor's office, will you

take me to the park after, etc." There was none of that for us growing up. We did what we were told.

Ishita: I would like to raise our daughter with reason and conversation rather than just setting limits around dos and don'ts (which obviously doesn't happen very often). Our parenting styles are different [from our parents'] to the extent that we have more resources available in terms of parenting books, "Google"! and knowing the benefits of certain things (like reading, keeping off from TV/movies) etc.

Manvi: I'd say my parenting style like an adult-to-adult relationship Vs a adult-to-child relationship that I grew up in. I like to use logic and reasoning to explain my kids what I expect of them and I ask them to use reasoning with me & their dad as well. I respect their everyday choices (like I don't want to take a bath today) just as much as I expect them to respect mine.

In summary, parenting in India seems to have been influenced by child-rearing views variously rooted in Hindu philosophy, European colonization, and now more recently by Euro-American Progressivism via the current waves of globalization of education and consumerism.

Conclusion

The participants for the above study included urban educated parents and it would be essential to include some voices that would allow a glimpse into what parents from more challenging socioeconomic groups might aspire for their children. I interviewed two individuals who worked as domestic help for an upper-middle-class family to get their perspective on their children's education.

Pushpa is a housemaid whose job is to clean houses for a living. She is in her early 40s and lives in a one-room rental with her husband, two daughters, and one son. Pushpa visits about 3–5 homes each day to do basic cleaning that includes sweeping and mopping of floors. Her husband works as a plumber which in India does not bring in much income. All three children attend government school in the neighborhood. Pushpa was determined in sending her all children (son and both daughters) to school, ensuring that they would complete high school, in the hope that they would not have to do the same jobs as her but could qualify for a more professional career.

Another domestic worker, Vishwanath, works as a driver in an upper-middle-class household. He has been given a room above the garage in

his employer's house. Vishwanath lives here with his wife, two sons, and a daughter. Although all three children go to school, the two boys attend private school while the daughter is enrolled in a government school. The fee for the private school is quite high and in order to earn extra income to pay for his sons' school, Vishwanath has taken on secondary jobs before and after hours to clean cars for other households in the neighborhood. He expressed that he wanted to send his sons to private school where they could learn English and thus become eligible for a better job than his own.

There is a deep desire on the part of millions of poor families in India for their children to attend English-medium schools so that they can have a better shot in the job market and at social mobility which would get the family out of the rut of poverty. According to Aula (2014), the socioeconomic status of an individual in India is often measured against their fluency in the English language. Parents from socioeconomically disadvantaged groups are recognizing the enormous capital that comes with the English language and are consciously opting to enroll their children in private English-medium schools where they will be taught English proficiency and technical skills. Studies have documented that even the poorest families save all that they can in order to enroll their children in private schools where they hope they will learn the English language. Because of this, enrollment into private schools is skyrocketing and the private school sector is mushrooming. To counter this effect, the Indian government began to establish English-medium government schools in an effort to attract more students into public education. Many state governments in India have tried to make English the medium of instruction for government schools in addition to private schools so as to meet the demands of poor families (Aula, 2014). According to a report in The Economist, this strategy worked well as a recruitment tool since the enrollment in one school was seen to go up by 50% in one year (available at https://www.economist.com/international/2019/02/23/more-children-around-the-world-are-being-taught-in-english-often-badly. Accessed on April 25, 2019).

A global consumer study commissioned by HSBC in 2015 examined parents' hopes and expectations for their children's education in more than a dozen countries in Asia, North America, and Europe. The resulting report titled Value of Education Higher & Higher presents comparative data on parents' attitudes toward their children's education (available at https://www.hsbc.com/news-and-insight/2017/how-much-would-you-spend-to-support-your-child. Accessed on April 25,

2019). According to this study, 96% of parents in India had at least one child in paid-for education. With regard to investing in their child's education, this study found that about 65% of parents in the United States saved toward their children's education whereas in India it was 87% and in China it was 80% who did the same. The number of parents who have paid for private tuition was a whopping 93% in China, followed by 83% in India, and by 46% in the United States. For 51% of the Indian parents surveyed, the most important goal they had for their children was successful careers as adults. The other goals that were ranked lower than successful careers were happiness in life, healthy lifestyle, earn enough for a comfortable life, and fulfilling their children's potential. Parents were increasingly willing to spend more on their children's studies and 88% of the Indian parents surveyed wanted to send their children abroad for higher education.

Considered to be a Third World country up until the twentieth century, India has, and continues to, struggle to cope with overpopulation, high rates of infant mortality, and low rates in literacy, life expectancy, infant mortality, and literacy (Human Development Report, 2009). However, the twenty-first century has seen India position herself as a successful emerging economy by meeting the demands of globalization and because of possessing a large educated English-speaking technologically-savvy entrepreneurial population (Chanderbhan-Forde, 2010).

As described in Chapter 3, recent education reforms in India focus on inclusion and access, and there seems to be an increasing focus on children's happiness and well-being in schools as is evident in the new Happiness Curriculum that was implemented in Delhi schools in 2018. On the other hand, the colonial exam-based policies of the past which focused on academic excellence continue to linger in the overall educational system despite India's new policies. In conclusion, and based on the survey responses, the aspirations of Indian parents today indeed seem to square with the newer educational policies as they move away from high academic expectations for their children to wanting their children to be kind, empathetic, hard-working human beings who will be successful in life with regard to financial independence and happiness. This is what Indian parents seem to believe is required for their children to succeed in a world that is globalizing and interconnecting at an unprecedented pace.

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CHAPTER 7

Ethnicity, Class, and Gender Dimensions of Child-Rearing in America

Gay Wilgus

Introduction

In the second half of the twentieth century, the United States witnessed enormous changes with regard to diversity and complexity in US families. As Carlson and England (2011) point out "… adults are likely to spend time living with more than one partner in marital and/or cohabiting unions,…." and "More and more children spend years living apart from one of their biological parent…." (p. 1). Additionally, in cross-national comparisons reveal that of all industrialized countries in the OECD, the United States has the highest level of family income inequality (Carlson & England, 2011, p. 1). Moreover, "The notion that marriage was exclusively a heterosexual institution is giving way to a more inclusive standard of eligibility" (Furstenberg, 2011, p. 207).

With regard to their children's education,

> …better-educated parents have begun to believe that even college graduation is insufficient to provide economic security for their children. In fact, economic data over the past several decades have reinforced this impression, creating something of a panic among better-off families that their children could not be assured of a bright future without a graduate degree. Risk of downward mobility, whether real or not, has become a driving force in how the role of parent is presently constructed: managing for success in school

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has become a dominant concern among the highly educated. (Furstenberg, 2011, p. 211)

In response to this scenario, parents at the top of the socioeconomic hierarchy have become "more protective and more actively concerned with promoting skills, talents, and knowledge…what Lareau (2003) calls 'concerted cultivation'" (as cited in Furstenberg, 2011, p. 213).

Bornstein (2012) points to another variable which bears consideration, namely that

> Generational, social, and media images…of caregiving and childhood play formative roles in…guiding parenting practices…Parenting… embeds cultural models and meanings…which maintain or transform the culture… Reciprocally, culture expresses and perpetuates itself through parenting. (p. 213)

It is the express mission of this chapter to craft a picture of the seminal values, attitudes, and belief systems of "American" parents, as well as their personal and professional aspirations for their children; however, do so is, by default, a nearly impossible task. The burgeoning number of ethnic, linguistic, socioeconomic, and immigration-related variables that beg consideration in such an endeavor is daunting. And as Yoos, Lorrie, Kitzman, Olds, and Overacker (1995) warn us,

> There is tremendous diversity in beliefs within ethnic groups as well as across groups. Ascribing to culture a deterministic role in the lives of individuals and families results in stereotyping. (p. 355)

Moreover, "Stereotyping creates barriers to understanding which are as impenetrable as those created by cultural ignorance" (Anderson & Fenichel, 1989, p. 9).

Nonetheless, the inspired and substantive work in this area of research by a non-negligible number of scholars makes a nascent attempt at laying initial inroads for this project a possibility. This, coupled with original research conducted with a selected sample of parent participants, will hopefully make a contribution in this direction.

Research Methodology

The choice of methodology for the ethnographic research described herein relied on several theoretical assertions. First and foremost, as Yoos et al. (1995) have pointed out

> Many factors in addition to culture influence individual behavior and thus culture may not be predictive at the level of the individual. It is not a substitute for good individual history taking and the eliciting of parental concerns and concepts of child rearing practices. (p. 355)

Moving further along these lines, Paker (2006) points to the importance of "…studying parenting not only across cultures but also across subcultures within the same country" in order to gain more "authentic" understandings of not only parenting processes, but also their associations with developmental outcomes (p. 20).

Bearing these points in mind, individual open-ended, face-to-face, in-depth interviews with research participants seemed the best way to avoid the pitfalls of superficiality and overgeneralization that Yoos et al. (1995) alert us to, as well as the stereotyping that Paker warns us against. Accordingly, an array of research participants who represented the most populous ethnic groups most in New York City schools was sought through directed sampling. Professional and personal contacts were utilized to create a research cohort in which Latino, African-American, Asian-American and European American parents and perspectives—as well as complex mixtures of these within families—were represented. The ten selected interviewees all resided in various boroughs of New York City. All were affiliated in some way with the educational system, either as teachers in training, teachers of young children, or as teacher educators. Most were currently solidly middle class, although several described having spent their earlier years as solidly working class. [An attempt was made to include parents from working- and non-working-class backgrounds, who had recently immigrated to the United States, and who only spoke Spanish. The principal of a school with a parent population fitting this description attempted to assist in this effort. However, none of the parents she approached were willing to participate, likely owing to issues of immigration status. Thus their voices are missing in what follows.]

In light of these considerations, the original research discussed herein in no way claims to represent the parenting beliefs and practices of all parents

in New York City, let alone the United States. On the other hand, one might argue that the varied and myriad groups that comprise the complexly woven tapestry of New York City's populace—the frequent first stop and catchall for large groups of immigrants—serves, in some regard, as a microcosm of the mélange that constitutes the nation as a whole.

It moreover bears highlighting here that all interviewees were mothers—some married, some single, some divorced. Several of the women included their husbands' perspectives in their discussions of their parenting beliefs and practices. However, the voices of fathers are not represented first-hand in this study.

The researcher met the selected interviewees at times and in locations that were convenient for them, e.g., at their worksites during lunch breaks. Interviews lasted for approximately one hour. Participants were asked to describe their personal and professional values and aspirations for their children, and to identify any ways in which these appeared related to the childrearing beliefs and values according to which they, themselves, were raised. They were additionally asked if they believed the school programs in which their children were enrolled were (1) supporting their own parenting values and (2) helping their children move toward their aspirations for them. Finally, parents were asked if past, current, and predicted changes in the economy, owing to globalization, had shaped their feelings about their children's future possibilities with regard to "viable" employment.

Before beginning the interview process, a review of the research literature centering on the above-named ethnic groups was conducted. The body of research literature on the beliefs and practices of parents from diverse socioeconomic and ethnic contexts is a burgeoning one. In what follows, the review and discussion of this literature will be limited to that which pertains to the ethnic groups represented by individuals who were interviewed for this chapter.

With these factors foremost in mind, the existent research literature on the major ethnic groups represented in schools in New York City—Latinos, African-Americans, Asian-Americans and European American—will be used to foreground original research findings regarding the beliefs and practices of selected parents in New York City. Both the existent literature and what parents have to say about their practices reveal the ways in which parenting practices are constructed, depending on parents' encounters with changing cultural, geographic, socioeconomic contexts. As Bornstein (2012) reminds us, "patterns of parenting might reflect …historical convergences in parenting, or they could be a by-product of information dissemination via forces of globalization or mass media…" (p. 217).

Ethnicity and Families in New York City

The New York City public school system serves more than 1 million students. Seventy percent identify as "Latino" or "non-Latino Black," and about one half are immigrants, meaning foreign-born or having a foreign-born parent. The Dominican Republic, Mexico, Jamaica, and Guyana represent 4 of the 5 countries of origin for immigrant students (New York City Independent Budget Office, 2011). This makes the study of Afro-Caribbean and Latino groups a particular area of interest for NYC educators (Calzada et al., 2015, p. 871).

Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, and Waters (2002) report that "The foreign born make up 36% of New York City's population and the second generation another quarter. Native born whites with native born parents make up only 18% of the city's population. In short, New York City overwhelmingly a city of minorities and immigrants" (p. 1023).

Asian-American Families

Research focused upon parental childrearing beliefs and practices in Asian families in the United States has focused largely on issues of collectivism vs individualism. Generally, Asian-American families have been found to place significant value on acknowledgment of family members' obligations to one another and the way family members are linked to the community as opposed to valuing the accomplishments of individuals (Chao, 1996).

Kim and Choi's (1994), focusing on Korean families, note that the most important relationship in the family is the mother–child "amae" relationship. They explain:

> Outside the home (soto) women occupy subjugated positions with very few individual rights and little power. Inside one's home (uchi) women, as mothers, hold stable and powerful positions…in families the position of the father is peripheral. The formal head of the family, he is accorded respect. However, this respect is symbolic: in reality he does not exert much control. (Kim & Choi, 1994, p. 237)

Moreover,

> A Korean mothers' personhood is not deserted but fused with that of her children. It is not a case of self-denial but of self-transformation. Becoming one with their children, Korean mothers are not self-interested persons pursuing their own independent goals. (Kim & Choi, 1994, p. 242)

With reference to children's development and childrearing, the belief that "…one's temper is innate but personality is learned. Thus, it is the parents' responsibility to culture the child's personality in a correct manner. "In fact, "…in teaching a child, the first tenths months in the mother's womb are more important …" (Kim & Choi, 1994, p. 239).

Korean mothers were often inconsistent in their socialization methods: Sometimes they appear to be authoritarian, and other times they appear to be democratic. A behavior that is prohibited at one point is unchecked at another. Situational whims, in place of particular principles for guiding children's behavior have been described as the norm (Kim & Choi, 1994).

Chao (1996) found that Chinese parents in several cross-cultural studies were found to have a high value for education, high performance standards, and expectations for their children at school, and a belief in the importance of hard work and effort. She explains:

> Chinese culture has traditionally emphasized education and has held great respect for scholars…parents stress to their children both the positive outcomes of getting a good education and warnings about the negative repercussions if they do not…parents convey the idea that they must work harder because they are foreigners or minorities. (Chao, 1996, p. 410)

Mothers moreover explained,

> In Chinese society, there is an invisible caste with scholars on top, farmers second, workers third and businessmen last. Chinese are very impressed by someone who has a PhD or is a doctor and this has more status and virtue than does money. (Chao, 1996, p. 412)

Accordingly, parents said they were willing to invest everything for their children's education, but that the children must have respect and regard for the family (Chao, 1996). They explained "both parents work hard so they can send their children to better schools and so they will be able to put them through college, including graduate studies or medical school" (Chao, 1996, p. 411). One mother said, "There is less divorce in families and more stability. If parents have problems every day, it affects the kids.

We believe that helping the child do well in school is the most important task…in other cultures mothers may stress tasks like being happy, enjoying life, learning a trade…" (Chao, 1996, p. 412).

On a practical level, the Taiwanese "parents emphasize reading and taking children to the library to study books" (Chao, 1996, p. 410). They read to them and used flash cards very early on, went over their children's homework every day and made sure they were "keeping pace" in every subject at school, with a focus on English (Chao, 1996, p. 408). Half of the Taiwanese mothers said they put their children in extras courses and assigned them extra work—beyond what the school gives them. They make them correct mistakes in their homework and redo the task associated with the mistake, over and over. Some mothers had tutors for their children and had them attend after school study groups. They report that they review what the teacher has taught at school each day (Chao, 1996). They said they wanted their children to develop "good study habits" so they can eventually "work well on their own," "concentrate" and "be responsible for their work" (Chao, 1996, p. 410).

One-third of the mothers in Chao's study believed their children succeed in school because of the value placed on the family. They said "children work hard to bring honor to the family, and education is regarded as the most important way to bring honor to your ancestors" (Chao, 1996, p. 412). They maintained that "Chinese children really want to make their families proud and not 'lose face' for their families…the child's personal academic achievement is the value and honor of the whole family. If you fail school, you bring embarrassment to the family and lose face. If you do good, you bring honor to the family and do not lose face. ….It starts from kindergarten" (Chao, 1996, p. 412). Indeed, one adolescent explained, "When I was growing up my mother never punished me for bad grades but I felt very guilty and proud for good grades" (Chao, 1996, p. 410).

Another mother added

> We need to stress good educations because foreigners have less job opportunities. We work harder in order to be ahead, and the opportunity structure is not that wide….so Chinese people have to be special in order to be successful. I have to do better than what White people could do. (Chao, 1996, p. 412)

At the same time, Chao was struck by Taiwanese-American mothers' focus on the individual differences of each of their children. The parents

in her study referred frequently to children's "inborn, natural ability" or "inborn personality." Some children were perceived to be more active while some were seen to be quieter and can concentrate better. They believed it was the parents' job to identify these abilities and tendencies, then push them to develop more in that area.

Interestingly, some mothers said that the more recent generation of mothers do not emphasize homework as much as they value "human relations" and children's ability to socialize with others (Chao, 1996). These mothers believed that children should not be pushed so hard at a young age or be involved in so many lessons. They believed that was for older children (Chao, 1996). This could be interpreted as an artifact of their time spent in and American school culture that espouses these values.

Monika

Although Monika's interview material is included in the chapter on European American parents, her responses are also included here, as her father was Chinese-American. Monika's grandparents immigrated to New York with "absolutely nothing," following the Communist Revolution in China. Her father was 18. Monika says "that side of my family was very 'pull yourself up by your bootstraps!'" Her grandparents worked in a laundry in Brooklyn, saving and saving until they were able to buy a restaurant in downtown Manhattan. Monika spent a lot of time with her grandparents in the laundry and in their walk-up apartment next door.

From the beginning, Monika says there was a very heavy focus on education. She recalls her grandmother writing math problems on a paper bag as she was working and making Monika solve them. Monika's father began his higher education at City College of New York and was then accepted to Columbia University, where he earned a Ph.D. She says her dad was "…obsessive about my doing well in school, by all the standard measures of success." Among her cousins, Monika was the only child to go to public school. Her cousins went to elite private schools, as the family was able to amass more money to finance this.

With regard to her Chinese side of the family's values and wishes, Monika says,

> I find it hard to escape that - hard to not pass that on… I really have that drive that I want to push [her children] in that direction, even though I know it's not ….. I'm consciously trying to rein it in. It's hard to not when I look at my

> daughter playing violin and playing in a violin recital…. it's hard for me not to be categorizing where she is in the violin thing. And it's been challenging.

Monika's 8-year-old son was diagnosed with ADHD and is receiving support at school for this. Of this situation, she says,

> I don't know if I would have ever …I wouldn't tell my Chinese grandparents…I would not tell my Chinese side of the family about it. They are still more conscientious about mental health… they are so academically focused that that would be really disturbing to them.

All told, Monika appears to have incorporated the value for education as the ultimate measure of one's worth espoused by her father's side of the family as a major feature of her own system of parenting beliefs and practices. Nonetheless, there is some effort on her part to "rein it in." This is likely related to her having been sent to a progressive public school by her European American mother, primary value for social justice took center stage in Monika's upbringing. This will be described in more detail in the section on European American parents. As will also be discussed later, Monika's motivation to scale back her temptation to push for academic achievement at all cost is no doubt mitigated by her son's ADHD diagnosis.

Amina

Amina' mother is Chinese while her father is African-American and from the South. Amina emphasized,

> in the Asian community they drill it into us: education, education, education…because Chinese people are discriminated against. Every ethnicity is discriminated against but if we have some kind of back up to maybe shut them up…

Amina wasn't sure exactly what her mother's age was when she immigrated to the United States. Her mother went to a very elite private school in the Northeast. Amina wasn't sure how her mother made her way there but says that the upper-middle-class "white" students there looked down on her mom. She persisted. Amina's mom eventually went to City College of New York where there was more of a socioeconomic and ethnic mix of students and said she felt comfortable and at home there.

Amina says her mother was "driven" when it came to her own education. She didn't stop at a bachelor's degree, she went on to do her master's degree and became a special education teacher in the New York City public school system. She joked that during these years, she and her sisters always wanted to have "normal" conversations with their mom but their mom was constantly teaching them something in one way or another. In fact, Amina, herself, now works one-on-one with children with special needs, usually children with autism.

Amina was adamant that she did not want her son, who is now only about 18 months old, to experience the same sort of discrimination that her mother experienced early on. She emphasized, "I don't want him to be overlooked if he has the same education and qualifications [as some other candidate for a job]. Amina said this was more of a concern for her than any considerations of what the global economy will look like when her son becomes a working adult. She said, "I'm more worried about his getting equitable salary. I just want him to be self supporting and happy in his work." She added that it is not important that her son has a status-filled job, just one that will allow him to support himself, and his family should he choose to have one.

Amina's dad was also focused on getting a college degree and got his undergraduate degree but since he took care of the three girls, he didn't get to do his graduate work. He was accepted to go to graduate school at Columbia University, but he took a job instead. It was he—not Amina's mother—who was expected to stay home and take care of the couple's three girls. Amina says, "My dad took us to school, he did homework with us, he did the dictionary with us…." Amina's father kept his acceptance letter to Columbia and takes it out to show his daughters from time to time.

All told, Amina's values for her child coincide somewhat with the research literature's assertions about Chinese-American families: The categorical valuing of education and determination that children will go as far as they possibly can with their educations and careers. But in other respects, Amina's values diverge from the values and beliefs of families in the research literature. It was not important to Amina that her son has a job at the top of the employment hierarchy, "He doesn't have to be a doctor," she said. Rather, more in keeping with the research literature's assertions about European American mothers' values and wishes for their children, Amina said, "I just want him to be happy." Although Amina's statements indicate a clear correlation with her mother's value for education, in other ways Amina's values and beliefs for raising and educating her son seem to

have been shaped by additional elements, for example, her having grown up in the United States, and having been parented by an American father who was willing to prioritize the raising of three daughters over attending the graduate school to which he had been accepted—a move that might have positioned him for a status-filled job. One might interpret this to mean that Amina respects her father's decision to take on the job of childrearing and managing the household as an occupation that he found fulfilling, even though this sort of work continues to be grossly undervalued within the American socioeconomic hierarchy.

African-American Parents

As McAdoo (2002) has argued, any effort to understand African-American families and their children must, first and foremost, take into account "the interactions of race, social class, culture and ethnicity" (McAdoo, 2002, p. 47). She contends that the interactions among these four elements are responsible for the diversity of family arrangements and family interactional patterns in African-American communities. Importantly, these "do not fit the monolithic view of African American families that is too often presented in the lay and research literature" (McAdoo, 2002, p. 47).

A preliminary element that bears consideration is the following: "to cope with enslavement and it's aftermath, family members have felt the importance of maintaining communal family traditions." As Dawson (2001) explains, there is a sense of duty and obligation among members at all levels of the African-American community, a feeling of connection to one another, owing to a collective experience of racial oppression" (as cited in Dow, 2019, p. 58).

This has had several implications, including "…the production of comparatively matriarchal family systems, …the communal traditions of shared child care, spirituality and oral tradition" (McAdoo, 2002, p. 49). In fact, "co-residential extended families and their support systems" have been identified as a major survival mechanism for African-American families (Hill, 1997 as cited in McAdoo, 2002, p. 49).

McAdoo (2002) adds that historically, a primary project for African-American parenting has involved educating children to behave in a "…race appropriate manner when confronting a European American person" (p. 53). Children might be taught, for example, to be assertive in responding to racial slights or to ignore them (McAdoo, 2002).

Dawn Marie Dow's (2019) recent study has focused on the beliefs, values, and practices of middle- and upper-middle-class African-American mothers. Dow identified three general groups of mothers within the larger sample she interviewed: border crossers, border policers, and border transcenders. Border crossers in Dow's study "…aimed to ensure that their children were fluent in all parts of the African American community and in cultures of privilege" (Dow, 2019, p. 16). Border policers "…wanted their children to feel at ease in a variety of middle class and elite social settings but did not have the same inclination to ensure that their children felt comfortable in poor African American communities" (Dow, 2019, p. 16). Border transcenders "wanted their children to be free to embark on lives that were not principally defined by racial identity" (Dow, 2019, p. 16).

Dow (2019) explains that because middle-class blacks frequently live either close to poor neighborhoods with high crime rates, or with mostly white neighbors, and don't often see other African-American families that their children need to be able to "border cross" (p. 63). Among Dow's border crossers, one mother, a teacher who was solidly middle-class, explained, "I want my children to be well rounded… I want them to be able to interact with a lot of different people and in a lot of different situations…I want them to be able to interact with… all kinds of black people. And not be scared or intimidated or feel like they aren't black enough, or in situations with whites not feel comfortable or sure how to act" (Dow, 2019, p. 55).

This mother and her husband could afford a nanny, but they lived in a neighborhood with poor and working-class people. She said she wanted her children to smile and speak to everyone in the neighborhood—including the neighbors who had visible drug addictions. She was searching for a "racially intelligent and sensitive" caregiver who would talk to her children in ways that encouraged them to understand the situations of people who, for example, were struggling with addiction (Dow, 2019).

Another woman's daughter had been first in an all black elementary school, then in large public schools, then in a private school, providing a range of experiences with people and contexts. The mother said "She knows how to be around black people… how to be around white people…how to be a scholar…how to be a community person…And I value that kind of cultural fluidity" (Dow, 2019 p. 65).

Border crossing moms were additionally concerned that their children "would have to choose between academic achievement and being grounded as African Americans in the African American community" (Dow,

2019, p. 66). They further worried that if their children "were not appropriately racially socialized that their 'blackness' might be challenged by their peers" (Dow, 2019, p. 65), and this might do damage to their self-esteem. As one mother commented, "There is a sense of power in knowing you can go anyplace in the world and you are not scared of the 'hood'…that you can handle yourself in a lot of different kinds of situations" (p. 65).

Along these lines, one of the moms described how she endeavored to "construct a black identity for her sons that included academic achievement as a nonnegotiable expectation" (Dow, 2019, p. 67). But she was concerned with her sons' being confronted with attitudes of "pick a path because you can't be both high achieving and recognized as authentically black" (Dow, 2019, p. 67).

Learning to engage in this sort of border crossing was seen as adaptive for African-Americans since "…they have to engage in elite and predominantly white workplaces and then cross back into their communities of origins" in order to "retain authentic connections to their extended family and to working class and poor communities of African Americans" (Dow, 2019, p. 59). Lending support to this assertion, Allen (2017) found that regardless of their socioeconomic class, African-American parents in her study expressed strong preferences for "diverse" schools "as a means to meet the end of dominant cultural capital acquisition, a term that seemed to serve as proxy for Whiteness" (p. vi).

Border policing moms describe a variant agenda for their children. One mother focused her wishes on having her children be "independent thinkers…to use logic and assess situations." She continued, "We don't want to feed them who they are; we want them to become their own person" (Dow, 2019, p.77).

Another mother expressed a desire to have her daughter be part of organizations "that will allow her display certain skill sets" (Dow, 2019, p. 82). She explained, "I learned etiquette through those programs…I hate it when we go to lunch and people are asking what fork to use…" (Dow, 2019, p. 83).

Many border policers put their children in private or charter schools with all or mostly white children, but usually only after they have been unable to find acceptable places in "culturally valued public schools" (Allen, 2017, p. 316). Parents in Allen's (2017) study of the elementary school choices of Black parents in low-income Brooklyn, NY neighborhoods opted for public schools and charter schools in relatively wealthier and Whiter

neighborhoods, "ascribed with far more symbolic exchange value than their public neighborhood schools" (Allen, 2017, p. iv).

As Allen (2017) points out, these parents had "internalized the dominant narrative of engaging in choice as good parenting, and perceived parents of children in private and public schools of choice as invested and involved and parents with children in their neighborhood public schools as ignorant, unmotivated, entitled, and/or uninvolved" (p. vi). These parents moreover "perceived choice as a means to join social networks of parents in culturally valued schools where parents have more capital" (Allen, 2017, p. vi). With similar motivations, other border policers focused on making sure their children had experiences associated with middle-class- and upper-middle-class families, like traveling, studying abroad, and participating in elite extracurricular activities (Dow, 2019). These parents had moreover "internalized the dominant narrative of the purpose of schooling as preparation for college and careers in an increasingly competitive global society…" (vi).

Nonetheless, in an effort to put her children in contact with African-American families, one of Dow's border policers sought out black churches. She became frustrated when she couldn't find African-American families with middle-class lifestyles in these churches. To be specific, she did not believe that the mothers she found in the church communities were as diligent as she with regard to the amount of research they did about childrearing and finding good schools for their children (Dow, 2019). Along these lines, Allen (2017) asserts that the parents in her study who put their children in parochial or charter schools, intended to access "social networks composed of parents of color who engaged in the labor of researching schools, applying to schools, and persisting until a child was selected" (p. 319).

Some of these moms expressed a desire to distance themselves from certain behaviors associated with non-middle-class parents, such as "speaking harshly to children, calling children names like 'stupid,' using profanity in the presence of children or physically disciplining their children in public" (Dow, 2019, p. 88).

Finally, border transcenders perceived racial identity and racial categories as "cages that could limit their children's expression, interpersonal relationships, and activities" (Dow, 2019, p. 104). They worried that too much focus on such categories might "compel their children to have to prove their racial authenticity" (p. 104).

Mihalia

Mihalia is an African-American mother of a 7-year-old boy, Milo. She is in her early 30s and teaches in a Montessori program in a neighborhood in Brooklyn that has been undergoing gentrification for the past decade or two.

Mihalia's goals for her son include—first and foremost—having him learn to be kind to others, to "treat people the way you want to be treated." She explains, "If he sees someone who looks different, I try to make it normal for him. I tell him 'God could have made you different'…Having respect for other people is what I want him to understand." Mihalia also wants her son to be able to "think outside of the box." She says, "I tell him 'You don't have to be what everybody thinks…" Here Mihalia segued into an explanation that her son likes to play with dolls and purses at school, rather than engaging in stereotypically "boy" activities. He drew a somewhat flamboyant self-portrait in which he had on earrings and lipstick. The teacher asked her if she would prefer that she not put Milo's self-portrait on the bulletin board with the other children's self-portrait. Mihalia told her "Of course, put my baby's picture up!" indicating her acceptance of her son's preferences.

Her son goes to a progressive public school in a neighborhood in Brooklyn that has been steadily gentrifying over the past few decades. It has gone from being an area with mostly poor and working-class families and few amenities to a very fashionable one filled with cafes, trendy restaurants, and expensive, individually owned boutiques. Milo's school includes children from the gentrifying population, as well as children from the working class whose families have lived there for generations.

Mihalia expended considerable effort in researching and securing the best schooling for Milo. She explains,

> My zone school is across from my house but my friend told me not to even put that on my choice list because even if you put it last they will put you in there. So I was asking, 'How do I get my son off the wait list?' Then I saw I wasn't on the wait list. I was number 2! [among children who had been moved from the wait list to children who had been offered a place at the school] When he got accepted, I took him - I ran down there! I knew I wanted him in a diverse community. I felt a little bad because there was this white mom who came after I did and she didn't know you had to register right away if your kid got offered a place. So by the time she came to register there was no more room. I felt kinda bad for her….

Mihalia emphasized:

> It's a really good school. They spend the majority of the day outside, even if it's thunderstorming. They go to the park a lot. They do a lot of exploring and talking about trees and animals and snails. It's hands on - they get them to read and do math indirectly. They don't do worksheets – they have all kinds of experiences. Instead of using workbooks they did "kebab math" … they asked, "What numbers could you put together to make 10?" They get them to write by saying "Write any story you want." Then they make it more specific. They say "What's your favorite thing in the story and why?"

At the first parent–teacher conference, they said "He's not doing well with sight reading. So I thought I would get him a tutor." Then she spoke to a friend who worked with first and second graders and she told Mihalia "Don't get a tutor - just keep reading to him - he's going to pick it up at his own speed." Mihalia said, "Math is easy for him I show him the math and he's blowing through it. I keep telling him 'You can be a scientist - try and think outside of the box. I don't want you to be just a teacher or a policeman.'" She later explained that she thought being a teacher or a policeman is fine, but she has hopes that her son will take on a career that involves using his math ability.

When asked how her own parenting values correlate with the ones she was raised with, Mihalia first explains that she was raised by her grandmother, her mother's mother. She says the values that come from her, and that she, herself encourages involve "being with family, spending time with family, those type of things…. being affectionate… he loves on me all day. Sometimes at night he will just hold my face. I'll tell him 'Get in your bed and go to sleep,' even though I slept with my grandma for a long time."

Mihalia says she also tries to enforce Milo's independence. She has him make his own bed, clean up the table, and do the dishes. She lets him cook things on his own. She says her grandmother encouraged her in this direction, she "….sat me down and taught me how to do a budget." Additionally, "My grandma used to take us on trips. We went to Mexico, California, the Bahamas…. we didn't go that far. She took us to Disney… I took him to Disney. I put him in extracurricular and afterschool activities. He's going to be starting Boy Scouts. I was a Girl Scout."

When asked if she worried about Milo's future, about his possibilities for finding a viable job in the global economy, Mihalia said,

> I do worry about him finding a job -that's why I push him more toward math and science. There is always going to be a need for math and science. I challenge him with that. He has a book from another school. It's way more challenging than what he is doing at his school. His dad is good with numbers. I tell his dad, 'You could have been an accountant. Milo is the same way. I want him to be a scientist or do computers. He'll tell me "I want to be scientist and a police officer. I try to keep him in a circle of people in the school that has connections - His friend got into the school on a scholarship. I try to keep connections, social connections to build relationships with the other parents at Milo's school. We've all been together since kindergarten. I do play dates, hang out with them and make relationships.

All told, Mihalia's parenting values seem to stick closely to those she was raised with as she prioritizes instilling a value for family closeness in Milo. Other aspects of her parenting correlate with what Dow's research on "border crossing mothers," seeing "engaging in choice as good parenting." Mihalia expended no small amount of energy on research and "running down to the school" the moment Milo was offered a slot. She also evidently "perceived choice as a means to join social networks of parents in culturally valued schools where parents have more capital" (Allen, 2017, p. vi) as she made a point of building and maintaining networks with other parents, ones that could work to Milo's advantage in gaining and maintaining social and cultural capital. Like Dow's border policers, Mihalia made sure Milo had experiences associated with middle-class families, like traveling and participating in extracurricular activities like karate and Boy Scouts.

Closely aligning herself with the Taiwanese-American mothers in Chao's study, Mihalia feels the need to "push" Milo to his full potential, to fully exploit his "special talents" as the Taiwanese mothers did, in Milo's case, his math abilities. The Taiwanese mothers felt that an additional push was necessary because of their children's immigrant status—that their children would have to "be better than the whites." Interestingly, Mihalia did not specifically tie her extra efforts to a worry that Milo might be discriminated against when he eventually becomes an employable adult, as he is a child of color.

Latino and Caribbean American Parents

"Latino" is an umbrella term for individuals from Central or South America, Mexico and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. Although the term refers to a group with a common history of having been colonized by Spain, it

bears emphasizing that "Latino" comprises a diverse group of people with a variety of reasons for being in the United States (Harwood, Leyendecker, Carlson, Ascencio, & Miller, 2002). Some are citizens, some are political refugees, some are professionals, some are documented and undocumented workers looking for jobs, and some are students obtaining higher education degrees (Harwood et al., 2002). The Latino population in the United States reached nearly 58 million in 2016, comprising 18% of the nation's population. This population has been the principal driver of US demographic growth, accounting for half of national population growth since 2000 (Flores, 2017).

A handful of quintessential themes and concepts have appeared in the research literature about Latino notions of parenting. As Reese and Gallimore (2000) explain, "Key moral values that parents were raised with continue to provide sustenance and guidance in the new cultural setting and represent conscious continuity with the past" (p. 120). They found that Latino parents in their research sample had "a clear set of traditional moral values…which they wish to transmit to their children, even though they are now residents of the United States…" Additionally, "for some parents these represent an expression of ethnic identity" (Reese & Gallimore, 2000, p. 120).

Morales-Alexander (2016) identifies some of the key traditional values Latino parents wish to inculcate in their children as "respeto, convivencia, and confianza to ensure the children become 'personas de bien' (good people) and are 'buen educado'" (well mannered) (p. 227). She explains "…these values speak to another cultural ethos—interdependence" (p. 228). The Mexican-American children among her research participants were "socialized to be a part of a group…whether it is family, the community, or school" (Morales-Alexander, 2016, p. 228). In fact, the families in her study specifically enrolled their children in Head Start programs with the express goal of "providing opportunities for children to learn how to engage with others in socially acceptable ways" (Morales-Alexander, 2016, p. 228).

Respeto emerged as a major tenet in Harwood et al.'s (2002) interviews with working- and middle-class Puerto Rican mothers of 12–18-month-olds. These mothers referred to respeto as "Proper Demeanor" that involves "…knowing the level of courtesy and decorum required in a given situation in relation to other people of a particular age, sex, and social status" (Harwood et al., 2002, p. 25). De la Vega (2007) adds, "when to say 'please' and 'thank you,' how to act around elders or youngsters, and

when it's appropriate to interrupt or not" (p. 170) to this list. She further notes the importance of Latino children's knowing "…what's important in life, how to defend oneself against discrimination, and to never believe that someone is more important than you, but instead to treat others with respect" (p. 170).

As Harwood et al. (2002) qualify, since all of the mothers they interviewed were working class, it is possible that "emphasis on respectfulness…represents not culture but socioeconomic circumstances" (p. 26). This would be congruent with Kohn's (1977) finding that working-class parents are more likely than middle-class parents to "emphasize conformity to authority and less likely to emphasize authority and personal initiative" (Harwood et al., 2002, p. 26).

With reference to confianza, De la Vega (2007) explains,

> Confianza is not easily translated into English because the notion of having confianza in another person emerges from a deep belief and carries more ideological weight than the English translation can hold. Confianza emerges from perceptions and mutual feelings of being welcomed, cared for, valued, and trusted. Confidence in another person can be another manifestation of confianza, although one can have confidence in another, but not trust them. Trust in oneself, on the other hand, can be considered or translated into self-confidence or self-esteem. (pp. 174–175)

One of De la Vega's interviewees explained, confianza "… is very important for the children, because we see that there are many adults that have problems with self confidence because it [the spirit] has been broken into pieces" (p. 175).

Another concept and principle that Harwood and her colleagues found to be essential to Latino parenting was familismo, defined as "a belief system that refers to feelings of loyalty, reciprocity, and solidarity toward members of the family, as well as to the notion of the family as an extension of self" (Cortes, 1995, p. 249). Harwood et al. (2002) found that Latino families "place greater emphasis on the child's obligations to the family and the larger group, and less emphasis on centering interactions around the child's own wishes, thoughts and desires" (p. 30) than do European American families. The Latino extended family has been described as a system for stress-coping and problem-solving. It "addresses, adapts and commits available family resources to normal and non-normal transitions and crisis situation" (Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan & Buriel, 1990, p. 351).

Latino Parents' At-Home Educational Styles

Cote and Bornstein (2000) found that Latina mothers "…spend little time sitting back and observing the child's play and explorations…." but, rather, tend to "…engage in didactic interactions geared at teaching something to the child" (p. 369). Along these lines, Planos, Zayas, and Busch-Rossnagel (1995) found that the Puerto Rican and Dominican working-class mothers in their study taught children specific tasks by "giving directives, visual cues and modeling" (p. 225). However, Planos et al. (1995) noted that Puerto Rican mothers used more inquiry and praise when teaching a child to do a task, compared to Dominican mothers who tended to use modeling to teach. Planos et al. (1995) interpreted this as a move by the Puerto Rican mothers—who had been in the United States longer than the Dominican mothers—to "provide children with a teaching-learning-experience that reflects the typical US classroom" (Planos et al., 1995, p. 233).

Latino Parents Use of Literacy Lessons to Promote Moral Values in Children

When the Latino immigrant parents in Reese's (2002) study were asked why they read to their children, only one-quarter said they intended to stimulate interest in reading. Another quarter said they did this because the children enjoyed it and asked to be read to. However, the most common response was that they read to their children for moral reasons, "para saber lo que es bueno y lo que es malo" (to know what is good and what is bad) (Reese, 2002, p. 116). One mother said she used the story of "Jonah and the Whale" to "teach him about correct behavior, telling him, 'if he does not behave well he will end up in the belly of the whale'" (Reese, 2002, p. 116).

When encouraged to read to their very young children, some insisted that reading to 2-year-olds was a waste of time. They said, "…at the age of two I do not think it is very appropriate. The 2-year-olds do not understand what they are being read, the meaning of it…[it] is 'perder tiempo' (to waste time) because 'no tiene sentido' (it does not make sense). One mother believed that American parents' reading to very young children 'must be a custom that they have.'" Another believed American parents read to two-year-olds, "because they do not have anything else to do" (Reese, 2002, p. 115).

Parents did not appear to regard these changes as an abandonment of traditional values from their homelands. If reading early to children meant a better chance of academic success, most parents complied with teachers' suggestions (Gallimore & Reese, 1999, p. 128).

Caribbean Families

The US Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service estimated in 2000 that 4 million Caribbean immigrants live in the United States.

For our purposes here, it is important to note that "The Caribbean region consists of 30 island countries, as well as the South and Central American countries of Guyana and Belize, and has an estimated total population of 42 million" (Griffith & Grolnick, 2014, p. 167). Thus, it is important to consider the overlap and boundary blurring which necessarily come into play in any discussion of research findings about "Caribbean" and "Latino" families. Most notably for our purposes here, the categories "Caribbean" and "Latino" both include Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic.

Caribbean Parents as Authoritarian

Discussions of Caribbean parents as comparatively authoritarian pepper the research literature. Griffith and Grolnick (2014) explain

> Existing research on British Caribbean families has described Caribbean parents as harsh and demanding in their parenting style, with strict expectations that their children display obedience, respect, and manners, as well as educational and social competence…. (p. 167)

Moreover, "the use of corporal punishment (is) often endorsed…and the parent-child relationship is usually not of an egalitarian nature" (p. 167).

Griffith and Grolnick (2014) found that in Caribbean families, "a structured household with clear and consistent rules and regulations is associated with positive outcomes" but parenting that is "domineering, coercive, and pushy in which parents force children to meet their demands and fail to take the child's perspective into account, and take over to solve problems for the child" (p. 168) is not.

Paker (2006) found that Caribbean parents used physical discipline most with their young adolescent children. This occurred more frequently with parents who had been in the United States for several generations. Paker (2006) speculated that Caribbean parents felt the need to use physical discipline in order to control their children who were becoming increasingly more independent in the "American" culture—one that parents may have perceived as foreign, dangerous and morally corrupt.

Along these lines, Deater-Deckard, Dodge, Bates, and Pettit (1996) contend "the meaning of physical discipline may be different for different ethnic groups, leading to ethnic subcultural differences in the outcomes of physical discipline" (as cited in Paker, 2006, p. 2). For example, "Spanking is more likely to be perceived as evidence of parental concern in African American families, whereas it is more likely to be seen as an indication of parental rejection in European-American families" (p. 3).

Caribbean Parents as Non-authoritarian

At the other end of the Caribbean, parenting spectrum is "Parenting that supports children's autonomy, by encouraging them to take initiative, to express their views and opinions, and allowing them the space to solve problems on their own" (Grolnick & Griffith, 2014, p. 168). Challenging the stereotypes of Latino and Caribbean parents as authoritarian and unilateral, mothers in Guilamo-Ramos et al's (2007) study asserted that parental control must be rational and consistent" (p. 25). As Guilamo-Ramos et al. (2007) explain

> …maternal concern for talking with their adolescents to explain their use of parental authority and instill a sense of responsibility and proper conduct can be viewed as aspects of…personalismo, which accords great value to personal character and inner qualities. In social relationships, personalismo is personified by warmth, trust, and respect, which form the foundation for interpersonal connectedness, cooperation, and mutual reciprocity. (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2007, p. 25)

In fact, Dominican and Puerto Rican adolescents interpreted parental control not as disciplinary, punitive and rejecting, but rather as "manifestations of parental love and concern" (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2007, p. 25). By the same token, "abdication of parental authority" was perceived as evidence of a lack of parental interest…" (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2007, p. 24)

Caribbean Parents Perspectives of Parent Involvement Activities in Schools

Afro-Caribbean parents apparent lack of participation in traditional parent involvement activities at their children's schools is often interpreted as disinterest and lack of investment; however, as Calzada et al. (2015) explain

> Latino parents, particularly those who are non English-speaking, may not often attend school events, volunteer in the classroom or communicate directly with school…but they appear to engage in high levels of home-based involvement by emphasizing educational values, engaging in educationally relevant home-based activities such as monitoring homework and curfews, and providing educational resources and adequate nutrition and rest for their children. (Calzada et al., 2015, p. 872)

Along these lines, Gillanders and Jimenez (2004) found that Mexican-American parents in their study were open to teachers' suggestion for using read aloud instructional strategies with their children, even though this strategy was novel for them. This showed their willingness to adapt their parenting practices and broaden their repertoire for supporting their children's schooling (Reese & Gallimore, 2000). These instructional strategies included "playing with words while skipping rope, finding the first letter of a word, inventing stories before going to bed, reading advertisements, playing school, and writing letters to family members in Mexico" (Gillanders & Jimenez, 2004, p. 262).

Nonetheless, Gillanders and Jimenez (2004) noted that "hints and vestiges of the parents' prior experiences with literacy continued to appear in their ongoing practices" (p. 262). Mexican-American parents in Reese and Gallimore's (2000) study, without exception, said they used the traditional syllabic or phonetic methods used in Latin America to teach children to read.

Parents explained that they, themselves, had learned to read and write by copying "planas" and reading "ma-me-mi-mo-mu," a syllabic method for teaching reading. Their teachers had focused on "flawless production of oral reading" and a belief that "practice makes perfect," (Gillanders & Jimenez, 2004) "hasta que se grabe" (until it is recorded or engraved) (Reese & Gallimore, 2000, p. 112). Children's interpretations of texts were not considered important (Gillanders & Jimenez, 2004).

All told, these parents' actions "contradict the common belief among educators that Latino parents are too busy surviving to care about their children's education or that they do not have the tools to help their children in school" (Gillanders & Jimenez, 2004, p. 262). This is born out by the stories of the Mexican immigrants in Jasis' (2019) study. At a meeting with parents and the principal, one couple explained:

> We became active in our kids' school when our younger son was denied the special services he really needed. We believed that our two older children were doing well in school, but only later, talking with one of their teachers we found out that they had problems too and that they were really behind. That was when we asked to talk to each of their teachers, and we then demanded that our youngest son must receive all the services that he needs. By now things have gotten better, but we are still fighting with the district to get all those services. Todo cambia cuando uno se empieza a mover [everything changes when you start mobilizing]. (Jasis, 2019, p. 6)

The idea of taking such an active role in their children's schooling seems wholly new to these parents, suggesting such participation was not encouraged or usual in their native Mexico. Their parenting practices appear to be changing as they adapt to life in schools in America.

Stacia

Stacia is the mother of three boys, aged 21, 16, and 8. She is earning a degree in early childhood education and currently teaches as paraprofessional in an elementary school where most of the children are from African-American, Latino and Caribbean families. She and her eldest son spent the first eight years of his life in Jamaica while Stacia's husband worked in the United States to provide the family with financial stability. He visited as much as he could. When their son turned 6, he said definitively that he wanted to live with his father. Stacia and her husband had a second son just before she moved to Brooklyn to live with her husband. She stayed home with her child at first. Stacia says that to this day, the 21-year old is very attached to her. He calls to check on her when she has classes at night. By the same token, Stacia says, "He still listens to what I say. When he's out and I call and say "Where are you?" he will still pick up the phone and tell her.

Stacia said that what she wanted for her sons that "they be able to speak up without being disrespectful, to be able to tell the difference between good and bad and what's right and wrong….to speak the truth about what they do and let me decide if it's worth being punished." She tells them "If you are honest you will be able to get along."

Stacia wants her oldest to go into teaching. She says, "I think he would make a good professor … he's good at expressing his thoughts, he wanted to do law. He's doing criminal justice at a community college and will transfer to a four year college to continue." Stacia says, "I've been begging… there's this (tuition free) program called 'Men Teach.' If he 'comes over,' he would want to do history." She says, "The middle one says 'Mommy I don't know!'" He is an excellent student. He says, "I'm going to go away to college. I would like to become an engineer." She tells him, "There are different branches. Which do you want to do?"

Stacia says that the 2nd son is "on the quiet side… he's like me…quiet and reserved…but he talks to me and his older brother. You'll hear the two of them. 'Mommy,' he tells her 'this conversation is just between us.'"

When asked how this compared to parenting in Jamaica, Stacia explained,

> I never beat them. I didn't have reason to…because we could talk. It's very common place to beat children in Jamaica. You can see kids here acting out… most of them are from the Caribbean and the parents will come up and whup them up and it doesn't change the behavior… When I was teaching in Jamaica you'd hear about the children fighting all the time. It was different in my class. Some of the parents said, 'Who is that teacher who is not causing me to come to school every week? (because their children had frequently gotten in fights in previous classes and the parents had been summoned to the school for this) For the entire year we didn't have any problems.

Stacia believed that the children who engaged in aggressive behaviors did so because of other problems. For example, she found out that one little girl who had been labeled a troublemaker had been abandoned by her mother. She said that the parents of most children in her class in Jamaica did citrus farming. If it rained a lot and the crops were bad, money was scarce so they would be hungry at school. I wanted them to know, "I'll feed you, I'll clothe you, I respect you."

All told, even though Stacia had three boys, she has cultivated a sense of respeto in them. In this sense, although she is Jamaican, not Latina per

se, Stacia seems to align herself with the Latino mothers in De la Vega's (2007) study, who wanted their children to know "…what's important in life, how to defend oneself against discrimination, and to never believe that someone is more important than you, but instead to treat others with respect" (p. 170). Stacia had a clear-cut desire for her sons to be respectful, but also for them to be respected, to be able to stand up for themselves. Her 21-year-old son's practice of answering his mother's phone calls, no matter where he is when she calls, indicates his continued respect for her, as well as his sense of familismo. Stacia's middle son's confiding in her ("Mommy, this conversation is just between us") is further evidence of the sense of familismo she has succeeded in promoting.

Moreover, Stacia's having accomplished the above without resorting to physical punishment of her sons, seems related to Guilamo-Ramos et al. (2007) description of the encouragement of personalismo, specifically, "…maternal concern for talking with adolescents to explain their use of parental authority" in order to "instill a sense of responsibility and proper conduct."

When asked how she came to espouse parenting practices that seem to contrast with those she was raised with in Jamaica, Stacia speculated that this might be explained by some atypical features in her own upbringing. As her parents were separated, her three older brothers took care of her and her two younger sisters. The brothers cooked the sisters' meals for them. The brothers "…were always home with their sisters while their friends were out partying… they were loyal – they took care of their sisters." Stacia says this was indeed unusual for Jamaica.

On a final note, in Stacia's careful attention to her sons' individual tendencies, talents, and preferences, followed by her practice of nurturing and "parenting" to those talents, Stacia's practices resemble those described by the Taiwanese mothers in Chao's study. One might wonder: Does this mean her parenting practices have been "globalized" by her experiences of immigration and exposure to other cultures in New York City? Or does this suggest that this is practice and quality are not simply unique to Taiwanese parents?

Arlene

Arlene is a 40-year-old Puerto Rican American single mother of three daughters, a self-described "dance mom, basketball mom, and swim mom." She advises and teaches undergraduate students as a public university and

is beginning her doctoral studies in the coming semester. Of this, Arlene says, "I'm the second in my family….I'm breaking barriers!"

Arlene has expended no small amount of energy in making sure that each of her daughters has received the schooling she feels will best serve them. Like Stacia, and the Taiwanese mothers in Chao's study, Arlene describes carefully tuning into each of her daughter's individual gifts and challenges. She says

> I went to school before zoning… you just bought a house…my mom said "you cross the street, bring in the immunization…." I had to be on wait list for kindergarten for my first child. It's overwhelming - you have to think about where you're gonna live to find out what school they are going to go to. Immigrant parents don't realize how complicated education is. We all understand the importance of it but the complexity to be able to get your child the best education possible, not only for advancement, but to break the cycle of poverty… and I speak English! And there are those manuals you have to feel your way through…

In addition to having to learn how to negotiate the process of getting her children into the best public school settings she could, owing to certain learning issues, Arlene additionally had to learn to navigate the system for getting her daughters added learning support. Of this experience she says,

and then if your child has issues…. when you just think she's a little clumsy maybe she's a little slower to speak… my sister (who has a background in working with children with special needs) told me "I don't want you to get offended but by the time she is 3 [one of Arlene's daughters] should be speaking in complete sentences."

Arlene continues

> I had never been around kids so I wouldn't know. Now you have to specifically request an evaluation. I had to say "She's a bit clumsy…she's knocked kneed and pigeon-toed. The pediatrician didn't pick up on her developmental delays. Parents think the doctors are going to tell them when something is wrong. I said to her teacher, "She's shifting her balance" and she said "You're right she's shifting…if your pediatrician had picked up on it…. You have to retrain her feet." I decided she either plays sports like soccer or she's a dancer. And that's how she fell in love with dance. This opened doors for her.

This daughter is about to audition to go to one of the special New York City high schools, one that focuses on the arts. Arlene has gotten her into "pre-audition boot camp" for the summer to increase her chances of getting in. She is taking her to see Misty Copeland perform as a reward for her work so far.

Arlene has had to advocate on several levels for her youngest daughter who is seen as "an immature 6 year" old by her current teacher. Arlene asks her child's teacher,

> How do you redirect her? If you know Gail, you know you have to keep her busy she's a natural born leader and if you don't keep her busy then she will get bored and start directing the other children. Her first grade teacher said an inexperienced teacher may label her as "the bad kid."

She adds, "Gail is the most confident one and the most sensitive one…one wouldn't think someone so sensitive would be such a strong leader…she is brilliant."

Asked how she has managed to do what she has done as a single mom, Arlene explains: "my mom and my sister…. we all lived in the same house until two years ago [when her mother died unexpectedly]…I qualified for HPD (low-income housing)." Arlene's father has also contributed a considerable amount of assistance. As Arlene often doesn't get home from work until eight or later, her father takes care of the girls, including cooking dinner for them, until she gets home. Additionally, her 20-year-old niece is also currently helping with childcare.

When asked about her hopes and fears around her daughters' eventual prospects in the job market, Arlene said that her older daughter wants to start her own dance studio. Arlene is very pleased with that aspiration. She believes it will make her daughter both self-supporting and happy. She says, "I grew up believing that if you learn, if you work hard you're going to have the job you want…..and somehow the color of your skin is not going to matter."

Arlene's parenting beliefs, practices, and experiences correlate with the research literature in several ways: Like the Mexican-American parents in Jasis' (2019) study, she has had to learn to negotiate the system for both identifying her children's special needs and getting services for them. This, she appears to have become quite adept at.

Arlene's close ties to her family—her sister, her father, her niece, and her mother until her unexpected death—reflect her value and dependence

on the principle of familismo. But providing an interesting twist here is Arlene's father's serving as a major caregiver for her daughters—including, most poignantly, his cooking for them. This perhaps reflects a revision in the culture's stereotypically machismo nature, a revision that would perhaps not have been made had the family remained in Puerto Rico.

Eliana

Eliana is a 30-year old, married mother of a 5-year-old boy. She teaches four-year-olds in a PreK-for All program and is getting a masters degree in early childhood education. Both of Eliana's parents immigrated from Ecuador to the United States at the age of 19, "…for better work." Eliana explains, "They were alone and just had to learn how to survive on their own. They had to work." She and her older brother were born in New York City.

Describing the way she, herself, was parented, Eliana notes,

"My dad was very strict with me growing up. He emphasized, 'You have to go to school do well - that's your responsibility. If you want to do something in life you have to go to school.'" Although her parents eventually separated, Eliana's father paid for her to go to a private Catholic high school. Eliana said,

> I think they would have stayed married if they had stayed in Ecuador because that's the culture over there - when they came here they were more Americanized. Coming here they saw a different viewpoint of life. My mom wanted different things for me. So I would speak up. I would stand up to my dad and say "Why are you being mean to her?"

Of her mother, Eliana said,

> She didn't want to just stay a mom so she went back to school and got her associates' degree in early childhood education, then worked as a special education para-professional for 30 years. When Eliana's parents separated, her mother took a second job as a postal worker, having a friend with a taxicab ferry her directly from her teaching job to the post office each day.

Eliana continued, "My mom installed in me as a woman to be independent and not to rely on anyone but yourself. She said 'I changed the light bulb, I took this apart, not your father.'"

Eliana's mom additionally told her "as long you go to school you don't have to worry." However, she says, "At first I didn't take advantage of my education. I was trying to find myself and see what there was out there in the world."

Eliana finds that her father's strictness and rigidness have stuck with her on some level, saying

> As I got older, with my son I had it innate in me to be strict and firm because that's way I was brought up. But my son has ADHD – he's super sensory, so rigorousness doesn't work… it doesn't work. I have to reprogram him to adapt to his environment to teach him and discipline him….to have some constructive criticism. I don't want to be stern and strict with him but I didn't know how to change because that's how I was brought up. I want him to feel loved and worthy but at the same time he has to work …he has to go to school. Sometimes he is too playful… he needs a lot or redirection and structure. I'm learning to be flexible - I pick my battles.

Thus not unlike Monika, who finds herself—owing to her son's ADHD diagnosis—forced to try to "rein in" her "Chinese side of the family's" emphasis on pushing children to be the best where education is concerned, Eliana has likewise been obliged to "rein in" the emphasis on hard work and rigor both parents instilled in her, also owing to her son's ADHD diagnosis. Both mothers express doubt that this adjustment to high standards for children's behaviors and academic performance—even in the face of the ADHD diagnoses—would be tolerated by their more traditionally minded family members.

On another note, Eliana's narrative regarding her formal and informal education seems dominated by issues of gender. The pervasive theme in her interview material centers on her mother's emphasis on the importance of women's being financially independent. This focus bore a clear relationship to Eliana's mother's experience of immigration, which facilitated her divorce from Eliana's father—a possibility Eliana says might not have presented itself had her parents remained in Ecuador.

European American Parents

In Chao's (1996) cross-cultural comparison of parents' beliefs, a number of themes emerged with regard to the beliefs and practices of the 50 European American mothers she interviewed. All families have been in the United

States for a minimum of three generations and had children in preschool in Los Angeles. Chao (1996) found these mothers usually emphasized

> 1. not wanting to push academics and avoiding "burnout" in young children 2. fostering the idea that learning is fun 3. valuing reading at home 4. nurturing their children's self esteem 5. showing a general interest in the child; valuing home education. (p. 406)

Several mothers felt that stressing academics would rob their children of self-motivation. One said,

> All these kids who are forced to excel at these early, early ages are showing symptoms of stress by the time they are 7 or 8…it just seems like… forcing kids to do all these things prior to their developmental stage of readiness, is just not doing them any favors. (Chao, 1996, p. 415)

One European American mother had received a school readiness checklist from a school. She said, "You were supposed to check off these list of things and they were all academic things. I think they should be…social things – like if your child can participate in a group circle" (Chao, 1996, p. 415). Another mother expressed a value for having children know how to resolve conflict and to get along in the "social type of environment that school is" (Chao, 1996, p. 416).

But another mother said, "hard work and concentrated effort and enjoying the process when it's possible and bearing up when it's not" were important (Chao, 1996, p. 416). One-third of the European American mothers believed it was important that their children think learning was fun and exciting and should stimulate their children's creativity. "Give them excitement by teaching them through everyday experiences and let that transfer to a school setting…Show him, explore with him the different aspects of ideas that interest him….," they said (Chao, 1996, p. 416).

One-third of the European American mothers thought that self-esteem was the foundation for their children's overall success and that helping develop children's self-esteem and confidence would create a foundation for doing well in life, school included—and for trying out new things. For these mothers, self-esteem building involved feeling secure within one's family, which was expected to make the child feel more secure at school.

Building self-esteem additionally involved "validating the child's curiosity.…encouraging their ideas… loads of praise and positive reinforcement" (Chao, 1996, p. 417).

The European American mothers moreover believed it was important to "extend their children's experiences and interests by taking them to museums, asking their children what they are doing, listening to them, being interested and encouraging them to ask questions" (Chao, 1996, p. 41). A third of the European American mothers believed in the importance of reading books to their children, in having a lot of books in the home, and making sure their children saw them reading (Chao, 1996).

Weininger and Lareau (2009) add considerations of socioeconomic class to the study of childrearing practices. They found that middle-class "white" parents "…viewed their children's upbringing as a project that involved, among other things, fostering each child's capacity for self-direction" (p. 685). They explain,

> In the spontaneous moments of daily life, as well as during in-depth interviews…middle class parents often stress the importance of children's curiosity, their desire to understand how and why things happen, their self-control, and their independence…In particular, these parents exhibited a focus on ''internal'' processes: Issues of intention, judgment, and decision all loomed large. (Weininger & Lareau, 2009, p. 685)

One interviewee expressed her desire to help her children

> develop enough confidence in their own judgment to resist the pressure of their peers and understand—and empathize with—the experience of those who may be excluded from the group or ridiculed by it. (Weininger & Lareau, 2009, p. 685)

The "white" middle-class parents in the study, whenever possible, gave their children the opportunity to choose what to do in a given situation:

> At times, this entailed giving them a menu of options rather than making a selection for them. In other cases, however, it entailed a lesson in reciprocity, which typically took the form of a negotiation, that is, a sequence in which the child expressed a preference, one of the parents expressed an alternative preference, and the two took turns explaining their positions to the other until one (often the parent) capitulated. The didactic element in these rituals was fairly evident: The children were being taught to justify their choices

> by providing convincing reasons while at the same time being exposed to another's perspective via the reasons offered for the alternative. (p. 686)

Middle-class white parents moreover saw leisure activities as important, as they provided a place where their children could make new friends. Some parents stated they saw leisure activities as a way for giving their children experiences of ethnic diversity. Several parents—both from working-class and middle-class backgrounds—saw leisure activities as a means for helping children develop self-esteem and a sense of accomplishment. Additionally, parents of all classes thought leisure activities could help their children build "rudimentary self-discipline" (Weininger & Lareau, 2009, p. 688).

In fact, "exposure" and "choice" were linked for middle-class parents. They believed that "the more varied a child's experiences, the more he or she will be compelled to evaluate 'options,' deciding which activities to pursue, which to abandon, and why" (Weininger & Lareau, 2009, p. 689). One parent said she was glad that her son "speaks up more about what he wants, about what he likes and what he doesn't like" (Weininger & Lareau, 2009, p. 689).

Working-Class White Parents

Weininger and Lareau (2009) found that in working-class families, in some situations adult authority was expected to prevail uncontested. One working-class white mother explained that although she expected obedience from her child that she frequently relented when her child was unwilling to follow a directive. For her, this "represented an act of surrender on her part" (Weininger & Lareau, 2009, p. 690). When working-class moms were directive, they did not offer any explanation, while the middle-class parents did (Weininger & Lareau, 2009, p. 690). This implied the working-class parents' preference for maintaining their children's respect for parental authority, as opposed to the middle-class parents' desire to have discipline-worthy interactions involve more reciprocal negotiation and mutual power between parent and child—for having the child help figure out what to do about her problematic behavior.

One of the working-class white mothers felt it was important to have her children participate in church groups, as she thought it helped teach her child "what's right and what's wrong," as well as to be "patient and respectful" (Weininger & Lareau, 2009, p. 692).

On the other hand, with reference to leisure time, children of working-class parents were free exercise their own initiative, make their own decisions, and pursue their own preferences. And Weininger and Lareau (2009) observed that working-class children had considerably more unscheduled time than their middle-class counterparts, during which they could choose what activities to engage in.

Issues of cultural, social, and symbolic capital.

Lareau, Weininger, and Cox (2018) have moreover examined how cultural, social, and symbolic capital can play a significant role in interactions between middle-class parents and schools. They described how in an elite district, as the administration was attempting to re-draw attendance boundaries for two high schools, several parents

> ….collectively revised the district's enrollment projections, and others compiled data collected via stopwatches to determine travel times between neighborhoods and schools at various points during the school day…" (Lareau et al., 2018, p. 16)

Another mother advised parents as to how to generate media coverage of their activism.

Parents additionally activated their social networks and created new ones to generate "….an effective counterweight to both the district administration and the (school) board" (Lareau et al., 2018, p. 16). As Lareau et al. (2018) point out, "Taken together, these activities suggested a significant expectation of deference from administrators and officials on the part of parents (Lareau et al., 2018, p. 16).

Monika

Monika, previously described in the section on Asian-American parents, owing to her Chinese parentage, is the mother of a 6-year-old girl and an 8-year-old boy. She describes her mother's side of the family as "waspy." Her parents met while both were completing degrees in public health, during the "hippy" era. Monika says her mother maintained "some of that mentality." Her father was from a Chinese working-class background and both sides of her family highly valued education. Her parents separated when she was very young so Monika switched back and forth between spending time with her mother in Washington Heights which, despite its current gentrification, was solidly working class and ethnically mixed when

Monika was young. Monika says her mother was "more relaxed about the academics piece of things" than was her Chinese father and always felt there was too much pressure from Monika's father's side of the family. Monika was sent to a very progressive public school, strategically located so as to draw children from a variety of ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. The school—in both its philosophical and practical mission—is directed by the educational ideas of John Dewey. This translates into a curriculum in which educators design learning experiences for children that are almost exclusively hands-on. Children are generally encouraged to initiate their own engagement with various materials as they see fit and to pursue lines of inquiry about curricular materials in ways that they, themselves devise. Monika noted the distinct lack of "pressure" to learn at this school.

Monika has carried on the tradition of her mother's side of the family, sending her two children to the self-same school she, herself, attended. In so doing, both she and her mother's ideals of schooling correlate with the European American mothers in Chao's study, for whom it was important that their children think learning was fun and exciting and should stimulate their children's creativity. Like the schooling Monika and her mother chose, the European American moms in Chao's study advocated for teaching children through everyday experiences, for supporting them as they explored different aspects of materials and ideas that interested them.

Like the mothers in Weininger and Lareau's study, both Monika and her mother tacitly expressed a desire to have their children "understand—and empathize with—the experience of those who may be excluded from the group or ridiculed by it" (Weininger & Lareau, 2009, p. 685). This was tacitly evident in Monika's mother's choice of life experiences for Monika. Her mother began an organization which built good quality housing for homeless individuals. Many of Monika's childhood hours were spent at the facilities her mother was responsible for creating, meaning she was often in the company of formerly homeless people.

True to her mom's motivations, Monika notes, "This influenced the way I look at other people; people were taking care of me and only as I was growing toward and adulthood did I realize they were impaired." Monika characterizes her sending her own children to the very progressive public school as "…trying to mimic a lot of what I experienced and got from there."

But an overriding concern for Monika when it comes to her children's schooling centered on her son's diagnosis of ADHD. She notes, "He is pretty brilliantly smart, but his executive functioning is impaired so I've

had to adjust, to try to remind myself that the happiness piece is the most important." She seems unsure as to whether the comparatively unstructured educational approach at her children's school is working for her son. She explains,

> They follow the children's lead and I feel like he often doesn't have any idea what he's supposed to be doing unless they are being explicit. I'm not sure he's absorbing that much from the class. He's found his place at school but it's hard for him socially. He can persist with behaviors that are annoying to other children.

When asked if she is concerned about her children's schooling positioning them to find viable employment as adults, she said "More recently I'm more worried about if we will have life on the planet!" She says she's not so focused on an expectation that they will be able to find a job and be able to support themselves but more worried about climate change. She says, "I've never been that environmentally minded but I'm getting more worried."

Monika noted, "I'm more focused on daily life and worried about the education that they are going to get because the school is having a hard time. They opted out [from taking the New York State standardized tests] last year - they had an 80% opt out rate so they got onto the - CSI (Comprehensive Support and Improvement) list. We're in hot water with the state…." Monika explained that every child who opts out of taking the standardized tests is assigned the lowest possible grade for the standardized test—a 1. Thus the school is classified as failing to make "Adequate Yearly Progress" (AYP) [see Chapter 4 for a fuller explanation of regulatory guidelines for "failing" schools, as put in place by No Child Left Behind Act]. Monika worried,

> Being on the CSI list is framed as support but their idea of support is nothing - taking away the arts to have more academic instruction. If we can't get off the list, then we don't get off the list for potential closure. It's hard to get families to come to the school (with these things being publicized).

Monika explained that there is a bill going up in the New York State Senate which attempts to codify the right to opt out according to law.

Two noteworthy items arise in the above: (1) Monika's use of "we" in discussing her children's school indicates that she sees herself as an active

part of and agent in what goes on at her children's school—not as a someone who hands her children over to the school each day, then exercises little to no control over what happens with her children's education thereafter. This fits with what Weininger and Lareau describe as characteristic of middle-class parents. (2) Monika's knowledge of the bill before the New York State Senate suggests she possesses the same sort of social and cultural capital, demonstrated by Lareau et al's interviewees who mobilized this capital in their efforts to help control the district administration's decisions about redrawing district lines.

On a final note, not unlike Eliana, rather than focusing on her children's future job prospects, Monika appears more focused on worries over her son's ability to learn in the school she has chosen for him, taking into account his ADHD issues. Moreover, Monika worries whether the school in whose philosophies she believes and which she enjoyed as a child, can survive the educational politics that schools with progressive, democratic agenda are currently facing in the United States.

Riva

Riva is a European American college professor, the mother of a six-year-old boy and a three-year-old girl. Among Riva's primary goals for her children are "having them be avid readers and writers…to love texts." She says "My husband and I both identify as people 'of the book,' we live our lives surrounded by books and words and get a lot of value from that."

In terms of personal and moral goals for their children, Riva says she and her husband "feel strongly about teaching our children to be able to name the uniqueness of their own identity." They want their children "to be able to walk into varied communities with love and grace." She and her husband talk about modeling that and giving their children opportunities to do that—"to notice how they are different from other people and how they can talk to other people…since they are being raised in a diverse city that is prone to segregation." With this goal in mind, rather than taking her children to the playground closest to her apartment in her tony, upper-middle-class neighborhood, Riva takes them to one several blocks away, located in a low-income housing project. In addition to having good equipment, Riva says it provides opportunities for teaching and modeling for her children. She says, "They can learn how you make friends with people who are racially different from you…how do you recognize a tension that is going on." For example, Riva describes an episode in which a child

of color was engaging in rough and tumble play with one of her children. The child's mother seemed uncomfortable with this and told her child to stop. In an effort to put the mother at ease, Riva said to her, "It's okay, they're just playing."

Riva believes her wish for her children be able to "enter any community with love and grace" comes from her parents. Both parents had what Riva describes as a strong sense of social justice. Her parents were both career public school teachers in the New York City—her father in public school and her mother in an inner-city Catholic girls school. Riva says her mother constantly brought home stories about her students from working class, non-dominant groups, by whom she was daily impressed.

It's important to Riva that her children feel a connection to and respect for their family members—their grandparents, uncles and aunts and cousins. The children go to a private school associated with Riva's and her husband's religion. Riva explains that this is not to isolate them from children of other religions but to encourage her children to "have a sense of pride in their family's culture."

Along these lines, Riva explains that she does not specifically associate the moral and ethical values that she wants to nurture in her children as coming exclusively from her family's religious orientation. She believes that these are values and attitudes she would want to encourage, regardless of her religion. Riva explains that her religion professes "we should all live a life of peace" and she very much wants for her children to learn to "find peace." For Riva, this means being at peace with who they are, as well as being able to find peace in times of difficulty they mind find themselves in as adults. Riva explains "Even if they struggle professionally for a long time, I hope they would have some kind of peace about it. Rather than self flagellate over it, I would want them to be able to calmly think of a next step."

Riva says she was raised with these values. She notes, "I don't remember being raised with any real achievement-oriented or academic pressure. There was trust that that would come. If anything, I was discouraged from competitiveness."

With reference to her own children's future prospects, Riva said "Of course I want them be educated and have a job but I feel that because they are in the situations they are in, (in a supportive, well-educated, middle-class family) I don't worry about that." She says she recognizes that the fact she is "not so actively worried about them having skills speaks to a level

of social and economic privilege that my kids have. They are being raised in a well-networked community."

This last statement brings to mind Mihalia who was obliged to actively work to include herself in a network with parents with social and cultural capital by first getting her son into the progressive school in her school zone, then forging relationships with such parents by including her son in afterschool activities and participating in parent involvement activities. Riva believed this social and cultural capital was at her children's fingertips, ready-made. The two women's different experiences likely stem from issues of ethnicity and socioeconomic class; nonetheless, both mothers recognize the value of such networks.

Moving further along these lines, Riva additionally recognizes that her focus on her children's learning to "find peace with themselves" and to enter communities of people who are in some ways different from them "with love and grace," is related to her educational and family background, as well as her socioeconomic status. Although her son had been deemed in need of support services as a very young child, Riva did not choose to focus upon this in her discussion. This choice aligns Riva with the middle-class white mothers in Weininger and Lareau's (2009) study, who wanted their children "understand—and empathize with—the experience of those who may be excluded from the group or ridiculed by it" (p. 685), as well as the border crossing mother in Dow's study who proudly said of her daughter, "She knows how to be around black people… how to be around white people…how to be a scholar…how to be a community person…And I value that kind of cultural fluidity" (Dow, 2019 p. 65).

It likewise aligns Riva with Chao's European American mothers who saw building their children's self-esteem and "confidence for trying out new things" as a foundation for children's overall success.

Discussion

Several themes emerge in the research literature on the values, beliefs, and practices of parents from a number of ethnic groups, combined with the original research described above. Some of these suggest a relationship between parenting beliefs and practices and issues of globalization while others do not.

Respeto, Confianza, and Familismo

Several of the values identified as seminal for Latino families pervade the research literature, as well as interviewee responses. Among these are respeto, confianza, and familismo.

Aligning their values with those of respeto, parents categorically named as a priority their children's learning respect—for family members, for themselves, and for others. According to De la Vega (2007), respeto also involves knowing how to conduct oneself with different individuals and groups of people. This value is reflected in Mihalia's statement "I want my son to understand respect for other people….When my son sees someone who is disabled, I want him to understand and respect that person, I tell him 'God could have made YOU that way.' Think about how you would feel if you were that person."

Monika and Riva, both of parents whose work focused on social justice in some aspect, placed major emphasis on having their children respect people who were "different from" themselves. Riva wanted her children to understand and respect the different perspectives of diverse families they encountered on the playground. Several of the "border-crossing" parents in Dow's study add their voice here, stating they wanted their children to respect all members of their neighborhood—even ones who were visibly struggling with drug addiction.

Respeto moreover involves "…knowing how to defend oneself against discrimination, and to never believe that someone is more important than you" (De la Vega, 2007, p. 170), but doing so in socially and culturally appropriate ways—in ways that demonstrate respect for others. This value was apparent in Stacia's expressed desire for her sons to be both respectful and respected, to be able to stand up for themselves. This value was likewise apparent in Amina's assertion that she did not want her son to experience job market discrimination, based on his mixed African-American and Chinese-American heritage.

Emphasis on confianza defined, in part, as "trust in oneself" which can be "…translated into self-confidence or self-esteem" (De la Vega, 2007, pp. 174–175) pervades both the research literature and interviewees' responses. Chao (1996) describes how, for the Taiwanese mothers in her study, "self-esteem building involved feeling secure within one's family, which was expected to make the child feel more secure at school" (p. 417). Riva broached this in expressing her value for children's being able to "name the uniqueness of one's own identity." She noted that in

sending their children to a school with connections to her family's religion, she and her husband hoped their children would "have pride in the small culture" with which their religion is associated. Riva's description of her wish for her children to be able to "find peace with themselves" to be able to say, "this is who I am" moreover translates to a desire for her children to be calm and confident in "naming (their) own identity."

For the European American mothers in Chao's study, building self-esteem additionally involved "validating the child's curiosity….encouraging their ideas…." Parental motivations and activity in this regard were described by several interviewees: When Arlene noticed that her oldest daughter was "a little clumsy" as a young girl, Arlene offered her the choice of playing soccer or taking dance classes. Her daughter chose dance and is now about to audition for one of the special performing arts high schools in New York. Her daughter's dream is to open her own studio.

"Border-crossing" mothers in Dow's (2019) study had a related but different project: In a conscious effort to avoid damage to their children's self-esteem, these mothers somehow made sure their children were "appropriately racially socialized" to lessen possibilities for their "blackness" being challenged by their peers.

Interviewees, without exception, acknowledged the importance of their children's feeling close to and having respect for family members. This coincides with what Cortes (1995) and Harwood et al. (2002) have written about familismo, previously defined here as "a belief system that refers to feelings of loyalty, reciprocity, and solidarity toward members of the family, as well as to the notion of the family as an extension of self" (Cortes, 1995, p. 249).

In sum, across the board, parents' values—both in the literature and as expressed by interviewees—emphasized the importance of respeto, confianza, and familismo. This suggests that parenting values and beliefs at times transcend national borders and ethnic categories established by the research literature. This might, in turn, raise questions as to whether different ethnic and national groups' initial concepts of these values—respeto, confianza, and familismo—are in any way modified and revised as parents migrate internationally in response to changes in the global economy. This suggests a direction for further research but is beyond the scope of this chapter.

Globalization and Parents' Aspirations for Children's Futures

Mother's responses to questions about their aspirations for their children's future employability in the perpetually changing global economy focused on various issues. Monika wondered aloud "if there will be a planet" and "If my son's school will be able to address his ADHD issues." Eliana, likewise, focused on son's ADHD issues, but wrestled with her understanding of these versus her desire to simply urge her son "work hard so he can get a good job." Arlene and Stacia both said they simply wanted their children to "be happy" in the occupations in which they end up—whether by choice or default. But in the meanwhile, Stacia is encouraging her oldest son to become a teacher.

Along similar lines, Amina said of her son, "As long as he is self-supporting and can take care of his family….I just want him to be happy." In this way, Amina distinguished herself from the Asian-American mothers in Chao's (1996) study, who said they pushed their children to be the best they could be. Mihalia focused on making her son's emerging preferences for toys and activities that are stereotypically considered "for girls" acceptable for his schoolmates and her family. She said she did worry about his ability to eventually find a job but seemed hopeful that his mathematical abilities would make it possible for him to become a scientist, "not just a teacher or a policeman."

All told, issues of globalization and the continually evolving global economy seemed to bear less weight in these women's aspirations for their children's futures than did other, more immediate and pressing elements, e.g., children's diagnoses of ADHD and concerns about how climate change would affect their children's futures. However, to the extent that changes in the global economy result in the excess use of fossil fuels and the production of other significant waste, in turn producing climate change that has large-scale, negative implications for the future of the environment, one could make the argument that Monika's worry for her children's futures is created and shaped by issues of globalization. Additionally, from the point of view that a perpetually shifting global economy consistently demands scientific innovation, one might argue that Mihalia's wish for her son to pursue a career in science is shaped by global economic factors.

By contrast, at least some of the parenting practices of the Asian-American families in Chao's study were shaped by issues of globalization. Had it not been necessary for them to immigrate to the United States, they

would not have needed to put added pressure on their children, saying "…Chinese people have to be special in order to be successful. You have to do better than what White people could do" (Chao, 1996, p. 412). They could have simply limited their efforts to pressing their children to be "The best they could be" in whatever area of ability had been identified as "special" to that child.

Amina's comment in this regard, "I don't want my son to be overlooked if he has the same education and qualifications" [as some other candidate for a job] likewise reflects this sense of the necessity for an "extra push." But her concerns are compounded by the fact that her son is African-American as well as Chinese.

Issues of Gender and Globalization

Several events experienced by these particular interviewees appear responsible for revisions to certain gender roles in their families. When Arlene's mother died unexpectedly, her father took over a significant amount of the caregiving for his three granddaughters. This included cooking the evening meals for them. One might wonder: Had his family not immigrated from Puerto Rico, would Arlene's father have been equally willing to take on this stereotypically "women's work."

Eliana speculated that if her parents had remained in Ecuador instead of immigrating to the United States for economic reasons, they might not have sought a divorce—they might have been expected to "just stick it out." As a result of her divorce, Eliana's mother became a major breadwinner, making it possible for her to support her two children in New York City. This, in turn, meant that Eliana's older brother took care of Eliana when their mother began working her second job at the post office. Eventually, Eliana's mother bought her own house, and then retired to Miami. Eliana emphasized how her mother's role-modeling in this regard has shaped her own perspectives, making her feel within her rights to express her opinions to her erstwhile "strict" father. And this is reflected in Eliana's own parenting style. She notes that she expects him to make his bed, help clean up after meals, and assist in other household tasks.

In fact, Arlene, Eliana, and Stacia each described how their mothers emphasized the importance of financial independence to them. All three stated that this was "drilled" into their heads. Each of these women's mothers had grown up in Caribbean cultures in which female independence was not generally promoted. Nonetheless, Eliana's and Stacia's mothers

managed to divorce their husbands. Although Arlene's parents remained married, they spent significant amounts of time living apart in New York City. Taking these details into consideration, Eliana's, Arlene's, and Stacia's mothers' emphasizing the importance of financial independence to their daughters appears logical if not commonsensical. But had these women not immigrated (excepting Stacia's mother who remained in Jamaica), this cautionary feature in their parenting might not have appeared.

Parent Involvement at Children's Schools and Globalization

Monika described her wholehearted participation in the evaluation and accessing of support services for her son's ADHD. She mentioned that when it comes to her Chinese side of the family, this is a topic that she downplays, if not avoids altogether. Although it seems clear to Monika that her son's challenging behaviors stem from his ADHD, she is not sure that her Chinese relatives would be accepting of this perspective. They might, rather, take the position that the boy needs to learn to be given more structure so that he can learn to control his behaviors.

Like Monika, Eliana's perspective of her son's ADHD behaviors is predominantly shaped by the education she has received, both at her job as a special education paraprofessional and in her teacher education program. She is eager and willing to utilize available research and therapies to address her son's challenging behaviors. Eliana believed that her son's behaviors would not be regarded with such understanding by her parents' families in Ecuador. Indeed, this was reflected in her brother's half-joking remark that if Eliana would just give him a day with her son, he could put end to the boy's challenging behaviors.

The Mexican-American parents in Jasis' (2019) study likewise showed an enthusiasm for utilizing available resources for addressing their children's learning needs which were, in principle, available to them through the school system. To reiterate, one father noted,

> We became active in our kids' school when our younger son was denied the special services he really needed. We believed that our two older children were doing well in school, but only later, talking with one of their teachers we found out that they had problems too and that they were really behind. That was when we asked to talk to each of their teachers, and we then demanded that our youngest son must receive all the services that he needs. By now

things have gotten better, but we are still fighting with the district to get all those services.

The idea of taking such an active role in their children's schooling seemed wholly new to these parents, suggesting such parent activism was not encouraged or usual in their native Mexico.

Concluding Remarks

Made abundantly evident in the above are the myriad elements that come into play when parents—regardless of ethnicity, immigration status, or socioeconomic class—consciously and unconsciously make decisions about the values they wish to instill and cultivate in their children, as well as the types of support—and sometimes pressure—they will provide their children with their schoolwork. Although the research literature has identified patterns of behavior for various ethnic groups in this regard, the interview material gathered from the research participants described in this chapter suggest that—owing to various factors—it is difficult if not impossible to make any general statements that consistently represent reality, with regard to how parents make decisions of this nature. For example, Stacia, from Jamaica, described how she tuned into each of her three sons' individual tendencies, talents, and preferences, then consciously encouraged them in those directions. In a similar fashion, Arlene, of Puerto Rican heritage, described identifying, then nurturing the different strengths and abilities of her three daughters. Nonetheless, the research literature attributes these parenting practices to Taiwanese-American mothers, specifically, those in Chao's (1996) study. This suggests that this parenting practice is not unique to Taiwanese mothers but in fact, transcends national borders and ethnic categories.

The overlap and blurring of ethnic categories revealed in the research literature and the interviewee data likely stems, at least in part, from the fact that several of the interviewees are themselves multi-ethnic. They are half Chinese/half African-American; half American/half Chinese; their parents were initially working class but have become middle class; they existed in one culture, then, owing to immigration, were obliged to figure out how to exist in another.

Along these lines, as Cortes, Rogler, and Malgady (1994) have pointed out that much research has presumed a "bipolar" view of ethnic identity, centered on the notion that "the adoption of a new culture occurs at the

expense of a corresponding rejection of the culture of origin" (p. 718). However, it is important to acknowledge that this perspective discounts the important possibility—in fact reality—that parents and children can and do consciously and choose and reject elements of their native and host cultures, depending on which they find most useful and/or appealing.

The above-raised issues are just a few of the elements that have contributed to the "non-normalizable" way in which parents make decisions about how to rear and support their children. But this, in the end, is what makes them the complex, thoughtful, and intriguing people they are, both as individuals and as parents. Their children stand to benefit from this substance and complexity.

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PART IV

Conclusion

CHAPTER 8

Educational Policy, Parents, and Investment That Matters

Gay Wilgus, Amita Gupta and Guangyu Tan

The educational policy landscapes of China, India, and the United States, as well as parenting beliefs and practices related to children's education, have been significantly revised and reshaped by increasingly rapid changes in the global economy. This has been made abundantly clear in the preceding chapters. The nature of these revisions and shapings fall into two broad categories: (1) changes in educational initiatives and reforms, ultimately geared toward the building of human and cultural capital, and (2) changes in parenting beliefs and practices, geared toward helping children negotiate the challenges these initiatives have created in schools, and to take advantage of the educational opportunities these initiatives have created.

This concluding chapter entails a discussion of differences and similarities in the ways that these two categories of change have played out in China, India, and the United States. Ultimately, this discussion makes a case for investment in human and cultural capital—specifically through investment in quality childcare and early education programs. At the same time, the effectiveness of education that derives from grand-scale standards, and that measure student achievement through standardized testing, is called into question. Recommendations are then made for redirecting energies, efforts, and money previously devoted to standards-based curriculum, pedagogies, and high-stakes testing, toward high-quality care and early educational programs instead. A case is moreover made for ensuring that the

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curriculum in these programs feature a heavy emphasis on play and the creation of child-friendly classroom environments.

Educational Policies and Initiatives in China, India, and the United States

Educational initiatives and policy in China, India, and the United States in response to globalization in recent years coincide on several axes. Although there are differences in the ground-level details and particulars of these policies and initiatives for each country, the essential concerns and foci are shared. These include: child-centered versus drill-centered curriculum and pedagogy; issues of language; local versus distant control over educational policy and practice; educational ideologies and spiritual beliefs; accommodating the influx of different ethnic, linguistic, religious, and socioeconomic groups; and increasing availability of educational experiences for very young children.

From Child-Centered to Skill and Drill-Centered and Back Again

China, India, and the United States are the world's three largest countries by population. However, unlike India, and the United States which are the world's largest and oldest democracies, respectively, China is a communist society ruled by a unitary one-party government. The government controls the school curriculum, which focuses on a collectivist ideology and reflects a nationalist political agenda. Early childhood education (ECE) and care were utilized as propaganda to advance the Communist Party's agenda (Hung, 2014). After the economic reforms of 1979, the field of ECE entered a new era. Western educational theories and play-based learning were introduced to China's early childhood care and education (ECCE) programs. This was the first time in China that the national policy acknowledged children as unique individual subjects, designated play, and active learning as the primary teaching methods in kindergarten, and legally defined the prominent role of play in ECCE (Pan & Li, 2012). The *Several Opinions on the Current Development of ECCE* (国务院关于当前发展学前教育的若干意见) (2010) stipulated that play should be treated as the main activity in ECCE programs, and acknowledged that children learn best through a variety of activities, in an enriched learning environment (Zhou, 2011). However, more recently, owing to global competition,

ECE has again been appropriated as a strategic investment in human capital, and curriculum focuses heavily on academics. English and STEM are increasingly integrated into ECCE curriculum.

Chapter 3 describes India's recent policy "shift from a traditional teacher-directed approach toward a child-centered approach in ECE: developmentally appropriate, activity based, related to child's needs, interests, abilities; integrated set of experiences to foster holistic growth in all developmental domains; flexible enough to meet the diverse social, cultural, economic, linguistic contexts of India; flexible enough to cater to individual differences between children; and able to help children adjust to routines and demands of formal teaching of primary school (NCERT, 2006)" (Chapter 3, p. 69). Although nineteenth and twentieth century Indian philosophers supported child-centered approaches this policy shift appears as a response to global research and trends in ECE, specifically in neuroscience and developmentally appropriate practices. These are "western" discourses supported by international and world organizations such as the UN and the World Bank.

Interestingly, educational policy initiatives in the United States appear to have headed in precisely the opposite direction, that is, from a focus on child-centered approaches to learning and pedagogy to traditional ones involving drill-and-skill, as well as rote-memorization style pedagogies. As explained in Chapter 4, this has come about as the result of a preoccupation with prioritizing the establishment of a set of national standards for PreK-12th grade aged students, then designing assessment tools—standardized tests—that allegedly measure students' attainment of those standards. Curriculum is then derived from the standardized test items, presumably in a way that ensures children score well on the test items. Pedagogies suited to imparting "knowledge" in this way tend toward drill-and-skill and rote memorization. As noted previously, this is an inappropriate approach to education. As has been well established in the research literature, meaningful and useful learning are hard-pressed to emerge from such approaches. Especially at the early childhood level meaningful and long-lasting learning comes from hands-on, in-depth, inquiry-based explorations directed by the children themselves.

Issues of Language and Learning

A second area of interest for comparison among the three countries' educational policies centers on issues of language instruction and learning.

Mandarin Chinese is the official language in China, and all instruction is in Mandarin Chinese, except in ethnic autonomous regions, such as Tibet, Xinjiang, and Ningxia provinces. Like India, students in those ethnic autonomous regions are offered trilingual programs: Mandarin Chinese, the local indigenous language, and English. However, compared with Chinese and English, ethnic indigenous languages are at a severe disadvantage (Adamson & Feng, 2009).

India is a country with huge linguistic diversity and has 22 official languages. The latest Census 2011 indicates that more than 19,500 languages or dialects are spoken in India as a mother tongue. India's current policy for language of instruction in all schools follows the 1964 Education Commission's "three-language formula" which has been described in Chapter 3:

> The three languages that students are required to learn during their school careers are 1) their mother tongue or the regional language of the state in which they reside; 2) English, the official language of India, and/or Hindi, the national language of India which is spoken by about 40 % of the Indian population according to Census 2001; and 3) a modern Indian language which may be one of the 22 dominant regional languages spoken in India and recognized as official. (Chapter 3, p. 69)

In support of this multilingual system and the national educational policy on language instruction in Indian schools, the Indian Constitution requires all states across the country to publish books in up to a dozen or more languages (Saini, 2000).

Along these lines, the United States has seen important movements with regard to bilingual education, beginning in Texas in the 1960s (Mondale, 2002). This movement was picked up, then unceremoniously dropped by the state of California in the form of its Proposition 227 (Attinasi, 1998). New York State continues to have a number of schools that offer different programs of bilingual education, e.g., immersion, dual language, comprising different languages—Spanish, French, Russian, and Mandarin, to name a few. In most states, students are required to take at least one course in a language other than English. Nonetheless, standardized testing for No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and now the Educating all Students for Success Act is given exclusively in English. In fact, this is likewise the case for the New York State Teacher Certification Exams, despite the burgeoning number of Spanish-speaking students in schools in New York State. Moreover, as previously noted, tests scores for children who have recently

arrived in the United States are counted in a school's performance score within one year of the students' arrival. This disregards extensive research findings (as well as the everyday, commonsense knowledge of teachers of English-language learners) that the age at which a child is exposed to a second language importantly determines how quickly that child is able to become fluent in that language.

All told, the respect for multilingualism demonstrated by the three language formulas in India appears absent from United States educational initiatives and reforms of the past few decades. Some expensive private schools might provide opportunities for students' learning a third language—often languages assumed to position students for eventual economic success as international business-folk, e.g., Mandarin or Arabic. This phenomenon appears equivalent to that in India, involving "rapidly growing 'international schools,' marketed as leveling the playing field by preparing children across Asia in the language and skills prioritized in the global job market" (Chapter 3, p. 69). However, such opportunities rarely present themselves in the American public school.

Local Versus Distant Control Over Educational Policy and Practice

China differs from India and the United States in that control of education shifted from the central government to the local government and private sectors after the economic reforms of 1979, then the central government reined back the control in 2011. From 1949 to 1979, education was considered a "public good," thus the central government paid all the operating costs and controlled the curriculum. As discussed in Chapter 2, education served as the State propaganda to advance the Communist Party's agenda. However, after the economic reforms of 1979, with the establishment of the market economy (*shi chang jing ji* or 市场经济) in the 1990s, the central government encouraged non-government and private investment and implemented a so-called "government retreats while private sector advances" (国退民进) policy. This policy indicated a shift of the government's responsibility of funding and monitoring of ECCE to the private sector or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Li, Yang, & Chen, 2016).

ECE and care thus became a paid commodity, which exacerbated the inequality between urban and rural areas, among regions, and between the haves and have-nots. Accessibility, affordability, and accountability (the

3As), along with sustainability and social justice (2Ss) were the greatest challenges faced by ECCE in China. To address these issues, in 2010, the central government made universal ECCE a national priority. The *Outline of China's National Medium and Long-Term Educational Reform and Development* (国家中长期教育改革和发展规划纲要 [*2010–2020*]) clarified the role of government in providing ECCE, suggesting that ECCE should be mainly funded, planned, and managed by the government. Therefore, the control of ECCE in China has gone through the central government to the local government and private sections, then the central government reined back the control shared by local government and private sectors.

Increasingly in India, English is being viewed as the global language that is required for upward mobility, and fluency in the English language is commonly viewed as a marker for higher social status. In Chapters 3 and 6, it was noted that this perspective of English as a global language "tends to lead to linguistic imperialism; and the compulsion to learn and teach English, as well as the compulsion to adopt a western discourse of ECE can be seen as forms of colonization leading to handing over control of local forms of knowledge production and research" (p. 69). Unfortunately, despite this, parents belonging to economically disadvantaged classes still desire that their children be enrolled in private schools which are modeled after western schools where they will hopefully master the English language. The hope is that their children will grow to be more competitive in a national job market that is becoming more globalized.

This phenomenon resonates with the situation in the United States as described in Chapter 4, specifically, the detailed descriptions of the myriad ways in which US educational policy and initiatives in the past few decades have been the work of a privileged few. A striking example is the 1996 National Governors Association (NGA) educational summit that anticipated the development of the Common Core (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 577–580). To reiterate, this summit proposed a "national nonprofit organization allied with states and business interests that could serve as a clearinghouse for information and research on standards and assessment tests" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 577–580). This organization, which eventually emerged in the form of Achieve, was allowed to accept "tax-deductible donations from businesses and philanthropies with interests in influencing the development….as well as the subsequent implementation and related products of standards and assessments" (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 588–589). This trend continued when Achieve got

its foot in the door with the 2008 publication *Out of Many, One* report, focused on a “common core of standards” (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 1109–1113) and set the stage for the creation of CCSS “—a single set of K–12 vision for ‘standards unity’ across the United States” (Schneider, 2015, Kindle Locations 1613–1615). This project, to a large extent promoted and bankrolled by the Gates Foundation, then implemented by Pearson, took control over issues of educational philosophy, curriculum, and assessment further and further away from the local contexts in which they occur. The fact that these several players’ motivations, interest, and investment in the above-named ventures were ultimately spurred by a drive to return the United States to the top slot in the global economic hierarchy paints these phenomena in American educational policy as consequences of economic globalization. Although ESSA portends to reverse this trend and give control back to local educational agencies (LEAs), school districts and states, in fact it the federal government continues to demand that all children undergo standardized testing from grades 3 to 8. Additionally, although states are given the right to design their own accountability measures and systems, they must still report the results of these to the federal government.

In both the United States and India, globalization has produced situations in which control over what goes on in schools has been taken further away from what is in the best interest of the individual child and from those who are in charge of the day-to-day experiences of children in schools.

Educational Ideologies and Spiritual Beliefs

Ancient Chinese and Indian texts and scriptures strongly emphasize knowledge as essential for success. In China, the first standardized tests were created during the Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD), when officials designed civil service exams to choose people to work in the government based on merit rather than on family status. The goal was to create an intellectual meritocracy based on Confucian learning (Strauss, 2012). Although the content of the test has changed throughout Chinese history, the idea that standardized test scores are the only measure of intellectual meritocracy remains true today. Academic performance on standardized tests is one of the top four expectations that Chinese parents have for their children.

In India, knowledge was at first valued for understanding but later, over the course of India’s history comprising of centuries of foreign and colonial rule starting with the first millennium, knowledge acquired by the

rote memorization of facts became a commodity for succeeding in tests and examinations. Unlike China and the United States, where religion and education are separated, education in India has historically been largely influenced by four religious or spiritual belief systems over the course of the country's history: Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity. As earlier mentioned in Chapter 3, the Constitution of India opens the doors of all educational institutions run by government or receiving funds from the state are open to all groups of Indians regardless of religious background. It additionally protects and allows for the free establishment of schools based on diverse religious beliefs. As also noted in Chapter 3, the Happiness Curriculum launched in New Delhi by the Dalai Lama in 2018 is a particularly intriguing example of the way in which Indian educational policy can integrate spiritual thinking into school curriculum. It encourages practices of "mindfulness and meditation to counter the academic stresses of Indian schooling by promoting values like gratitude, harmony, justice, love, and respect" (Chapter 3, p. 69). The promotion of this curriculum is partly related to Indian spiritual beliefs and partly to the recent large-scale global initiatives for children's general well-being, supported by the U.N. and other international organizations.

There is not, at present in the United States, an overt connection made between large-scale educational policy and religious ideology. [There are, however, private schools that are affiliated with specific religious groups.] This stems from a conscious effort in the American educational system, begun more than a century ago, to separate church and state, as well as the public school, as a state institution. In fact, as discussed in Chapter 4, there is a conspicuous lack of emphasis on almost anything other than math and literacy learning. This makes for an obvious downplaying of any focus on moral or values education—that is, education that might be ultimately derived from religious ideologies, that might involve, for example, the promotion of "secular" moral and ethical practices, like those of the Happiness Curriculum: gratitude, harmony, justice, love, and respect. Although there have been some recent fledgling efforts to restock interest in "character education" that enjoyed a brief time in the spotlight in the early nineties, this has yet to take place on a grand scale. Although the campaign for multicultural education, followed by social justice education made some progress in this direction, this has been largely overshadowed by the previously described drive for student success on standardized tests that take exclusive interest in math and literacy.

Accommodating the Influx of Different Ethnic, Linguistic, Religious, and Socioeconomic Groups

Along these lines, it seems worth noting here the ways in which, owing to large-scale immigration in response to globalization, educational policy has necessarily been adjusted and revised—or not—in the United States in order to take into account the various ethnic and linguistic groups that enter its borders. As alluded to previously, the United States, saw an impressive push for multicultural education, beginning in the late 1960s. The campaign for bilingual education represents another movement in this direction. However, the long-term effectiveness of these movements has yet to be definitively established.

Educational policymakers and educators must likewise address issues of ethnic and religious diversity in China and India. But unlike the situation in the United States, this diversity comes in the form of ethnic and religious groups which have long inhabited these countries. The diversity India is now witnessing within school populations comes from the fact that schools are now mandated to admit children from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and are thus becoming less segregated and more inclusive.

All told, teacher educators in the United States and India and are huffing and puffing to prepare teachers-in-the-making for working with children from various ethnic, national, religious, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Owing to the rapidity with which changes in the U.S. population is occurring and to the plethora of ethnic and religious groups within China and India, this is no small task.

Increasing Availability of Educational Experiences for Very Young Children

Initiatives to provide early educational experiences available for 3- and 4-year-olds are on the rise in all three countries. For example, in 2010, the Chinese government issued the *Outline of China's National Medium and Long-Term Educational Reform and Development* (国家中长期教育改革和发展规划纲要 [*2010–2020*]), which made universal ECCE a national priority. As detailed in Chapter 2, the *Outline* stipulates,

> By 2020, one-year preschool education should become the norm, while two-year preschool education should be basically universalized, and three-year preschool education popularized in regions where conditions are ripe. Due

> importance shall be attached to the education of infants aged between 0 and three. (p. 12)

In India, the current spotlight is very much on ECE development and advocacy for the expansion of the Right to Education Act of 2009 to include children below the age of 6 years (see Chapter 3). In the private sector, nursery schools and preschools are rapidly mushrooming all over metropolitan and small-town India.

In the United States, this is being set in motion through initiatives like Universal PreK, New York City's PreK-for-All and its emerging 3K for all. Other initiatives have been implemented in other states, for example, North Carolina's Smart Start intended to provide early care and educational slots for all children 0–6 years of age, and More at Four, focused on preparing four-year-olds for kindergarten and later schooling.

In the next section, we will examine how parental philosophies and practices of child-rearing compare in China, India, and the United States.

Parent Perspectives and Practices in Response to Globalization

The ways in which parents' perspectives and practices in China, India, and the United States have been shaped by globalization in recent years fall into three broad categories: parents' perspectives of and expectations for their children; the roles of families, extended families, and communities in childcare, child-rearing and school support in China, India, and the United States; and related to this, changes in gender roles.

Perspectives of and Expectations for Children in China, India, and the United States

In China, Confucianism plays a key role in forming beliefs about personal, familial, and social relationships, and this has a significant impact on parenting and family involvement in children's lives. The three basic virtues, *xiao* 孝 or filial piety, *zhong* 忠 or loyalty, and *jing* 敬 or respectfulness are intertwined and considered fundamental in parent–child relationship (Cua, 2000). Confucianism professes that children be viewed as dependent upon and inferior to adults. They are taught to be obedient, loyal and respectful, and follow the family rules. This perception of children has changed over time; however, children

are still considered as subordinate, and they are expected to be obedient and to do what they are told to do. Those who follow the rules and are obedient and respectful are rewarded and encouraged by parents and teachers. They are so-called, good child (好孩子; 乖孩子). As discussed in Chapter 5 in contemporary China, for Generation X and Millennial parents, self interests may triumph over filial piety. Some parents express their desire to be the best friend of their children. This is most likely related to Generation X and Millennial parents' increasing exposure to alternative perspectives of families, children, and parenting—either through various media or firsthand experience. Other families maintain the strict authority of the family, emphasizing the characteristics of obedience.

In India, children are expected to "live up to the family name," and also fulfill duties to the family and community. Norms of personal chastity and modesty in private and social behavior are reinforced. The practice of self-control is central to character formation (Kulanjiyil, 2010). As was seen in Chapter 6, perspectives of childhood and motherhood in India are "defined within a spiritual frame and are endowed with a degree of divinity." Traditional Indian parenting has actively incorporated the teaching of cultural and spiritual values. In fact, children's well-being is defined in terms of their ability to love, the friendships they have, and the morality and strong character they exhibit. Additionally, parents are expected to provide for their children until they are financially independent. As explained in Chapter 6 of this book, it is the duty of the child to reciprocate by honoring, respecting and caring for the parent, and family members' lives are "physically, emotionally and financially connected across generations," in ways that create a "cyclical and interdependent relationship between parent and child" (Chapter 6, p. 217). However, based on the survey findings and as described in Chapter 6, differences in parenting styles were observed to have occurred over larger sections of Indian society and this might be attributed to the significant influence of recent globalization. Parents expressed a desire for their children to be more independent, be able to explore their interests and make career choices based upon their individual passions and interests. A generation ago parenting in India would have been more adult-centered and authoritarian, as had been encouraged during centuries of British colonial rule. "It is quite apparent that through global interactions young parents in India are being introduced to new and alternative perspectives on child development and education which they seem to integrate with the traditionally Indian practices based on ancestral wisdom" (Chapter 6, p. 217).

As is made evident in Chapter 7, in the United States, owing to the great number of ethnic, linguistic, socioeconomic, and religious groups who inhabit the various regions and cities, there is no singular perception of children and childhood. Early immigrants in the late sixteenth century, mostly Puritans, believed that humans were born sinful as a consequence of mankind's "Fall" had led to the widespread notion that childhood was a perilous period. As a result, parenting was concerned with saving children's souls through instruction and by providing role models for their behavior. This perception of child has undergone radical revision in subsequent centuries.

As indicated in the research literature reviewed in Chapter 7, Latino and Caribbean American parents in the United States value qualities and behaviors of *respeto*—including deference to adult family members and other people who are "senior" to the child, *confianza* to ensure they children become "*personas de bien*" (good people) and that children are "*buen educado*" (well mannered). Although these are not identical to those described above as important in Chinese and Indian cultures, they nonetheless heavily resonate with the same.

Also like families in China and India, Latino families in the United States place more emphasis on the child's obligations to the family and the larger group, and less emphasis on centering interactions around the child's own wishes, thoughts, and desires (Harwood, Leyendecker, Carlson, Ascencio, & Miller, 2002). This value was referred to as *familismo*, defined as "a belief system that refers to feelings of loyalty, reciprocity, and solidarity toward members of the family, as well as to the notion of the family as an extension of self" (Cortes, 1995, p. 249). Interestingly, despite their experiences of immigration to the United States, these essential moral values that parents were raised with were seen to continue to provide guidance in the new cultural setting and "represent conscious continuity with the past" (Reese & Gallimore, 2000, p. 120).

The notable change noted in research with reference to the parenting styles of Caribbean American parents centered on their disciplinary practices with young adolescent children. To reiterate, parents were found to engage more frequently in authoritarian punishment with this age group, presumably owing to a perceived threat that they would otherwise pick up the "bad behaviors" of American youth.

Chinese-American parents were found to have a high value for education, high performance standards and expectations for their children at school, and a belief in the importance of hard work and effort (Chao, 1996).

These parents would often warn their children about the negative repercussions of not working hard in school, emphasizing that they must work harder because they are foreigners. Thus although working hard in school has traditionally been emphasized by Chinese parents, their immigration to the United States in response to changes in the global economy gave these parents and added incentive to emphasize this expectation. However, Chao (1996) observed that Taiwanese mothers of the more recent generation put less emphasis on homework than on their children's ability to socialize with others (Chao, 1996). They maintained that children should not be pushed so hard at a young age or be involved in so many lessons.

In the United States, the parental expectations vary among different racial and ethnic groups. For example, a study by Peng and Wright (1994) drawing upon the NELS data found that 80% of Asian-American parents of eighth graders expected their children to attain at least a bachelor's degree, compared with 50% of Latino parents, 58% of African-American parents, and 62% of European-American parents. In addition to the indicators of race and ethnicity, family socio-economic status (SES) also impacts parental expectations. For instance, in a longitudinal study, Alexander, Entwisle, and Bedinger (1994) found that parents' expectations for their early elementary children's grades in reading and math were above the children's actual grades regardless of ethnicity and SES.

These expectations of the parent interviewees in Chapter 7 in some ways fit with these statistics and some ways do not. Amina, the Chinese-American/African-American mother stated "Education, education, education…this was what was drilled into our heads by our (Chinese-American) mom…There is no question that my son (no 18 months old) will go to college." Similarly, Monika, the Chinese/American mother noted feeling the need to "rein in" her inclinations to push her children to do extremely well in school—despite her son's ADHD diagnosis—an inclination she associates with her "Chinese side of the family." Mihalia, the African-American mother was eager to have her son develop the mathematical abilities he had demonstrated "to become a scientist." Eliana, the Ecuadorean-American mother, also indicated her high expectations for her son, in spite of his ADHD diagnosis. She stated "I don't want to be stern and strict with him" (in the way that her father was with her) "but I didn't know how to change because that's how I was brought up. I want him to feel loved and worthy but at the same time he has to work …he has to go to school. Sometimes he is too playful… he needs a lot or redirection and structure."

The Roles of Families, Extended Families, and Communities in Childcare, Child-Rearing, and School Support in China, India, and the United States

As we saw in the preceding chapters, in China, India, and certain ethnic groups in the United States, parents traditionally rely heavily on grandparents and other extended family members for childcare. It is not uncommon for three generations to live together or close to one another so that grandparents can help raise the child. Multigenerational living has been considered the cultural ideal in China, so that parents can rely on family members for childcare, as well as care for the elderly. In such living arrangements, grandparents play a big role in childcare, as 34% of Chinese grandparents took care of their grandchildren in 2014. This number is much higher in metropolitan cities.

Despite large number of grandparents caring for the grandchildren, many Generation X and Millennial parents complain that the grandparents' way of parenting is often old-fashioned. These differences in opinion can lead to fights and strain family relationships. This has produced a situation in which even though multiple generations may live together, the mothers are still the primary caregiver.

Similarly in India, as indicated in Chapter 6, childcare is also considered a family affair. It is also quite common to find 3–4 generations of the same family living together as a joint family or close-by and interacting closely with each other on a regular basis. Multigenerational living allows for adults and children to physically be a part of each other's worlds more intimately and for a longer period of time. Many Generation X and Millennial parents have appreciated the care and guidance offered by the older generations at home as was very clear in the research data with Indian parents in Chapter 6. However, this trend could be changing according to Das (2015) who describes a "new breed of grandparents" who love their grandchildren but will not babysit them forever. One might rightfully wonder if this is an artifact of globalization: Do grandparents who are exposed to novel images of grandparents and grandparenting via various media or firsthand experience decide to revise their practices based on this exposure?

The United States contains so much diversity in terms of ethnic, linguistic, socioeconomic, and religious groups that it is neither possible nor desirable to make general statements about family structure and parenting and characterize it as being "American." Although generations may not live under the same roof, more grandparents and other relatives are

sharing the responsibilities of childcare. For example, almost 7.8 million or 10.5% of all children under age 18 live in homes where the householders are grandparents or other relatives (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010, *Census*).

Grandparents' and extended families' taking responsibility for childcare is likely related—at least in part—to the fact that the United States has no formalized paid maternity leave, even though there are a handful of companies that do provide this. In addition, parents face the challenges of limited options for quality childcare, long waitlists and steep costs, which in many cases is more than the cost of sending a child to a public college. Across the United States, it is not unusual for childcare tuition to be the first or second-largest household expense. Adding to the financial burden of paid childcare, some families, particularly low and no-income families, also rely on extended family and community members.

As discussed in Chapter 7, there is "a sense of duty and obligation among members at all levels of the African-American community, a feeling of connection to one another, owing to a collective experience of racial oppression" (as cited in Dow, 2019, p. 58). This interdependence of family and the community has several implications, including "… the communal traditions of shared child care,…" (McAdoo, 2002, p. 49). This was illustrated in Mihalia's interview—in specific, her explanation of how her grandmother had raised her and her sister when their mother became unable to do this. On the other hand, the middle-class African-American mothers interviewed by Dow (2019)—although all expressed a desire for their children to feel connected and close to their extended family members—did not describe depending on family members for childcare to any significant extent. Indeed, one of the mothers described at length the dilemmas she experienced in locating an appropriate nanny. This revisions in trends for family member child caregiving in the African-American community, related to a perpetually increasing African-American middle class.

As also noted in Chapter 7, the Latino extended family serves as "a system for stress-coping and problem-solving…adapting and committing available family resources to normal and non-normal transition" (Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan, & Buriel, 1990, p. 351). This was born out by Arlene's description of how, when she left the father of her three girls, in order to allow her to continue working, her mother, her sister, and her father all took responsibility for childcare. When her mother died unexpectedly, her father took over an extra share of the childcare, picking children up from school and cooking their evening meals. More recently, she explains that a 20-year-old cousin has also taken over some of the childcare for her.

Thus there are trends across China, India, and the United States for parents to continue to rely on grandparents and extended family members for childcare, and some budding suggestion of change in these trends. Trends of reliance on family appear related to long-standing practices and beliefs in individual cultures, and others are due to the lack of available, affordable childcare when mothers are obliged to enter or return to the workplace, owing to economic necessity. So we see that, on the one hand, the cultural importance given to strong generational connections and attachments may be responsible for joint family structures. On the other hand, economic necessity may be created to changes in the labor force in a given country, owing to global economic changes which would then require the mother to work in order to guarantee the family's economic stability. Or a mother might choose to return to the workforce, although the family is not dependent on her income, as she is exposed to globalized media images and accounts of women who enjoy economic and other forms of independence from men.

Issues of Gender

In China, the perception that the public domain is for men, and the domestic domain is for women (男主外女主内) is rooted in Confucianism, which prescribes women's role as a full-time wife and mother (相夫教子). In Chapter 5, we saw that in recent years, there is a resurgence of such traditional gender norms that place the majority of household and child-rearing responsibilities on women. There has been a concerted effort to encourage women to focus on marriage and family instead of careers. Therefore, it is common that fathers are absent from child-rearing, resulting a trend of "widowed family." In one case study, the mother was the primary caregiver by default, because in her words, "he (the father of their children) does want to help, but he just doesn't know how. Besides, he is a surgeon and very busy with his career." Although in recent years, many mothers were in the workforce in China, they found it challenging to balance career and family. They thus made a conscious decision to quit their jobs and return to family sphere, becoming full-time stay-at-home moms and wives. This increase in stay-at-home moms (SAHMs) appears related to the growing middle class in China as a result of its advancing position in the global economy in recent years.

The situation has been comparable for India. Indian mothers consider it important to stay at home to support their children's education and

development as much as possible. And child-rearing and care is generally prioritized within the Indian community (Chanderbhan-Forde, 2010). The growing number of SAHMs in India in recent years is likewise related to its growing middle class as a consequence of its advances in the global economy.

By contrast, in the United States in recent years, the number of hours spent by mothers in the workforce has been on the rise. In 2016, moms spent around 25 hours a week on paid work, up from nine hours in 1965. At the same time, they spent 14 hours a week on childcare, up from 10 hours a week in 1965 (Geiger, Livingston, & Bialik, 2019). Moreover, according to Geiger et al. (2019), about 24% of American mothers are living with a child younger than 18 without a spouse or partner, increasing their need for employment. Nonetheless, these statistics do not tell us if these increases in women's working hours in the United States are attributable to a desire by an increasing number of women to enter the workforce or by an increasing necessity for dual incomes for the family's economic survival.

Conclusion

Despite the culture-specific concepts of childhood and various models of child-rearing, parents across the three countries share some similar expectations of their children. Education, knowledge, and learning have been held in high regard among parents in China, India, and the United States. The maintaining of close relationships with extended family members and of a sense of obligation to family has likewise been a perennial concerns of parents in all three countries.

Investment That Really Matters: Providing High-Quality Care and Education for Young Children

Historically, early childhood programs have not been perceived as key in economic development initiatives. But more recent research by leading economists has linked investment in early childhood development with economic prosperity, productivity, and competitiveness for both the individual and society. Lynch (2007) has pointed to growing global evidence that investment in early childhood programs easily pays for themselves over time by generating very high returns for participants, the government, and the public. Lynch (2007) explains, "While participants and their families get part of the total benefits, the benefits to the rest of the public and

government are larger and, on their own, tend to far outweigh the costs of these programs" (p. 4). Carneiro and Heckman (2003) calculate that the return on the investment in primary and secondary education is 3:1, meaning for $1 invested, the return is $3. Notably, for early childhood learning programs it is 8:1. And as James Heckman, Nobel Laureate in Economic Sciences, adds, "The returns to human capital investments [for our purposes here, investment in early care and education programs] are greatest for the young for two reasons: (a) younger persons have a longer horizon over which to recoup the fruits of their investment and (b) skill begets skill" (Heckman, 2000, p. 39).

Quality in Early Experiences of Care and Education

But simply stopping at making care and educational experiences available and accessible for young children and their families is only half the battle. As an example, strong efforts to ensure universal education India led to successful results with regard to increased school enrollment of children but better access did not necessarily lead to better student learning (see Chapter 3). The nature and quality of these experiences are crucial to children's development and well-being, and thus to the potential for early care and education initiatives to make it possible for both mothers and fathers to enter and/or re-enter the labor force in their given economy. A number of elements have been identified as crucial to providing high-quality early care and educational experiences for children.

The Crucial Importance of Play in Early Care and Education

Abundant research has demonstrated the importance of play in child development, and the positive effects of play. Kenneth Ginsberg of the American Academy of Pediatrics contends, "Play is essential to development… Play allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity and physical, cognitive and emotional strength"(Ginsburg, 2007, pp. 182–183). Miller and Almon (2009) describe play as "activities that are freely chosen and directed by children and that arise from intrinsic motivation" (p. 15). Moreover, as Almon (2007) explains, there is "a strong relationship between a child's capacity to play and his or her overall development - physical, social, emotional, and intellectual" (p. 3). Copple and Bredekamp (2009) add "Play is an important vehicle for developing self-regulation…" (p. 14). Research from 1970s Germany moreover showed

that by grade four, children who had attended play-oriented Kindergarten surpassed children who attended academic-oriented Kindergarten in physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. The findings were so compelling that, after a period of switching to a more academic approach, Germany converted all of its Kindergartens to play-based programs.

In advocating for play-based classroom environments and pedagogies, one needs to bear in mind, however, that the definition of what is acceptable play varies within diverse cultural contexts. Educators need to use caution in not enforcing a singular definition of play as conceptualized in white middle-class English-speaking cultures onto early childhood practices in countries that might hold a different understanding of what forms of play are acceptable.

The Importance of Social-Emotional Health for Young Children's Learning

In a related vein, as emphasized in Chapter 4: "No education reform can succeed if the curriculum ignores or violates the psychosocial nature of the learner…." (Tanner, 2013, p. 9). Substantial research has demonstrated that in order to take advantage of and eventually make real-life use of the experiences offered them in their educational trajectories, children must first be on solid socio-emotional ground. Volumes of research on the relationship between social-emotional development and learning, and more recently, research in neuroscience, have emphasized, in no uncertain terms, that children who experience emotional distress from one source or another are generally unable to make full use of their educational experiences in school. When this is the case, there is little to no possibility that such children will be able to translate their schooling experiences into skills and abilities that will position them to be productive participants in the economies in which they function as adults.

Early care and education programs are in a position to address this reality, this necessary prioritizing of children's social-emotional development and general well-being. They can do this by providing young children with care and educational environments that emphatically take into account their socio-emotional health, that provide them with experiences that will encourage them to, "develop powers of sustained inquiry and application," and "growth in critical thinking," to become "productive, idea-generating" individuals (Tanner, 2013, p. 9). And these are the very abilities, skills, and qualities that can eventually position them, when they

become adults, to contribute richly, wholeheartedly, and substantially to the health of the economies in which they operate.

As discussed in Chapter 2, after the economic reforms of 1979, Chinese government prioritized ECCE and invested in developing "the whole child." The Ministry of Education (MoE) issued regulations and by-laws to ensure kindergarten curriculum provides young children with key experiences and that the curriculum should be organized around young children's interests and experiences. The regulations maintained that the primary goal of ECCE was to cultivate young children's subjectivity, autonomy, and creativity through active learning. Moreover, the kindergarten curriculum should be conducted through the venues of daily routine or play (Li & Li, 2003; Liu, Pan, & Sun, 2005; Ye, 2002; Yu, 2002), acknowledged children as unique individual subjects, and designated play and active learning as the primary teaching methods in kindergarten, and legally defined the prominent role of play in ECCE (Pan & Li, 2012).

India appears to have acknowledged this inevitability in its most recent national policy initiatives. As alluded to in Chapter 3, the Indian educational system has steered away from its "centuries old colonial and rote memorization-based pedagogy toward a more learner-centered pedagogy." But policy often times fails to acknowledge the ground realities. Implementing the policy discourse of a play-based learner-centered pedagogy classrooms across India is a daunting challenge when schools and classrooms all over the country are lacking in basic resources like electricity, running water, or even toilets for the children, and teachers face as many as 50–60 children in one early childhood classroom (Gupta, 2014). Although these conditions seem unsurmountable, efforts are still being made to adapt forms of child-centered pedagogies that are more suitable for the local circumstances. Another point to note is that in collectivist cultures which comprise of strong familial and community interactions, young children live with or in close proximity to friends and family members. In doing so, they are exposed to many more opportunities for emotional and social development in their home environments through almost constant multigenerational interactions as compared to young children being raised in nuclear families.

In the meanwhile, thanks to A Nation at Risk and the policy initiatives set in motion in response to this report's assertions, the United States has barreled in the opposite direction. These initiatives—America 2000, NCLB, the Common Core State Standard and its resultant curriculum, and the Educational Success for Students Act—are standards-based. To

reiterate, the standards are used as a basis for assessment tools that beget teacher-centered, drill-and-skill, teach-to-the-test pedagogies. They focus on defining and raising the subject-matter standards students are expected to meet. In order to get their students "up to speed," schools are extending the school day and putting more and more emphasis on academic learning, which can squeeze out play from curriculum. Recess, the only time in the school day reserved for outdoor and mostly unstructured play is shortened. In some schools, it is as short as 15 minutes, while others have eliminated recess altogether (Riser-Kositsky, 2018).

In so doing, US educational policy turned its back on volumes of research literature, as well as empirical and statistical evidence that children learn best from child-centered experiential, hands-on, inquiry-based pedagogy. Thus, one might rightfully ask: If educational policymakers and pedagogues in India were able to recognize the value of such pedagogies as indicated by their recent adoption of child-centered, developmentally appropriate curriculum, why, then, do US educational policymakers continue to fail to recognize this value? The answers lie, most likely, in the fact that, as explained in Chapter 2, educational policy and initiatives in the United States have been largely controlled by organizations and individuals whose primary interests are market and business-oriented. Recall how David Coleman having no background in classroom teaching or in writing educational standards became recognized as the "architect" of CCSS (Schneider, 2015). Although the "work groups" tasked with creating the Common Core included college professors (presumably with educational expertise) and leaders of educational advocacy groups, no classroom teachers or educational administrators were asked to participate. Once again, an argument for putting educational policy in the hands of those who actually understand education and children emerges.

In conclusion, we framed this book with the three main conceptual ideas of Globalization, Human Capital Development, and Cultural Ecology. The ensuing chapters have presented a global spotlight on the field of early childhood in the context of three different countries—China, India, and the United States—making it clear how these frameworks are addressed within the various discussions in the book. In each of these countries, we have seen the impact on educational policies to come from both local beliefs and convictions on what is good for the growth and well-being of the child, as well as from the scrutiny of international comparisons which is inherent in the phenomenon of globalization. In each of these countries, we have also seen how parenting beliefs and practices are rooted in cultural traditions

of their families and communities but which are also changing under the impact of global economic forces. There is no doubt that globalization is here to stay and nations around the world are faced with the task of preparing their youngest children to live and succeed in a world that seems to be changing in real time. The challenge for educators and policymakers is to design experiences for young children that will allow them to grow holistically and happily in the face of societal and global pressures.

We argue that countries that wish to position themselves to be productive participants in the global economy invest heavily in quality early care and educational programs for children, where quality is defined within the local constructs of well-being. More precisely, we argue for programs with a heavy emphasis on providing young children with culturally sensitive experiences that prioritize their social-emotional development and providing them with abundant opportunities for healthy and acceptable forms of play as defined within the worldview of their cultural communities. Such programs need to espouse the idea that children actively construct their own knowledge by interacting with peers, teachers and other adults, and materials. They need also to create environments that are sensitive and inclusive of children with diverse abilities and from diverse cultural communities. The provision of ample and accessible programs of this nature stands to offer young children the possibility to develop the physical, social-emotional, self-help, and language and cognitive skills necessary for success in school and in later life. As has been made evident in discussions throughout this work, only in providing such opportunities to children in their early years will local, regional, state, and national entities equip children to eventually contribute productively to the national economies in which they participate as adults. Further, only in so doing can nations position themselves as highly respected members-in-good-standing and be counted among those who can lead by example in the global economy.

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Amita Gupta and Guangyu Tan

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