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University of Bristol, UK

Susan L. ROBERTSON

Long Division: When Private Interests Into Public Education Simply Do Not Go!

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Abstract

Education governance frameworks matter as they can either go some way to ameliorating social inequalities through how and by whom they are funded, provided and regulated in capitalist societies, or they can create further divisions that in turn exaggerate social inequalities. In this Caroline Benn Memorial Lecture I will argue that not only is the project of making more equal societies through democratising education not even 'half-way there' – to use a phrase Benn herself coined, but that new widening and lengthening divisions in education are being created, exploited and exported. In my lecture tonight I will consider three ways in which I see this occurring in education both in the UK and in many parts of the globe: the deepening involvement of profit-making firms in education provision; the promotion of private interests in national and global education policy-making spaces; and the enclosure of political space that limits public scrutiny and accountability. Taken together, these developments suggest a new level of urgency around what must be our common cause: the capacity to do the sums that add up in making a very different society.

1. Introduction

In 2007, London's Tate Modern Art Gallery opened a dramatic exhibition by Colombian female artist, Doris Salcedo. This profoundly moving installation – entitled *Shibboleth* - was a deeply cut fissure in the floor of Tate Modern's Turbine Hall that jaggedly snaked from one end of the hall to the other. The modern day usage of the term *Shibbolet* refers to a custom, phrase, or use of language that acts as a test of belonging to a particular social group or class, much like a 'private' school or Oxbridge university education acts to confer 'club status.

On first inspection, we might conclude Salcedo's work is referring to the internal war that had characterised Colombian society since the late 1940s. Yet the poignant, indeed sad, reality, of Salcedo's work is that it says a great deal about our contemporary world, with its widening and deepening social and economic divisions.

In 2014, French economist, Thomas Piketty – made the best-seller list in the popular media with his weighty 685-page book, *Capital in the Twenty First Century*. It is not often that an academic text like this can be picked up as 'essential' reading in airport bookshops.

What was it about Piketty's extraordinary overnight success? In part it was because this was an economist breaking ranks with his fellow neoclassical economists whose ideas have, since the 1980s, powerfully shaped political projects and agendas around the world. Drawing on the works of Adam Smith who argues: "the rich…are led by an *invisible hand* to make the same distribution of the necessities of life, which would have been made, had the earth been divided into equal portions among its inhabitants, and thus without intending it, without knowing it, advance the interests of society" (Smith, 1979), neoclassical economists have argued the invisible hand will also lead to all boats rising.

No long division here! Rather – in Smith's world, and that of the neoclassical economists who have used his ideas to shape state reform agendas, the role of the state is to enable the market to govern through consumer choice, with producers responding as suppliers to demand, and quality adjustments resulting in an *equilibrium* that benefits *each individual* as well as the community as a whole.

However, Piketty's works shows precisely the opposite. And he is not alone in drawing this conclusion. The OECD in 2014 published work showing the stark inequities that have emerged amongst many OECD countries. What characterises the most unequal? They all embraced neoliberal policies from the 1980s onward: the UK, USA, Chile and New Zealand, Australia, the list goes on. From being a relatively more equal society in the 1970s, the USA is now *more* unequal in the distribution of wealth and income than at any point over the past century. Worse than this, despite the ubiquity of austerity policies in many OECD countries, the wealth of the top 1% of that 10% has dramatically increased since the economic crisis in 2008 (OECD, 2014).

In this lecture tonight I will argue not only is the project of making more equal societies through democratising education not 'half-way there' - the title of Benn's report in 1970 on the British comprehensive education system – but despite the promises of market liberalism, we are even further away from this goal. There are new widening and lengthening divisions that have been created, exploited and exported, with significant consequences for education.

Tonight I will be considering three ways in which I see this occurring both in, and on, education: (1) the further penetration of market-based approaches, and deepening involvement of profit-making firms in education provision; (2) the promotion of private interests in national and global education policy-making spaces; and (3) the enclosure of political space that limits public scrutiny and accountability. In my conclusions I will argue that there is now considerable evidence on the table about the failure of this market-based model to deliver efficiencies and equity. If we do our sums, and add up the costs, then it is clear that private interests in delivering socially just public education are highly problematic. In short, they simply do not go!

2. Advancing a Market Model for Governing Education

Whilst 'education', 'education', 'education' was the mantra for Blair's Labour Government when it took office in 1997, it is fair to say this mantra has also shaped the opportunities, policies, and strategies, of international agencies, governments, parents, and private investors, regarding what model to govern the sector.

International agencies – framers of market projects and strategies

For many governments, education has become part of their globally-competitive knowledge-economy/human capital investment strategies. Here policy entrepreneurs working for organisations like the OECD and the World Bank have tended to view (wilfully in some cases) education in narrow, neoclassical economic terms; individuals are economic, maximising, agents who do best under conditions of competition.

This 'human capital conception' can be seen in the way the OECD operates in the education sector; it routinely promotes poster countries, like South Korea, for their economic development. In a blog post that accompanied the launch of the post-2015 education priorities for the next decade, the OECD Director for Education and Skills, Andreas Schleicher, argued Korea showed 'what is possible in education':

> …it is an amazing example of how education can leverage social progress and become the key agent of change. Two generations ago Korea had the same level of economic development that Afghanistan has today, and one of the least developed education systems. Today, Korea is one of the driving forces of the OECD, and Korea's school system comes out on top of our global PISA metrics for the quality of education…and better education outcomes can help improve income and reduce poverty.
>
> The key message here is simple: there is no shortcut to improved learning outcomes in a post-2015 world where knowledge and skills have become the global currency. And there is no central bank that prints this currency. We cannot inherit this currency, and we cannot produce it through speculation; we can only develop it through sustained effort and investment in people, both young and old. And for those countries struggling to provide high-quality education, the economic output that is lost because of poor education policies and practices leaves many of them in a permanent state of economic recession (Schleicher, 2015: 1).

Yet this is a narrow conception of investment, guided largely by the assessment tools that the OECD has been developing, including PISA, TALIS, and PIACC.

Similarly the World Bank, from the 1970s onwards, promoted the idea of education as human capital so as to justify 'investing' in education (after all it is a bank), and it also promoted the idea of private versus public 'rates of return' from that investment (Psacharopolous, 1973). For the Bank at the time, the proportion of public investment in education should decline as students proceeded up the education ladder because of its greater 'private' rather than 'public' return. For low-income countries, the result was that the Bank imposed conditions – such as no public funds going into higher education. The long-term result has been the devastation of higher learning, including teacher training.

There are many problems with these kinds of economic conceptions of education. First, such crude human capital arguments cannot account for why it is that countries with highly educated workforces are not high growth economies (witness the over-supply of highly educated graduates in the UK and the USA, as well as Spain and some of the Arab region). The point to be make here is that it is not so much that skills matter – though of course skills are important, but that qualifications serve a more important function; they are a means for not just for getting ahead (social mobility) but increasingly they are critical actually staying ahead in the global race for jobs (Brown, Lauder and Ashton, 2011).

Second, rates-of-return arguments shift some of the funding burden for education to families, and at this point (keeping aside any arguments we might have about the societal good more generally of being educated), decisions about who gets to access the resources of the family's purse will be shaped by – first, what the income of the family is, and second, who should be invested in by the family – males versus female. The clearest illustration of what is likely to happen in gendered societies can be seen in Rose's (2003) account of Malawi; the Bank imposed 'user fees' to cover the 'so-called' 'private returns' to individuals, the net effect was that the numbers of girl children going to school plummeted.

Governments

Since the 1980s, many governments have been encouraged to adopt a market-based or privatisation agenda with regard to their social welfare sectors. Education has not been exempted from this. Countries have bought into this weak-state/market model to different degrees. What they are committing themselves to is a particular *logic*: that education will be more efficient if it operated according to the rules of competition (choice, standards, information about performance, and so on leading to better quality) and that private firms will deliver goods and services more efficiently than governments (leading to cost savings). Typical *mechanisms* to deliver this market-based model include vouchers, charter schools, academies, free schools, market-based teaching, or test-based accountability. The overall assumption *driving* this model is that private management (if not ownership), with few regulations, will deliver better learning outcomes. Those countries pursuing this reform logic include Chile, UK, some states of the USA, Sweden, Australia, New Zealand, Colombia – the list goes on.

This is also the model the World Bank has committed itself to, in many cases funding research projects to collect 'the evidence' that reinforces the Bank's policies (Klees et al., 2012). In its Education Strategy 2020, the Bank has also stated a commitment to increasing more private sector interests in education and that its conception of the education system for the future now includes' for-profit' actors. It has also placed moving to a private for-profit model as a central development trajectory in its SABER indicators and assessment tools for guiding the education development of all countries around the world.

More broadly – we can also see those countries promoting a weak-state/market model have also have put into place policies that advantage particular fractions of capital and class groups; this includes systems of taxation that favour corporations and the wealthy – the view being that this would stimulate growth through the trickle down of wealth. Such decisions were taken and promoted by influential advisors, including Nobel Laureate, Joseph Stiglitz, former chief economist of the World Bank, and economic advisor to the US's Clinton Administration in the 1990s. Yet Stiglitz has recently observed:

> I trace the[se] inequalities to a particular set of decisions that we took when we lowered the tax rate from 91% down to very low levels at the top, where we stripped away regulations. So the result of that was not a more dynamic economy, but a more unequal society. We tried the experiment of trickle down. A third of a century later, we can fairly definitively say it was a failure (Fisher, 2015: 1).

The problem with this model (for example, of no or low levels of taxation for the wealthy, tolerance of tax havens, tax breaks for non-domicile residents, tax breaks for foundations), is that public education is as it says on the box: public as it is dependent upon redistribution. When those earning and owning the most do not pay their share of tax, then either the state spends more than it receives – hence borrowing more (from those financiers who don't pay their tax in the first place) to pay the bill, or letting more and more of the tax burden fall to middle and working class families, with those least able to, shouldering a bigger share of tax relative to income and outgoings. Streeck (2014) describes this shift as a move from a *tax state* to a *debt state* (2014), with the state and families facing a growing crisis in their capacity to finance their debts.

As a public service, education has been a casualty of the debt state, with teachers' wages, investment in infrastructures, and redistribution to close inequality gaps, all under pressure. Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) have been rolled in as a new mechanisms for raising funds; creative accounting techniques – such as off-balance sheet accounting have been used to hide long term mounting public debt; venture capitalists and education entrepreneurs have been welcomed into bidding for a share of the education pie, and households have been courted with ideas such as the 'graduate premium' in order to recalibrate ongoing challenges to the public purse. Yet the irony here is that many of these initiatives – such as PPPs – have created new opportunities for corporations to use public funds to cream off profits, and deliver, in many instances, inferior education outcomes (see Robertson et al., 2012; Macpherson, et al 2014).

The dominance of what we can call a ***weak-state/market model*** can be contrasted with the *logic* of a ***strong state-public investment model*** – a model that Benn relentlessly campaigned for; a comprehensive education system premised on universal access, and the preparation of citizens for the economic and wider political society, and equality. Here the *mechanisms* to ensure quality include the preparation of high quality teachers, equitable funding to schools, high quality infrastructures, and whole child pedagogy. The *drivers* of outcomes here are that public ownership, public responsibility, and accountability through democratic processes, will ensure better quality teaching and learning environments for teachers and students and thus better learning outcomes.

In the strong state-public investment model the state is able to draw upon a progressive taxation system in order to invest in the public interest, rather than depending upon families to find the resources for the own individual, inevitably unequal, investments. This is clearly dependent on maintaining and legitimising a tax state, as well as being able to demonstrate there are social benefits to all citizens – including economic growth, productivity security and health and welfare. Countries here who continue to support a strong state/public investment model include Finland, Cuba, France, USA, Singapore, amongst others; I will return to a comparison of these two models shortly.

Parents

Now decisions about education are not simply those that governments make; parental aspirations and strategies matter especially in a world where there is growing, if not intense, pressure on individuals to compete in society (jobs, political influence and so on). In highly competitive societies, there is significant pressure on education systems – by the middle and upper classes – to develop governance systems that enable forms of differentiation, and thus 'distinction'. This goes some way to explaining why it is that that anxious parents become tacit, if not vocal, supporters of weak-state market driven policies in that they are looking to manage the consequences of competition, and thus mitigate the consequences of 'not making it' and hence declining social mobility. However, in more unequal societies, one of the outcomes of such strategies is that they tend to lead to poorer outcomes all round, including lower economic growth (Lundvahl et al., 2015). In the end, such class strategies end up as being self-defeating in that over the longer haul they deliver a poorer quality of life in that society for all who live there, including the ruling classes (witness gated living, issues of security).

Private education investors

A final set of actors in our story includes a growing band of private education investors, eager and willing to invest in edu-businesses, and in money-making ventures in the sector. And whilst governments tend to refer to knowledge-based economies and efficiency arguments as the key drivers for education performance and reform, what is not visible here is the fact that for many countries they are now dependent upon the revenues arising from trade in 'education services'. Opening up education to market players is thus a bigger macro-economic and structural issue in that the OECD countries are seeking to increase their share of trade in services, including education as a potential services sector. If we were in any doubt about the direction of that policy travel, in March 2014, investment advisors working for Merrill Lynch Bank of America on the estimated value of education – $4.3 trillion (Hartnett, Leung and Marcus, 2014: 6). This was not idle speculation – much as we might imagine ourselves as landing the lottery.

In their report, three large global companies were identified as the beneficiaries of opening education up to whole-sale, and huge scale, corporate investors; Pearson Education, Elsevier, and Informa. Pearson Education is a huge education corporation who operates globally making them the biggest education corporation in the world. Until recently Pearson owned the Financial Times; this was recently sold to enable the new Pearson to pursue a strong global education investment strategy. Pearson Education has been investing extensively in education; in examinations companies, testing services, text-book production and more recently a for-profit university in London. It is currently experimenting with emerging markets, including investments in a chain of schools in Ghana, and other countries. Its senior executives have developed close collaborations with international agencies like the OECD; this can be witnessed in the cross-overs of board members – for instance, the OECD's Andreas Schleicher is also on Pearson's Learning Curve board. Like many of the new for-profit edu-businesses, their CEOs are also handsomely rewarded, bringing them into the ranks of the top 10% and 1% identified by Piketty (2014). These are a new super rich class able to concentrate their wealth even further. As education systems – from schools to universities - are confronted with funding shortfalls and/or governments willing to change the regulatory protections around education as a public good – they are also exposed to a predatory form of financial capital – including private equity firms, which in turn makes education vulnerable to the logics of profit, differentiation, social inequalities and new forms of power at work in policy spaces.

3. Private Interests in education policy making

There are two main ways in which we can see private interests in national and global policymaking spaces. One is via corporate philanthropists and their foundations. The second is via the growing intrusion of multilateral actors – like the Bank, and the OECD, and global education corporations, shaping education policies *outside* of – and thus *away from* - spaces where there is public debate and accountability, but which have the potential to transform what happens within nations.

Scott (2009) describes how corporate philanthropists are also increasingly targeting their contributions to education in areas of state policymaking and programme intervention in ways that hugely shape the direction of the sector. These corporate philanthropists and their foundations also promote a particular set of social norms they believe are more desirable for competitive economies; entrepreneurship, getting rich, competitive individualism. These corporate philanthropists and their foundations are also interested in promoting particular governance models in education; charter schools, school vouchers, standards and high stakes testing, privatisation.

In the schooling and the university sector in the USA, active Foundations include the Walmart Foundation, Lumina Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Robertson Foundation, the Broad Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the list goes on. Their investments in education give corporations, via their Foundations, significant influence over the governance of education systems, and the social norms and outcomes that follow. This kind of influence has its alter-ego in the culture of the new capitalism Sennett describes so well (Sennett, 2006: 12).

In a recent article in the Guardian (4th November, 2015, p. 35) McGoey discusses the huge influence wealthy entrepreneurs like Bill Gates have on sectors like health, and argues their 'charismatic advantage' means important public debates (in this case patents and pharmaceutical corporations) simply do not happen. This is despite the fact they are matters of public concern. One example here is the Gates Foundation's adoption of a 'value-added' approach in their US$1/3 billion project on what makes a quality teacher. There are many questions that critical researchers ask about the validity of value added measures in assessing teachers, not least because it assumes that it is possible to determine the influence of a particular teacher on a particular learner, and from there to pay that teacher as a result. But my point is also this. How, where, and when, were teachers consulted about this, and why is it that a foundation gets to impose their vision of the world on the sector, on teachers, and on teacher renumeration (Robertson, 2012)?

4. The enclosure of political space and the question of democracy

Market-models tend to be anti-democratic and unaccountable to wider publics. This is hardly surprising; their driving logics (efficiency, competition, profit making) tend to lead to the invoking of clauses, such as 'commercial sensitivity', in turn limiting public scrutiny and debate. This is despite the fact that in many cases those same market actors are in receipt of public funds.

Market-models are also dependent, not on what the public thinks/debates, but where the bottom line is regarding profits, and share-holder value. When education as a societal good becomes encircled and constructed as a private/commercial/consumer good, then it changes the nature of the claims that can be made by citizens. This might include students being excluded from a school because their performance is likely to lead to poorer test results (cropping), or the school being selective of some students over others to ensure test results are maintained at a particular level (creaming).

Two further examples are worth putting on the table here. The first is the secrecy surrounding the current trade negotiations (TTIP/TISA), which includes education as a tradeable services sector. Whilst those concerned with education, including teacher unions, associations and social movements, have asked about the status of education in these negotiations, and pressed hard to have their views heard, the deals have largely continued in secrecy. This should not be a question of asking the European Trade negotiator about the status of education; this should be matter of public debate and deliberation about something of the utmost importance to all of our collective futures. Constructing education as a commodity and services sector, and in doing so placing the rights of investors over and above the human rights of citizens, is surely a question that goes to the heart of what kind of democracy we live in.

Second, in the recently released Green Paper on higher education in England (BIS, 2015), the government has stated that it will not allow Freedom of Information requests to be made in the higher education sector – arguing that as these requests cannot be made to private HE providers, then public HEIs should receive the same treatment. This surely cannot be the case; that our right to know, and request information about, decisions being made in the higher education sector, are now to be considered a question of 'fair treatment' with the private realm. Sure it should be the other way around, as the for-profits are in receipt of public funds via the student loan book (currently under-written by the state). As English higher education careers down the path of a full-blown market model, perhaps we might remind the policymakers that they are also pursuing a model that will, in the long term, be not just economically and socially costly, and also politically corrupt.

5. Doing the sums. Adding up right….

So what evidence might we look at that would enable us to *see* that the difference between ideology and evidence regarding which governance model for delivering socially-just education? Can we do the sums, and what do they add up to?

Weak state-market model	Strong-state public investment model
Chile	Cuba
Sweden	Finland
United States of America	Ontario

Figure 1: Locating countries in a weak state-market model VS strong state public investment model

Adamson, Astrand and Darling-Hammond's forthcoming book *Global Education Reform: How Privatisation and Public Investment Influence Education Outcomes* (2016) is a very timely help in this task. Drawing on specially commissioned chapters by leading education experts, from Pasi Salberg to Martin Carnoy and Michael Fullan, Adamson et al demonstrate the differences between a *weak state-market model*, and a *strong-state public investment model*. Pairing Sweden with Finland, Chile with Cuba, the USA with Ontario (see Figure 1), they draw a series of conclusions about each model. The evidence is quite stark.

When we do the sums, and add up the evidence, no country/state is able to show notably better results arising from a market investment model. Rather, over time, deep-seated inequalities begin to reveal themselves in such a way the entire system suffers (see Figure 2). As Stanford economist, Carnoy notes: "…The negative aspects of inequality and markets, especially as they play out at the bottom of the social scale, seem to offset any positive effects of parent's freedom to pick and choose among schools" (2016: 246).

Weak state-market model	**Outcomes at System Level**
	Substantial evidence that at the system level Sweden, USA and Chile have lost ground regarding equity and quality; Chile performs well below the OECD average; high level of inequality in Chile; there is considerable deprofessionalisation of teachers
	Sweden instituted market model in the 1990s; it later dropped significantly on PISA from being well above the OECD mean to well below
	USA ranks below average in mathematics and science, and just above average for reading on PISA; highly privatised districts (e.g. Milwaukee/New Orleans) in the USA perform at the very bottom of their respective states

Figure 2: Student outcomes of weak state-market model

Strong-state public investment model	Outcomes at System Level
	Finland and Ontario/Canada perform amongst most highly ranked nations in mathematics, reading and science; high quality curriculum. Finland is in top of performers in PISA; earlier reforms eliminated tracking,
	Cuba's (measured on SERGE) average student performs at the highest proficiency level – with small classes and a developmental approach to learning; in those states of the USA where it is more highly regulated by the state, and there are strong investment in instruction and professional learning there are better system outcomes
	Across all of these three examples, teachers are well paid, there is strong collective bargaining, and strong preparation and licensing regulations

Figure 3: Student outcomes of strong-state public investment model

Similarly, those US states with the highest overall performance have been least involved in chartering or privatisation (see Figure 3), while those with the most unregulated approaches to market based reforms are lower overall. Systems of choice, when tied to market as opposed to public investment models, raise one of the big, and difficult, issues that Benn was grappling with.

Adamson et al's (2016) book adds further evidence to work we reported in *Education, Privatisation and Social Justice* (Macpherson, Robertson and Walford, 2014) for low-income countries. Despite the 'promise' of privatisation – that is (i) real choice, (ii) the system is more effective and efficient, and (iii) competition by private providers increases quality in both the state and the private sectors, our research showed that what over-determines student performance is not so much the 'private/market' model but the resources that social class groups can mobilise for themselves – and in this case exclude those unable to pay.

Busemayer and colleagues (2014) also pick up the issue of social class, and the strategies behind behind class groups regarding education governance. If elites favour private education because of the benefits that are derived, and if low income groups prefer more socialised systems because of the benefits a public system will bring, much depends on whether there is an easy opt out clause or opt in incentives for the middle classes regarding a state investment model versus a market model. The middle classes are more likely to pursue a state investment models if they can valorise some advantage here. But this has benefits for the working classes in that the middle class is likely to work politically hard for better public education. However, if middle classes swing their political efforts behind privatised market forms, then there is no benefit in the public realm for those who are less well organised. This kind of research shows the political importance of galvanising the middle classes around what might be collectively-oriented social project, rather than more individualised projects and outcomes.

6. When private interests into education simply do not go!

It is now time to return to Benn and draw some conclusions about a way forward. Caroline Benn was education's Mary Wollstonecraft; a prescient, committed, and tireless campaigner for a system of education who sought to ameliorate the inevitable differences that result in capitalist systems giving rise to very different possible education trajectories and futures. Fifteen years on from Benn's death in 2000, and given considerable attention given over to education –- it would have been a fitting tribute to Benn's efforts to say we had made some progress on this front, not only in the UK, but globally.

But we have not! The conclusion I have drawn from the evidence before us is that private interests are more and more dominating education in ways that limit its capacity to make a better, fairer, more decent society. The UK, like the USA, is highly unequal and even more so over the past 5 years since the financial crisis. It is clear that market-models of education do not produce social justice outcomes.

Others have also drawn this conclusion. In his annual report in 2014 to the UN General Assembly on the state of, and right to education, UN Rapporteur for Education, Kishore Singh, draw attention to the proliferation of private providers of education, and its repercussions on the; "…principles and norms underlying the right to education" (2014: 3). He shows in his report that privatisation is adversely affecting the right to education as an entitlement and as a means of social empowerment.

The developments I have sketched above suggest a new level of urgency around what must be our common cause: the capacity to do the sums that add up in making a very different society. And this, as Benn showed, is a question not just of imagination - to **see** that there are alternative models, but that faced with the evidence, that we have **the political will to act** on that evidence. As Piketty states:

> …we should be wary of any economic determinism in regard to inequalities in wealth and income. The history of the distribution of wealth has always been deeply political and it cannot be reduced to purely economic mechanisms. …The history of inequality is shaped by the way economic, social and political actors view what is just and what is not, was well as the relative power of those actors and the collective choices that result (Piketty, 2014: 20).

Piketty's findings are simple enough: left to its own devices (weak institutional arrangements for redistribution through progressive taxation; pressure for high wages, high taxes and high skill arrangements), wealth distribution will tend toward concentration in wealth accumulation, in turn producing even further inequalities. Similarly, left to be managed using market devices and an excess of individualism, education tends to be more unequal, giving rise to ongoing social and economic inequalities.

What alternatives might we consider here for the reform of education that might ameliorate, rather exaggerate, the trends Piketty (2014), Streeck (2014), and others, have pointed to. The first is to develop policies, programmes and practices where a tax rather than debt state 'manages' the race between competing social groups for education as a positional good, through forms of redistribution. This, in turn, means challenging human capital accounts of education, and those who use their political and economic power to propagate these views.

The second is to continue to assemble the evidence on education governance frameworks and social justice outcomes, and ask about the relation between that evidence, and the logics, mechanisms and drivers, that have given rise to these outcomes. Such data must encourage a conversation about social inequalities, working conditions, labour rights, a living wage, new forms of exploitation, social justice, economic growth, and so on.

The third is that education must be extracted from the vortex that is rapidly sucking it up into the new culture of capitalism; of individualism, consumption and entrepreneurship (Sennett, 2006). For education to be recovered as a human right, and the basis of a new social contract, it must be viewed as a societal good funded by the state. Education must be rebuilt and judged fit for purpose; that purpose being to create those spaces, opportunities, and encounters where a next generation are helped to ask the kinds of questions and engage in the kinds of politics that will make a positive difference to their lives, and the lives of others around them. It is also fit for purpose when those who have been educated care about, and act upon, daily injustices. An education system committed to social justice and not market justice would have a radical effect on politics. Only then will education move us to a point *beyond* being *halfway there*.

Thank you