

UC Berkeley

UC Berkeley Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Exploring the Power of a Paradigm: Going Backstage with Policy Influencers in the Education Accountability Debate

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5r6521nr>

Author

Coghlan, Erin

Publication Date

2018

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

Exploring the Power of a Paradigm:
Going Backstage with Policy Influencers in the Education Accountability Debate

By

Erin J. Coghlan

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Education
in the
Graduate Division
of the
University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Heinrich Mintrop, Chair
Associate Professor Janelle Scott
Professor Christopher Ansell

Fall 2018

Abstract

Exploring the Power of a Paradigm: Going Backstage with Policy Influencers in the Education Accountability Debate

by

Erin J. Coghlan

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Heinrich Mintrop, Chair

For decades, the U.S. has experimented with accountability policy for public schools as a way to improve academic achievement and to draw attention to student inequalities. Accountability as a solution to the problems facing schools has become so widespread that it arguably has become a ‘policy paradigm’. A policy paradigm is a framework of ideas and standards that shape the way policymakers and influencers think about how to define a policy problem, how they think about goals, the instruments they rely on to solve the policy problem, and the expected results. A policy paradigm also includes important moral ideas about human nature, motivation, who is to blame for the policy problem, or ideas about who deserves what resources in society. A paradigm can become so universal that the core policy and moral ideas become common sense and simply taken-for-granted.

Accountability arguably reached paradigmatic status in education with the culmination of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation in 2001, which thrust the regulatory force of the federal government on individual states and their respective school systems. From its inception, NCLB had inherent “bugs” in its design that led to unintended consequences for the schools. Most notably, the former law set an overly ambitious goal to close the achievement gap in 13 short years in the absence of capacity building. Some states reduced the cognitive complexity of statewide tests to comply with federal benchmarks while individual schools began to focus on basic skills and ‘teach to the test’ in order to ‘game’ the system and avoid possible sanctions. In addition, NCLB made very little progress on its goal to close the academic achievement gap; academic achievement on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) actually declined in the first years of implementing NCLB. In December 2015, Congress and President Obama responded to the unintended consequences with a more flexible federal policy design—the Every Student Succeeds Act—that shifted many of the goal setting and accountability functions back to the states, giving states flexibility to select their own policy designs and tools to regulate school and student performance.

What happens to a paradigm in that situation? Does it begin to lose legitimacy and fracture, or is it somehow maintained? The goal of this research project was to capture the ideas of influential state-level policy thinkers and opinion leaders following the collapse of NCLB to determine whether the accountability paradigm was still seen as a viable solution to solving education inequalities. I chose to study state-level policy influencers who could shape the public

debate with new ideas about how to solve the problem of school inequality following the demise of NCLB. I targeted influencers who could entertain doubts, reflect critically, and think ‘outside the box’. By studying influencers, I could test the strength or weakness of the paradigm.

All told, 65 leading policy influencers and opinion leaders—45 from California and 20 from Tennessee—were sampled to reveal a spectrum of thinking about how to go about solving the problem of student and school inequalities. I interviewed a cross-section of influencers involved in the accountability debate in each state. I identified influential state elected and appointed officials, academics, journalists and bloggers, civil rights activists, community organizers, and members of the business community to understand how they thought about accountability policy and alternative policy ideas in the aftermath of NCLB.

The main thrust of the findings reveals that the accountability paradigm is firmly in tact but has stretched across different institutional venues. Some influencers preferred a *Local Control and Professional Model* of accountability that put trust in school professionals and local communities to solve the problem of school inequality. The policy influencers within this cluster shared a nurturing and trusting *Humanist* moral narrative that played out in their policy ideas. Others desired a *State Control Model* of accountability. These influencers turned to the state as a problem solver for inequality in society. Thinkers within this cluster shared a *Structuralist* moral narrative and were weary of the ‘dangers of localism’ and distrustful of human nature. They thought that without a collective body of governance (such as the state), narrow-mindedness, bias, and discrimination would take root in local politics and further inequalities in schools.

Lastly, other influencers supported a *Market Control Model* of accountability. Market control thinkers firmly believed that students would be better served if “failing” schools were pushed to an alternative institutional environment by the state, or if students and families could exit low-performing schools by exercising school choice. Three very distinct moral narratives supported the market model of accountability. *Social Justice Entrepreneurs* saw reality through the lens of historic inequalities, racial oppression, and institutional exclusion, and they saw the marketplace as an exit from low-performing schools that kept poor and minority students locked into cycles of intergenerational poverty. They believed in the power of individual agency and were drawn to policy ideas like charters and vouchers because they reinforced the individual’s ability to act. *Paternalists* had a very different moral narrative. To them, standards of appropriate behavior, rule setting, external pressure, and discipline were important dimensions of their moral outlook. To overcome the shortcomings of ‘failing’ schools, they believed in the disciplinary aspects of the state and market to create conditions for school improvement. Lastly, there was a moral narrative of the *Empiricists*, who tried to rationalize their beliefs and values with technical language from the accountability paradigm. They turned to data and empirical research to make sense of consequences, school choice, and state takeover policies without delving into narratives of systemic inequalities or the complexity of the relationship between poverty and low performance.

Table of Contents

List of tables and figures	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
What is a policy paradigm?	2
About the cases	3
Previous literature	5
Dissertation overview: organization and findings	6
Chapter 2: Literature review	8
The welfarist paradigm	8
The neoliberal paradigm	9
The accountability paradigm in education	12
Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework	15
Proposed framework	16
Policy dimension	18
Moral dimension	19
Chapter 4: Methodology	22
Multiple case study approach	22
Methods	23
Sample selection	24
About the states	27
Within case sampling	29
Data collection and analysis timeline	31
Data analysis	32
Limitations of the study design	33
Strengths of the study design	33
My role as a researcher	34
Chapter 5: Findings	36
Section A: Professional and Local Control Model of Accountability	39
How is the policy problem defined?	39
What causes the policy problem?	41
Making sense of the demise of NCLB	42
How do they try to solve the policy problem?	43
What is the underling moral narrative?	50
Overall summary	55
Section B: State Control Model of Accountability	58
How is the policy problem defined?	58
What causes the policy problem?	60
Making sense of the demise of NCLB	61
How do they try to solve the policy problem?	63

What is the underling moral narrative?	70
Overall summary	76
Section C: Market Control Accountability Model	79
How is the policy problem defined?	79
What causes the policy problem?	81
Making sense of the demise of NCLB	85
How do they try to solve the policy problem?	87
What are the moral narratives underlying the policy consensus?	94
Moral narrative #1 – Social Justice Entrepreneurs	94
Moral narrative #2 – Paternalists	104
Moral narrative #3 – Empiricists	109
Overall summary	112
Section D: Discussion	115
Looking at the policy dimension in greater detail	117
Discussion of the policy dimension	120
Looking at the moral dimension in greater detail	121
Relationship between the moral and policy dimensions	123
The power of the paradigm	126
Chapter 6: Conclusion	128
Reflection on findings	129
Contribution to the literature	133
Implications for policy and practice	134
Limitations	135
Areas for future research	135
Appendix A: Interview guide	137
Appendix B: Codebook	142
Appendix C: Demographics of study participants	150
Bibliography	152

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1. State selection criteria	25
Table 2. Selection criteria for California and Tennessee	27
Table 3. Professional classification of study participants	31
Table 4. Key differences between aspects of the policy problem	117
Table 5. Core features of accountability policy, by accountability model	119
Table 6. Worldviews by moral narrative	122
Table 7. Trust in institutions, by moral type	123
Table 8. Overview of accountability models and corresponding moral narratives	128
Figure 1. Moral and policy dimensions of ideas within the accountability paradigm	17

Acknowledgements

A dissertation is a hell of a project. It takes many months of careful thinking just to conceptualize what to study, and many years to collect, analyze, and report on the data. Along the road to putting together the proposal and actually writing this dissertation were many teachers, friends, family members, and healers who made this project possible.

My committee chair, Rick Mintrop, was essential in the development of this project. Every step of the way, he pushed me to the very limits of my thinking, and then told me to go a bit further. I am immensely grateful to his support and guidance throughout this project, and for his imprint on my life. We have come a long way from the taxi ride to Evanston, Professor Mintrop.

To my committee member, Janelle Scott, who always held space for me in her research group and kept her office door open. Thank you for pushing me to think about networks and elite actors, always reminding me to ask, “who are they?!” To another committee member, Christopher Ansell, thank you for consulting with this very strange student from Education interested in policy paradigms, and for always taking time to meet with me. You were an essential guide in the Public Administration literature that I could not have done without. To Dan Perlstein, a faculty member in the School of Education who picked me up in my lowest moments: thank you. And to Jorunn Moller from Norway, thank you for helping me think about New Public Management theory in an international context and for always being a kind person in a far from perfect world.

There are several graduate students from the POME program at Berkeley that I could not have done without. Miguel Ordenes—you are one of my life’s greatest friends and teachers. I’m endlessly grateful that our paths crossed at this critical juncture. Mahua Baral, words can not express how deeply appreciative I am for our connection and support for one another. Thank you for being there for me on all fronts, from the halls of Tolman to the echo chamber of our hearts. Seenae Chong, a true godsend at just the right time. Thank you for being a deeply thoughtful, reflective writing partner in the last throes of the program. This dissertation has come this far in part because of you. David Torres, thank you for being such a great friend and tour guide in the southern hemisphere. I look forward to our lifelong friendship and nights of intense debate. Anisah Waite, you were there for me since the beginning, and although we are on different sides of the country, I know we will always pick up right where we left off. To the neoliberalism research group, thank you for your feedback on early drafts of the proposal, and to Dan Perlstein’s research group who helped me think through the findings.

My parents and family members were essential to getting through the program as well. Thanks mom and dad for being patient and understanding when I continued to tell you graduation was still another year away. Ryan and Kyle, thanks for reminding me to have fun. Kelly, thank you for always being there during the crisis moments and for the sage advice that lives in your old soul. Aunt Elizabeth and Uncle Mike, thank you for your moral support throughout this experience and for always putting a glass of wine in my hand when things got tough. And to Bruce and Sue Heys who have been kind and supportive of me since they first met me just three days before I took my oral examination. Elaine Daly, a deep, heartfelt thanks for helping me through every step of the program and dissertation. I live a better life because of your kindness, love, and presence.

To all the friends along this journey who will be interwoven throughout my life: Hilary Maynard, Andy Lick, Randi Aho, Carl Nadler, Joe Kliegman, and Emily Schneider. Thank you for being my touchstones throughout this program and lifetime. I look forward to spending more time with you all now that this program is done.

To Nick: my life partner and better half. You have been at my side for the entirety of the dissertation process. Thank you for your willingness to talk at length about this project and for lending your patient ears to the daily grind of graduate school. Thank you for supporting me—and feeding me—throughout this process. Even tonight, you cooked me one more meal as I sit here typing away late into the evening, even though I know you just want your partner back. I love you.

To the 65 policy influencers I interviewed: Thank you for meeting with me and for sharing your insights. I have a tremendous respect for all your unique life perspectives. I tried to listen to you all carefully and I hope the findings can help those in the field of education policy begin to understand one another more clearly.

And lastly, I would like to recognize the unique experience of earning a PhD. There really is nothing else quite like it on the planet. A virtue of studying the social sciences is that it provides an opportunity to reflect inwards in an otherwise intellectually ‘outward’ journey of the social structure. I went down deep inward paths throughout this experience. After completing the program, I walk away as a very different person.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Since the 1980s, influential state and federal policymakers, along with civil rights groups, business leaders, and other persuasive policy actors have framed the success of the education system as essential to the health of the economy (Mehta, 2013). However, these policy actors have also acknowledged a serious problem with public schools, in that they are presumably unequal, underperforming, inefficient, and in need of reform (Debray-Pelot & McGuinn, 2009; Mehta, 2013). To address the shortcomings of the education system, both state and federal policymakers have experimented with accountability policies over the last several decades in an attempt to lift school performance and close the academic achievement gap (Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009, 2013). Accountability has become so widespread that some argue it has become a ‘paradigm’ (Mehta, 2013), providing policymakers with a framework of ideas and standards deemed to be functionally and morally appropriate to guide the policy approach (Campbell, 2002; Hall, 1993).

Arguably, accountability policy reached paradigmatic status in education with the culmination of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation in 2001, which thrust the regulatory force of the federal government on individual states and their respective school systems. The thinking behind NCLB’s design was simple: education leaders and teachers ought to be held accountable to measured performance targets derived from regularly administered student standardized tests, and school professionals ought to be rewarded if they exceeded expectations, or punished if they underperformed (Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009). Federal policymakers and interest groups justified this design with moral arguments that blamed school leaders and teachers for low-performing schools and held them responsible for closing the racial and economic achievement gap (DeBray, 2006; Kantor & Lowe, 2006).

From its inceptions, NCLB had inherent “bugs” in its design that led to unintended consequences for the schools. Most notably, the former law set an overly ambitious goal to close the achievement gap in 13 short years in the absence of capacity building (Mintrop & Sunderman, 2013). Some states reduced the cognitive complexity of statewide tests to comply with federal benchmarks while individual schools began to focus on basic skills and ‘teach to the test’ in order to ‘game’ the system and avoid possible sanctions (Au, 2007; Mintrop & Sunderman, 2013). In addition, NCLB made very little progress on its goal to close the academic achievement gap; academic achievement on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) actually declined in the first years of implementing NCLB (Lee, 2006). What was clear was that the law created tremendous growth in high-stakes testing, a huge number of districts were classified ‘in need of improvement’ and sanctioned, and the law’s unintended consequences were more likely to affect the poor and minority students the law was intended to help (see Darling-Hammond, 2007; Mintrop & Sunderman, 2013). In regards to performance and equity, NCLB can be considered a policy failure (Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009).

In December 2015, Congress and President Obama responded with a more flexible federal policy design that remained firmly grounded in the accountability paradigm. Congress passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a law that signals a retreat from centralized federal regulation but does not abandon accountability as a solution to solving education inequalities. Instead of continuing with centralized federal control, ESSA shifts many of the goal setting and accountability functions back to the states, giving states flexibility to select their own policy designs and tools to regulate school and student performance (U.S. Department of Education,

2015). The accountability paradigm still remains however, since ESSA requires states to test students and to set centralized goals for student achievement. It creates a mandate for states to intervene in the lowest performing schools that fail to show improvement over time, and requires states to raise the rigor of their learning standards in order to prepare all students for college and careers (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Some federal control still remains since states must have their plans approved by the federal Department of Education, and states are still subject to compliance in return for federal funds (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

Across the U.S., influential policy thinkers at the state level had about a one-year window after ESSA was passed to hash out tailored accountability policies for schools before enacting the new law during the 2017-18 school year. State boards of education, school professionals, leading civil rights groups, members of the business community, influential journalists and bloggers, community organizers, and other education reform stakeholders engaged in public debates to shape several important aspects of their state's unique accountability policy design. While it was entirely possible that policy influencers would continue to think within the bounds of the accountability paradigm to go about solving education inequalities, influencers also had the opportunity to put forth new ideas to solve the achievement gap and improve low-performing schools.

The goal of this research project was to capture the ideas of influential state-level policy thinkers and opinion leaders during the transition period between NCLB and ESSA. Importantly, the study focused on the ideas of influential thinkers with the power to sway state decision-making. The study did not focus solely on the key legislators or governing bodies (i.e. state boards of education) that would predictably comply with the mandates of the federal standards and guidelines. I chose to study influencers who could shape the public debate with new ideas about how to solve the problem of school inequality. I targeted influencers who could entertain doubts and reflect critically on the collapse of NCLB and who could think 'outside the box' about how to solve the problem of education inequalities. By studying influencers, I could test the strength or weakness of the paradigm after the demise of NCLB. If the influencers I interviewed still firmly believed in the core tenants of accountability, that would indicate that the paradigm was firmly in tact; however, if the influencers doubted whether accountability still had power to undo school inequalities, or if they began to turn to alternative policy ideas to go about solving the problem, that could signal that the accountability paradigm was brittle or in danger of collapse.

The main research questions guiding the project asked: *Did the collapse of NCLB weaken the accountability paradigm and leave room for influential thinkers to generate alternative ideas to solve the problem of education inequalities? Or does the accountability paradigm remain firmly intact, and if so, why?* These questions were explored within the changing landscape of state-level policy during the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017. The project intended to uncover a spectrum of thinking about how high-profile system-level influencers of the policy debate were rethinking the problem of the achievement gap and school inequalities, if they were rethinking the problem and solutions in new ways at all.

What is a policy paradigm?

To study the accountability paradigm in education, I turned to Political Science literature that provides a theoretical base to study 'policy paradigms'. A policy paradigm is a framework

of ideas and standards that shape the way policymakers and influencers think about how to define a policy problem, how they think about goals, the instruments they rely on to solve the policy problem, and the expected results of chosen policies (Hall, 1993). As noted by Hall (1993), a policy paradigm “is influential precisely because so much of it is taken-for-granted and unamenable to scrutiny as a whole” (p. 297). In other words, policy paradigms (like accountability) have become so widespread and normalized that the core ideas remain unchallenged and simply ‘taken-for-granted’. Policy actors and influencers can simply rely on a policy paradigm as a go-to solution to solve a given policy problem.

A growing body of literature finds that moral discourses are important elements of policy ideas and paradigms (Campbell, 2002; Daigneault, 2015; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993; Schneider & Ingram, 1993). Policymakers and influencers may rely on their own experiences or their personal views about human nature and motivation to formulate policy decisions (Le Grand, 1997), or they may draw on their beliefs about ‘others’ and who deserves what resources and assistance in society (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). Policymakers and influencers may also rely on ideas about who or what institution is to blame for the policy problem and who or what institution is responsible for solving it (Benford & Snow, 2000). The personal beliefs and worldviews of individual policy actors can shape the design of a given policy. For example, under NCLB, the prevailing moral discourse was that teachers and school leaders were to blame for the problem of the achievement gap, and the accountability design targeted individual schools with sanctions if they failed to improve over time (Kantor & Lowe, 2006).

Given the two sides of a policy paradigm, which I define as a ‘policy dimension’ and a ‘moral dimension’, I used a qualitative multiple case study research design (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009) to understand how a cross-section of U.S. policy influencers from different walks of life thought about the problem of school inequality in the post-NCLB era. I chose to study high-level policy influencers across two U.S. states, California and Tennessee that varied widely in their political traditions and cultures. I intended to uncover a wide range of policy and moral ideas to determine whether the paradigm remained firmly entrenched in the minds of high-profile policy influencers or whether new ideas were taking root to undermine and ‘shift’ the accountability paradigm in education.

About the cases

California is known primarily as a politically Democratic state. Democrats have controlled the legislature nearly every year since 1970 (Willcoxon & Willcoxon, 2011). Despite the saturation of liberal ideology—especially in the state’s powerful urban centers—the state also has a very conservative faction of lawmakers who represent the rural, agrarian parts of the state. California today is very diverse and is known for its growing Hispanic and Latino population (Lopez, 2014). Today, California has a massive school system that mirrors the state’s changing population. There are over 1,000 school districts and 10,000 schools that enroll more than 6 million students (California Department of Education, 2018). Over half of all students are Hispanic or Latino, about 23 percent are White, roughly 10 percent are Asian, and 5.5 percent are African American (California Department of Education, 2018). California also has a very active charter school environment that enrolls nearly 10 percent of all students (California Department of Education, 2018).

In Tennessee's legislature, politically conservative lawmakers who represent the agrarian, rural areas of the state are in the majority today, although the state does have a stable and growing Democratic presence, especially in its urban centers of Memphis and Nashville. Tennessee has just under 2,000 schools that educate roughly one million students (Tennessee Department of Education, 2018). Over 60 percent of students are White, about 25 percent are African American, 10 percent are Latino, and just a small portion is Asian (Tennessee Department of Education, 2018). Like California, Tennessee also has a strong and growing charter school movement that primarily serves low-income communities in urban areas such as Nashville, Memphis, Chattanooga, and Knoxville (Tennessee Charter School Center, 2018).

California and Tennessee vary widely in their approaches toward state education policy. Much of the education reform debate in California has focused on how to improve public schools for low-income and minority students. Several of the state's active advocacy organizations have been calling for more centralized state intervention in low-performing schools over the last several years (Fensterwald, 2018). Meanwhile, the top policy actors during the time of the study—including Governor Jerry Brown, State School Board President Mike Kirst, and State Superintendent Tom Torlakson—advocated for more decentralization and local control, following suit with the state's long tradition of direct democracy (*The Economist*, 2011) and the governor's call for 'subsidiarity' (Freedberg, 2014). The result is a tension between the state's school professionals and political leaders and the state's civil rights and advocacy groups when it comes to hashing out policy reforms for public schools.

In Tennessee, state lawmakers alongside the state's teachers unions applied for and won a federal Race to the Top grant in 2010 (U.S. Department of Education, 2010) that kicked off a number of new centralized education reforms including the state's Achievement School District (ASD). The ASD allowed the state to intervene in low-performing schools and districts and implement 'turnaround strategies' to improve performance (Tatter, 2015). Such strategies included converting public schools to charters, firing the school principal and teachers and replacing them with new staff, or simply closing the school. The state also ramped up efforts to monitor teacher performance using value-added models and teacher evaluations (Tatter, 2015). While these centralized reforms were initially enacted by a Democratic governor and supported by the state's teachers unions, teacher's voices have since been weakened. Conservatives in the state—led by Republican Governor Bill Haslam—limited the collective bargaining power of teacher's unions in 2011 (Ghianni, 2011), and have increased pressure on teachers to show improvements in student achievement (Tatter, 2015). Unlike Californians, the political tension in Tennessee is not between centralization versus decentralization, but rather, a tension between who gets to decide how to centralize. Organizations representing the state's public schools and school professionals tended to be in tension with the state's ruling conservative actors and charter school supporters about education reform.

All told, 65 leading policy influencers and opinion leaders—45 from California and 20 from Tennessee—were sampled to reveal a spectrum of thinking about how to go about solving the problem of student and school inequalities. I interviewed a cross-section of influencers involved in the accountability debate in each state. I identified influential state elected and appointed officials, academics, journalists and bloggers, civil rights activists, community organizers, and members of the business community to understand how they thought about accountability policy and alternative policy ideas in the aftermath of the collapse of NCLB. I

asked these thinkers to express their views as individuals—not as representatives of their respective organizations—and to explain how they saw the policy problem, what they considered the causes, and then how they went about solving the problem. I sampled participants from across the political spectrum to get a sense of the policy ideas they supported, and paid attention to whether or not they still relied on accountability as a solution to solve the achievement gap and improve low-performing schools. I also paid attention to the moral discourses underlying their policy ideas, which are integral to the study of policy paradigms (Campbell, 2002; Diagneault, 2015). I paid particular attention to the participants' views of institutions, their views about groups in society (i.e. minorities vs. whites and poor vs. wealthy), views of equity and redistribution, and their perspectives about human nature and motivation. By taking a close look at influential individuals in the education accountability debate in each state, I aimed to see whether policy influencers still turned to accountability as a solution to education inequality, or whether new ideas were taking root that indicated a shift in the paradigm.

Previous literature

This study makes a significant contribution to a growing empirical work on the study of policy paradigms, especially in the field of education research. In education, there is just one study of policy paradigms that looks at the historical development of paradigms in education policymaking, focusing on the evolution of accountability policy since the 1980s (Mehta, 2013).¹ Outside of education research, previous studies in Political Science tend to stay at the level of structural or institutional analysis. For example, other empirical studies of paradigms look at culture (Capano, 2003), policy networks and influential actors (Mehta, 2013; Beland & Cox, 2016; Workman & Shafran 2015; Zhu, 2013), discourses (Beland, 2007; Beland & Orenstein, 2013; Jenson, 1989; Wood, 2015), historical path-dependency of policy change (Cox, 2004), and economic crises (Hall, 1993; Hogan & O'Rourke 2015; Kern, Kuzemko & Mitchell 2015; Oliver & Pemberton 2004). Some studies focus specifically on defining degrees of paradigm shift (Huo, 2009; White, 2012), while others theorize how the process of social learning and policy feedback influence policy change (Beland, 2010; Daugbjerg, 2003; Wood, 2015).

Unlike existing studies, I chose to study the level of the individual rather than the structural or institutional level, and focus directly on policy influencers as opposed to policy makers. Within the policy paradigm literature, I found just two studies that focus on the level of the individual (Daigneault, 2015; Weible, Heikkila, & Pierce, 2015). These existing studies shed light on how individuals formulate policy ideas, but they stop short of deeply engaging with the moral ideas that drive policy conceptions. Moreover, these two studies focus on lawmakers as the target population, who may not be the first 'signals' of paradigm shift.

This study makes a contribution to the study of policy paradigms at the level of the individual in two main ways. First, this study focuses on high-profile policy influencers that have the power to influence policy lawmakers and public discourse, rather than focus on lawmakers themselves. Influencers are free to question and think critically about past policy reforms and can generate new policy ideas and move them into the public discourse. Policy influencers may provide some of the first 'warning signals' of a paradigm's shift or collapse. By targeting policy

¹ Jal Mehta's (2006) dissertation looks in greater detail at the development of accountability in education policymaking since the 1980s, and his book (2015) looks even further back in time to the school reform movements of the early and mid-20th century.

influencers following the collapse of NCLB, the study provides insight into the brittleness of the paradigm from the ‘inside out’; if policy influencers are beginning to doubt accountability as a solution to education inequality, this may signal a shift or collapse of a given paradigm. But if policy influencers can still justify the core ideas of a given paradigm, then that may indicate that the paradigm holds strong. This study also makes a significant contribution to policy and moral ideas that either uphold a paradigm or begin to shake it. On average, I held 90-minute interviews with study participants and was able to unravel the moral narratives and common-sense beliefs that supported a given influencers policy ideas.

Dissertation Overview: Organization and Findings

This dissertation is organized as follows. The next chapter (Chapter 2) presents a literature review of the way policy paradigms in the U.S. have addressed inequality and shaped education policy over the last several decades. The chapter focuses in on the moral and policy ideas that shaped the rise of accountability in education with No Child Left Behind and the more recent Every Student Succeeds Act.

Chapter 3 provides the conceptual framework, which primarily draws on literature from Political Science to answer the research question guiding this study: whether the accountability paradigm still holds together after the collapse of NCLB, or whether the paradigm is beginning to shift. I tackle this question with a framework that includes both a policy dimension and a moral dimension of a paradigm. I look to understand the policy ideas that are at the forefront of policy discussions as well as the moral ideas that are often taken-for-granted that usually remain in the background of policy discourse.

Chapter 4 presents the methodology of the study. The study employs a qualitative, multiple case study research design. It relies heavily on in-depth interviews with policy influencers to understand the life experiences, motivations, and subjective worldviews of the individual participants. I examined the phenomenon using a deductive, theoretical approach to the data analysis but also allowed for findings to evolve using grounded theory.

The findings are presented in Chapter 5, which is organized in four sections according to the key findings of the study. The main thrust of the findings reveals that the accountability paradigm is firmly in tact but has stretched across different institutional venues. Section 5a reviews findings for policy influencers who preferred a *Local Control and Professional Model* of accountability that put trust in school professionals and local communities to solve the problem of school inequality. The policy influencers within this cluster shared a nurturing and trusting *Humanist* moral narrative that played out in their policy ideas. Section 5b reviews the thinking of policy influencers who desired a *State Control Model* of accountability. These influencers turned to the state as a problem solver for inequality in society. Thinkers within this cluster shared a *Structuralist* moral narrative and were weary of the ‘dangers of localism’ and distrustful of human nature. They thought that without a collective body of governance (such as the state), narrow-mindedness, bias, and discrimination would take root in local politics and further inequalities in schools. Section 5c presents the ideas of those who supported a *Market Control Model* of accountability. Market control thinkers firmly believed that students would be better served if “failing” schools were pushed to an alternative institutional environment by the state, or if students and families could exit low-performing schools by exercising school choice. Three very distinct moral narratives supported the market model of accountability. *Social Justice*

Entrepreneurs saw reality through the lens of historic inequalities, racial oppression, and institutional exclusion, and they saw the marketplace as an exit from low-performing schools that kept poor and minority students locked into cycles of intergenerational poverty. They believed in the power of individual agency and were drawn to policy ideas like charters and vouchers because they reinforced the individual's ability to act. *Paternalists* had a very different moral narrative. To them, standards of appropriate behavior, rule setting, external pressure, and discipline were important dimensions of their moral outlook. To overcome the shortcomings of 'failing' schools, they believed in the disciplinary aspects of the state and market to create conditions for school improvement. Lastly, there was a moral narrative of the *Empiricists*, who tried to rationalize their beliefs and values with technical language from the accountability paradigm. They turned to data and empirical research to make sense of consequences, school choice, and state takeover policies without delving into narratives of systemic inequalities or the complexity of the relationship between poverty and low performance.

Section 5d renders a comparative analysis of the three accountability models side by side, taking a closer look at the policy dimension and the moral dimension of the paradigm. The conclusion is presented in Chapter 6 with a brief summary of the study. The conclusion also reviews contributions to the literature, the limitations of the study, implications for policy and practice, and directions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review first takes a very brief look at two important paradigmatic periods in U.S. history, welfarism and neoliberalism, and describes the core trends of how U.S. policy has dealt with the problem social inequalities in each time frame. I first describe the ideas embedded in the early period of welfarism in the United States (1930s-1970s) and the state-led efforts to solve social inequalities. I then describe the core tenants of neoliberalism, and how neoliberalism has influenced education policymaking and the ‘accountability policy paradigm’².

The welfarist paradigm

During the Great Depression, a national economic crisis, class conflict, and stark inequality called for new ideas to solve the policy problems of mass unemployment, poverty, and weak international trade (Hall, 2013). In his study of policy paradigms, Peter Hall (1993) analyzed the prevailing ideas put forward to solve the crisis during this time period. As described by Hall (1993), a policy paradigm is a framework of ideas and standards that shape the way policymakers and influencers think about how to define a policy problem, how they think about goals, the instruments they rely on to solve the policy problem, and the expected results of chosen policies. When ideas become universal to the point of becoming ‘taken-for-granted’, they become paradigmatic.

During the 1930s, economic theory put forth by economist John Maynard Keynes provided policy solutions that justified government deficit spending and intervention in the economy during times of high national unemployment, without nationalizing industry. Until the onset of the depression, government intervention in the economy was unorthodox. Hall argues that Keynesian economics gave policymakers justification to monitor and intervene in the marketplace, and ushered in a new period of social benefits to protect those most disadvantaged in a market economy. For the first time in U.S. history, the federal government intervened in the labor market with new programs like unemployment insurance, social security, extended rights for collective bargaining, and providing jobs for the poor (Gilbert, 2004), which was a major paradigm shift in U.S. policymaking.³ Several landmark policies created during this time still exist today, including Social Security, Aide to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), food stamps, unemployment insurance, and workers’ compensation (Katz, 2008).

Keynesian ideas became so pervasive that they were used not only in the U.S. but also quickly spread globally (Hall, 1989). Attached to the policy ideas were collectivist norms that characterized the heyday of this ‘welfarist’ era (Gilbert, 2004; MacGregor, 1999), and for the first time in U.S. history, the federal government became responsible for ensuring the economic security and welfare of many of its workers. As illustrated by Neil Gilbert (2004), many of the

² I consider the accountability policy paradigm in education to be a ‘meso-level’ paradigm that is embedded within the ‘macro-level’ neoliberal paradigm.

³ Although many of these programs were designed to protect workers, historian Michael Katz (2008) argues that social insurance policies privileged White men and discriminatory practices against minorities and women ensued. For example, Social Security and unemployment insurance excluded agricultural and domestic workers, who tended to be African Americans and women. At the state level, African Americans experienced exclusion of programs like AFDC funding. Richard Rothstein (2017) notes that the federal government also promulgated racial segregation and unfair home mortgage and loan practices throughout much of the 20th century, and turned a blind eye to racial discrimination in the south during the ‘Jim Crow’ era until the Civil Rights movement.

New Deal programs created greater collective responsibility for social reproduction and produced greater state-led efforts to reduce social inequalities and protect laborers in the marketplace, efforts which were unprecedented leading up to the Great Depression.

While these ‘New Deal’ programs largely focused on increasing employment and extending protections to workers in the labor market, just a few programs focused on education and training (see Kantor & Lowe, 2013). It was not until the 1960s that the federal government began focusing on education and job training as a solution to inequality with the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). As pointed out by Kantor & Lowe (2013), the ESEA was an effort to target schools with new funding, especially Title I dollars for schools serving low-income students that were intended to help offset the conditions of poverty. With the passage of ESEA, the federal government took a massive redistributive approach through schooling, and invested directly in human capital development rather than continue to focus on strategies to protect workers from inequalities and uncertainties in the marketplace (Kantor & Lowe, 2013).

A paradigm in flux

In his study of policy paradigms, Peter Hall (1993) notes that when empirical ‘puzzles’ or ‘anomalies’ associated with a policy problem accumulate over time, policymakers are likely to alter their policymaking strategies. If the ideas behind a given paradigm fail to provide solutions to new puzzles and anomalies, policymakers can make changes to the setting of policy instruments, such as adjusting the level of funding of a given program, resulting in what Peter Hall (1993) would call ‘first order’ paradigm change. Alternatively, if the puzzles and anomalies grow severe enough, policymakers may choose to replace the paradigmatic policy instruments altogether. This is referred to as ‘second order’ paradigm change. In second order change, while the instruments might get replaced the overarching goals of the paradigm remain the same. In rare cases, paradigms will experience ‘third order change’ and radically shift the instruments and goals of the paradigm. Often, paradigms are more likely to experience incremental first or second order change rather than radical shift and may go through a process of gradual and layered change (for examples of studies see Hall, 1989; Mahoney & Thelen, 2010).

The neoliberal paradigm

A radical third order paradigm shift came about in the 1980s. The economy was once again in crisis with challenges of high unemployment, an oil crisis, and slow economic growth. Inflation was extreme. From 1970 to 1980, inflation rates doubled, most likely due to an increase in the price of oil that pushed the cost of other goods higher (Nielson, 2018). The orthodox ideas underlying Keynesianism failed to control inflation and price stability and low unemployment in the economy. As illustrated by Michael Katz (2013), the legitimacy of the state to solve social problems by raising taxes or intervening in the labor market was majorly called into question. As a result, the old ways of regulating market performance via Keynesian economics and government intervention in the labor market were strategies seen as incapable of solving the country’s economic and social problems.

While these changes were occurring incrementally in the years leading up to the 1980s, a new intellectual doctrine put forth by Milton Friedman and his ‘Chicago Boys’ at the Chicago School of Economics provided policymakers with new ideas to solve the prevailing policy

problems that could substitute for Keynesian economics (for an example of his early writings, see Friedman, 2008). As argued by David Harvey (2005), Friedman's supply-side economics offered an alternative approach to controlling inflation, the prices of goods and services, and unemployment. Friedman's ideas also called for a minimal central state and a strong reliance on the market to solve social inequalities. U.S. policymakers who were desperate to maintain control of the economy eventually embraced Friedman's 'neoliberal' policy doctrine. As described by Harvey (2005), a major shift in the relationship between the state, society, and the market took place, which was ushered into reality with the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 and the 'right turn' in politics (Ferguson & Rogers, 1987). In the era of neoliberalism, government was seen as unresponsive to citizen needs and a radical transformation in the relationship between the state and society took place that reduced the role of the state and opened the way for the marketplace to solve social inequalities.

Neoliberal public management

Arguably, the core ideas inherent in the neoliberal paradigm evolved into a new way to manage public services, culminating into what scholars call the 'new' or 'neoliberal' public management (Aucoin, 1990; Mintrop, 2018; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). In reaction to the overreaching 'bureaucratic state' came influential books such as *Reinventing Government* (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992) and *In Search of Excellence* (Peters & Waterman, 1982) that provided a blueprint for public management reform in the United States, promoting core ideas to 'reinvent government' and to 'do more with less'. These ideas translate into a focus on outputs of policy rather than the inputs, decentralizing public services, and a reliance on market models for social policy that allow for private-sector organizations to deliver public services (Frederickson, Smith, Larimer, & Licari, 2012; Hood, 1991; Gruening, 2011). New management practices such as contracting out, privatization, accountability, budget cuts, standards, measurement, and market competition provided the tools in this neoliberal menu for public services in the U.S. and internationally to be managed more like a private business than a public service (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011).

Narrowing in on accountability, the neoliberal public management literature describes accountability as a mechanism that can hold agents (the sub-units) responsive to a principal in a contractual relationship, often with the use of sanctions or rewards to motivate the agent to meet the requirements of the principal (Hood, 1991; Aucoin, 1990). In the Public Administration literature, Barbara Romzek and Melvin Dubnick (1987) identified four types of accountability: bureaucratic, legal, professional, and political, which are common arrangements of the principal-agent relationships. They describe bureaucratic accountability as a hierarchical relationship between a superior and a subordinate where the subordinate must follow closely regulated rules and guidelines often with threat of awards and sanctions; often times, the state will play the authoritative role in this model of accountability. Legal accountability is based on a contractual relationship between a controlling party outside the agency that can impose legal sanctions onto members of a given agency. Arguably, third parties or private contractors in a marketplace often will facilitate a legal accountability model (Klinger, Nalbandaian & Romzek, 2002). Professional accountability models rely on the skilled expertise of employees to self-govern or control a given agency; for example, faculty in higher education institutions often operate in models of professional accountability with little external regulation (Mehta, 2014). Lastly, political

accountability is a model used when public officials are required to be responsive to the demands of constituents.

Scholarship from psychology unpacks the principal-agent mechanism to describe the underlying moral dimensions imbedded within accountability design (Bovens, 2010; Dubnick, 2007). In a moral sense, accountability is seen as more than a political tool of good governance, it can be seen as a virtue of behavior, where a sense of personal responsibility, responsiveness, or a willingness to act with transparency and fairness is associated with accountability (Bovens, 2010; Dubnick, 2007). Scholars such as Christopher Hood (1995) have attempted to connect the worldviews identified in cultural theory—specifically Mary Douglas’ (2002) grid-group theory—to different modes of bureaucratic control. Grid-group theory includes the following worldview classifications: ‘hierarchists’ are those who imagine a society with clear roles and rules as well as tradition and order; egalitarians embrace equality and shared responsibility for governance; individualists are self-interested and rely on competition as the main form of social control; and lastly, fatalists are cultural isolates who are ‘rejects’ of society and have no determined pattern of control (for instance the very poor, slaves, or servants). As argued by Hood (1995), these four worldviews map onto different preferences for modes of governance, and can result in preferences for different institutional arrangements. One could imagine that Douglas’ (2002) classification of worldviews could also map onto the four accountability models identified by Romzeck and Dubnick (1987). The literature review now turns to a discussion of how neoliberal public management has influenced education policy.

Neoliberal public management in education policy

Jal Mehta (2013) contends that policy ideas rooted in the neoliberal public management doctrine—foremost, the idea of school accountability—moved front and center in the education reform debate following the release of the federal *Nation at Risk* report in 1983. The report brought education to the forefront of national policy discussions at a time of national economic crisis. As described by Jal Mehta (2013), the report was successful at tying concerns about economic development to the low performance of American students on international performance exams. In addition, the report assigned blame to principals and teachers, purporting that it was schools that should be responsible for the academic outcomes of students rather than social forces such as poverty (see also the National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Kantor & Lowe, 2006). This was a divergent swing from the problem definition that characterized education policy during the mid-20th century, which defined inequality in the schools as a result of structural constraints or racial segregation and poverty (Kantor & Lowe, 1995, 2006). Jal Mehta (2013) argued that the new framing gave rise to a new set of interests in education policymaking who brought very different ideas about school improvement to the table and created a radical paradigm shift in the way policymakers viewed the policy problem and solutions. Most notably, Mehta (2013) contends that the business community and federal government saw education as a national interest to protect and advance the nation’s economy, and the new political actors could advance managerial ideas typically used in the private sector as a solution to education inequalities. Moreover, this new set of policy actors shifted the goals of education policy towards a strategy for human capital development in pursuit of economic gain. Mehta (2013) argues that the release of *A Nation at Risk* triggered a paradigm shift in education policy. This new paradigm, as described by Mehta (2013):

“... emerged in the early 1980s and is still dominant today. The paradigm holds that educational success is central to national, state, and individual economic success; that American schools across the board are substantially underperforming and in need of reform; that schools rather than social forces should be held responsible for academic outcomes; and that success should be measured by externally verifiable tests” (p. 2).

The accountability paradigm in education

In light of this new paradigm, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, individual states experimented with new policy ideas from the neoliberal public management reform agenda, like charter schools, public school choice, vouchers, accountability, and standards-based reform. As shown by Mehta (2013), incremental changes were made at the federal level during this time period as well that integrated neoliberal public management ideas into federal policy, most notably, standards-based reforms and accountability. For example, Congress passed the Goals 2000 Act in 1994, which provided seed money for states to develop curriculum standards. During the same year, ESEA was reauthorized and made the delivery of Title I money conditional on the development of state standards and assessments. And in 2001, the federal No Child Left Behind act set the stage to make high-stakes accountability unanimous across all 50 states. The passage of NCLB, a bureaucratic accountability model (Romzek & Dubnick, 1987), was significant because the federal government extended its reach to all public schools in the country, specified the grades in which students needed to be tested, set ambitious goals for achievement, and set in place consequences for schools that did not improve over time. For the purposes of this study, I consider accountability as a standalone policy to have reached paradigmatic status with the passage of NCLB.

Under NCLB, all states were required to test students in reading and mathematics in grades 3-8 and once in high school. States also had to determine proficiency levels for student performance in aggregate and by subgroup, set clear learning standards, and ensure that all students were making adequate yearly progress in order to reach 100 percent proficiency by 2014 (Figlio & Loeb, 2011). NCLB used explicit consequences such as the threat of loss of funding as part of its policy design, and used measures of student proficiency on standardized tests to determine the allocation of sanctions (Figlio & Loeb, 2011). With this design, the federal government was able to pressure individual schools, districts, and states to take the demands of accountability seriously (Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009).

Moral discourses present in NCLB resonate today throughout the accountability paradigm. For example, the mainstream accountability discourse is saturated with moral arguments about who is to blame, and who needs to be held accountable. As noted by Kantor and Lowe (2006), under NCLB teachers and school professionals, rather than the social system, were to be blamed for low school performance and student inequalities (Kantor & Lowe, 2006). Discourse about equity is also interwoven in the paradigm, with a large focus on the achievement gap between minority and low-income students and White/Asian and wealthier students (Mehta, 2013). In fact, as described by Jesse Hesser Rhodes (2011), one of the main reasons that accountability reached paradigmatic status with NCLB was because the equity agenda mobilized civil rights groups, political and economic elites, and conservatives into a common reform agenda (for similar arguments about the political alignment of interest groups in formulating NCLB, see Debray, 2006; Debray-Pelot & McGuinn, 2009).

Uncertainty in the accountability paradigm

For several years following the passage of NCLB, evidence came to light that the policy design had several unintended consequences for school professionals and student learning. For example, Wayne Au (2007) analyzed 49 qualitative studies revealing that high-stakes testing led to narrowing of curriculum content to just teachable subjects, that subject area knowledge was fragmented into test-related pieces, and that teachers changed their pedagogical practices to ‘teach to the test’. Linda Darling-Hammond (2007) focused on the equity implications of high-stakes testing and found that schools and entire districts began to reclassify low-performing students as ‘special education students’ or moved them out of the school district altogether to game the accountability system. In some cases, entire cities like Atlanta were found to collude on helping students cheat on performance exams in order to avoid potential sanctions (Strauss, 2015).

As illustrated by Mintrop and Sunderman (2013) there were inherent flaws with NCLB’s design that attributed to the unintended consequences. The former law was grossly underfunded and lacked capacity building, especially for low-income schools that needed more direct technical assistance and financial resources in order to improve (for example, see Harrow, 2010). The law had unrealistic goals of closing the achievement gap by the year 2014, with 100 percent student proficiency in Math and English by that time. Moreover, the high-stakes policy design oriented teachers and school leaders on the outputs of accountability (student test results) rather than the more important outcome, student learning (for an example of this trend in the classroom see Ball, 2003). In light of this theoretical scholarship detailing the policy’s flaws alongside the mounting empirical evidence of unintended consequences, on the face of it, NCLB looked like an utter failure. Ambitious goals were shattered in the face of a faulty policy design, and assumptions about the power of sanctions were upturned by evidence pointing to unintended consequences for teachers and students.

In December 2015, Congress and President Obama responded with a more flexible federal policy design that remained firmly grounded in the accountability paradigm. Congress passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a law that signals a retreat from centralized federal regulation but does not abandon accountability as a solution to solving education inequalities. Instead of continuing with centralized federal control, ESSA shifts many of the goal setting and accountability functions back to the states, giving states flexibility to select their own policy designs and tools to regulate school and student performance (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). The accountability paradigm still remains however, since ESSA requires states to test students and to set centralized goals for student achievement. It creates a mandate for states to intervene in the lowest performing schools that fail to show improvement over time, and requires states to raise the rigor of their learning standards in order to prepare all students for college and careers (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Some federal control still remains since states must have their plans approved by the federal Department of Education, and states are still subject to compliance in return for federal funds (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

The passage of ESSA reaffirms that federal policymakers still see accountability as a legitimate solution to solving education inequality. For the purposes of this study, I wanted to know whether the experience of failure of NCLB was enough of a shock for influential policy thinkers to look for alternatives. Often, policy influencers—rather than policymakers—can serve as indicators for a deeper crisis. This study focuses on high-profile policy influencers (not policymakers) across two states that have the power to influence lawmakers and public discourse.

Influencers are free to question and think critically about past policy reforms and can generate new policy ideas and move them into the public discourse. Policy influencers may provide some of the first 'warning signals' of a paradigm's shift or collapse. By targeting policy influencers following the collapse of NCLB, the study provides insight into the brittleness of the paradigm from the 'inside out'; if policy influencers are beginning to doubt accountability as a solution to education inequality this may signal a shift or collapse of a given paradigm. But if policy influencers can still justify the core ideas of a given paradigm, then that may indicate that the paradigm holds strong.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

The focus of this study is narrow. I aim to understand how the collapse of NCLB shapes leading policy influencers' thinking about education policy. I study the policy ideas that are at the forefront of the accountability debate, looking at how participants name the policy problem, what they think causes the problem, and what solutions they advocate for (Hall, 1993; Rochefort & Cobb, 1994). I also study the normative, taken-for-granted ideas of policy thinkers that usually remain in the background of policy discourse (Campbell, 2002). I look to see if the policy influencers continue to adhere to the ideas associated with the accountability paradigm and how they morally justify these ideas. By looking at both policy and moral ideas, I ask if we can see the breaking down of accountability as a paradigmatic solution for education inequalities following the demise of NCLB. This is the main research question guiding this study.

Although the study of policy paradigms is rooted in institutional theory (Hall, 1993), I do not take a typical institutionalist approach, and therefore do not focus on the symbolic and material aspects of institutions (Thornton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury, 2013). For example, I do not study the ways in which economic interests (Au & Ferrare, 2015), elite networks (Beland & Cox, 2016; Wison, 2000), or culture (DiMaggio, 1997; Swidler, 1986) influence policy actors' ideas. Nor do I turn to other institutional factors exogenous to an individual that may influence ideas and paradigm shifts, such as national discourses in policymaking (Jenson, 1989; Schmidt, 2008), national interest (Katzenstein 1996), social movements and revolutions (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 1996), crises (Hall, 1989, 1993), or public opinion (van Cuilenburg & McQuail, 2003).

Rather than focus on the individual's institutional environment, I focus on the thinking of individuals themselves. Moreover, I focused directly on policy influencers as opposed to policy makers. Unlike lawmakers who may predictably comply with the legal mandates of federal policy (such as ESSA), influencers are free to question and think critically about past policy reforms and can generate new policy ideas and move them into the public discourse. Policy influencers may provide some of the first 'warning signals' of a paradigm's collapse. By targeting policy influencers following the demise of NCLB, the study provides insight into the brittleness of the paradigm from the 'inside out'; if policy influencers are beginning to doubt accountability as a solution to education inequality, this may signal a shift or collapse of the accountability paradigm. But if policy influencers can still justify the core ideas of accountability, then that may indicate that the paradigm holds strong.

Since I focus on the level of the individual, the theoretical conceptualization for the study comes closest to constructivist institutionalism (Hay, 2008). According to Hay (2008), constructivist institutionalism sees policy change as a relationship between actors and the institutional contexts in which they find themselves. Leveraging constructivist institutionalism helps uncover how individuals play a part in policy change, and gives detail to the mental models (Berman, 1998) actors bring to the process of policy change. I focus interviews on the set of policy and moral ideas that individuals hold as a result of their own unique personal life experiences and their unique institutional environment (Campbell, 2002; Nilsson, 2007). By focusing on individual actors' policy and moral ideas, I aim to understand "their perceptions about what is feasible, legitimate, possible, and desirable...shaped by both the institutional environment in which they find themselves and by existing policy paradigms and worldviews" (Hay, 2008, p. 5).

Assumptions

I consider the individuals I interview the interpreters of both moral and policy ideas. They are high profile policy influencers and represent a wide cross-section of organizations and institutions that shape the education policy debate in their respective states (see the section on methods for more information). Most are not the key decision-makers when it comes to formulating education policy; the majority of participants are influential individuals who can think outside the box and shape public discourses. As policy influencers, they make important contributions to policy debates and may generate new ideas or they may defend and justify the status quo (Baumgartner, 2014). I target them to understand how they make sense of NCLB failure, and how they think education policy should be designed for school improvement going forward.

I treat the study participants as unique individuals with their own worldviews, values, beliefs, and life experiences that aid them in the interpretation of their institutional environment. In this sense, I see the influencers as individuals who are able to rationalize, who may act with self-interest, or who may act selflessly as they puzzle through policy problems (Baumgartner, 2014). I recognize that individuals are influenced by unique state and national institutional environments, and also recognize that the accountability paradigm is embedded within the broader era of neoliberalism. With these assumptions, I study the ‘everyday cognition’ of the influencers as they think about education policy (DiMaggio 1997).

Proposed framework

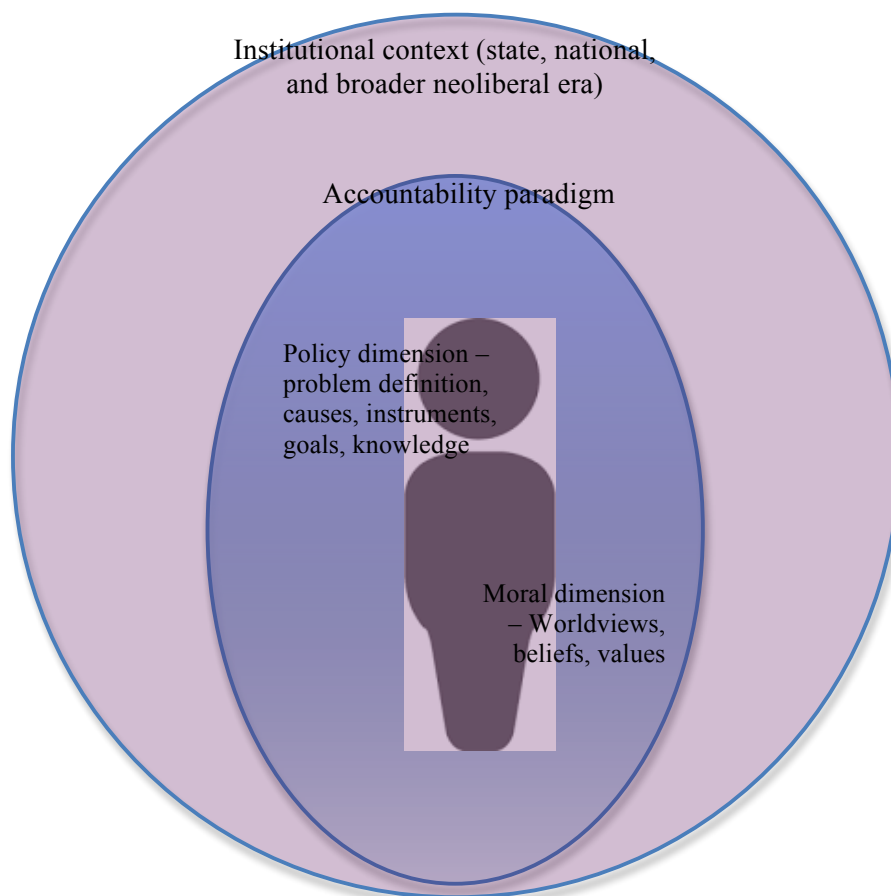
To study this process, I created a conceptual framework building on recent advances in the study of policy paradigms (Diagneault, 2014, 2015b; Hogan & Howlett, 2015; Rayner, 2015). I first divide the study of a policy paradigm into two dimensions, a ‘moral’ and a technical or ‘policy’ dimension. As shown in Figure 1, the *moral dimension* includes worldviews and the beliefs and values that make up worldviews (Koltko-Rivera, 2004; Nilsson, 2007). In the *policy dimension*, I study the way actors frame the policy problem that requires intervention, the ideas they hold about goals and policy instruments (Hall, 1993), and the knowledge sources they draw from to shape potential policy designs (Ingram, Schneider, & DeLeon, 2007; Radaelli, 1995).

I hypothesize that individual’s moral ideas or ‘narratives’ (Tomkins, 1965) play out in the policy ideas they support (the advocacy coalition literature refers to moral ideas as ‘core beliefs’ [see for example, Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993]; however, I adapt Tomkins’ use of ‘moral narratives’ to illustrate how stories of life experience play out in individual realities). I pay attention to three overarching ‘worldviews’ that may influence the ideas of the people I interview: views of human nature and motivation, views of ‘others’ and group relationships, and views of equity and redistribution.

I also hypothesize that the moral and policy ideas held by policy actors are embedded within unique state and national institutional contexts and the broader, neoliberal paradigm. The conceptualization provides a framework to uncover normative ideas that are usually taken-for-granted, in the background of policymaking discourse (Campbell, 1998; Searle, 1995), or part of a logic of appropriateness in the culture of policymaking (March & Olsen, 2011) that are often overlooked but closely connected to how policy influencers think about ideas for policy. Figure 1 below illustrates the conceptual framework visually.

This framework builds on literature that indicates a connection between a moral (or ‘normative’) and policy (or ‘cognitive’) dimension in the construction of a policy paradigm (Campbell, 2002; Hay, 2008; Hogan & Howlett, 2015). The conceptual framework may inform institutional theory by providing a lens into the construction of ‘social identities’ that filter institutional logics (Hay, 2008; Thorton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury, 2013), and adds to a growing theoretical base on the construction of policy paradigms (Hogan & Howlett, 2015). This study will contribute to both areas of literature by exploring in-depth the moral narratives and policy ideas that either hold a paradigm in place or begin to shake it.

Figure 1. Moral and policy dimension of ideas within the accountability paradigm



Policy dimension

To define the policy dimension, I take as a starting point Peter Hall's (1993) definition of a policy paradigm that includes problem definitions, policy instruments, and goals, and add to this definition the causes of the policy problem (Rochefort & Cobb, 1994), and knowledge sources (Campbell, 2002). These variables will show how policy actors think about and frame the problem of inequality and schooling, what they think are the root causes of the problem, what policy instruments they prefer to use to solve the problem and their preferences for policy design, what knowledge sources they draw from to inform their thinking, and the goals they have for accountability.

A problem definition is a way of viewing and thinking about a perceived problem in society (Rochefort & Cobb, 1994). Understanding problem definitions have been key to understanding policy debates and why policymakers may support different kinds of policies (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993; Rochefort & Cobb, 1994; Schnedier & Ingram 1993). This study will not go as far as to trace how different coalitions vie to create a prevailing problem definition (Kingdon & Thurber, 1984), or how a problem definition reaches a policy agenda (Rochefort & Cobb, 1994). Instead, the concept of a problem definition will be used in a limited way to determine how policy actors understand the challenges facing the public schools, with a focus on the problem of inequality, achievement, and student equity. I capture their problem definition on a more cognitive level by focusing on actors' prevailing *framing* of the problem. Framing is a way of articulating a policy position, which rests on an individuals' underlying beliefs (Schon & Rein, 1994), but is located in the foreground of policy debates (Campbell, 2002). I look specifically at policy frames (Rein & Schon, 1996) used by different actors to construct the problem and solutions of low-performing schools. For example, a prevailing policy frame on NCLB was that school professionals were failing students and therefore, teachers and school leaders needed to be held accountable for results, and sanctioned or awarded appropriately (Kantor & Lowe, 2006). I look to see if policy actors are reframing the problem in light of NCLB collapse.

Policy goals are defined as the objectives to be achieved by a given policy, and reaching them would ameliorate the public policy problem (Stone, 2002). Stone (2002) offers the following typology of policy goals: equity, efficiency, security, and liberty, and these categories can provide a framework for the researcher to give definition to their goal preferences. As discussed in the moral dimension section, a policy goal commonly associated with recent education accountability laws is equity, and equity may have a strong social justice orientation. It is also possible that actors will talk about overarching policy goals through an efficiency lens (i.e. using language of economic efficiency, doing more with less, making public services more efficient via competition, becoming more economically competitive, etc.), or through the lens of security (i.e. guaranteeing economic security by securing an educated labor force) or liberty (i.e. exercising the freedom of choice in the marketplace). I leverage the typology of policy goals offered by Stone (2002) to look for patterns in how policy influencers think about the long-term outcomes of policy design.

A core component of the policymaking process is the knowledge or information sources that policy actors draw from to develop policy solutions (Ingram, Schneider, & DeLeon, 2007; Radaelli, 1995). While I do not study knowledge and information directly, I look for policy actors' sources of influence. Powerful individuals, whether policy entrepreneurs (Beland & Cox,

2016; Hogan & Feeney, 2012; Mintrom, 2000) or prominent academics with specialized knowledge sources (Salant, 1989) may be one source of knowledge that actors draw from. Another source of influence may be intellectual think tanks or specialized university institutions that generate influential ideas (Scott, Lubienski, & DeBray-Pelot, 2009; Stone, 2012). Epistemic communities may be another source of ideas and knowledge (Campbell, 2002), which are networks of professionals and experts with an authoritative claim to specialized, policy-relevant knowledge. As noted by Peter Hall (1993), anomalies or new puzzling circumstances can undermine the ideas and knowledge sources that support a given policy paradigm, and if enough doubt evolves in the minds of policy actors, this may open the way for new ideas and knowledge sources to emerge from these sources. I look for anomalies to determine if new ideas and knowledge sources emerge from puzzling circumstances.

Policy instruments are tools leveraged to solve public problems or attain policy goals (Schneider & Ingram, 2005). Typical policy tools may include taxes, subsidies, inducements and sanctions, capacity-building or resource investment, and tools that motivate learning (Birkland, 2011). In the case of neoliberal public management, policy tools for schools include vouchers, school choice, teacher evaluations, value-added models, deregulating teacher's unions, and accountability (Tolofari, 2005). Under welfarism, common policy instruments focused on the input side of public programs, and often included resources and capacity building (Katz, 2008). I also pay attention to preferred policy designs, especially when it comes to understanding accountability policy. I look at the core features of accountability, including data, measurement, and consequences (Figlio & Loeb, 2011) to see if there is consensus or variation on those dimensions. I also look at more periphery features of accountability, such as performance monitors (i.e. the state, district, school, or local communities), and the preferred target of accountability (i.e. district, school, or teacher). It is possible that nuanced or radical policy design preferences will take shape in light of NCLB failure.

Moral dimension

I take the concept of normative ideas from Surel (2000) and Campbell (1998, 2002). Normative ideas “consist of taken-for-granted assumptions about values, attitudes, identities, and other collectively shared expectations” (Campbell, 2002, p.24). I give definition to normative ideas in what I call the *moral dimension* of a policy paradigm.

I hypothesize that worldviews are at the core of the moral dimension, and shape the value and belief systems (Koltko-Rivera, 2004) and broader moral narratives (Tompkins, 1965) of individuals. Worldviews are a “set of assumptions about physical and social reality that may have powerful effects on cognition and behavior” (Koltko-Rivera, 2004). Worldviews may be found at the level of culture and may dominate entire historical eras, but may also exist at the level of social groups, and at the level of the individual (Nilsson, 2007). Worldviews are the foundation of how a person comes to understand oneself in the physical and social world, and how one comes to make sense of the reality in which they are embedded (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). For the purposes of this study, I focus on worldviews at the level of the individual.

At the level of the individual, worldviews encompass assumptions individuals make about a wide range of topics, such as the nature and meaning of life, the nature and origins of the universe, the nature and meaning of truth, or the nature and behavior experienced in group or interpersonal relationships (Koltko-Rivera, 2004). Worldviews may be culturally constructed and

communicated throughout the social world via social institutions and norms (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Worldviews overlap with values and beliefs, but the assumptions underlying worldviews are superordinate, in that they provide the epistemic and ontological foundations for values and beliefs (Koltko-Rivera, 2004). An individual may not even be fully aware of the worldviews they hold (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Naugle, 2002), and thus, worldviews held by an individual often remain unchallenged and taken-for-granted. Relevant dimensions of worldviews for this study are ideas about human nature and behavior (Le Grand, 1997; Kluckhohn 1950); views of ‘others’ and group relationships (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1973); and ideas about justice, especially distributive justice and fairness (Deutsch 1975; Young, 2011).

Uncovering the worldviews of influential thinkers is especially relevant when studying education policy, which has had ideas of justice as its aim since the Civil Rights era (Kantor & Lowe, 1995). Ideas about student equity, in particular, have become a moral foundation of modern accountability laws, such as No Child Left Behind (Fusarelli, 2004). While public policies typically have normative or moral justifications (Schneider & Ingram, 1993), ones that are geared towards equity are imbued with moral judgments about distributive justice and fairness (Rawls, 2009), as well as ideas about social justice, domination and oppression (Young, 2000). By drawing out the worldviews that are usually in the backdrop of how an individual talks about policy ideas (thus, they become taken-for-granted), we can see how moral discourses and worldviews may influence the rationale for how policy actors come to think about policy design. By understanding moral narratives, we may begin to understand how a technical solution to solve a policy problem may be upheld even when the empirical evidence makes it difficult to believe in the effectiveness of the policy approach, as was the case with NCLB.

Interpersonal group relationships – Views about group relationships include beliefs others (Koltko-Rivera, 2004), which may differ along racial/ethnic and class lines. I look to uncover beliefs the study participant’s hold about what ‘others’ need and deserve (Larsen, 2007; Feather, 1999), paying particular attention to the race and socioeconomic status of others (Young, 2011). I also look for the ways that individuals judge the moral rightness of others (Haidt 2001; Rokeach, 1973). *Locus of responsibility* is a concept to get into finer detail about who or what institution individuals cast blame or responsibility towards (Sue & Sue, 1999). There are two main types of locus of responsibility (Sue & Sue, 1999): On the one hand, there are those with a *person-centered orientation* who believe it is up to the individual to be motivated and make effort to achieve success in society. On the other hand, *system-blame* people look to the sociocultural environment and take a structural or institutional position when trying to make sense of human action and behavior. Again, I pay attention to the institutions or groups individuals blame or perceive as responsible for solving the policy problem.

Human nature – Views of human nature refers to how someone perceives the basic moral orientation of human beings, for example, whether human nature is considered inherently good or evil (Kluckhohn, 1950; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1973), simple versus complex (Wrightsmann, 1992), and whether human behaviors are changeable versus permanent (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1973). I focus on the worldview actors have regarding ideas about human nature, and how they relate to ideas about motivation and change.

Distributive justice – Distributive justice is concerned with the distribution of conditions or goods that affect an individual’s well-being, which may include their emotional well-being, economic standing, physical health, or other social aspects (Deutsch, 1975). Perceptions of

distributive justice have important ramifications for social relationships in society, and what is considered fair. Prevailing views of distributive justice may structure the way that different individuals and groups in society receive resources, rewards, or sanctions (Powell 2005; Schneider & Ingram, 1993). Distribution usually occurs along three rules or underlying concepts (Deutsch, 1975). Redistribution can occur using the concept of *equality*, meaning that everybody receives the same outcome, regardless of their individual input. Redistribution may also occur based on *equity*, where outcomes are rewarded in proportion to an individual's input. Lastly, redistribution might also occur based solely on *need*, meaning that the needs of an individual or group are taken into consideration in the distribution of goods and conditions.

In the case of education policymaking, the prevailing redistributive worldview centers on debates about student equity and may be interpreted in two ways. Equity may be used in an economic or *utilitarian* sense as a concept to address the inequities of how resources and opportunities are allocated in a market system (Rawls, 2009). Some policy actors may take this utilitarian concept of equity to correct marketplace inefficiencies and ensure that society does not waste the economic potential of any of its citizens (Swift & Marshall, 1997). In the case of education policymaking, policymakers with a utilitarian outlook of equity may focus on the lowest performing schools to improve the skills and knowledge students gain so that they can access better opportunities, and in turn, maximize the efficiency of the economy. Alternatively, equity may be expressed from a *social justice* perspective (Troyna & Vincent, 1995), which takes as its starting point concepts of domination and oppression of social groups in society that receive inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities (Young, 2011). Ideas about social justice and equity have to do with the analysis of social structures and institutional contexts as they influence the distribution of resources and opportunities for those ordered in the bottom of the social hierarchy (Troyna & Vincent, 1995). I look for variation between actors if and when they discuss ideas about redistribution and fairness.

Using this framework, I interview academics, journalists and popular bloggers, policymakers, business leaders, and leaders of nonprofit and advocacy organizations to understand their thinking about accountability. I capture the moral and policy ideas of actors located in two states (and thus, two different institutional contexts). By capturing a wide cross-section of policy influencers in a national context, I aim to understand whether we are experiencing the incipient collapse of accountability as a paradigmatic solution to solving the problem of education inequality, or whether the paradigm remains firmly in tact.

Chapter 4: Methodology

During the reign of NCLB, over 20 states officially protested NCLB and withdrew from participation (Darling-Hammond, 2007). National civil rights leaders, members of Congress, state governor's, and even former President Barack Obama expressed public dismay of the accountability law, with many citing its over-reliance on testing and classroom time spent teaching to the test (Zernike, 2015). The Every Student Succeeds Act replaced NCLB and loosened the federal regulatory control of NCLB, but the new law does not radically change the core elements of accountability's design. Features such as goal setting, pressures, targets, and consequences are still embedded into ESSA's design, but with more flexibility for states to stretch and pull at these design features. What happens to the strength of a policy paradigm in that situation? Do the core policy ideas remain firmly entrenched in the minds of leading thinkers, or do some or all begin to think outside of the bounds of accountability? Does the collapse of NCLB signal the rise of new policy ideas to solve the problems of school and social inequalities, or will influential thinkers maintain the status quo? And lastly, are we experiencing radical third order paradigm change (Hall, 1993) or is this merely a time of first or second order rearrangement? To study the status of the accountability paradigm in the minds of influential thinkers, I ask the following specific research questions:

1. How are influential policy thinkers in their respective state thinking about the policy problem, and what policy ideas are being offered to solve the problem?
 - a. How do policy thinkers define and frame the policy problem?
 - b. How do they describe the causes of the policy problem?
 - c. What specific policy instruments do they reach for to solve the problem?
 - d. What knowledge sources do they draw from to inform their thinking?
 - e. What are their policy goals?
 - f. Who (or what institution) do they blame for the policy problem, and who (or what institution) do they think is the problem solver?
2. What moral justifications support the policy ideas of influential policy thinkers?
 - a. What are their underlying beliefs about interpersonal group relationships, specifically as those views relate to race and class relationships?
 - b. What are their beliefs about human nature and motivation?
 - c. What beliefs about redistributive justice and fairness play out in policy thinkers' ideas about the problem of low-performing schools?

Multiple case study approach

This study uses a qualitative case study research design (Yin, 2009; Stake, 1995; Creswell, 2013) in order to understand how policy thinkers in the U.S. are reconceptualizing accountability policy in the post-NCLB era. For this study, I chose two states (or 'cases')—

California and Tennessee—to capture a wide cross-section of individuals from different walks of life (more on case selection below) that are representative of the U.S. setting. The case study approach is an appropriate methodology for this study for two main reasons. The case study methodology allows for the comparison of individuals (or ‘multiple units’) within the cases that were bounded by geographical space and institutional contexts (Creswell, 2013). I chose to study individuals across two states with very different socio-cultural environments and political traditions. California is an ethnically diverse, traditionally liberal state, with a substantial and growing Hispanic population. Tennessee is also an ethnically diverse state with a large share of African Americans and a growing immigrant population, but with a strong political tradition of conservatism (see state selection criteria below for more information). Second, the cases I chose to study were bounded in time, which is essential for case study research (Creswell, 2013). I planned to collect data during the one-year time period following the revision of No Child Left Behind (December 2015-May 2017), but before states were required to put in place new accountability plans under ESSA (formally, the plans were to be enacted by the 2017-18 school year).

This research study takes both a deductive, theory driven approach as well as an inductive, grounded theory approach to the data collection and analysis (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). I use the theoretical constructs described in the conceptual framework to create open-ended interview questions that determined how participants were thinking about the policy paradigm, and allowed space for participants to reveal their policy ideas and moral justifications. The open-ended interview questions allow for participants to describe moral narratives and policy ideas that were beyond the initial scope of the conceptual framework. During data analysis, I used deductive theoretical approaches leveraging codes in my conceptual framework, but also used grounded theory to determine new and unusual patterns not theorized in the literature (Creswell, 2013). The deductive and inductive approach aided in theory building of how a policy paradigm is reproduced within an individual subject (see more in data analysis section below).

Methods

In-depth interviews

This study heavily relied on in-depth interviews with leading policy influencers. In-depth interviews were a useful method to focus intently on the individual participants in the study; the in-depth interview made it possible to understand in detail the life experiences, motivations, and subjective worldviews of the individual participants (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). In-depth interviews provided more nuanced understanding of the individual participants in a way that other methods (such as focus groups or observations) could not. In-depth interviewing made it possible to capture nuanced meaning at the level of language and allowed for understanding of feelings, beliefs, and opinions to emerge (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003). More trust could be established in the one-on-one interview, and it became possible to have a free-flowing conversation where the participant felt at ease to share their thinking about the policy problem and the personal life experiences and beliefs that supported their solutions to the policy problem (Weiss, 1995).

Open-ended, semi-structured interview prompts were prepared to uncover dimensions by which individuals perceived and experienced their reality (Creswell, 2013; McCracken, 1988; Weiss, 1995). The open-ended prompts included broad questions relating to the main paradigm

dimensions, and also included more narrow follow-up probing questions (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003); all questions enabled participants to answer prompts with free-form responses. The prompts were designed to uncover the theoretical concepts identified in the conceptual framework. All interviews were recorded with a wireless recording device, transcribed, and detailed notes were taken after each conversation.

Given that several of the study participants were high profile, influential, and visible individuals in their respective state, interview techniques for elite actors were leveraged to ensure the quality and honesty of the responses (Lilliker, 2003; Aberbach & Rockman, 2002). Several articles note techniques that are successful in the pursuit of securing interviews with elite actors (Berry, 2002; Lilliker, 2003; Morris, 2009), how to interact with elite actors as a researcher (Berry, 2002; Morris, 2009), and how to ask questions of elites (Berry, 2002). For example, literature on elite interviewing recommends several tips before the interview even begins, such as ‘studying up’ on the elite participant before interviewing them, seeking out high profile participants at public events and building rapport and trust with the given participant, and creating thorough and detailed invitation letters to recruit participants (Berry, 2002; Lilliker, 2003).

In general, I leveraged several subtle techniques offered by the literature to quickly gain trust with each participant during the actual interview. I was on time for all interviews and researched the participant thoroughly beforehand (Berry, 2002). I pushed for in-person interviews rather than phone calls (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003). I dressed plainly and conservatively (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003). I was very professional and took time to explain the study and the informed consent (Morris, 2009). During the interviews I was also careful to watch my body language. I often turned my body away from the participant, but made strong eye contact and listened carefully to what they said (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003). I did not interrupt the participant, but occasionally would use subtle cues like checking my watch or looking at my notes if they were off-track in the conversation. I smiled, laughed, nodded, and showed curiosity and compassion when appropriate, which helped me quickly gain trust, which was essential for in-depth interviewing (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003). The literature documents that elites may often employ skillful tactics to deflect questions they do not want to answer (Batterson & Ball, 1995). To get around this, one technique suggested by the literature is to map interview questions onto current events. For example, in the California context, rather than ask participants the direct question, “do you think that giving more money to poor schools will solve the achievement gap problem,” I asked participants to respond to a quote from the governor that addressed this point. Participants were more likely to feel comfortable critiquing the governor than to be asked squarely about this concept. Another strategy during interviews is to offer several non-threatening questions followed by one possibly uncomfortable question, and then move on to non-threatening questions again (Morris, 2009). For example, during conversations about redistribution and resources for schools, I sometimes asked why racial diversity made it difficult for the political system to share resources. This made some participants uneasy, but I gently probed until they shared with me their more personal ‘back stage’ response instead of a more scripted ‘front stage’ response (Goffman, 1959).

Sample selection

Case selection

Considering that I wanted to explore moral worldviews informing policy, I selected concepts that would help to identify unique cases (states) where I was likely to find a range of

individuals influencing state-level education policy. Three levels of criteria were generated, and two states (or cases) were selected from these criteria. The first level criterion was the type of learning standards that had been implemented in a given state. Priority was given to states that chose to implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), which standardized the comparison. For the second level criterion, a theory driven approach was used to determine the political climate of each state (Elazar, 1994; Morgan & Watson, 1991) and the degree of state racial/ethnic diversity (Hero & Tolbert, 1996). Identifying these characteristics determined the given state’s outlook towards government (Elazar, 1994; Morgan & Watson, 1991), and the types of actors I was likely to find in the political environment vying for influence (Hero & Tolbert, 1996). Lastly, the third level criterion included the degree to which education policy was centralized or decentralized in a given state (see Table 1 below for more detail). From this list, two states—California and Tennessee—were chosen as ‘typical cases’ (Creswell, 2013).

Table 1. State selection criteria

Level 1	Common Core participation and likelihood of sustainability
Level 2	Political climate; racial/ethnic diversity
Level 3	Degree of state centralization of education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Allow teacher tenure ● Strength of teacher unions ● State-level teacher evaluation systems ● State Agency model of school turnaround

Criteria #1: Participation in the Common Core standards

I used adoption of the Common Core standards as a constant to compare the two cases. At the time this study was taking place, under ESSA, states were required to develop challenging academic standards in reading/language arts, math, and science. ESSA also required that the new standards be aligned with the given state’s public higher education system and the state’s career and technical education standards (ESSA website). Initially, over 40 states indicated that they would adopt the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to meet the new law’s requirement. However, over time politicians and interest groups in various states reconsidered their participation. To generate a list of potential cases, I searched online news outlets and state education department websites to determine a list of states that indicated plans to move forward with both the learning standards and testing components of the Common Core. This initial search helped to standardize the comparison between states, since states that moved forward with the CCSS would face similar challenges in designing an accountability system to reach a similar end goal (student academic achievement on the CCSS tests). Twenty states were initially identified: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Within this list, some states formally changed the name of the CCSS to adapt to their local context (for example, Tennessee refers to their standards as ‘TNReady’, even though the underlying standards are from the CCSS).

Nonetheless, the states identified in this list used both the standards and testing component from the CCSS.

Criteria #2: Political climate and racial/ethnic diversity

Political climate was important to consider when selecting cases for this study, since political climate can indicate the dominant culture of a given state, and the ideologies of individuals competing in the policy arena to influence education policy decision-making. Elazar (1994) developed a measure of political climate using religious affiliations and population migration patterns to determine the political culture of a given state. In Elazar's (1994) model, states are classified as moralistic, individualistic, and traditionalistic. A moralistic state culture is a political environment where there is a strong role for the state and centralized services for the public good. Moralistic cultures are driven by the 'common good' and use the state to intervene in private activities when it benefits the well being of the community. An individualistic culture is a more utilitarian policy environment, with government providing the minimum functions demanded by the electorate. The individualistic state encourages the extension of the marketplace into the public sphere and limits the role of government. Individualistic cultures limit community intervention into private activities and use government to keep the marketplace in working order. A 'traditionalistic' state culture is more elitist by nature and generally maintains paternalistic relationships to the commonwealth and an ambivalent outlook towards the marketplace. This type of state also has a political system that tends to be reserved for elites at the top of the social structure, who are motivated to maintain traditional social orders. Since the 1960s when the classification was first created, empirical data have been used to test the trueness of fit to the states (Morgan & Watson, 1991), and the classification system remains sound.

Since the Elazar (1970) classification does not account for non-European or minority groups, I used the classification developed by Hero & Tolbert (1996) to identify racially diverse states, which accounted for differing state policies that may be the result of competition between minority and dominant racial groups. Hero and Tolbert (1996) developed a three-part classification system, and identified some states as 'homogenous' with very small minority populations, 'heterogeneous' states with White populations as well as a moderate number of minorities, and 'bifurcated' states with both a large White population and large minority population. These categories tend to map onto Elazar's classification, with homogenous states being moralistic, heterogeneous states tending towards individualistic orientations, and bifurcated states in the traditionalist category.

Of the 20 states that indicated they would adopt the Common Core, I used the Elazar (1994) classifications to determine which states had different political traditions. Using the classification helped to narrow the list of potential cases. I identified states with differing state political cultures so I could be sure to interview a variety of individuals with different value and belief systems, life experiences, and exposure to differing norms and traditions that would influence the way they thought about state policy and the accountability paradigm. When looking for states based on racial/ethnic classifications, I identified two states that were similar in composition to one another, as a proxy control variable.

Criteria #3: State centralization score

The third criterion to determine the degree of state control over education policy considered the recent history of education reforms in a given state. I looked for policies that were clear indicators of whether the state government was willing to intervene in schools and the work of school professionals, or whether the state took a hands-off, local control approach to regulate the work of school professionals. After gathering data on many aspects of education policy, four criteria stood out as the most common characteristics of whether a state was likely to have a centralized or decentralized approach to education policy (this criteria was cross-referenced with Carnoy & Loeb, 2002, which offers a categorization scheme for state centralization). The four variables included whether the state allowed teacher tenure (identified via state websites), the strength of teacher unions (Winkler, Scull & Zeehandelaar, 2012), whether there were state-coordinated teacher evaluation systems (Hull, 2013), and whether the state took a centralized approach to ‘turning around’ low-performing schools, meaning that the state engaged with firing teachers and/or the school principal, closing schools, or converting school to charters (information for turnaround strategies was found within state applications for NCLB waivers). States were then ranked by score and compared against the Elazar (1994) classification and the Hero & Tolbert (1996) classification. The final states—California and Tennessee—were selected from this final list, and the final criteria for each state are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Selection criteria for California and Tennessee

Criteria	Description	California	Tennessee
Level #1	Participation in Common Core	Yes	Yes
Level #2	Political culture	Individualistic	Traditionalistic
	Racial/ethnic diversity	Bifurcated	Bifurcated
Level #3	Education centralization score	Low	High

About the states

California is known primarily as a politically Democratic state. Democrats have controlled the legislature nearly every year since 1970 (Willcoxon & Willcoxon, 2011). Despite the saturation of liberal ideology—especially in the state’s powerful urban centers—the state also has a very conservative faction of lawmakers who represent the rural, agrarian parts of the state. These competing ideologies are rooted in the history of migratory patterns to the state. In the mid-19th century, many from the East coast, Chile, China, and Australia emigrated to California’s central valley and the Sierra Mountains for the gold rush bringing along ‘individualistic’ traditions with ideas about individual effort and competition (Woodward, 2011). A Protestant group of New Englanders and Midwesterners followed closely behind, settling in the Los Angeles and San Francisco areas bringing with them idealistic and communal traditions (Woodward, 2011). Later on in the 1930’s conservative Southerners with ‘traditionalistic’ values

were attracted to central California and its farmlands during the Great Depression (Elazar, 1994). Large numbers of Hispanics migrated to Los Angeles and the central valley after World War II, and Asians immigrated to northern California in the 1970s, largely settling in urban areas (Elazar, 1994). These early migratory patterns and the associated ideological traditions set the stage for California's longstanding divide between the liberal metropolis' and the state's rural conservatives.

California today is very ethnically diverse and is known for its growing Hispanic and Latino population (Lopez, 2014). Today, California has a massive school system that mirrors the state's changing population. There are over 1,000 school districts and 10,000 schools that enroll more than 6 million students (California Department of Education, 2018). Over half of all students are Hispanic or Latino, about 23 percent are White, roughly 10 percent are Asian, and 5.5 percent are African American (California Department of Education, 2018). California also has a very active charter school environment that enrolls nearly 10 percent of all students (California Department of Education, 2018).

Over the last decade, California has struggled to adequately fund its public school system. After the 2008 market crash, California lost much of its general fund revenue that relied on income taxes, leaving dwindling funds for the public school system. Through the efforts of the Local Control Accountability Formula and a commitment from the governor and legislature, today the state has returned to its pre-2008 levels of school funding, with additional funding allocated to districts that educate low-income students, foster children, and English learners (Fensterwald, 2017). However, the state remains firmly in the bottom of state school finance rankings, and falls significantly behind the national average of per pupil funding; in 2017, the state spent about \$8,700 per student, roughly \$3,500 less than the national average (Fensterwald, 2017).

Much of the education reform debate in California has focused on how to improve public schools for low-income and minority students. Several of the state's active advocacy organizations have been calling for more centralized state intervention in low-performing schools over the last several years (Fensterwald, 2018). Meanwhile, the top policy actors—including Governor Jerry Brown, State School Board President Mike Kirst, and State Superintendent Tom Torlakson—have called for more decentralization and local control, following suit with the state's long tradition of direct democracy (*The Economist*, 2011) and the governor's call for 'subsidiarity' (Freedberg, 2014). The result is a tension between the state's school professionals and political leaders and the state's civil rights and advocacy groups when it comes to hashing out policy reforms for public schools, including the design of ESSA accountability.

In Tennessee's legislature, politically conservative lawmakers who represent the agrarian, rural areas of the state are in the majority, although the state does have a stable and growing Democratic presence, especially in its urban centers of Memphis and Nashville. Tennessee has a long history of conservatism and authoritarianism that historically concentrated wealth and power in the hands of a few elite (Elazar, 1994). This 'traditionalistic' ideology has played out over time, most notably with Tennessee's history with the slave trade and cotton production (Woodward, 2011). The 'traditionalistic' ideology is also embedded in the state's support of more recent secret military projects including the development of the nuclear bomb in Oak Ridge, Tennessee (Taylor, 2012), as well as underground military bases and nuclear facilities (Grey,

2018). These traditionalistic ideological traditions are contrasted with more progressive social movements. Nashville and Memphis were sites of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) lunch counter sit-ins (Lovett, 2005), and the more recent urban renewal of cities like Nashville that has given rise to a new liberal elite (Smith, 2017). Tennessee is also growing in its diversity; the state has long had a stable African American population, accounting for roughly one third of the state population, but today many more Latino and Hispanics are moving to the state alongside refugees from the Middle East who migrate to large urban areas like Nashville (Lotspeich, Fix, Ost, & Perez-Lopez, 2003; Nagle, Gustafson, & Burd, 2012).

Tennessee has just under 2,000 schools that educate roughly one million students (Tennessee Department of Education, 2018). Over 60 percent of students are White, about 25 percent are African American, 10 percent are Latino, and just a small portion is Asian (Tennessee Department of Education, 2018). Like California, Tennessee also has a strong and growing charter school movement that primarily serves low-income communities in urban areas such as Nashville, Memphis, Chattanooga, and Knoxville (Tennessee Charter School Center, 2018).

Over the last decade, state lawmakers in Tennessee became very concerned about its low academic performance after the U.S. Chamber of Commerce published a national report detailing how Tennessee compared to other states (U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2007). In 2010, state lawmakers alongside the state's teachers unions applied for and won a federal Race to the Top grant (U.S. Department of Education, 2010) that kicked off a number of new centralized education reforms, including the state's Achievement School District (ASD). The ASD allowed the state to intervene in low-performing schools and districts and implement 'turnaround strategies' to improve performance (Tatter, 2015). Such strategies included converting public schools to charters, firing the school principal and teachers and replacing them with new staff, or simply closing the school. The state also ramped up efforts to monitor teacher performance using value-added models and teacher evaluations (Tatter, 2015). While these centralized reforms were initially enacted by a Democratic governor and supported by the state's teachers unions, the tables have since turned. Conservatives in the state—led by Republican Governor Bill Haslam—limited the collective bargaining power of teacher's unions in 2011 (Ghianni, 2011), and have increased pressure on teachers to show improvements in student achievement (Tatter, 2015). Unlike Californians, the political tension in Tennessee is not between centralization versus decentralization, but rather, a tension between who gets to decide how to centralize. Organizations representing the state's public schools and school professionals tended to be in tension with the state's ruling conservative actors and charter school supporters about education reform.

Within case sampling

To determine interview participants, I used a purposeful sampling technique (Creswell, 2013) to intentionally select high-profile individuals that influenced education policy discourse and decisions in their respective state. I intended to capture a wide cross-section of influential individuals that thought about the policy problem from a wide range of perspectives; therefore I sought to capture a maximum variation sample (Creswell, 2013). I targeted individuals from various industries, including elected and appointed state officials, influential journalists and bloggers, leading academics, members of the business community, leaders of nonprofits and civil rights organizations, and leaders of think tanks. It is the epistemology of these individuals that

create the dominant, public understanding of problems facing the schools, and these individuals are often the people with the sway to shape the contours of public debate and the power to influence policy designs (Campbell, 2002). Thus, they have the ability to significantly influence the contours of the paradigm.

To identify the sample in each state, I first used major news sources and state websites to identify the key actors in a process of collecting a ‘purposeful sample’ (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). In the case of California, I reviewed the *Los Angeles Times*, *EdSource*, the *Sacramento Bee*, and the *LA Report* to determine the major voices in the education reform debate. In Tennessee, I read the *TN Chalkbeat* and *The Tennessean*. After identifying the major individuals cited in the public debate, specific selection criteria were used to identify the sample population. To identify organizations, criteria included whether the organization had a statewide agenda (rather than focusing on a single city or region), whether the organization had a specific focus on education (rather than work cross-policy areas), and if the organization were referenced at least three times in articles related to accountability and printed in major statewide news outlets, signaling that the organization was central to the network of organizations vying for influence in the education debate. After top organizations were identified, I visited their websites to identify their executive director or policy director as a potential study participant. Preference was given to executive directors, but if they were not available, then I followed-up with the policy director. To identify individuals unaffiliated with major organizations, prominent academics involved with shaping accountability policy were included in the sample, along with any journalist or blogger that wrote opinion pieces on the accountability debate. In addition, members of the business community who were major financial contributors to education causes were also included in the list of potential study participants. Thus, with these criteria, I identified the most prominent individuals influencing the education debate in each state.

Recruitment

After creating the initial sample list, I attended state Board of Education meetings to distribute study flyers and my business card to the targeted sample (often, the high profile individuals would be in attendance at the meeting, especially during meetings to discuss state ESSA plans). About one third of the California sample was recruited this way, and about one fifth of the Tennessee sample. Other participants were recruited via email or phone call invitation. In general, email was the most effective way to recruit participants. The participants that either declined to participate or were unreachable were very high-ranking public officials (such as the governor or US Senators in each state), the highest profile thought leaders (such as Linda Darling-Hammond or Chester Finn), or state billionaires that influenced the education debate (such as Reed Hastings, Eli Broad, or members of the Walton family). In general, lower ranking elected or appointed public officials agreed to participate, along with leaders of nonprofits, leaders of think tanks, journalists and bloggers, and lower profile academics and business community members.

Participation requirement

After agreeing to participate, one 90-minute interview was scheduled with the individual at a location of their choosing. Most interviews took place either in the participant’s workspace or at a local coffee shop. Fewer than five interviews were scheduled via phone. In a few instances, two people from the same organization were interviewed together. This occurred once

with an organization in California, and once in Tennessee. In such instances, each individual was considered a participant in the study. After the interview was completed, participants were asked to fill out a demographic form and a brief survey gauging their preferences for policy ideas.

Participant descriptors

As shown in Table 3, there was a fairly balanced sample between the two states, with a similar number of participants recruited in the categories of elected or appointed officials, state departments, school professional organizations, business community representatives, and journalists/bloggers. In Tennessee, no academics were successfully recruited. One academic had been contacted who was at one point in time central to the state takeover debate, but he had since moved to an out-of-state university and declined to participate. As shown, there were far more nonprofit organizations recruited in the California sample. California is a much larger state than Tennessee and therefore has many more nonprofit organizations competing in the policy arena, and thus, more representatives from nonprofits were interviewed.

Table 3. Professional classification of study participants

	California (number of individuals)	Tennessee (number of individuals)
Elected or appointed officials	5	3
State departments	3	3
School professional organizations	3	5
Nonprofit organizations	21	9
Academics	2	0
Business community	1	1
Journalists/bloggers	3	2
Think tanks/research centers	2	2
Total (N=65)	40	25

Demographic characteristics were collected from participants that chose to complete the demographic intake form (there was an 80% response rate among participants who chose to complete the demographic form and the brief survey). The demographic table can be found in the appendix.

Data collection & analysis timeline

The project unfolded during the following phases:

Phase I: Data collection (September 2016 – March 2017): In this phase, I contacted and interviewed key policy actors in the states of California and Tennessee. I spent the fall of 2016 in California, and the spring of 2017 in Tennessee. Within California, I conducted interviews in Sacramento, the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, and San Bernadino. In Tennessee, interviews were conducted in the cities of Nashville and Memphis. The vast majority of interviews were held in-person. Five interviews (four with California participants and one with a Tennessee participant) were conducted over the phone.

Phase II: Data analysis (March 2017 - October 2017): This phase included the analysis of interview data from both states. Analysis included note taking on each individual interview, coding the interviews using NVivo, creating data matrixes and reflection memos, and identifying patterns in the data to categorize participants along common variables.

Phase III: Produced written dissertation chapters (October 2017 – October 2018).

Data analysis

After interviews were recorded, I first took notes on all recordings using a data reflection tool (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014), which listed out the main theoretical variables of interest from the conceptual framework alongside space for notes. This first pass at the interviews provided a within-case analysis (Creswell, 2013) to get a sense for variation within each unique case or interview. Next, a transcription service transcribed 50 of the 65 interviews (15 interviews were identified as non-essential, and notes on the interviews were used in lieu of a full transcript). After receiving the transcripts, I listened to the audio files and corrected the transcripts if there were errors. After this process, I uploaded the transcripts into the qualitative software program, NVivo. Deductive codes were derived from the conceptual framework, and related to the core policy and moral dimensions of the paradigm. I started with key descriptive codes that were relevant to each dimension of the paradigm, such as policy ideas about goals, policy instruments, problem definition, knowledge sources, and codes relating to the moral dimension such as worldviews about redistribution and fairness, interpersonal group relationships, and human nature. After creating these primary codes, I created more fine-grained secondary and tertiary value-based sub-codes (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014) as they became necessary to capture the nuances of the data. In some cases, patterns arose that were not part of the original conceptualization of the study. For example, I began to code for beliefs about institutions (state, market, family, and profession) under the coding scheme for worldviews to capture differences between individuals' beliefs towards different institutions. In such instances, new inductive codes using grounded theory (Creswell, 2013) were created to capture the content of the interviews. An associated codebook was produced that captures the most relevant deductive and inductive codes used in the analysis (see Appendix).

After the coding was complete, I read through the individual codes and began to identify key variables that distinguished the content of the interviews, with the intent to categorize participants into clusters depending on whether individuals indicated similar policy preferences and moral narratives. I identified several variables described in the codebook that were used to create three policy groups and five moral narrative groups. The descriptive and value codes that tended to matter most included problem definition, policy instruments, beliefs about institutions (state, market, family, and profession), causes and blame of the policy problem, and outlook towards human motivation. I then assigned individuals to the corresponding policy and moral

clusters based on their ideas expressed during the interviews. To help with the analysis of different individuals, I added a group code to the transcripts so that I could easily identify different moral and policy types while reading through the excerpts.

I then created a series of data matrixes and analytical memos (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014) to clearly identify the characteristics of these different moral and policy groups. In the first round of analysis, I first scaled down the paradigmatic variables of interest and pulled out salient quotes for each variable, and documented the data in five separate data matrixes (one for each moral type). After identifying patterns in the moral and policy dimensions, I then wrote analytical memos to describe the findings. The data matrixes and analytical memos refined the data and illuminated the main patterns in the data. Specifically, I looked for the key variables that identified similarities and differences between individuals, and I also looked for patterns within each state and across the cases.

Limitations of the study design

This study relied heavily on in-depth interviews as the primary method of data collection; arguably, the lack of other methods of data triangulation limited this case study approach (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). However, the purpose of this study was to understand influential policy actors' ideas about accountability policy and their deeper moral narratives. This required that the participants felt comfortable to share their beliefs and personal experiences with me in an intimate conversational setting. Private one-on-one in-depth interviews provided a format where the participants could freely express their policy ideas, moral justifications, and deeper worldviews. Thus the in-depth interviews provided intimate details of beliefs and personal experiences that would have been lost in other data collection tools such as surveys or document analysis.

The states selected as cases tended to be extreme cases; I chose one state that indicated a very centralized policy environment (Tennessee) and another state that indicated a decentralized policy environment (California). The findings could be strengthened if another case were added to the study, in particular, a state that has more of a mixed policymaking climate. Additionally, a case of federal policy influencers would further strengthen the findings. Ultimately, the study would be strengthened if several more cases were added.

Lastly, the study sample was limited to the individuals that responded to my invitations to participate. As mentioned, I did not interview individuals that were elites. I did not interview the governor in either state, key paradigm idea generators (Linda Darling-Hammond, Michael Fullan, Lamar Alexander, Chester Finn, etc.), or billionaires that influenced the spread of ideas (i.e. Waltons, Reed Hastings, Eli Broad). Rather, I interviewed people that were publicly accessible with public contact information published online.

Strengths of the study design

The two cases selected to study (Tennessee and California) represent two ends of a continuum; Tennessee represents a conservative political climate with a centralized education policymaking tradition, while California represents a liberal political climate with a decentralized education policymaking tradition. Having two states or cases added confidence to the findings; it increased the validity and stability and trustworthiness of the findings since I could compare

individuals operating in very different sociopolitical environments (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). I was also successful at meeting with a sample of very visible and vocal individuals influencing education policy in the public sphere in the states of California and Tennessee. Overall, the majority of people I contacted agreed to be in the study, with just the elite class denying participation (i.e. the governor of each state, the state billionaires, or the highest profile thought leaders like Linda Darling-Hammond and Chester Finn).

This study makes a significant contribution to the small but growing empirical work on how paradigms change and shift by studying the level of the individual (for other studies of the paradigm change at the level of the individual, see Weible, Heikkila, & Pierce 2015; Diogeneault, 2014). The majority of empirical studies that capture paradigm shift stay at the level of structural or institutional analysis to understand the causes of policy change. Other studies look at culture (Capano 2003), policy networks and influential actors (Mehta, 2013; Zhu, 2013; Workman & Shafran, 2015), discourses (Beland, 2006; Campbell, 2002; Jenson, 1989; Parsons, 2002; Wood, 2015), historical path-dependency of anomalies and puzzles (Howlett, 1994), and exogenous shock (Hall 1993; Hogan & O'Rourke 2015; Oliver & Pemberton 2004; Kern, Kuzemko & Mitchell 2015). Such studies focus specifically on defining degrees of paradigm shift (Huo 2009; White 2012), or theorize how the process of social learning and policy feedback influence policy change (Beland 2010; King & Hansen 1999; Wood 2015). Many of these studies are historical, descriptive, and leverage document analysis as the primary methodology. This study makes a significant contribution to the study of policy paradigms by creating a unique conceptual framework to study both the moral and policy dimensions of a paradigm, and leverages in-depth interviews to understand different policy ideas and the moral narratives that support paradigmatic shifts or justification for the status quo.

My role as a researcher

I perceive social reality through a mixed ontological lens of idealism and realism (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). On the one hand, I believe that an external physical reality exists independent of human beliefs and perceptions, but on the other hand, I believe that human beings construct their own social reality based on beliefs and subjective understandings. In this way, I am an epistemological interpretivist (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003), and I believe that my role as an academic and a researcher, combined with my physical identity and cultural upbringing, influence the way I interact with the social world.

I am a White woman of northern European descent, and grew up on farmland in a small town in Minnesota. Today, I identify politically as liberal, I care about social justice and inequality, and I desire to create a more equitable society. These cultural and physical characteristics about myself undoubtedly shaped the interactions I had with the study participants. Throughout the interviews, I tried to be an empathic, objective listener during the interviews, and I tried to keep an open mind whether the participant was politically conservative or liberal. As noted by several feminist theorists in the study of interview methods (Nielsen, 1990; Reinhartz, 1992), my positionality as a White, female research from 'liberal Berkeley' most likely influenced the way I was perceived by participants from different backgrounds. In some cases, my identity as a White woman may have benefitted my access to conservative individuals and their willingness to share their worldviews without restraint. In other cases, my school and graduate program helped more liberal participants perceive me as an 'ally' in our conversations, but maybe was off-putting to some conservative participants. My lower social status as a

graduate student may have also influenced the interview with the study participants, who were often high profile individuals in positions of power. In some cases, this served to benefit the quality of the interviews since I was often perceived as non-threatening; in other cases, I did not always probe or question the participants as deeply as I could have, so that it did not appear that I was challenging or doubting their thinking.

Chapter 5: Findings

The findings chapter addresses the main research question guiding this study: *Does the demise of NCLB represent a weakening in the education accountability paradigm and open up space for new ideas to emerge about how policy can be designed to achieve student equity and improve low-performing schools?* To address this question, I looked at how the study participants defined the policy problem, how they perceived the causes and solutions of the problem, and what moral justifications they relied on to support their policy ideas. I analyzed interview data using deductive and inductive methods to establish groupings among the participants' policy preferences and moral justifications. I found that the core features of the accountability paradigm such as data collection through student testing, performance monitoring, and consequences for under-performance were still firmly entrenched in the minds of policy actors, but that certain policy influencers—with unique moral narratives—were likely to coalesce around distinct accountability policy models. In short, individuals could be grouped into three accountability models with unique moral narratives supporting each accountability model.

Answering the following key questions formed clusters of individuals that coalesced around each of the three accountability models:

- What is the policy problem?
- What are the causes of the policy problem?
- When thinking about solutions, who (or what institutions) hold the key to improving the situation, and who (or what institutions) are in the way?
- Should consequences for low-performing schools be severe and punitive or light and supportive?
- Can teachers and other school professionals be trusted to do the work of school improvement?
- How interventionist should or must state government agencies be?
- Can the marketplace be a vehicle that creates the right incentives and pressures for school improvement?
- Do families generally have the ability to advocate for their children's high quality education?

Following these main questions, I established clusters of thinkers that adhered to three distinct policy models that stretched the accountability paradigm into different institutional venues. Undergirding the three policy models were five distinct moral narratives. This findings chapter is broken down into three sections where I first describe the preferred accountability model for each cluster of thinkers and then describe the attendant moral justifications.

Findings Section 5a describes a cluster of 19 individuals who showed common support for a *Professional and Local Control Model* of accountability. Many participants within this cluster were former school professionals who had experienced the effects of NCLB first-hand and wanted to create a 'paradigm shift' in how people thought about accountability. While they were frustrated and dissatisfied with the former accountability law, they still embraced the ideas embedded within NCLB such as data, monitoring, and consequences, but wanted to move those policy design elements inside the control of the profession and local districts, and away from punitive intervention from the state. A *humanitarian* moral narrative built by faith in school

professional alongside strong trust in families and local control and a nurturing outlook towards human motivation supported their policy ideas.

In Section 5b, I review the way 20 individuals thought about a *State Control Model* of accountability. They tended to think about accountability policy design with the state front and center of their ideas. They believed in the power of the state to rectify inequalities and deficiencies in the education system and believed that with the right design the state could design the conditions for the achievement gap to close. The participants identified in this cluster relied heavily on the main components of the accountability paradigm such as data, testing, and consequences but framed the policy solutions in terms of how the state could use those policy instruments to initiate change. The participants embodied a *structuralist* moral narrative, meaning that they had strong faith in the regulatory power of the state and were weary of the ‘dangers of localism’ that would evolve in local communities in the absence of a collective body of governance.

Findings Section 5c explores the accountability model and moral narratives of a very different cluster of influential thinkers who supported a *Market Control Model* of accountability. The 26 participants identified in this cluster saw great potential in the marketplace as an arena to solve the problem of low performing schools. They wanted to integrate market-based policy ideas into the Market Control accountability model that moved low-performing public schools to deregulated, marketplace conditions. They were supportive of an accountability model that narrowed in on academic achievement as the sole indicator of school performance, and privileged the power of the state to impose punitive consequences to schools that “failed” to improve academic performance over time that would push them to the marketplace. They thought that low-performing schools were more likely to be accountable for student achievement under marketplace conditions than if they continued to exist in a slow, unresponsive, and bureaucratic public sphere.

The policy ideas within the Market Control Model were undergirded by three distinct moral justifications. *Social Justice Entrepreneurs* firmly believed in the power of education as a way to overcome structural inequality and believed that individuals could escape poverty on their own if they succeeded in the education system. They expressed a moral narrative that focused on the power of individual agency to escape low performing schools and conditions of poverty, and in this way, embodied an entrepreneurial spirit to work towards social justice causes. *Paternalists* articulated a moral narrative centered on the concepts of rule setting, norms of appropriate behavior, and discipline as a ‘way of life’ that was necessary for school improvement. They saw markets as an institution where low-performing schools would need to respond to competitive pressures in order to survive. *Empiricists* were a third group that drew on data or empirical evidence to try and justify their moral outlook, with subtle preference for *laizze faire* ideas.

Each findings section first reviews the characteristics of the individuals identified in each accountability model. The findings then move on to describe how participants within a given accountability model define the policy problem and the causes of the policy problem. Next, the findings sections gauge how participants reflected on the demise of NCLB and how they were moving forward with their thinking about policy instruments to solve the perceived policy problem. Each findings section ends with a description of the moral narratives supporting the policy ideas, followed by a brief discussion of the findings.

Across the board, the findings reveal that the accountability paradigm is firmly in tact. All 65 participants still believed in the core concepts of accountability such as data, monitoring schools and districts for performance, and creating consequences for under-performance, although they varied in their preference for each design component. None imagined new ideas that would move the policy solutions far outside the bounds of accountability. Importantly, many recognized the importance of resources and redistribution for school improvement, yet none imagined a political agenda of mobilizing people for equality and challenging the economic elite. Many participants also acknowledged that stronger ‘inputs’ were needed to improve low-performing schools such as the need to adequately fund teacher salaries, and to have better teacher certification and training programs, yet none proposed policy solutions to address inputs. Instead, many relied heavily on the components of accountability as a solution to go about solving the perceived policy problem, and therefore the architecture of accountability remained in place.

Chapter 5, Section A

Professional & Local Control Model of Accountability

There were 19 individuals, 11 from California and 8 from Tennessee who expressed support to reconceptualize accountability in terms of local and professional control rather than an external model of accountability tightly regulated by the state. The individuals identified in this cluster tended to be leaders of organizations representing school professionals as well as elected or appointed statewide officials (i.e. appointed state school board members or state legislators). Several of the participants categorized in this accountability model were either former school professionals or had engaged in local district politics by serving on local school boards.

Supporters of the Professional and Local Control (or PLC) Accountability model thinkers still firmly believed in the core components of accountability, but believed that many of the core components were best controlled ‘internally’ by school professionals and district actors rather than regulated ‘externally’ by the state. In short, they wanted to create a ‘paradigm shift’ in the way people thought about accountability. They wanted to move away from a narrow focus on test scores and broaden the number of indicators used to determine school performance. They wanted families and community members rather than the state to hold schools accountable for school performance. And they desired to see positive consequences assigned to low-performing schools rather than negative consequences. When thinking through the target of accountability policy, the individuals identified in this cluster wanted to move away from teachers and individual schools as the primary target, and instead, preferred to target districts. They supported one new policy idea outside of the bounds of the accountability paradigm, which was a community schools model of school reform where more social services would be imbedded within low-performing schools serving low-income communities.

Individuals who supported the PLC model embodied a *humanitarian* moral narrative. They tended to trust school professionals and families and believed that people were better motivated when they were nurtured rather than punished. Humanitarians also believed in the democratic qualities of public institutions and shunned the stratifying effects of the marketplace. Views of redistribution focused on schools rather than any particular group of individuals and although they wanted to see more resources distributed to low-performing schools, none had any new ideas to allocate additional resources to low-performing schools and communities outside of the new federal funding associated with ESSA.

How is the policy problem defined?

It was not entirely clear from discussions what this group of thinkers saw as the policy problem. Participants frequently mentioned the achievement gap and issues of student equity, but those issues were not necessarily front and center during interviews. Rather, discussions of the achievement gap or student equity were interwoven into conversations with a strong concern for the problem of poverty in society. Several participants made the argument that there were far too many poor children who came to school with a range of issues that under-resourced schools could not solve alone. Here are just a few examples of participants who may be addressing the concept of the achievement gap but actually pointing to the policy problem of poverty:

So, inner-city schools face just unimaginable problems with poverty and any number of different things. I mean, they're -- when you go next week in Memphis, you're going to hear a lot of things. Dr. Anderson [a

pseudonym] presented to the legislature today and said, "There are 44,000 students in Memphis public schools with a little over...who live--who reside in households that subsist on less than \$10,000 a year." I mean, I almost fell out of my chair. I knew, obviously, you know, we've spent a lot of time working with our affiliate in Memphis and money issues is germane to Memphis, but that statistic really was kind of a gut punch for me to think, you know, how in the world could a school be expected to address all of the issues attendant to a student that's living in that kind of abject poverty? (220, P1)

I think that schools also have to be conceptualized as more than just the school itself. The schools are imbedded in a community and that community is within a society that has a host of other features and factors that play into the burdens that kids come to school with the conditions at they're in at home, the families that they're in. There's so many other--the amount of healthcare, mental and just health care that they get or don't get. There's just so many -- the nutrition that they get or don't get. There's just so many features that play into how all of the people arrive at a school building and arrive in a school district that when we only think about it from a school perspective as the only thing, I think that's where we start to be limited. (119, P1)

I – the more I sit up at this policy level, the more I'm just like, we keep expecting schools to address problems that are just so much deeper, you know, we talk about, you know, equitable access to teachers. It's like, "What about equitable access to food and healthcare and shoes and parents who aren't in jail?" You know...So, when you say, I could – what are the biggest problems facing our schools, well, there are problems facing us as a nation I think more than just our schools in particular. They just play out in our schools. (114, P2)

Frequently, thinkers within this cluster would discuss other countries and would make the connection between the success of other countries' education systems and the strength of their welfare state. A representative of a teacher's union had spent time traveling to study the success of education systems around the world, and saw that the success of schools in countries like Finland, Singapore, and Iceland were predicated on the strength of their social services for the poor. In his own words:

The other part that we haven't talked about is, if you look at successful systems, like Finland for example, then you look at what makes them successful. If you go into their classrooms and look at the teaching techniques they used, they've learned them all from us, from the United States. You don't see anything, I've been in these classes in Singapore, I've been in Shanghai just last August and in Iceland and so on, visiting all these successful systems but what they do have - good prenatal care for families. You know paid paternity and maternity leave. When a child is born they have an opportunity to bond with the child. They have childcare, health care, proper health care for the family. It's just all these kinds of things in place so that children don't come to school hungry with rotted teeth and they can't see because they can't afford glasses and nobody knows so do you think they're acting up but there are really kids can't see so that's why they're not learning to read, or they don't have the proper mental healthcare. Those kinds of issues you don't see that in these successful systems cause they take care of those issues. Those are things that are not directly related to school but are related to student performance or student achievement into learning. (132, P1)

To participants with this mindset, the quality and success of public schools was the result of a country's welfare state investment. The logic followed that there was generally more equality of opportunity in countries with generous social policy. When thinking about low-performing schools in California, a high-ranking representative of a state department expressed that the academic outcomes experienced by students in those schools were merely 'symptoms' of the overall 'root cause' of poverty. In her own words:

...we spent a lot of time talking about root causes versus, you know, symptoms, I think our schools are a symptom of some larger root causes. And to address those root causes requires such a shift in what we believe is important as Americans as a whole. That's going to take I think more time.

In sum, while the 19 participants in this cluster expressed concern for issues of the achievement gap and student equity, conversations about these issues were wrapped around the larger issue of poverty, which tended to be the main thrust behind their perception of the policy problem. To them, school performance and inequality were interrelated. Low-

performing schools were merely the result of a weak welfare state and inadequate social services for low-income communities.

What causes the policy problem?

As mentioned, participants argued that the cause of poverty (and tangentially, low-performing schools) was connected to a deficit of the welfare state and a lack of adequate social services for poor communities. They pointed to the deficit of the welfare state while cautiously defending schools, arguing that schools had limited control over student success in conditions of poverty. An outspoken advocate for public schools in Tennessee argued that out-of-school factors and a lack of social services were more significant contributors to the achievement gap than within-school factors:

There's research that says that school performance is primarily influenced by outside of school factors by about two-thirds, outside school factors and one-third in-school factors. Teachers themselves are responsible for only about somewhere between 7% and 15% variance in test scores. We know that teachers are the most important in-school factor for increasing test scores, but their overall impact is much smaller than environmental and socioeconomic factors. If we want to craft a solution, the best solution is to try to meet the needs of the children that are coming into schools with basic needs unmet, needing therapy or healthcare or those types of interventions. (219, P1)

While they acknowledged that schools were just one piece of the larger fabric of the welfare state, when discussing the causes of low-performing schools in particular, thinkers within this cluster nonetheless tended to reserve a narrow focus on the lack of resources and social services for the lowest-performing schools. Participants would commonly loop back to the fact that low-performing schools were inadequately funded, or not funded at the same level as schools in wealthier communities, which they argued made it difficult for school professionals to adequately serve all the needs of disadvantaged students. Without adequate resources, they posited that schools could not create the necessary conditions to attract and maintain good teachers, nor provide students with much needed social services. An influential leader of a teacher's union clearly made this point:

I have yet to see a school where they find enough resources...Because I'll bet you, if you look at a lot of the issues dealing with those schools, that'll be related to hearing, vision care, dental care. We're actually looking at the other programs around those issues but mental health care services, school safety, teacher training, the school facility itself you know. I mean if you think about a school environment where adults leave the minute they have a chance to, and we expect students to learn in that environment? And then you put all of the newest teachers there because they're the ones that don't have a choice, right, so why would we send children there? Why would we do that? (132, P1)

He went on to describe the lack of resources as a major detriment to teachers and other school professionals. He argued that teachers, in particular, needed to be adequately funded if we expect to have better teachers in low-performing schools to serve disadvantaged students:

It's remarkable we do as well as we do given the starvation wages public schools have been on and then you would tack, you layer on top of that the attacks on public education, on teachers that have been happening under No Child Left Behind, under this whole regime of corporatizing our schools, and wonder why it's not an attractive profession to be in. Teacher job satisfaction doesn't necessarily relate because of their salary, right? So we know that that's not the driving force. Yes, they have to feed their families, they have to be able to pay their mortgage or pay their rent, which is an issue in California obviously, especially in the Bay Area, but you know, you still have a life right? And you have to live that life and you have your own families to raise...So if we really wanna make it an attractive profession, don't you have to put those things in place? (132, P1)

Thinkers with this policy conception were frustrated that schools alone were often seen as the cause of the achievement gap and that other social programs were not part of the school improvement picture. An influential state representative emphatically made the argument that the achievement gap would be lessened or eliminated if social services were better funded:

In a perfect world, we wouldn't have to give more resources to low-performing schools because many of the issues that plague our low-performing schools would've been resolved or addressed before the kids even came to school, and the predictability around which schools would be low performing would be lessened if not eliminated. Do you know what I mean? I think there are equity issues before you even get to the school question. (114, P2)

In sum, the thinkers identified within this cluster tended to think broadly about the causes of poverty and the achievement gap. They saw the schools as just one component of the welfare state that contributed to student success. They argued that schools could better serve students from impoverished backgrounds if school professionals had adequate resources and if better social services were provided within schools and low-income communities.

Making sense of the demise of NCLB

Perceptions of the policy problem and the causes of poverty and low school performance played out in the participants' perceptions of No Child Left Behind. The overarching sentiment among the 19 individuals was that while NCLB had good intentions, it took a turn for the worse and became a 'testing regime' that created a 'shame and blame' era of education reform. They were quick to name the unintended consequences of the former law, such as too much time spent teaching to the test, unattainable achievement goals, and narrowing of the school curriculum. They argued that NCLB unintentionally harmed the lowest performing schools that the law was intended to serve and did nothing more than to identify and punish the poorest schools. Several shared personal experiences of living through NCLB as classroom teachers. Here are a few excerpts that describe their memories:

The testing regime was ridiculous. There were weeks I would spend more time testing or prepping for testing when I was actually teaching. I saw the effect it had on my kids, the stress on them. I think a lot of the stuff was just developmentally inappropriate because they were pushing all these academics down to these younger children. We see it now in Kindergarten, first graders where they're filling out worksheets all the time. That is developmentally inappropriate for students. They would take away their recesses. They would not allow play. They wouldn't even teach them how to hold a pencil. We would be doing stations for example, moving around, but they were all paper-pencil stations or reading stations. They were being, I think, pushed inappropriately. Especially boys because boys, at that young age, are a little bit behind girls in terms of development-- when they are developmentally ready to learn to read, for example, just decoding essentially, and word recognition and stuff like that. I think there were a lot of negative effects. (132, P1)

There was a fifth grade teacher, she was teaching a lesson from the book on science, it was astronomy or something like that and all the stories were related. It was technically thematic, that's what they call thematic. She brought in a telescope and the principal made her take it home because it wasn't part of the program. She wasn't in full fidelity to the program. She was asked to take it home. Ridiculous things like that. We didn't have a science program and I asked about the science because science wasn't a tested subject. The science program was the one laminated sheet in the box that came with the reading program. That was supposed to be a science program. I mean, no discovery, no hands on, none of the exploring stuff. It was really awful. What even made it worse was that they were only doing it in schools that taught kids like mine. They were poor, they were kids of color. (132, P1)

... it really was focused on accountability, and I lived it. So a lot of data driven classroom teaching that went on. We taught to the test, you know, we took two weeks of a year just to teach how to take a test, not even the content for that test...you know, I was present in the classroom when the use of data began, and everything was data focused, and we didn't focus so much on children learning, it's how well they did on the test, and we would focus on what bands they were in...So, I lived that and watched it and it was-- everything was about accountability and the accountability was all on the teacher, and we're responsible for

student's learning and that's a tough thing to be responsible for somebody else's learning, and ultimately what we gained was test-focused. (140, P2)

Participants within this cluster also cited an overwhelming dissatisfaction with the lack of resources and capacity building in NCLB's policy design. Several mentioned that students in low-performing schools suffered from the effects of poverty and that districts and school professionals needed additional funding to tackle the problems associated with impoverished communities. Moreover, school professionals needed more technical assistance and professional development in order to teach students coming from impoverished backgrounds. A former school principal in California who is now part of an education think tank argued this point:

...but it [NCLB] didn't take into consideration the amount of resources and needs that those school had. It also didn't look more holistically at the schools and the children themselves. It didn't take into consideration the whole myriad factors that the schools serving high poverty kids are going to need a whole lot of other resources and their students might be starting much farther behind than other schools so their growth is going to have to happen at a different pace and you can't do it with the same amount of money or the same amount of resources like you're going to need more resources. You're going to need more support. You're going to need more networks and models of how to do things well and that really was not included in the policy...(119, P1)

While the overwhelming sentiment was that NCLB was a poor design, all was not lost in the former accountability law. The majority of participants approved of the use of data, especially as it was used to disaggregate student achievement by subgroup. In fact, nearly all participants hailed this feature of the former law. For example, a former classroom teacher and now an influential leader at a state level department in California described the benefits of NCLB in this way:

I think, again, the intentions were good, right? What child are we going to leave behind? And I think some of the elements of No Child Left Behind were super helpful to us as states – or as a state or as states or as a country in general. Like, we should really be looking at things like achievement gaps and why is there such predictability about who is not achieving versus who is and don't we want some data to be able to base some goals and actions upon – right? Like, that intention was really good, and I think more transparency around what gap was there was brought about by No Child Left Behind, I think was good...(114, P2)

The 19 participants identified in this policy model were quick to express their frustration and disappointment with NCLB. This is perhaps unsurprising given that the majority of the participants were former school professionals who directly experienced the unintended effects of accountability under the NCLB regime. Several shared personal experiences about changing their teaching style to teach to the test or witnessed narrowing school curriculum to just teachable subjects. Many were also disappointed that NCLB lacked adequate funding and capacity building so that school professionals could be adequately resourced to improve academic achievement for students from impoverished backgrounds. Despite these shortcomings, they appreciated the former law's focus on data and disaggregation of data by subgroup, and saw promise in the power of data to work towards closing the academic achievement gap.

How do they try to solve the policy problem?

Reframing the accountability debate

When thinking through the policy problem and the shortcomings of NCLB, nearly all of the thinkers identified within this cluster wanted to create a 'paradigm shift' in the way people thought about accountability as a way to solve the policy problem. Importantly, they did not want to abandon the concept of accountability policy altogether, and they defended the core

features of accountability such as data use, consequences, measurement, and targets as useful ways to tackle the problem of low-performing schools. However, they emphasized that they wanted to change how people thought about the features of the policy design. Many individuals articulated that they wanted to get away from a centralized accountability model like NCLB that gave the state the power to impose punitive consequences in the form of ‘external accountability’ on schools with low test scores; instead, they wanted school professionals and district actors to be ‘internally accountable’ for student achievement and learning and desired minimal intervention from the state. A leader of a California think tank said it well:

So I think, number one, is also figuring out a way to, you know, like you’re talking about paradigms earlier, it’s a paradigm shift for state leaders and for general public and parents to think about accountability without a negative connotation embedded in that word. So for so long in our recent history, that word has a very negative, you know, piece to it. When you say accountability, it’s like, “Uh, oh. I’m in trouble!” As opposed to accountability meaning, “oh, great. Someone else is seeing a thing that I had a hunch was there. Now I can get some support and some help to address this thing and there will be resources and support attached to me, working through, and crafting a plan with my educating my co-workers, my fellow educators, district leaders, school leaders to figure out how to address this thing that isn’t working, that we’re struggling with, that we need help. So, really shifting that definition of accountability I think is number one. (119, P1)

Data

To achieve this new vision for accountability, this cluster of individuals strongly supported more measurement and more data collection, but they wanted to put less focus on test scores and broaden measurement and data collection to other measures of school success, such as school climate, parent engagement, and suspension rates. Through the eyes of an outspoken advocate of school professionals in California, more data and measurement meant that schools could have access to more fine-grained information about the performance of a given school and school professionals could better diagnose the roots of the problem to design appropriate interventions. In his words:

You have the data that’s behind all of the first line data, understandable for community, parents and all that, you know, and all the things that the parents need for information. But there’s a deeper dive that the professionals and the school can look at and use all those different kinds of indicators, some are the, are the five indicators that are required-- a few, maybe a couple of indicators that are statewide indicators that we think are important as a state-- and then the rest can be developed locally for the school. And then they can choose where the needs—the way we looked at it in the task force report was every school needs some kind of improvement that’s why-- so we continue this improvement cycle and some schools may need more targeted type of interventions so we’re gonna look at these indicators and there’s a certain area that you think, you know, you see it pop up and you focus on that. That’s an intervention and there are some schools that are gonna need some more intensive intervention. And then you focus and you do what needs to be done based on what the indicators are telling you. (132, P1)

To the participants with this mindset, more data also meant that schools and districts could more carefully diagnose whether schools were missing core social services that would better serve students. In this way, participants within this frame of thinking were convinced that more data would help to accurately diagnose the problems in low-performing schools. For example, a California participant talked about the variables that make up the school climate indicator, noting that the indicator helped diagnose the deficits inside of low-performing schools:

When we talk about a school climate indicator, it’s not just about do you feel safe in school and are you being bullied...but also looking at things like: do students have access to a nurse? Do they have access to a counselor? Is a library open? Do they have a librarian? Do they feel safe going to and from school? All those things indicate school climate. The class sizes, you know, those kinds of things. (132, P1)

Consequences

Professional and Local Control accountability thinkers also imagined that more data could help the state target more resources and capacity building to low-performing schools. In fact, several of these individuals wanted to target additional resources and capacity building as a ‘positive consequence’ for low-performing schools. They thought that additional metrics could help the state assign targeted resources or technical assistance to areas where a given school needed improvement; for example, more targeted support could help schools better engage with parents, reduce their suspension rates, or improve college-going rates. To make this point, several offered metaphors of a car mechanic or a doctor that needs to carefully diagnose a problem with more information and offer remedies rather than simply call a car ‘broken’ or a patient ‘sick’ and punish them for it. One participant put it this way:

I mean if you go to a doctor and you're sick and they gave you antibiotics but you do not get any better, does that mean the doctor is a failure or does it mean that maybe you have a virus and he should be giving you antivirals, or maybe a cancer, or maybe there's something else going on there that you're not treating. Maybe you're not doing the right interventions, right...And so you keep that constant interaction going on so that I can actually tell you what's this--since there's no hammer, I'm not gonna be labeled a failure if I tell you that this isn't working right, so we're actually interacting now as either as peers altogether, this is what's going on in my classroom, I have this you know, they have it here. There are strategies that we know work, the research shows work. (132, P1)

Again, there was a framing or messaging reorientation of consequences for low-performance using expanded metrics. Many of the thinkers tried to reconceptualize how the public perceived consequences and they tried to recast consequences in a positive light. As exemplified by a representative of a state level department in California:

...we're in a very different place now where we're trying as much as possible to encourage schools and districts to make good decisions based on local context, as opposed to Washington D.C. coming in with a set of sanctions that so very far-- I mean, even for Sacramento to come in with sanctions, I mean, punishment in an education system, what? That just that wasn't a good idea ever. I mean, it's not about punishment. It's about, ‘What can we do to support you to be better,’ as opposed to, ‘You have failed. You would be – you will be punished,’ right? (114, P2)

When pushed to further describe how these new consequences would work in reality, some participants reported they were experimenting with this new form of consequences as a direct reaction to the design of the ‘shame and blame’ consequences of NCLB. Therefore, there was not much empirical evidence in existence yet that this new model would be successful. A leader of an influential think tank in California put it this way:

NCLB focused pretty maniacally on achievement gaps, and the subgroups in achievement gaps. You know if you didn't make it with subgroups then you got punished and, you know, the achievement gap is hardly closed...So you know I think that we are trying something different now and it is substantially a reaction to NCLB. Partly because we don't want to do that anymore so we are going to do the opposite. (117, P2)

With this new way of thinking about positive consequences for low-performing schools, participants revealed a strong desire to build up supports for the teaching profession. This included new forms of technical assistance for schools, whether that technical assistance came from a state intermediary organization (in the California context, this was the California Collaboration for Education Excellence, and in Tennessee, it was the Centers for Regional Excellence), or from resource sharing between districts. In the words of a teacher's union representative in California:

I think sometimes there has to be outside technical assistance and some kind of intervention. There's a difference between going in with a hammer and saying 'okay do this or else you're going to be punished in this way' and going in and saying 'here's what you need, here's some technical assistance, here are the resources, here's what I see from the outside, here's another just school that's similar to your school but they're functioning in a way different level than you are. So we're gonna match you up for peer assistance to each other so that you can learn from them what's going on'. So there are lots of different interventions that are different, but the state definitely needs to have a role on that absolutely. (132, P1)

In some cases, participants were asked to respond to the critique that some schools employed 'bad teachers' and that without punitive consequences, those bad teachers would continue to teach students with the highest needs. The prevailing counter-argument was that school professionals did not need to be held 'externally accountable' by the state with punitive consequences for teacher performance, and that the profession itself could be 'internally accountable' and self-regulated. A representative of a teacher's association in Tennessee gave his take on this critique:

People say, "Well, you're just defending bad teachers." Nothing could be further from the truth. We don't have any interest in keeping a teacher in the classroom that either doesn't want to be there or isn't effective. I mean, that doesn't serve, if you were to look at it from a just purely self-interested perspective, why in the world would a teacher organization want to keep teachers that weren't good at their job? I mean, that makes very little sense for us to intentionally dilute the quality of the profession itself, but yet you hear that accusation being made pretty frequently when we start trying to talk about something other than "It's the teacher's fault," right? That's kind of the default setting for a lot of what I would, I guess you could call it "the education reform movement". (220, P1)

A participant in California was pressed on this same topic, and was asked how teachers would be held accountable to the demands of the public and the state in a more pressure-free accountability model. He offered teacher evaluations—regulated from within the profession rather than externally regulated by the state—as a solution to this problem:

So if you have teachers who are not doing that, you should have a good fair evaluation process in place to catch that, to be able to deal with those particular things. I know very few teachers that want, a teacher that doesn't want that, working in their system because they have to pick up the slack, and if you think about a student and you have a teacher that is not doing what they need to do for the student, for whatever reason, nobody wants that. It just doesn't make any sense. (132, P1)

Targets

The punitive, over-reach of the state and 'external accountability' was a point of concern for many participants across both states. Several of the influential thinkers in this cluster were cautious in their thinking about the state's role in providing consequences to low-performing schools, and were weary of the state and federal government's overreach into the schools during NCLB. A long-standing leader of California public schools expressed his vision for a more limited role for the state and outlined his support for a new intermediary technical assistance organization to work directly with districts rather than an overly bureaucratic state:

I see the role of the state providing what the CCEE [California Collaboration for Education Excellence] does, figuring out how to get the right kind of help and assistance to districts and starting with respect for those at the local level who can actually do the work as opposed to 'we're some superheroes who parachute in to tell you ne'er-do-wells how to actually educate kids.' It's a preposterous notion when you think about, I mean, take a look at Inglewood, which has been run by the state for 4 years now. Academics have gotten worse, finances have gotten worse. The notion that there's an army of experts out there who actually know how to better run schools is a deeply flawed notion. (138, P2)

A statewide official in California reflected on the state's previous attempts to takeover other low-performing districts, and made the case that local control was a more powerful change agent than the state or federal government:

But really what we're doing from the state level is pushing authority down to the local level. And I'm a firm believer that innovation and success occurs at the local level. It can't be driven from Sacramento. Historically, when we try to be the driver from Sacramento, it doesn't work, and I'll give you a couple of those examples. When have states taken over schools? When the state took over Richmond, the state took over Oakland, it wasn't like those school districts overnight turned around or suddenly became ultra high performing because the state took them over. In fact, quite the opposite. So, I don't think the state has the tools, the knowledge, or the ability to take over school systems and build school systems anywhere and say, "hey, we're gonna turn this around." So, it has to happen at the local level. We need to set the bar and fully expect and hold the locals accountable for their part. (140, P1)

Support for local control played out in how several of the policy thinkers conceptualized the targets of accountability policy. Rather than focus on individual teachers or individual schools (as was the case under NCLB), many of the participants argued that the state should hold districts accountable, and the districts could then work with individual schools and teachers on school improvement efforts. An elected official in Tennessee expressed this point:

So I think you got to look at each district, the Superintendent level. Hold the Superintendent and the school board accountable. Because ultimately, they set and implement policy. We're trying to -- we put too much emphasis on where we got to hold teachers accountable so-- we've tied their, their tenure decisions and their evaluations to the test scores, and even some teachers get evaluated on test scores of students they don't even have, or in non-tested areas. So, ultimately, I think that the school district level, Superintendent, school board need to be held accountable and I think they welcome that... (216, P2)

Pressures

Tied to thinking around district accountability and local control was the idea of parent engagement. Several of the policy influencers believed that parents would engage in school improvement efforts if more control was abdicated to local districts, and if local districts were held accountable for parent engagement. For example, a high-ranking official in California shared a personal experience observing the effectiveness of parent engagement in a southern California district:

But this other issue of matching with parents who are really equipped to reinforce all the positive learning that's taking place. I was in Anaheim Union High School district 2-3 weeks ago. Came away absolutely impressed. They're gonna be one of the pilot districts for the CCEE. They are doing, one the things Governor Brown said 3 or 4 years ago, what would the California version of the British inspector look like with participation from parents and people at the local level. What Anaheim Union is doing, they are using parents -- train parents in advocacy and civil rights folks -- as a part of their classroom walkthroughs. Where what they're doing effectively is-- and the Union's on board not manning the barricades and saying this is about evaluation. It's about educating local stakeholders about what's going on in classrooms...(140, P1)

In this way, this cluster of thinkers imagined that parents—rather than the state—could provide pressure for school improvement in an accountability model.

Resources

Despite their call for more resources to support parent engagement efforts, and to garner new resources to bolster technical assistance and capacity building for schools, when asked about a plan for acquiring more resources from the state many of the participants did not have one. Instead, many of these thinkers across both states pointed to the new federal ESSA funding as a

source of new revenue that they thought would be adequate to fund their new vision to solve the policy problem. In the words of an appointed official in California:

Well I mean there is a lot that's yet to emerge in terms of ESSA, and amount of dollars that's gonna float from the feds...I haven't lost any sleep around money. Whatever we wanted to do, the money has been there and the state [California] gave us \$30 million in the last budget bill that the governor signed. We're now talking about, you know, expansion of the CCEE [California Collaboration for Educational Excellence] would be over the next couple of years so I haven't spent a lot of time fretting about money and then some people estimate there's about \$200 million in the ESSA that would flow to the state for technical assistance and other things. So, for some reason I am not fretting about money right now. That could change. (138, P2)

Many saw the new ESSA funding with big eyes, so to speak, and envisioned that much could be done with the new funding. A leader of a statewide organization in California thought that the new ESSA funding was more than adequate to provide technical assistance to the thousands of schools across the state:

...we're going to create more providers. We won't-- we're gonna spawn more providers. And how we're gonna do that? We can withhold 7 percent of the ESSA money. We must withhold 7 percent. The state of California could withhold between \$150 and \$200 million of ESSA for state-wide purposes. Most grant, we needed more grant at the local school districts, we could accomplish all this. We could fund networks of districts for data...ESSA set-asides. \$150 to \$200 million, that's real money. We have to set aside by law. Seven percent of Title I. That's \$128 million. We're not in Rhode Island, so this is real money. (135, P2)

Especially in California, several of the influential thinkers were somewhat satisfied with the additional funding allocated to low-income students through the LCFF funding, and therefore targeted federal funding as a new cash flow that could be used to create new professional development opportunities. The leader of a California think tank put it this way:

I think there's ways to leverage like for example, so Title II under ESSA, there's a strand for professional development that you can use for leadership, for principle leadership and professional development in service and pre-service potentially also. So, figuring out "Okay, there's a strand of money here, PD has been cut significantly in most states under NCLB so how do we use the strand of federal money to give teachers the right training?" right? So I think also it's about being creative with the streams of income that do exist and the buckets of money. I think you'll be writing, I got California it sound like -- and kind of think their LCFF is a huge step towards differentiating the way money gets distributed based on the needs of the students. It's finally an acknowledgement from the State, aside from them Title I funding from feds, but it's an acknowledgement about -- your school might need a little more than your school in these areas if you have a higher population of homeless kids or students in foster care or X, Y, Z. (114, P1)

Many participants cited the political impossibility of getting new funding for schools at the level of state legislatures, and instead expressed strong interest in federal funding as an easier place to find new funds. An influential defender of public schools in Nashville aptly made this point, along with an elected official in California:

...I was like, "You're kidding me. You've got all this money at the federal level?" because there's Title I funds, there's Title IV funds, there's these competitive grants. So, that's one of the things we're working on right now is how can we sit down and really create the space for schools that are interested in this to tap into some of those resources? Because I can tell you, unfortunately, the political reality here is the state's not going to cough up any money to fund this stuff, or if they do it's going to be a long bloody struggle. (217, P1)

Well, the governor is very tight with the dollars so...we pushed for more money for teacher support. BITSA, beginning teacher support, and we've been nominally successful there, but with the LCFF too-- without categorical funding now-- we don't have dollars to allocate over to teachers for training or teacher support. They're all mixed in the LCFF so that makes it more difficult too when you've got the governor being very cautious in spending your money on things like that...He [the governor] wants to let his LCFF's formula saturate. He had all these changes over the last four years, three years, and so I think his mantra is "Don't micro manage the classroom from Sacramento ". But also, let's see his change saturate and build

capacity within themselves and see where this goes. Now, to the ones that want that to happen overnight, they're not going to like that message but that's the reality of the situation. (140, P1)

In sum, the core components of the accountability paradigm were still firmly in tact, but supporters of the PLC model wanted to see a 'paradigm shift' in how people thought about the paradigm's core elements such as data, consequences, and school monitoring. They wanted to expand the amount of data collected on school performance and to move beyond mere measurements of student academic performance. They desired to have positive consequences such as more resources and capacity building assigned to low-performing schools rather than punitive consequences that lacked guidance or resources for improvement. They believed in the power of local control and thought that parents and community members could monitor school performance and could be a pressure for school improvement more so than an overly bureaucratic state. They also believed that school professionals could be 'internally accountable' for school performance by regulating the profession using teacher evaluations. They re-imagined a role for the state to provide more resources to low-performing schools and wanted the state to create new intermediary organizations to provide technical assistance to districts. They preferred to buffer individual teachers and schools from external monitoring and re-imagined the target of accountability to be school districts. While not mentioned directly in the findings, several of the thinkers within this policy cluster mentioned throughout the interviews that they drew information from academics like Linda Darling-Hammond, Andy Hargreaves, and Michael Fullan to inform this 'paradigm shift' in accountability.

Across the board, individuals within this cluster revealed a stark contradiction in how they described the policy problem (and causes of the problem) and how they thought about their proposed solutions. Despite their concern for the conditions of poverty and the deficit of other welfare state programs to serve low-income communities, none mentioned a plan to secure better welfare services for low-income communities. Nor did anyone mention plans to target the state to better fund low-performing schools, and instead, many turned to the new federal ESSA funding as a source for new revenue.

Stepping outside the bounds of the accountability paradigm?

A few thinkers within this cluster stepped outside of the accountability paradigm with a new policy idea for low-performing schools. A few individuals thought that more resources could be put towards providing better wrap-around services for low-performing schools and to provide social services for students and their families. This concept was formulated in the idea of the 'community schools' model of schooling, where services such as Laundromats, health care, counseling, or afterschool programs for parents could be included in the organizational structure of a given school. This was an especially popular idea amongst the Tennessee participants, who desired an alternative approach to the state's school takeover strategies:

...we've been really involved with some consortiums and some coalitions working around the idea of community schools, which we see is kind of the exact inverse of what the state's current intervention model is, which is this very top down, ASD will come in, take a school over, turn over its staff, turn over its leadership, hand it over to a charter operator, and basically in not so many words just blow the school up, with or without the consent of the community it's worth noting. So, we're interested very much in looking at different ways to do that, engaging with communities, engaging with parents and stakeholders, and figuring out what the unique needs of those communities are instead of this one size fits all model of intervention that the ASD has become, or this one star who more or less that just comes in and just wipes out a school. (220, P1)

However, beyond mentioning or advocating for the idea of community schools, this cluster of thinkers did not incorporate the community schools model into how they thought about accountability (for example, none mentioned the community schools model as a possible ‘consequence’ for low performance), nor did they talk seriously about breaking out of the accountability paradigm to focus solely on an effort like the community schools.

What is the underlying moral narrative?

Individuals who supported the Professional and Local Control model embodied a *humanitarian* moral narrative. They revealed trusting and nurturing views of human nature but were quiet on group relationships (they did not talk much about race and class relationships in U.S. society). With regards to their views of human nature, ‘humanitarians’ tended to trust school professionals and families and believed that people were better motivated when they were nurtured rather than punished. Discussions about equity focused on public schools rather than any particular group of individuals (i.e. minorities or poor students), and they strongly supported public schools as democratic institutions and shunned the stratifying effects of the marketplace.

Trusting and nurturing views of human nature

Ideas about human nature were prevalent throughout conversations about teachers and the work of school professionals. When discussing whether teachers were to blame for low academic achievement amongst disadvantaged students, many of the participants immediately defended teachers with moral arguments about the ‘good will’ teachers expressed towards students. A public school advocate in Tennessee gave examples from his personal or professional experiences where he saw teachers go above and beyond what was required of their job to see students succeed:

I've spent plenty of time in priority schools, which is our word for bottom five percent. Spent lots of time talking to those teachers and I have yet to find one that says, "You know, I really like my job and I don't want to get fired, but I just don't care about the kids I'm teaching and I don't want to try hard to get them to improve." I mean, that has never been an observation of mine and I'm not--I've never met anyone who's made a similar observation. (220, P1)

The tendency to trust teachers came out in other ways, and personal experiences—rather than empirical evidence—justified many of the moral arguments made throughout the conversations. Several participants, especially those that had spent time in the classroom or working closely with teachers, argued that even in low performing schools teachers often provided care and safety for students. Others argued that teachers went out of their way to care-take for poor children including purchasing food and supplies for students out of their own salaries. For example:

...And there's not a teacher that hasn't bought food for students in their classroom. We know they don't --or a kitchen lady that doesn't sometimes, for some students, actually provide them with food for the weekend cause they won't get it at home or they can't get it at home. (132, P1)

The inclination to trust teachers translated directly into the policy ideas these individuals supported to give more resources and autonomy to school professionals. For example, an advocate for school professionals in California makes a direct connection between his belief that teachers are good people who can be ‘trusted to do the right thing’ and the policy idea to provide school professionals with more resources:

But you're assuming that they [teachers] want to be there and want to do their job, that's why you go into teaching. And I know very little, very few teachers that don't wanna see what's best for their student. It is everything we do...but when we focus, even on things like bargaining better salaries or good retirement, a stable retirement, or better health benefits or something, it's about attracting and retaining the best and the brightest in the profession. How are you gonna get the best and the brightest if they can't afford to feed their families while they're there, or give them healthcare or for the house? It's all tied to student learning, to improving student learning. That's why I'm saying if you have a school that is so bad-- that the facilities are so bad or so unsafe that an adult, the minute they get the opportunity of seniority to leave--what does it say about that school? And we're sending children there, and then wondering why it's not working? (132, P1)

The tendency to trust teachers translated into perceptions to trust parents as well. Again, the tendency to trust parents comes from participants' personal experiences. A former educator from California shared an early childhood memory of growing up with a parent who actively engaged with his schooling, which reinforced his belief that parents could be trusted to engage in their own students' schooling:

All of us who were born poor came from humble circumstances, all of us had parents who by hook or by crook figured out even though they had limited education, there was a whole lot that I need to do to reinforce the good stuff that is going in my kids' school. So my mom raised 6 of us by herself...Everything about what was going on in school was reinforced. If that can happen in my family, it can happen in any other family with the right kind of support. (138, P1)

A vocal advocate for public schools in Nashville shared her personal experience engaging with her local school as a parent, and the success that parent engagement had in turning around the test scores at the school:

I wanted to give back to the community, so I started getting really involved with the schools. The PTO at my children's school died. A couple of us stepped up and said, basically two parents, we will be the PTO. We tried to rebuild everything. I became very active at the school. It's a Title I school. It's about around 50% low-income students. It serves a large portion of special needs students, very adverse population with about 25 different countries represented. We are very involved. We built the PTO. We did all these fun projects like we put in a natural landscape playground. We planted 30 trees, which I watered for two summers. We put in a teaching garden to grow vegetables. We did a lot of gardening projects just because a couple of us like gardening. We started having big school-wide events, which they hadn't had before like a Fall Festival and a spring event, built support for the school. Five years later...test scores went up. This had a really good positive impact on the school just because parents became involved. We promoted the school. The community wrapped its arms around the school. We built numerous business partnerships and partnerships with other organizations to bring greater resources to the school. (219, P1)

Again, the connection between a deeper trust in parent engagement can be connected directly to the policy idea to support local control. In the words of a think tank leader in California:

So you know I think that we are trying something different now and it is substantially a reaction to NCLB. Partly because we don't want to do that anymore so we are going to do the opposite. It is placing our bets in a very different place, that teachers, educators, communities really want to do the right thing. It is not easy to do but if we rely on them and trust them, maybe we'll actually see some progress. That remains to be seen but I think that is the theory of action for many of us. (117, P2)

In sum, humanitarians expressed a deep trust in teachers and parent engagement and drew on their personal, lived experiences to justify this outlook. This trust translated into their policy preferences for professional and local control accountability.

Humanitarians had a unique take on motivation as well. Individuals with this mindset deeply believed that teachers needed to be nurtured and supported rather than disciplined and punished in order to motivate change. Several participants spoke at length about the drawbacks

of the dominant perspective towards motivation that was present in the design of NCLB. They argued that NCLB enforced a culture of punishment that led to apathy and defeat amongst school professionals. Here are just a few examples:

If I were a teacher in those schools and I was punished arbitrarily, I'd give up. What would you do? I'll just say: "Why should I care?" Here I am working my ass off trying to sort of get better and they throw me in a bucket with these schools that can't do anything right. Why would I work hard? I mean that's my response... So you're just beating up some set of schools because you say: "Well, we have to beat up some set of school. We know there are bad schools out there. We better focus on them." (117, P1)

And it shouldn't be about punishing the people at the school that are trying to do the work, right? Then I bet that you would -- if you focus on that, and if teachers knew they weren't going to be a beat over the head to teach in the school, I think you'd find a lot more veteran teachers staying in schools like that... (132, P1)

So, it's discouraging for teachers because they're not being fairly evaluated on their work. I think we've created a culture where we're losing teachers because they feel they're being punished for factors outside of their control. Particularly when they're working with challenging populations that have a lot of needs and who aren't going to perform as well. (219, P1)

This concept of human motivation played out in their rejection of the framing of 'failing schools', and several of the thinkers desired to put an end to the 'shame and blame' era of accountability. Take for instance a leader of a teacher's association in Tennessee, who categorically refused to even refer to schools as 'failing':

...you will never hear me use the term "failing school". I understand that's kind of what's worked its way into the common understanding of it, but I don't think that schools have ever really been a failure. I think there are a number of different--a number of different factors that go into--into a school that you find that is consistently underperforming and I feel like there are lots of academics that have done research that is suggesting that things like generational poverty, things like violence, things like food insecurity, all of these, there's a myriad of factors that can create an environment that produces a challenge for educators and to attribute all of that to--or to suggest that all of those things are inside the purview of an educator's ability to influence those I think is frankly kind of naive, almost. (220, P1)

A former school teacher from California and now a prominent leader of a teacher's union talked about the effects of the culture of failure on students, arguing that he saw NCLB have an emotionally damaging effect on children inside the classroom. He went as far as to call punitive accountability tantamount to 'child abuse':

One story I like to tell because it always amazes me was when I was teaching second grade, I would always have a boy or two that would come to me and I'd tell them, "Let's go read or you go have to pick a book" and they'd be like, "I can't read...why should I pick up a book?" You have a seven-year old, self-identified as a failure. It's not like their fault that they couldn't read, it's that they weren't developmentally ready to decode text, but they understood story, they understood right, they could look at a book and they could interpret the story. They could tell you the story from the beginning to the end. They could do all that kind of stuff. You knew they had to interact with text and with the books in order to be able to learn to read because that was part of that process of learning. I spend the next six months just getting them to pick up books and interact with them in appropriate ways...Just the effects of child that young not learning, or self-identifying as a failure at a school experience, that would follow them all the way through their school career. That to me is tantamount to child abuse. (132, P1)

Others clearly expressed their support for more nurturing views towards human nature. An influential state representative in California described that it was 'common sense' to expect behavior to change with nourishment and care taking rather than punishment:

"And really those, think about just how do people improve performance in kind of a fear and threat based way? How do you like, I mean—I have dogs, they're very ill-behaved right now, not getting enough attention, but you know, do you like—is it about fear and threats or is it about positive supports? That just seems so common sense to me as a teacher and I think it seems common sense to our education leadership right now. Where it's like, "We're going to help you to be better at what you do. We're not going to scare you or threaten you into doing a better job because we all know, nothing learns as well as it could from a place of fear." You know, systems based on fear are not good. (114, P2).

A business leader in California argued that human beings were ‘intrinsically’ motivated rather than ‘extrinsically’ motivated. He cited literature from organizational behavior and motivation studies, and argued that when a system is designed with external ‘sticks and carrots’ the result will be compliance rather than long-term, sustainable change:

...we know from our studies in human behavior, and also for organizational behavior, and I would say also from human experience. That's achieved when you support and acknowledge and embrace that intrinsic motivation, that's the strongest long-term motivators for human beings and organizations of human beings. We just, long-term, spark for that, or driver, is intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation will give you a short-term gains cause they aren't sustainable gains. In fact, they usually build resistance to the change and then the gains are often wiped out. Unless, unless you wanna build an elaborate system about extensive and expensive extrinsic carrots and sticks forever, and even with that, you would still, you would get malicious compliance more than you actually get high performing behavior from actors in the system, whatever system it is. (123, P2)

When probed further to explain how he arrived at this conclusion from the literature, especially when much of corporate America relied on the ‘sticks and carrots’ model of motivation, he relied on his personal experience as a manager to describe the success he had finding ways to intrinsically motivate his staff:

But when it came to people, I think the longer I was in leadership, I realized, I felt that people didn't wanna be managed. The more you manage them, the lower their productivity. You could manage them into mediocrity... I'm assuming that you want to do a good job, like if I'm a principal, I'm looking at you as the teacher, I see that you look like you're burned out and your kids are doing horribly. I'd say you'd probably started in this profession with an aspiration to help young people do well and something has happened, stuff happened. It's not working. My job then is to try to understand you, what motivates you, what makes you tick...Then if you start to figure out what makes a person tick, then you start to try to unpack what's happening that they're not bringing their skills and talents and their motivations to your organization, so that role of a teacher or for my kids, like, or whatever role they have. Is there something in the environment that gets in the way? Is there processes that are not good? Are there relationships with me, the boss or the peers, whatever? (123, P2)

In sum, humanists had a nurturing view towards human nature. Humanists revealed a common-sense understanding that it was more effective to nurture and support people than punish or discipline them, and much of this understanding came from their own personal experiences. This perception of motivation played out in their distaste for the punitive aspects of accountability law and the ‘shame and blame’ era of NCLB and also shaped their preference for ‘positive consequences’ in accountability.

Views of justice

Conversations about justice were imbued with ideas about equity. However, participants’ view of equity tended to center on the public school system rather than any particular group of individuals. Many of the humanitarians expressed the virtues of the public education system and equated public systems with a civically engaged electorate. A former elementary school teacher and now a high-ranking state official in California expressed this point:

... we chip away, and in theory, part of the reason that I've been in education so long, and I think a lot of people are is, you know, we have hope that if we actually provide high-quality education for our students now, they become smarter, more holistic, for the good of the collective people, critical thinkers, people are able to read and comprehend, who understand evidence, base their arguments on fact...[chuckling] You know? Like, a civically prepared electorate, I mean, what – right? We need to get there. So, you know, it's one of those like we can't fix this until we have a majority of the population who understands what it means...(114, P1)

Others articulated the importance of public schools while also voicing concerns about how charter schools and other ‘privatization’ efforts were transforming the purpose of schooling and

undermining the democratic quality of education as a public good. A leader of school professionals in California made this argument by claiming that the privatization movement had made education a commodity rather than a public good:

Yeah, because everything is being commoditized. It's a commodity [education]. It's becoming a commodity rather than a public good. We've moved away from a civic-mindedness of education, and we're commoditizing anything that we paying taxes on. I mean just look at the way they've -- the way the opposition, which I came from a religious background so I call them the "spawn of Satan", but if you look at what they've done, they've commoditized everything that can be commoditized. So, you've seen the airlines as being deregulated, you've seen the -- just about everything that can be -- the army are guarded by -- our army bases are guarded by contract for hire security. Our prisons are for profit. Our prisons are run for profit so therefore we've created now a financial incentive to imprison our citizens, and consequently, we have the highest percentage imprisoned population in California in the entire -- of the entire developed world and of the United States. (132, P1)

An influential state representative in California clearly made the connection between public education and a functioning democracy as he described his fears of privatization:

Well, that's happened in other states. Essentially when they privatize -- Indiana is heading in that direction, Arizona is heading that direction, Tennessee is heading that direction. Right? So, these are all conservative places and I don't know the true goal of student performance as much as it is infusing society with certain people's value systems. The state has an obligation to its people to provide public education. That's necessary and essential for democracy to function. If we privatize it, it's no longer the role of the government or the state and it will falter. (140, P1)

A member from the business community in California explained how business leaders typically perceived public schools. He rationalized that the business community saw the school system as slow and unresponsive and it was the 'American way' to look to the market and privatization as the solution:

I mean that's kind of a, you know, a widely held belief that is partially earned and true, and it's partially a stereotype, it's not fair but nonetheless, that tends to be the general sense of the business community of education, that it's one of our many big, public, inefficient bureaucracies. And so then the next perception is, if that's true, what you need is to shake it up a little bit, so you shake it up in a number of ways. One is more accountability, have some goals, have some metrics, and the second is use carrots and sticks. We do tend to be in love with incentives and bonuses and all that sort of stuff. So some people in the business community say, 'Oh put some of that in there.' The third thing is we tend to, we tend to sort of have almost this religious like faith in competition. Like, 'free markets solve everything', right? So that's, the American way. Anything that's sort of less than free markets is you know, evil, or at least free markets will fix everything. (123, P2)

Nearly all of the humanitarians openly and passionately rejected any use of market-based reforms such as charter schools, vouchers, or turnaround strategies that upturned the management of school, arguing that such policy instruments merely privatized the public education system. A leader of a teacher's union in California became visibly upset while he made this point:

And your option isn't just to say "okay now this one number says you're failing so you're a failure so we gonna send it for everybody, you're a failure we'll label you as a failure and now we're gonna close you and turn you into a charter." That's not intervention that's just privatizing. And what do we see from the charters? They're not outperforming anything, any better than the schools in the communities where they are. There's some good charters but there are also some really good public schools. But as a whole, they're not over performing or under performing their traditional public schools. So if that's the case then, that's not an intervention that works. You're not improving the school there, so you've made this big dramatic move and you fired everybody and you labeled them a failure but what have you done for the students and improving student learning? You haven't done anything. (132, P1)

Often, humanitarians argued that charters and other market-based reforms took important resources away from traditional public schools, stratified the student population, and re-segregated schools. An outspoken school board member in Tennessee ardently made this point:

They talk about school choice, which is supposed to give parents greater control. But in reality, it doesn't. The school themselves have the choice of which students they want to serve, and whether they want to keep students. First of all, there's evidence that charter schools are re-segregating school populations. I've come to believe that they really aren't public schools in many aspects and they've argued in court that they are not, actually public schools. They are selective in various ways. They re-segregate the schools not only by race but sometimes by socioeconomic, by parental-engagement, which is problematic because when you have parents who are able to make a choice or who are willing or able to make a choice, their children tend to perform better in school, so to sometimes you will see a boost in test scores but it really has more to do with the student population that the charters are serving. But aside from the fact that their concerns that charter schools are re-segregating school districts, charter schools also are taking resources from the schools that serve our most vulnerable students. We've had two separate independent studies that were done here in Nashville that reached the same conclusion, which was that the growth of charter schools will, with nearly 100% certainty, have a negative fiscal impact on the district. (219, P1)

A representative of a teacher's association in Tennessee argued that market-based reforms were morally unjust and antithetical to achieving equity goals. He argues that market-based reforms often impacted low-income and minority communities—who tend to be politically disempowered—more often than they impacted middle or upper class communities.

I don't think it's a coincidence at all that communities of color are disproportionately targeted for things like state takeover, for things like voucher schemes, and things like that, and I do think that there are certainly some things to be said for fighting back against education reform movements. I hate to even use that term, but--privatization schemes may be more accurate--as a racial and classist issue. I know that--I think that would be an accurate statement to at least question the rationale or why you tend to see that, because I mean, we may be able to argue about describing motives as to why it's happening, but I don't know that anybody could argue if it's a fact that these communities are wildly disproportionately targeted for these types of interventions, and you don't see someone suggesting that we go in and take over a school full of white kids in the suburbs and turn it into a charter school, and you know, I mean I'm sure they would say, "That's because their test scores aren't bad," but what about rural communities? There are lots of rural communities that have heavily struggling, you know, low scores. I mean, the bottom five percent of Tennessee is confined exclusively to the major urban areas, but you look, say, at the six to ten percent, there's probably a dozen county systems in rural Tennessee that are hanging right there on the line. (220, P1)

Conversations about the topic of equity centered on the virtues of public schools and the importance of funding them, rather than focusing on any specific group (i.e. minority or poor students). Humanitarians defended the public school system as an institution integral to the strength of a democratic society and shunned the use of reforms like charters and vouchers that they argued privatized schools and turned education into a commodity with stratifying effects for students.

Overall summary

Supporters of the Professional and Local Control model of accountability largely perceived poverty as the main policy problem and thought that a welfare state deficit and a lack of adequate social services for poor communities caused poverty. Moreover, when thinking about low-performing schools, they pointed to a deficit of resources and capacity building within the school system, specifically, and were quick to call out the lack of resources necessary for school professionals to teach students living in poverty.

Despite this problem definition, there was a stark disconnect between the ways participants described the problem definition and how they thought about policy solutions. Many of the thinkers did not waiver in their critique of the lack of resources for schools, nor did they

pause to withhold criticism from the underfunded welfare state and lack of adequate social services for low-income communities. Yet these thinkers still reached towards accountability—arguably, a narrow policy instrument that lacked adequate funding to address the root causes of poverty in schools and low-income communities—to solve the perceived policy problem. This gap in their logic was notable. Nearly all participants focused on schools as the site of reform and sought to build up the capacity of school professionals rather than build capacity in low-income communities. Moreover, several of the thinkers pointed to federal funding provided by ESSA as a source of new revenue to fuel their policy ideas (i.e. technical assistance and capacity building for the profession), rather than target state legislatures and elites.

Many within this cluster were former school professionals who experienced first-hand the unintended consequences of NCLB. Many had seen how NCLB narrowed school curriculum and incentivized teachers to teach to the test. Despite these critiques, they still believed in the power of the accountability paradigm but wanted to create a ‘paradigm shift’ in the way people thought about accountability’s core ideas, such as data, monitoring, and consequences. They wanted more data and more measurement in order to have a more fine-grained understanding of the inner-workings of individual schools. They transformed the concept of consequences from a punitive connotation to a positive one, and argued for more capacity building and more technical assistance to support school professionals in low-performing schools. The PLC model of accountability moved the public eye away from monitoring and sanctioning individual teachers and schools for performance and shifted the target of accountability to district actors. They preferred that the state have more data and more metrics to target specific areas within schools for improvement even though participants’ ideas were murky about how improvement in targeted areas would occur.

PLC accountability thinkers wanted the state to play a limited and supportive role in school reform (rather than the ‘over-reaching’ and punitive role the state played under NCLB), and desired school professionals, families, school board members, district actors, and local community members to take control of monitoring and regulating school quality. They made the argument that parents, communities, and school districts knew better how to improve the conditions of schools, rather than an overly bureaucratic, compliance-driven state department. They also imagined that school professionals could hold themselves ‘internally accountable’ by regulating teachers from within the school environment with instruments like evaluations. The 19 participants were weary of too much ‘external accountability’ and external regulation; they preferred to buffer school professionals and individual schools from external regulation by advocating for districts to be the target of accountability models. Lastly, they introduced one new policy idea to improve low-performing schools that was outside of the bounds of the accountability paradigm, the community schools model.

The policy ideas in the LCP model were largely propped up by ‘humanitarian’ moral justifications to trust teachers and families. Many of the participants drew on their own personal experiences as teachers or other school professionals—rather than point to empirically tested studies or quantitative trends—to justify the good will of teachers towards students and to justify policy ideas that allocated more resources and autonomy to school professionals. Several also reflected on their personal experiences growing up with active parent engagement or described experiences engaging with their own child’s school to justify the rationale for local control. Interestingly, across the board this cluster of thinkers lacked a strong and coherent moral

narrative towards minorities or low-income students. While many of the participants would express that they wanted to improve schools in the interest of minorities and low-income students, the student population was not at the core of their moral narrative. Instead, protecting the public school system—while also protecting and supporting the teaching profession—was at the core of their moral ideas.

Chapter 5, Section B

State Control Accountability Model

This section describes the thinking of 26 participants, 22 from California and 4 from Tennessee. Many of the influential thinkers within this cluster were grassroots organizers or leaders of multi-issue civil rights and advocacy organizations. There were a few journalists and academics as well as a few representatives of state institutions. About a quarter of the participants had spent time as classroom teachers or served in schools in another capacity. Many were seasoned veterans of state politics and had engaged with education policy for several years, and in some cases, several decades.

This policy cluster approached the accountability paradigm with the state front and center in their minds. They believed in the power of the state to rectify systemic deficiencies and believed that with the right design the state could create the conditions for the achievement gap to close. The participants identified here relied heavily on the main components of the accountability paradigm such as data, testing, and consequences but framed the policy solutions in terms of how the state could use those policy instruments to initiate change. Thus, they envisioned a *State Control Accountability* model and desired to build an accountability system where the state could clearly monitor, regulate, and intervene in schools and local districts.

The moral narrative of this cluster was *structuralist*, meaning that the participants viewed public schools as part of a larger interconnected system between districts, state departments, governing bodies like the legislature, and legal structures such as the state constitution. They had faith in the regulatory powers of the state and were weary of the ‘dangers of localism’ that would evolve in local communities in the absence of a collective body of governance (the state or federal government). Some were more distrustful of human nature than others, but the general thrust was that narrow-mindedness, bias, and discrimination would take root in local politics if the state did not regulate and monitor local behavior. They also revealed a deep belief in redistribution for low-performing schools and low-income communities, but when pressed to describe a plan to garner more resources for the schools, they often blamed a gridlocked political system for inadequate redistributive policies.

How is the policy problem defined?

To the State Control Accountability thinkers, the policy problem was focused on the academic achievement gap that existed between poor and minority students, on one hand, and wealthier, White and Asian students, on the other hand. As noted by a prominent academic in the California accountability debate, he was concerned about California’s low state ranking on NAEP and the persistent equity issues associated with the achievement gap:

Well, I think that certainly in California, our academic performance is very bad. So when you look at California's performance on NAEP relative to other states, we're always near the bottom, and that is even after adjusting for the demographics of our students. We're usually somewhere in the 40's out of 50 in state rankings. So that's clearly a problem, I think...And I guess the last thing I would say as an addition to low overall levels of performance, California, just like every other state has achievement and attainment gaps between crudely White and Asian or high SES folks on the one hand, and Black and Latino folks, that are English Language Learners on the other hand. And those problems are not specific to California. I don't actually even know whether the achievement gaps are relatively large or small in California as compared to other states. But certainly I think that everyone would say that we can do better. (124, P4)

But to these participants, the definition of the policy problem extended beyond mere achievement. There was an important nuance to the policy problem that State Control Accountability thinkers expressed: they thought that there was a *broken system* that existed between schools, districts, and the state that was associated with the achievement gap. They frequently mentioned that schools—especially those at the low-end of academic performance—did not have sufficient resources to facilitate improvement and that the system was skewed to benefit wealthy communities and disadvantage poor ones. They were also very concerned about the lack of capacity building for school professionals in schools where the system was most broken. For example, when asked to describe the policy problem facing schools in California, a leader of a community-based advocacy group in California was quick to first name the challenge of school resources:

Well, the number one challenge is that they're under resourced. We have among the lowest per pupil spending in the country. When you take into account the cost of living out here, it costs more to get adults in our schools, and couple that with our low per pupil expenditures, we have the worst adult-student ratios in the nation, in terms of teachers-to-kids, counselors, administrators, social workers, etc. There's not enough adults in the system to deliver a good product everywhere like there should be. I sit on the school board, and there's not enough people in the administration to run the place effectively, to communicate with the community, to do the engagement that you want to do. (116, P4)

He then immediately followed up with the problem of capacity building for school professionals. He named teacher preparation, teacher credentialing, teacher pay, and professional development as key systemic issues that the state needed to better manage. Here is an excerpt from his conversation with text underlined to emphasize the broken systems argument:

I think we can do a better job with our teacher quality. I mean I think that's the other thing, that just fixing and having a good accountability system by itself isn't going to fix. The supply of fully prepared or effective teachers is going down. The state is not doing a good job of managing that. The credential programs are having fewer and fewer people go through them and graduate. We got a shortage that's just coming on and getting worse. It's related to the pay. We don't pay and support people. It's a low paying job with not enough resources to support you and everyone wants to blame the teacher. So it's not a great attractive profession. So it's related to some of these others. But once we get people in there, we need to do a better job of supporting them, improving them, providing the mentoring and assistance and having effective evaluation systems that manage the people in a way that improves--Those who've been improving gets rid of those who can't or won't. (116, P4)

Throughout responses to the question regarding the policy problem, participants in this cluster interwove a structural argument into their definitions of the policy problem directly related to the deficits of the education system (not the broader welfare state). Here are a few examples of other participants who described the policy problem with system deficit language (underline added for emphasis):

So the real work of education is figuring out how we build capacity among everyone in our system to get better and to learn and improve and it's really hard work and we've not figured it out. For years, you know professional development was, we're gonna bring in some experts to come lecture to you, you spend the half hour listening to them and then go back and we're expecting your pedagogy to change. That's ridiculous, right? So it's not—it's not about the old sit and get kind of PD but it's how we work with someone, how we build professional learning communities, how we build these systems which are actually regularly give feedback and give ability to improve and improve the craft. It's hard but that's what we have to do. (112, P4)

I've worked in the area of what we should do for English learners for numerous years, and I'm very concerned about the lack of strategies that are fully implemented into the schools to work with English learners, particularly long-term English learners. I think the secondary high-school level English-learner population is overall neglected, because we have a system in education of-- you go to six or seven periods during the day. If you set aside an English language development class, there's some stigma to that.

Teachers at the secondary level may not have the expertise to work with English learners. They're a math teacher, that's what they know best. (113, P3)

First of all, for low-performing schools, I think, it's not a matter of funding because the funding is provided by the states or in this case, the local control funding formula. But I think that there has to be more oversight on how those funds are being allocated to ensure that the systems that the school districts have in place, if they're not working, they have to make sure that they can work to make them operational for the students. (108, P4)

As shown, State Control Accountability thinkers were certainly focused on the problem of the achievement gap as it applied to low-income and minority students, but their problem definition was also saturated with an 'education system deficit' argument. When talking about the policy problem, several participants pointed to areas where the state and education system were insufficient to meet the needs of low-performing schools.

What causes the policy problem?

When asked to define how the policy problem was caused, through the eyes of State Control Accountability thinkers, a common theme was to name social causes. Several pointed to 'zip code issues', poverty, segregation, and cultural deficits that attributed to students being 'behind' by the time they entered the K-12 system. Here are a few examples:

Well, I mean if you look at the research, the vast majority of it is outside school factors. Schools have an important role to play. I think it's 30% of the variants or something. I don't know the exact number but in terms of when people have looked at this. So good schools can make a difference and a bad school will really set you further behind. But we have a segregated society. We ration big schools by zip code and wealth. When you go to a school with a lot of other well-off kids who come from two-parent families and two incomes, you have students who are easier to teach and you have more community resources to support the learning. When everyone's low-income, it puts a lot more stress on the system. It's a lot harder to succeed. We've got to deal with the income equality and sort of segregation of our society by income and our schools by income. (116, P4)

Yes, you know the achievement gap, you kind of have achievement gaps before kids get to school. So you can't blame achievement gaps on schools. It clearly exists in the broader society, in housing policy, in residential segregation, the inter-generational transmission of inequality. All the usual stories actually. I would say, personally, I would say those are reflected in schools. (117, P4)

I guess we start with the student, right? And kids come to us having different levels of experience. And so, if a student comes from a family that understands the system, that understands the hoops we have to jump through, the parents get it. They'll understand some of the pre-formational things that need to happen, in the preschool years to get their child ready for school and how to keep them moving forward in the system. Those kids will have better success, and when you have groups of students who come from-- with less resources that you know, lower income that are coming from an immigrant background, whose families might not have the experience, some of that, they're bringing it with them, and so, they might not come with all the advantages that some of our other students are coming with. And so, even when you start at pre-K or kinder, you're going to start seeing that gap just because of life experiences based on resources, based on parent education, parent experience, all those different types of things. (127, P3)

A second theme arose around the cause of the policy problem being directly related to the systemic deficits of the education system. Again, several participants pointed to the issue of unequal or inadequate school funding and discrepancies between teacher quality and development of professional capacity. Teacher salaries, employee contracts, teacher turnover rates, and the inadequate supply of prepared and effective teachers were just some of the issues inherent in the education system that contributed to the policy problem. Importantly, the state

continued to be interwoven throughout their descriptions of the causes of the policy problem. Here are a few examples of the education system deficit rationale, with the state argument underlined for emphasis:

When you get to the narrower lens of education policy. Um, if I was going to, you know-- those are employee contracts, our compensations systems tend to allow the best teachers and principals to move out of those schools or in some cases... drive them out. So we have this churning in those schools, and it is pretty clear to me now that to be successful, the high performing schools have some stability and some strong leadership, and so we have got to end the churning in those schools. We don't have a state policy to do that. (100, P4)

Lack of resources. A shocking lack of administrative capacity. Overwhelmed teachers. A generation of teachers who were trained to teach for the test, and trained to sort of deliver scripted curriculums. Yes I think that is it. You could put a lot of footnotes under that but that is basically it. We [the state] are asking the schools to make big changes and they are simply not equipped or ready to make the kinds of changes we are now expecting them to make. (117, P4)

In sum, State Control Accountability thinkers often gave two answers when they discussed the causes of the policy problem. They acknowledged social causes such as poverty and segregation that attributed to the achievement gap. But they added to this an education system deficit argument and attributed the policy problem to a systemic lack of resources for schools, underprepared teachers, teacher turnover, and other factors that attributed to a lack of adequate professional capacity.

Making sense of the demise of NCLB

While the thinkers in this cluster recognized that NCLB's design was imperfect, they generally embraced the policy. They especially liked the federal requirements for all states to focus on data and disaggregation of student data. Several mentioned that the former law focused on minority and low-income students in the school system who were invisible in policy discussions prior to the NCLB era. A representative of an influential advocacy organization in California made this point and emphasized the importance NCLB had for student equity:

...what I would say is that No Child Left Behind wasn't a perfect law, and there were a lot of things we were learning from, but there were a lot of really important things that it did. It required that we disaggregate data by subgroup, and tied identification of schools, and assistance, and intervention for those schools to the performance of individual groups of students. That meant that students of color, English learners, special education students couldn't be invisible in the system, and we had to finally acknowledge that there are schools that on the surface are good schools in California, but that under the surface have big achievement gaps, and that wasn't something that was really part of the conversation before No Child Left Behind. For that reason alone, it was really important, and I'd say effective law. (105, P4)

There was also a general appreciation of the technical aspects of the policy design. A few mentioned that they liked the testing and assessments that came out of NCLB. For example, an academic in California was quick to admit that the testing of NCLB was far from perfect but he thought there were some positive aspects of data use, testing, and quantification that were a step forward in the realm of education policy:

Okay I think No Child Left Behind was a success in a couple of ways...it led to improvements in the technology of assessment because we raised the stakes because we sort of placed this tremendous emphasis on testing. People got better at testing. They started thinking about testing issues, they started designing better tests. They started critiquing the tests that we had, and saying these are okay for certain purposes but

not okay for others. I think that it really brought testing and assessment into the centre of the policy conversation, in ways that ultimately led to NCLB's demise, but in fact that was a step forward. (117, P4)

While the participants supported data use and testing, according to some, one of the biggest drawbacks of the former law was that it simply was not implemented well by states. Importantly, several thinkers defended the federal government's role in designing policy for the nation's schools, but they thought the design failed to account for adequate resources and capacity building at the state level. In this sense, they thought the federal government failed at being the master 'architect'; they thought the federal government should have been more prescriptive with the states and should have helped with capacity building. Here are a few examples from participants who made this point:

...No Child Left Behind was a major advance in this idea of accountability. It left the states with a tremendous amount of flexibility that by and large, they didn't use well. They didn't use it well because neither the federal government nor the states had the capacity to do a good job of implementation. And that ranged to everything from technical stuff like states and districts lacking the capacity to develop state-of-the-art assessments to broader issues like disseminating clear evidence about effective whole school turn-around strategies. And failing to create and refresh continuous improvement on things like whole school improvement or school discipline practices or any of 2,462 different things. Failing to do that, but of course we didn't get the results that we wanted. We were left with a lot of impositions and constraints but without the pay off. (139, P4)

And then there were failures with the implementation of the [financial and technical] assistance. The state, however, designed the assistance...So, I think it's convenient now that California leaders are saying that NCLB failed when it came to assistance when, in fact, they were the ones on the hook for implementing it. So, I'd say that it gave us plenty of things to learn from, and things to hold on to. And I think that's where we are in California right now is that with the system that we're designing we are really focusing on issues of equity and subgroup performance. I think that's something that we've learned that's been really important from the last two decades of accountability... that we're also learning to get smarter, and more nuanced about how we identify schools for assistance and provide that assistance. (105, P4)

So, lots of people blame the Federal government for too much testing, when the reality is that No Child Left Behind didn't make that many demands for testing. It was decisions made by states and districts that made the whole thing explode. But they blamed the Feds for it. So that's a misattribution of who is responsible for the mess that you don't like. (139, P4)

Another drawback participants identified was the sanctions piece of NCLB. While they liked the concept of consequences, several mentioned that the sanctions were too simplistic and misjudged how to motivate school professionals to improve their practice. A prominent leader in California gave his take on sanctions, noting that the design of NCLB consequences 'misunderstood' the complexity of school environments:

I think it was horrible. I think it was just wrong and I – the main thing is I think that – and this happens all the time in policymaking--is politicians and elected officials, in particular, is the notion that there's a single – we're gonna find a simple answer when we do this. I mean inherent in the sanctions piece in the NCLB was this belief that schools could do well. They were just choosing not to do well by kids and if they were embarrassed and sanctioned, they would do well by kids. That fundamentally misunderstands what's going on, so it wasn't gonna get you the results you want. What actually has to happen is much harder, much more difficult and much more time consuming and something that is not simple. (112, P4)

To many of the participants, consequences needed to include more support and resources and needed to be tailored to the individualized needs of schools. A representative of a state institution in California said it best:

I don't think it [sanctions] was effective because there are so many other variables on why low performing schools were struggling. Like for example, if we look at the test scores perhaps the way that the test was created, it was not reflective on the populations that they were testing or perhaps it was the administration that had nothing to do with the policies of No Child Left Behind. So, there's so many variables that is really hard to sanction. I think in my opinion, a better way is to try to have some sort of state or federal intervention to try to assess the situation and then provide support, not to be punitive but more so, supportive. (108, P4)

In sum, State Control Accountability thinkers generally liked the design of NCLB. They appreciated the federal government's role in designing a national education policy with the power to uncover student inequities that were largely overlooked prior to NCLB. They also liked the former law's focus on data and the technical advances made with testing. When they considered the shortcomings of NCLB, they tended to point to the problems of state implementation rather than the problem of the initial design. They did admit, however, that the sanctions design was too simplistic and they desired more support and resources to be allocated to low-performing schools.

How do they try to solve the policy problem?

More data

Generally, State Control accountability thinkers were on board with collecting more data from schools and districts than was collected during the NCLB era. To them, moving away from the narrow focus on student test scores alone and broadening the accountability system to multiple measures provided nuanced information that the state could use to intervene in low-performing schools. An influential academic in the California accountability debate put it this way:

And if we design a system, an accountability system, where all that matters is math and reading test scores, which some people kept sort of bringing back into the picture, because those were the easy things to measure and those were the data we already have, then we wouldn't see any change. So I would much rather see a really wide array of measures, a really innovative and different system... (124, P4)

Importantly, the thinkers identified in this cluster deeply believed in the power of data to be a motivator to open discussions about performance across racial and class lines. A seasoned political activist in California argued that conversations about educational equity could become clearer and more focused with the use of data and information:

So, there are lots of forms of accountability obviously and the most popular has become information. And again, from the 70s, from the early 70s in the public policy arena, information has been viewed as a kind of a regulatory tool. Information that would then lead to changes in consumer behavior, changes in market dynamics, changes in political dynamics. And that particular theory has certainly been the most successful part of No Child Left Behind. And I think the disaggregation of data really transformed the discussion about education equity. So the problem I think has not been with the information, the problem has been with how it is or isn't used. (139, P4)

Influential thinkers in the State Control accountability cluster also wanted the state to use the multiple measures design to target more nuanced resources and professional development to schools that needed improvement in certain areas like school climate, or attendance and graduation rates. Note how the following excerpts make the case that multiple measures will help the *state* target better resources to schools:

We [the state of California] have a system that's going to give us detailed data. We'll know that this school is struggling with academic achievement for English learners, or this school is struggling with the school climate issues particular for African American students. We can identify more discretely what's happening in schools and provide more targeted assistance. (103, P4)

I think that the state can find this information very valuable. So like you said, if one metric is more alarming than the others then it gives the state the ability to intervene and provide assistance in that area. So, let's say that they're struggling with school climate where the students don't feel that let's say the teachers or administrators are really helping them. I mean, we've had situations where students don't feel welcomed by their teachers. So there's more than the student is not learning. Perhaps, there's personnel issues or other things. So, if that's the case then the state can say, "Okay, look, would you guys have to fix your administration or try to give the teachers training on how to better -- try to work with the students?" And it's not really so much the students or how they're doing it in the school or maybe if it's the curriculum, the state can provide assistance on updating their curriculum or helping them, just improve, in general. (108, P4)

While all of the participants identified in this policy model supported the idea to collect multiple measures of school performance, some wanted to have one single composite measure of overall performance based on academic achievement in addition to the multiple measures. To them, it was important for the state to have a clear idea of what schools were failing students academically and they did not want to lose sight of that focus. They also argued that parents ought to have a clear, single rating to make informed decisions about schools. Here are a few examples from participants who make these points:

I mean, institutionally, we think that ultimately academic outcomes are the most important...I think that there are other elements that are important but ultimately the academic outcomes are most important...And we're willing to look at these other students - ultimately, we want to look at student outcomes. We don't care very much about inputs. That's not - in terms of when it comes to accountability, it's really about what's happening with the students. We think academics are critically important and probably most important in terms of the responsibility of schools.... (109, P4)

Given the direction that the board adopted this year, I want, as a citizen, as a parent, you know, as a future public school parent. I want a simple rating, even if it's based off of all of these like dense measurements, it can be a grade, it can be a single color, it can be a number, but I actually want a summative – is that right? Summative? Summative calculation for where the school stands compared, you know and do it for all schools. So, I know that API is maligned for being crude, but I think, it's just from a user point of view where you've had that and I want it going forward. (110, P4)

Consequences

For those who preferred to have one single composite measure of school performance in addition to multiple indicators, they also preferred that the state enforced more strict and punitive consequences for schools that had low overall performance. The logic followed that if the state did not 'hold the line' with schools and put strict consequences in place, then schools would not respond with the 'sense of urgency' that was necessary to close the achievement gap. A representative of a state institution in Tennessee gave her opinion on the use of the Achievement School District as a 'course of last resort' that was needed to create urgency amongst low-performing schools:

We believe the ASD is the course of last resort. We're going to try to give the LEA all the opportunities, multiple opportunities to demonstrate that they can take on the improvement of these schools and show the dramatic improvement before the state would make a move. But in the absence of the local education agency doing the right thing and seeing improvement for schools, then I do think that there is a place for the state to intervene. We are the last line if you think about the federal government having a Civil Rights

focus in terms of federal education law. At a state level in Tennessee, we've moved from being just compliance oriented to really also thinking of ourselves as, "Hey, we're not going to just let certain communities fall further and further behind in terms of the way they're serving their needs of the kids," I think that's appropriate. (204, P4)

But not everyone wanted the state to take a strict approach to consequences. After seeing the drawbacks of NCLB, another faction wanted the state to assign supportive consequences to schools rather than punitive ones. They wanted to move away from the sanctions-based consequences that were part of NCLB and were willing to experiment with 'positive' consequences in the form of more resources and capacity building. Here is a representative from a nonprofit advocacy organization in California who said it best:

I think districts need to feel some pressure, that someone's looking at them, and that things that they don't want could happen if they don't do their job. I think No Child Left Behind went overboard. And as I said, it was too punitive and too narrow on what it was. So the idea of a support system instead of a punitive system is a good one. And the idea of having districts focus on multiple measures instead of just a few narrow academic ones, I also think it's a good one. But yeah, you know what I mean? I'm okay with the first reaction not being 'reconstitute the school or the district' or whatever. Along the spectrum of things, there are going to be some schools and districts in really bad shape that's going to be obvious pretty quickly. And there should be external mechanisms to bring those schools to do something there to fix those schools and districts. (116, P4)

Pressures

For those that did not want the state to enforce punitive consequences, they also believed in the power of parent engagement as another source of pressure for school improvement at the local level, whereas those that wanted punitive consequences did not believe that all parents could engage in school improvement efforts. Those who supported 'positive' consequences in the State Control accountability believed that parents had a role to play in engaging in their child's education and improving the condition of local schools. They also thought that the state could help parents better engage in the school improvement process:

So another issue, I would say, would be just the administration, just kind of assessing how they're implementing their programs in the district and ensuring that there's parent engagement or as well as community engagement because it's important for the parents and the community in general to be involved. If they feel that the school is struggling as low- performing, how can they get involved to make sure that there's change? (108, P4)

Targets

When it came to determining who would be held accountable for school performance, it was unclear who this set of thinkers believed should be held accountable. Some simply argued that accountability needed to be integrated throughout the education system, starting with the student and working up towards teachers, school administrators, and district leaders. Others emphasized that all adults throughout the education system needed to be held accountable. Here are a few examples:

I mean I think that in general, as sort of a general statement, I think that there needs to be accountability among all actors. As an example, I think that there needs to be some level of student accountability. Student accountability these days in most places is just grades and that's not a real strong form of accountability. I'm not a big fan of like high-stakes exit exams, but I do think that students needs to be accountable for their learning. I think that teachers need to be accountable as well. I mean if you're not performing, if you are not contributing to a positive school climate, I think that you need to be accountable for that. I think that

schools need to be accountable. Schools are receiving large sums of taxpayer dollars and year after year are not delivering. Meaning the kids are not learning in the school. I think that schools need to be held accountable and administrators. So I mean I think that it's a wrong idea to think that we could target accountability to like one level of the system and that that would really change outcomes. What we need is a much more systemic approach to accountability that recognizes that everyone should be accountable for their performance and that that's likely to be the best way to see sustained improvement. (124, P4)

So, I think from my perspective, it's all of the adults that make the decisions, need to be held accountable for student outcomes. Because ultimately, the students have -- well if you think about, they have the most direct accountability. They don't know it. It's delayed. But it will all catch up with them when they become adults, right? And so, I often say that I feel like the responsibility lies on all the adults in the system who make the decisions because the children don't get to make the decisions... They are completely depending on us to help them to become educated well enough to be able to sustain themselves economically and independently once they leave us after 12th grade. So given that, given how much risk and how little influence that the children have, then you have to really focus on the adults who are the only ones who get to make the choices. And even the influence of those parents, as I said, children don't get to choose their parents. So, for us, the adults in the system, we have to operate in a frame of, 'we are protecting all the students that are in our care' ... We have to be the advocates for children, which means that we have to hold ourselves accountable for the results of all children. (204, P4)

Resources

Additional resources were also at the forefront of their minds when discussing policy solutions. However, while several pointed to the problem of inadequate school resources and also mentioned more resources were part of the policy solution, nobody had a plan for garnering new funding for public schools from the state legislature in either state. An academic in California recognized the need for more resources but then nodded at the political system as the main impediment to garnering more resources for schools:

It's hard to get good on a light diet, you know. If you're trying to do weight training, you probably want to bulk up like, you're doing it, you know. California's persistently a bottom feeder financially, and it's very, very difficult to get that idea across politically because we -- it's a big state. (122, P4)

Within discussions of support for new resources, there was an important caveat that the state must ensure transparency and accountability for additional funding to local districts. In the California context, several thinkers in this cluster were disappointed that the state's new LCFF funding was being used in ways not originally intended by state law (in some cases resources were being spent on teacher salaries and pensions rather than the students the law intended to serve). A representative of a state-level institution in California gave her take on how districts were using new state funds on teachers rather than students, and advocated for more state oversight and transparency:

So I think that the public has the right to ensure that the revenue of the school districts are receiving are being intended or are being used for what they're supposed to. Because I can tell you that I've actually received a call from a board member from Apple Valley [a pseudonym] that was complaining to us on how she voted to reject her LCAP because the funds that they got from the state were being utilized for teacher salaries which, don't get me wrong, I think it's great that teachers should get compensated and they should get their salary increases. However, the funding is supposed to go to high-need students to lower-income, foster youth and just people that are struggling. So throughout the state, we have people complaining, and at the local level, some of them are effectively addressing those issues and others are not and I think that because the state, their role is to provide the guidance to the school districts on how to use the funds and ensure that we're closing the achievement gaps. I think that we have to be there to provide that oversight and transparency. (108, P4)

Stepping outside the bounds of the accountability paradigm?

Other policy solutions offered by the participants were centered on capacity building for school professionals. As previously mentioned, the participants thought the policy problem and the causes of the problem were associated with the deficits of the education system; therefore, they desired the state to create more incentives to recruit and keep teachers in low-performing schools, improve leadership, and improve professional development. However, these ideas were merely mentioned in passing and nobody articulated firm plans for pressing for policy change. Here are just a few example excerpts:

Yes we need some state intervention to create incentives to support quality people staying in those [low-performing] schools. So I am not convinced that just adding more people to the mix, or more programs to the mix is productive. If anything it simply becomes distracting. They have all these programs and it just becomes a cacophony of all these initiatives and that is really hard to sort out. So, by reading up, and I'm sort of a closet researcher and mostly it is just talking to lots of people over the years, I really think the key is...strong, stable leadership in those schools. (100, P4 L1)

Whether it is about resources or - and I don't just mean financial resources. I mean, about human capital, you know? It's about really making sure that the resources - the human and material resources that each individual student needs gets to them. Schools and districts don't have a lot of room to be able to do that. Then there's in terms of making sure that the people and the professionals in charge have the skills to be able to make those decisions as well. I think we have a pretty serious issue in terms of not just preparation of school leaders and educators in general but just that pipeline overall in terms of making sure that you've got the right skill set because it's changed so much over 40 years that the responsibility and skill set of the school leaders are so different. (116, P4)

The other one is one that's actually been a personal and organizational priority is around equitable access to effective teachers. We're not doing a good job with it. I think there's a lot of discussion around it. And this is something like I have said publicly to the department. And we have really strong, close relationship with them. There's a lot of reports, there's a lot of like, "Here's what were trying to do." There's very little appetite for actually taking significant-- immediate, right, I'll use that term, immediate. So there's some long term rules actually toward kind of the equitable access component, whether that's the teacher prep side of things and that's when we have been involved, but not at the forefront. (200, P4)

When asked about market-based reforms, such as charters and vouchers, the participants were not completely averse to the policy ideas, but they did not outright endorse them either. They were concerned that policy ideas like charters and vouchers made it difficult for the state to regulate in an alternative institutional environment. Once students entered a 'quasi-market' environment, the state had little ability to monitor or control what happened inside the institutional space. A representative of a state institution in Tennessee struggled to justify how market-based reforms could be acceptable with the right government oversight:

There's still public oversight, a public charter still come under the government structures and auspices and the accountability of public schools. It's unchartered territory in terms of what happens when you get these private vouchers, like are they within the same accountability framework? They certainly won't have the same governance and oversight and then again, are you just creating more, wider, equity gaps...(204, P4)

Another participant in this cluster from Tennessee happened to be a vocal advocate of charters and vouchers. However, he talked about his acceptance of these reform ideas with the state at the center of his thinking; he argued that market-based reforms were acceptable if the state could still regulate private school environments with standards and testing:

I think then it just goes to -- and again, it's the state's responsibility. So again, that's why I've talked about like if you're concerned with that, because the state is tasked with providing that public education, whether that's within a private school environment or a charter school or a magnet school or a district run school, then it's the state's responsibility to set up a framework or participate in schools... It's like not every single private school would be able to participate. You're going to have to have high standards, right? ... You're going to have to do annual assessment of students so that we can actually track their progress, right? (200, P4)

Beyond ideas for policy reforms, State Control Accountability thinkers consistently mentioned the important role the state had in 'fixing' low-performing schools. A lawyer and education advocate in California gave his common-sense understanding of the contractual and constitutional responsibility the state had to improve low-performing schools:

Yeah. I come at this in part as a lawyer. I guess I'm many things, but in part I am a lawyer and from a legal perspective it's all about the states. Because everything that happens within the state is a matter of state responsibility in the formal sense. It is state laws and constitutions that create local jurisdictions. Whether it is a mosquito control district, or a municipality, or a school district. They are creatures of the state from a legal perspective. And if the problem is school district lines, it's the state that sets up the framework for deciding what school district lines are going to look like and where they are going to be drawn. It's not up to LA Unified, it's a state problem. Revenue structures are state problems. The terms of collective bargaining agreements and what's covered, what can be bargained and what cannot be bargained, is a state issue. Disparities and resources and funding across districts, it's a state problem. Licensing of teacher preparation programs, it's a little bit of a federal problem but mostly it is a state issue. (139, P4)

While many participants agreed with this sentiment, several also mentioned ideas about how to redefine the role of the state. Especially in California, State Control Accountability thinkers recognized that in the past, the state had become too bureaucratic and compliance-driven and they wanted to move away from that reputation and stigma. However, they struggled with how to re-conceptualize a role for the state as a 'system designer'. There were numerous instances where participants in this group mentioned ideas to reform the state or they talked about how they imagined themselves personally to be 'designers' of a system; here are just a few examples:

Well the 'bureaucratic' that we are trying to get away from, I can now understand why everybody is recoiling from it. I mean the old categorical programs [in California], it was just really easy to fall into that sort of bureaucratic approach to stuff. I think NCLB has the same flaws. So you know...check the boxes. So I've been around the block a few times and depending on if it was going back or forth, I understand why everybody was really up with them, and rightly so. But there still is a state role in all of that, what we are doing today is not the bureaucratic check the boxes. (100, P4, L1)

So how do we create that context? I think that's the piece that we're trying to figure out because we can't ... policy and budget, which is where I play, is a blunt instrument. You can't really get into the human element of the relationship piece but you can resource it. You can kind of create a structure that helps assert some type of vision...(100, P4)

...there's a whole lot of folks who are from an old guard, even some folks from the newer generation but especially the old guard who are like, "We can't trust those locals at all. We need to tell them exactly what to do and we need to come in and compliance-orient them into success." I just don't think that model works. It probably won't work at all. (103, P4, L1)

I think about it like it is design theory; I'm going to geek out because it resonates. Bounded creativity, what are the design principles that you're trying to accomplish? That goes to the values. What are the design parameters? You've got to butt up against these boundaries. In the policy environment, there are real boundaries. There are ... this is the ... let's say we're doing regs. This is the statutory construct we are responding to, I can't go outside of the statute. Statute is about interpretation. Let's take these words and that's kind of one bound of the system. We know what our values are. Not only do we know what our

values are, we know what we think is the right ultimate outcome to support student success. It's both vision and values. You have the statutory construct that's a design constraint then you have the political context and where power sits. What's CTA going to think about this, what does the school boards, what does ACSA, what is the governor going to think about this? Then that's your pressure cooker. Then you look at what tactics you have, what are things that you can bring to bear to try and shift the bounds a little bit or work within that frame. (103, P4)

I came to this, having been something of a student of regulation and regulatory reform in a more academic sense, both because of my teaching and just things that I had done in and around various areas of public policy... and so I always conceptualized this as a regulatory problem of how do you set up the right structure for establishing goals and incentives and measuring effectiveness and creating feedback loops and things of that sort...(139, P4)

In sum, State Control Accountability thinkers agreed on most policy solutions such as data use and testing, the expansion of metrics to gauge school performance, garnering more resources, and building the capacity of school professionals. But there was a key disagreement about the state's systemic role that divided them into two camps. One faction imagined the state as a '*multiple systemic actor*' that could work with parents to monitor and put external pressure on schools. They also wanted the state to assign 'positive consequences' in the form of more resources and capacity building to low-performing schools rather than assign sanctions. Interestingly, although not stated explicitly in the findings, those who supported the state as a 'multiple systemic actor' tended to draw on literature from academics like Linda Darling-Hammond, Michael Fullan, and Andy Hargreaves to inform their thinking. They also noted that they shared policy ideas between social networks with similar ways of thinking about the state and parent engagement, and many acknowledge that they networked with the thinkers that supported the Professional and Local Control accountability model.

The other faction saw the state as a '*single systemic actor*' that was the sole institution that could pressure schools. They wanted the state to assign more punitive consequences to the lowest-performing schools that did not improve over time in order to motivate those schools to feel a 'sense of urgency' to close the achievement gap. Again, knowledge sources were not revealed in the dialogue presented above, but participants shared in passing that they tended to get information for new ideas from their social networks.

Despite these differences, across the board, the 26 participants agreed that more resources were necessary to build capacity in schools and to provide school professionals with technical assistance. However, aside from new federal ESSA funding, nobody had a plan for garnering more resources from state legislatures.

When thinking outside of the accountability paradigm, many participants within this cluster were weary about market-based reforms such as charters and vouchers because they found it more difficult for the state to regulate in a marketplace environment. They were more likely to support other policy ideas that built up the inputs and capacity of the teaching profession, such as better credentialing programs, fixing the teacher shortage, and addressing teacher preparation, even though none proposed a realistic plan for addressing such inputs. Lastly, State Control Accountability thinkers saw themselves as 'architects' or 'designers' of a state system, and they talked about re-conceptualizing the role of the state. However, they did not have any concrete ideas about how the state could move away from the stigma of compliance and regulation.

What is the underlying moral narrative?

Participants who thought about accountability from a State Control perspective tended to have a 'structuralist' moral narrative. They were most clearly identified by their distrustful outlook towards human nature and their views towards redistribution. Several were light on addressing views about 'others' and group relationships, meaning that not many participants within this cluster were very forthright in their efforts to discuss the relationship between race, class, and power issues in U.S. society. Often, the structuralists would mention race and class issues but would not delve into the historic relationship of race and class in U.S. society or the ways that institutions and laws over time had excluded minorities, especially, from opportunities for economic advancement. There were a few exceptions, and some participants were more willing than others to weave arguments about race and discrimination throughout their moral narratives.

At the core of their moral narrative, structuralists held distrustful views of human nature, and thought that a collective governing body (the state) was necessary to protect students from narrow-mindedness, bias, segregation, and discrimination that were inherent in local politics. They strongly distrusted local control and commonly referred to the 'dangers of localism' that would ensue without the state as a 'backstop' to protect against discriminatory practices. There were slight differences between thinkers on the topic of motivation and parent engagement (which mapped on to the differing perspectives on the state as a single or multiple systemic actor). Some thought parents were capable of engaging in school improvement and thought that local actors should be motivated using 'positive consequences' such as more capacity building and technical assistance. Others disagreed and thought that all parents were incapable of engaging in school improvement and preferred to use more punitive, negative consequences to motivate changes to human behavior.

Despite these differences, all structuralists were on board with the idea of more redistributive policies for low-performing schools. However, no participant had a plan for allocating more resources from the state or the economic elites. Instead, many blamed the political system and class difference for the inability to garner more resources for schools.

View of human nature

Throughout interviews with structuralist thinkers, there was overwhelming distrust of local school boards, local politics, and districts (referred to as local control). Structuralists across-the-board were very concerned that biases and discrimination would likely take root in local communities if the state did not monitor and intervene in local decision-making. There was a core belief that structured the way this cluster of participants thought about local control, which is a belief in an association between human nature and discrimination. A lawyer in California argued this point clearly, noting that people are 'hardwired' to distrust others based on racial or ethnic difference, which was one of the reasons that locals could not be left to their own devices without state oversight:

And I also think that we're hardwired as human beings to have a certain amount of mistrust for-- based on difference. Even fear based on difference. It's like it's really wired. It's like you're from that cave on the other side of the hill. "I can't trust you, you're not part of my clan. I'm worried about you, you're other." That's hardwired and at different moments in history, at different places, we seize on different forms of difference as the key issue. And because of our history, because of slavery, because of whatever. Here in

America, it's often race. But this capacity to hate based on difference, it's in our breasts, it's cloaked like a serpent ready to lash out when triggered. But I think that just like our innate propensity to sin. That doesn't mean you give up on it. It's just mean you have to be prepared to wake up every day and struggle against it. And I think race is like that. I have to struggle against this. This is not like the enlightenment, where you can somehow be educated out of it. You read a book. You see a play. You have some friendships. You hear a sermon and you're cured. No, we still have this propensity to sin that you have to struggle with. And the same is true with race. (139, P4)

This core belief translated into the way participants thought about the 'dangers of localism'. When the state was absent in local affairs, several structuralists pointed out that this led to segregated schools and Jim Crow laws, ultimately resulting in the call for the federal government to intervene through the efforts of the Civil Rights movement. Without the federal or state government as a 'backstop,' many of these participants feared that discrimination and bias—a natural part of human nature--would creep back into local affairs. A representative of an advocacy group in California put it this way:

I think that many states, like the federal government as a whole, have been trapped by the nineteenth century romanticism about local control. But I think part of it [local control] is this Pontius Pilate phenomenon, "don't blame me, I washed my hands off it." And part of it is, there is certainly some, in many states a lot of distrust, but it's only natural for humans, especially humans of the politician subspecies, to be afraid to take on responsibility for things that may not be able to be fixed, things that look really hard to do. But local control is fine for affluent suburbs, and indeed doing something to limit local control triggers ire from affluent suburbs, whereas poor communities are likely not to have much political voice when these big decisions are made. And that is why I think a lesson of the Civil Rights movement, from my perspective, a lesson is, that the State and local dynamics around equity have been, in a long-run sense, unreliable in the absence of a strong Federal backstop. And that's why Jim Crow was doing so well until *Brown v. Board* for such a long time. (139, P4)

Several interviewees, including an influential academic in California, were also concerned about how money and resources would be spent in local communities if the state did not require accountability and transparency. He thought that local control models would result in discriminatory practices with resources squandered for the students that needed them the most:

The other thing that I would say is that while I think local control is one of those things that sounds great, and that every one can support in principle, that historically local control in education has often meant that poor kids get screwed and that local control has often increased segregation, policies that benefit the already well-to-do and harm the historically underserved. And so I think that we need to be extremely vigilant in a local control system even more so than under a system that's more centralized about what's actually happening in those places. So we need to really track where the dollars are going, which is not what's happening [under LCFF]. And if the intent of the policy is that those dollars be targeted to English learners or low-income students that we actually see that that is the case, otherwise I worry very much that local control actually results in widening of gaps rather than narrowing. (124, P4)

In Tennessee, a representative of a state agency brought up another interesting point about curriculum in rural schools. She was concerned that if the state did not mandate learning standards and standards of curriculum, the 'narrow-mindedness' of local affairs would limit what students learned about life beyond rural towns:

...and then there was this whole conversation about who teaches in our rural schools and what are they teaching and how are we making sure that just, the reality of the country is being represented in all of our classrooms, right. And meaning not like demographically per se but just telling folks the truth about what is America, who America is made of, what life looks like beyond your rural town...I mean it's scary, you know, it's like people are just like 'oh no we don't want our kids to learn these things'-- it's like but wait these are, these things are true! You know, like why would we why would we not want to educate our

students about all of these you know major world religions and you know economic issues. You know like, these are things that they actually would encounter, these things are true why should we not, you know, make sure that they are aware of and knowledgeable about these things (204, P4)

Despite the deeply entrenched distrust of local control, Structuralists did not express the same distrust towards school professionals. Occasionally, a few would passively mention that all teachers could not be trusted across-the-board, but they generally did not fault or distrust them to the same degree as their distrust local control. Instead, these thinkers erred on overlooking the potential misgivings of the teaching profession and generally supported the policy idea of giving them more resources and support to improve their professional capacity. Here is an example from a community organizer in California who talked positively about the power of a teacher to transform the lives of students; she followed up this statement with her vision of capacity building for the teaching profession:

Even if kids -- I think it's proven fact that if kids have parents that care about them, that love them, that's going to make all the difference in the world, depending on how fully engaged the parents are going to engage in the kids' learning. But if they're not lucky enough to have that in their life, at least if they had a caring adult -- and who is that caring adult going to be? It's most likely going to be a teacher. So -- because the most influential person in the kid's life is going to be either their parent, or the teacher, and if they're lucky, they will be both. But if they don't have that teacher, their level of learning isn't going to be completely turned on so that it'll carry them for the rest of their lives. They'll fail before they even have a chance to start. So I think that teachers need to be passionate and then they need to be given -- like I said the truth and the training, and there's a place to really feel like they're being treated and valued as much as any profession. (125, P3)

In a way, the moral narrative embodied by this group of participants considered teachers to be part of the state or institutional system and not mired in the politics and discriminatory practices of local control. For example, a leader of district reform in California gives an interesting take on how he perceived teacher biases. Rather than blame teachers directly for holding bias, he placed teachers within a racist or biased institutional system that he argued was translated through individual teachers:

So I deeply believe we have teachers in our systems who are not racist but there's an institutional racist system and there's bias that exist in the system that aren't -- that aren't personal to them but exist. But you don't wanna have to deal with that so you sort of say 'it's poverty' and that's the issue. But when you use the data that I've just referenced you sort of say, you actually look at the classroom and you say in fact it's not poverty. That's not what's going on here or we will do surveys and we ask in the surveys, we ask kids, "do teachers have lower expectations for you because of your race?" and we ask teachers in the same school, "do you have lower expectations for your kids because of their race?" Teachers say, absolutely not. Kids say, absolutely not everywhere but in some schools. (112, P4)

Lastly, there was evidence in the interviews of a deep ethic of caretaking for children from all of the 'adults in the system', ranging from teachers and district actors all the way up to state political leaders. A representative of a state department in Tennessee said it best:

So, I think from my perspective, it's all of the adults that make the decisions, need to be held accountable for student outcomes. Because ultimately, the students have -- well if you think about, they have the most direct accountability. They don't know it. It's delayed. But it will all catch up with them when they become adults, right? And so, I often say that I feel like the responsibility lies on all the adults in the system who make the decisions because the children don't get to make the decisions. Children don't get to pick their parents. They don't get to pick where they live. They're the ones who are most at risk. They are completely depending on us to help them to become educated well enough to be able to sustain themselves economically and independently once they leave us after 12th grade. So given that, given how much risk

and how little influence that the children have, then you have to really focus on the adults who are the only ones who get to make the choices. And even the influence of those parents, as I said, children don't get to choose their parents. So, for us the adults in the system, we have to operate in a frame of, we are protecting all the students that are in our care. They are going through the public schooling...we have to be the advocates for children, which means that we have to hold ourselves accountable for the results of all children. (204, P4, L3)

Differing perspectives on motivation

There was an important divide within the moral narrative of this group of thinkers when it came to the topic of human nature as it related to motivation. Across the board, this group generally expressed at least a hint of distrust towards human nature. The participants varied to the degree that they distrusted human nature and thus they differed to the degree to which they thought 'sticks' or punitive consequences were necessary to motivate changes to human behavior. Here are two examples that reveal the range of views towards motivation. In the first excerpt, a leader of district reform in California agreed that pressure and consequences were necessary to motivate changes to human behavior, but he was lukewarm on the idea of external pressure. By the end of the excerpt, it became apparent that he is much more interested in the idea of 'positive consequences' to motivate changes to human behavior, arguing that more capacity building was necessary to make changes within schools.

And so, don't forget that schools are run by human beings, right? And it's a human adventure in the end. And so, no one, very few put it, as much as they care about the kids in the system they care but it's really hard to just, to say 'I'm not doing this well. I'm not good at what I do, or I'm not good enough at what I do, and I want to completely change what's happening and I want to ask for more work, harder work in more difficult things in front of me.' It's really hard to ask of a system, right? And so, when you're in the middle of it you feel like you're working your ass off coz you are and you're doing what you can do which you are, right? And so, to say so the notion of sanctions, the notion of that outside pressure can push a complacent system to force different change, but what I would say is, it can't do it at scale. It can do it in the instances where it's just not happening...I agree that outside pressure can help but the problem with NCLB, it wasn't as much as the outside pressure but the outside pressure then led to...led to actions that were not effective. So, it led to this notion we're going to bus kids to other schools, that doesn't work. We're going to bring outside service providers in and do tutoring, it doesn't work...and what you need to do is improve the system from within, right? You need to build capacity of the teachers that are there. (112, P4)

Interestingly, the person identified in the quote above belonged to the 'state as a multiple systemic actor' group. In the second excerpt below, a representative of an advocacy group in California belonged to the 'state as a single systemic actor' group and showed a deeper distrust of human nature. He was more willing to talk about a worldview of interpersonal group relationships, and argued that 'race and difference almost always get in the way of rational behavior.' Because of this natural propensity to discriminate, the participant strongly supported 'sticks' to motivate changes to human nature. In his own words:

Race and difference almost always get in the way of rational behavior. That's part of the definition of prejudice. So from my point of view, some forms of compulsion had to be a part of the formula. That's why so many religions have a version of hell, because just exhorting a better form of humanity without any sticks, often fails. (139, P4)

Differing perspectives on parent engagement

There was another division between participants' perspectives towards parent engagement. On the one hand, a cluster of participants—usually community organizers or

nonprofit organizations that worked with parents and community members—believed that parent engagement could be another ‘lever’ to put pressure on schools. This faction believed that when parents engaged in the school improvement process they could help to close the achievement gap. In this way, they viewed parents as ‘operating arm’ of the state. As mentioned in the policy dimension section, they also thought that the state could design policies to better engage parents. Here are a few examples of participants who believed in the power of parent engagement:

I think there is also-- what I'm working on right now, which is understanding the power of families, and knowing that you can't divorce student achievement from the experience that child is having in the home or in the community. That means that you have to pay as much attention to parent-family engagement as you do other factors in the schools. ...54% of the families we work with across the state come from another country, and they have no idea how our system works, and they're intimidated by it. I think gap closure also comes into play when the family's empowered to be a voice for their child, to understand the system, and to value the education that their child is receiving. It can go a huge way, and it doesn't have to cost a lot of money, but it does require for teachers and educators to be given the tools to work with families so they partner better. (113, P3)

...what changes then with that agenda is oftentimes the people outside pushing inward are saying, like parents do, when they come to a board meeting or thousands of them are on the stairs, in session, inside the meeting room and outside on the street, saying, chanting, and calling out names or what have you. Now they're under a spotlight, now they know that they [local district actors] can't get away with certain things that they have been doing for years and years because now the media is covering that, social media is talking about it every two seconds. So parents have gotten wiser about how their power can be utilized. So when that started happening, and I don't mean just parents in those days, but parents right now, but in those days when people got together and were trying to create change, they used their power of organizing to then bring the grassroots voice into the mix and by shedding a light on that, it became very visible. (125, P3)

On the other hand, a separate group of State Control thinkers within this cluster—typically leaders of statewide education advocacy organizations—did not believe that parents could engage in the school improvement process. One participant bluntly expressed his disbelief:

Parents are remarkably bad. Many parents, especially parents who are living in very stressful circumstances are not great at figuring out which educational options are optimal for their kid. They just start-- they basically want their kid to be happy. But what that has to do with career in college readiness is almost nothing. (139, P4)

Another participant draws on her personal experience growing up as an immigrant in California. She used her childhood experience to articulate how her mother was limited in engaging with her education in a foreign culture. Despite the importance of education that her mother instilled in her, cultural barriers limited her mother’s ability to interact with teachers and navigate the school system. In her own words:

This part I guess I will come at it from a personal experience. I am an immigrant. I came here when I was 6 years old from Taiwan and I started in kindergarten. And my mom didn't speak the language. My mom doesn't, still, today, I talk to her in Chinese. In Mandarin, and so, for me, just go to school and learn a new language and figure it out with the help of my teachers was tremendous. While my mom may have instilled in me like the importance of learning, she couldn't help me with reading or, you know, doing the homework, right? And I am fortunate enough that, you know, I able to go to college and grow and become hopefully a protective member of society even if I'm member of the lame-stream media, you know. So, I have mixed feelings on that. Like, when I hear that, that like, yes you, as a parent, you have a responsibility to give – to foster the love of education in your kids, but that – I don't know that I'm – you know, but like literally, my mom couldn't help me, right? So, that doesn't stop me from learning. So, I don't buy into the excuse that, “Oh, it's the parent's fault.” Because I am fortunate in that I am a testament to the fact that

great teachers and supportive teachers can get you through extraordinarily well. So, yeah. On that one, you know, it's not empirical. It's just my own experience as an immigrant...(110, P4)

The different perspectives of motivation and parent engagement mapped onto the different preference for the state's role in assigning consequences (as described in the policy dimension section). Those that believed in the power of parent engagement and who also had a softer view towards human nature preferred the 'state as multiple systemic actor' model. Those that did not believe in parent engagement and who had a more negative view towards human nature supported the 'state as single systemic actor' model.

View of justice

While it was evident that this group cared deeply about issues of student equity, they often took a systemic approach to describing their views of justice and equity. As already mentioned, this group of influential thinkers was more than willing to talk at length about the inadequate financing of the education system and the associated inequalities for poor communities. They believed that more funding was necessary for school improvement and that more state resources should be reallocated to low-income schools. In California, several participants found it hard to believe that the state did not require more redistribution of resources from economic elites or corporations. However, participants like this representative of an education advocacy organization justified that it was difficult to spend more at the state level when the state already allocated 40 percent of the general fund to education:

So it's like we have the capacity to invest and the reason why we're ... I think there's lots of reasons why we haven't. One is when you look at the state budget that billions of dollars for education overshadows the rest of the budget, and so, people think 'wow, all of our money is going to Ed.' It's like, 'yes, because it's a massive system but when you look at the actual investment you're making, it doesn't ... any indicator that it would ... it's on track or it's sufficient, right?' When you compare to other nations, when you compare it to per capita, when you look at some of the 'Getting Down to the Facts' studies that were done under the previous administration where they tried doing ... to estimate how much money would it take to get schools closer to what adequate might look like, it was billions, right? (103, P4)

Others pointed to previous reforms California had already enacted, such as Proposition 98, Proposition 30, and the Local Control Funding Formula. They acknowledge that such reforms were merely 'nibbling at the edges' of school finance reform and thought that much more should be done to redistribute resources. But many thought that it was politically infeasible to do much more:

It's easy politically to say 'well, we're fulfilling Prop 98, that's the constitutional minimum guarantee of funding, that's all we have to do.' And people don't want to raise taxes. So instead of biting a bullet and saying what does it really take to invest in California to build a quality public school system again, because we used to have one, it's easier to kind of nibble on the edges and keep the status quo in terms of level of funding than try to go out there. I mean it's going to require raising taxes while they're statewide or new local authorities to raise taxes locally. And that's not a popular something that's going to get support from most politicians. Though I think if they were strong leaders, it's not impossible. We've seen Prop 30 pass. But even that was like a temporary kind of band-aid boost when you consider what the shortfall is. (117, P4)

A few individuals mentioned that the political system favored elites with resources who were resistant to redistribution towards poor people. One person even went as far as to offer a cultural interpretation that in the U.S., "we simply don't like poor people. So we treat them badly

and then we blame them for being poor” (117, P4). A representative of an education advocacy group in California posed a complication between race, resources, and the political system:

It’s the population change. To me, you have this generation of students. They’re not majority white. They’re largely immigrants. They’re in disadvantaged communities. They come to school with a lot of disadvantages that their home life might not be calm. They may not have the resources. A lot of its money. My own take is that we have this large, poor, disadvantaged population to care for and a system, a political system, that is skewed toward older educated people who don’t want to pay for it. (110, P4)

While there was a lot of concern for more redistribution of resources to fix systemic inequalities, participants in this cluster could only surmise what it would take to make more funding a political reality. Importantly, nobody had a plan for redistributing resources:

...at some point some politician’s going to have to go up and say, “I’m going to touch the third rail,” you know, “I am willing to touch Proposition 13, and – you know, and I’ll go up and – you know, go up in flames and sparks, but I – you know, I’m just going to take this on frontally,” either that or one of the, you know, the ventured billionaires, you know, may do this. You know, I mean, I’d – it – somebody’s got to say, “You can’t get good, you know, on a thin diet.” (122, P4)

In sum, the Structuralist moral narrative was largely shaped by worldviews towards human nature. First and foremost, the 26 participants expressed a strong distrust of local control and the ‘dangers of localism’. They thought that discrimination, segregation, bias, and narrow-mindedness were a natural part of human nature that would blossom in local affairs without the presence of the state. They deeply believed in the state’s responsibility and contractual obligation to fix systemic inequalities and to monitor local behavior. This included monitoring the fair and transparent use of state resources, tracking student and school progress, and having the state serve as the ‘backstop’ against discriminating local affairs.

While they strongly distrusted locals, they were more willing to trust school professionals. They generally perceived teachers and school leaders as part of the broader ‘system’ and did not fault them wholesale for the achievement gap. Instead, they tended to favor ideas that would build capacity amongst school professionals. There was a strong ethic of caretaking for children. Many of the Structuralists saw a role for the state and all of the adults in the public, state system to protect and care for children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

There were disparities between participants in the outlook toward motivation and parent engagement. Some believed that parents could act as another ‘arm’ of the state to put pressure on locals and were more willing to believe in ‘carrots’ to motivate changes to the teaching profession. Others were not so trusting of parents and did not think that they could engage in the school improvement process and also thought that more punitive consequences were needed to motivate changes.

When it came to views of justice, all the Structuralists were on board with the idea of more resources and capacity building for schools, especially for schools serving low-income and minority students. However, nobody offered a realistic plan for garnering more resources from the state or the economic elites. Instead, many blamed the gridlock of the political system or class divides as the reason why more funding was unrealistic.

Overall summary

For those that supported a model of State Control accountability, the role of the state was front and center in their ideas. They believed in the power of the state to design and facilitate school improvement and they saw themselves as ‘architects’ or ‘designers’ of a state accountability system. They believed in the power of the state to monitor, measure, and intervene in low-performing schools and this belief was interwoven into many of their policy and moral ideas.

Despite acknowledging some of the drawbacks of NCLB, the thinkers within this cluster largely stayed within the bounds of the accountability paradigm to problem solve school inequalities. In fact, this cluster of thinkers adhered closely to the original design of NCLB and continued to support a state-centered approach to accountability. They desired to modify parts of NCLB, such as collecting more data and multiple metrics of school performance so that the state could better monitor schools and provide adequate resources and support when needed. Their adherence to the accountability paradigm was perhaps remarkable, given that they saw the problem and cause of the achievement gap from an ‘education system deficit’ perspective, and thought the state needed to fix systemic deficiencies such as correcting funding inequities or bolstering the capacity of school professionals teaching at the worst schools. None had a plan to target additional resources from state legislatures or the economic elite, nor did any offer ideas or solutions to fix the inputs of the education system, such as better teacher training or improving the work conditions for teachers.

Instead, the influencers within this cluster kept their thinking closely mapped to the accountability paradigm. Underlying the debate over a single versus multiple measure of performance was a debate about the appropriate role of the state in assigning consequences and whether or not other institutions (such as the family) could be used as another lever to monitor and hold schools accountable. For those that believed in the power of parent engagement and ‘positive consequences’ there was an underlying belief about human nature that people are best motivated with support and capacity building rather than sanctions. Those that saw the state as a ‘multiple systemic actor’ believed in the power of parent engagement, largely drawn from their personal experiences growing up with engaged parents. For those that wanted ‘punitive consequences’, they did not believe that all parents could engage in school improvement and thought that the state was the only lever of monitoring and accountability. Therefore, they thought the state needed to be tough on schools and use ‘sticks’ over ‘carrots’ so that low-performing schools would respond with urgency to the need to close the achievement gap. Those that perceived the state as a ‘single systemic actor’ also tended to be more willing to acknowledge interpersonal group relationships in society and were more open about racial and class issues that play out in local politics.

There was a strong distrust across-the-board for local control models of accountability. To this group of influential thinkers who embodied a ‘structuralist’ moral narrative, locals could not be trusted without state oversight, since they believed that it was a natural tendency of human nature to discriminate against others, especially when communities were left to their devices. Several mentioned the example of the events leading up to the Civil Rights movement and pointed out the Jim Crow laws that existed without strong federal oversight. When the state was absent from local affairs, they argued that discrimination, bias, and narrow-mindedness took root and led to unfair local practices. In the more recent California accountability debate, they worried that without the state, students who were traditionally disadvantaged—low-income and

minority students—would continue to fall behind due to the discriminatory nature of local politics and inherent human biases based on difference. Despite a strong belief in the need for redistributive policies, none of the participants had a plan for garnering more resources from the state or economic elites. They tended to blame the bias within the political system or political power dynamics for the inability to redistribute any more resources down to poor communities.

Chapter 5, Section C

Market Control Accountability Model

This section includes the analysis of 20 individuals, 7 from California and 13 from Tennessee who were united in their faith of the marketplace as an institutional venue where the policy problem could be solved. Some were leaders of charter management organizations, single-issue education advocacy organizations (i.e. groups with a single focus on teacher quality like Teach for America), while others were leaders of conservative think tanks, members of the business community, or state representatives that identified as Independent or Republican. Just a handful had taught or worked within a school at some point during their careers.

This group of thinkers perceived that the competitive pressures and deregulatory environment of the market could create the conditions for school improvement. They firmly believed that students would be better served if “failing” schools were pushed to an alternative institutional environment by the state, or if students and families could exit low-performing schools by exercising school choice. Thus, they wanted to build ‘market-based reforms’ into their accountability model. They wanted a strong focus on student test scores as a way to determine school performance and favored using punitive consequences for schools that failed to improve over time, such as charter conversions and other state-sponsored turnaround strategies. They were more willing than thinkers in other accountability models to closely monitor the work of individual teachers, and preferred to expose them to market pressures as well by integrating ideas like value-added models as a monitor of performance. Because they thought that low-performing schools and teachers would be more accountable to student achievement under the pressures of the marketplace rather than under the public sphere, this model is referred to as *Market Control Accountability*.

Despite the policy consensus among these thinkers, there were three very different moral narratives underlying the policy ideas for Market Control Accountability. *Social Justice Entrepreneurs*—typically leaders of charter management organizations or advocates of school choice and teacher reforms—were individuals with a mission to open up pathways for poor and minority students to gain access to higher quality schooling by an ‘any means necessary’ approach. They blamed teachers and low-performing schools for the transmission of inter-generational poverty and problem-solved their way out of failing public institutions by leveraging the marketplace as an exit. Another cluster of thinkers shared an *Empiricist* moral narrative. They were purists in their faith of data analysis, monitoring, and technical rationality to solve the policy problem yet tended to skew their rationality toward the principles of laissez-fair markets. The third faction of thinkers embodied a *Paternalist* moral narrative. These individuals leaned towards political conservatism and believed in discipline, rule following, and standards of good behavior to motivate school improvement.

How is the policy problem defined?

Across the board, this cluster of thinkers described the policy problem in terms of low academic performance. When asked about the problems or challenges facing their given state, they often quickly cited either low NAEP test scores, low scores on the given state’s academic achievement tests, or the low U.S. ranking on NAEP in comparison to the rest of the international community. Here are three excerpts, the first from an influential thinker in

California, the second from a state representative in Tennessee, and the third from a business leader in Tennessee, which lucidly expressed their thinking about the problem in terms of academic performance and the achievement gap:

It's such a huge paradox because California is one of those states that everybody thinks are just too progressive and so big and there's lots of diversity and there're so much money here, but we're really not doing all that great in comparison to other states especially on test scores or any other, you know, NAEP, or when you compare SBAC results for California versus other states. We're still like in the 40th place. (118, P5)

So, we have several goals as a state, whether you're looking at the department's strategic plan or the state board's master plan and you know one of those--well, there's three at least that the state board has currently. One is to be--continue to be the fastest improving on NAEP, but also get into the top half of states by 2020. We've seen a lot of movement as a state in terms of our NAEP scores, but reading has been hardest to move and that's mirrored in our state test data, too, which we've been in a process of transitioning from one state assessment to a newer state assessment that's better aligned to our state standards, but you know, kind of whatever metric you look at our literacy scores have really struggled to make the same gains as our math scores. (210, P6)

It's 8% of the total population of third through eighth grade students or 8% of third through eighth graders tested below basic in math and LEA. Of those students, all but 2,000 of that 35,000 were in some historically underserved subgroup. So you have just the startling number of these underserved students that are below basic at an early level and they're not coming out of the -- and you know, for African-American students like we were top. We were in the top five states in graduation rates for African-American students but the bottom five in proficiency and so, again, kind of going back to painting an inaccurate picture of where our students are and we're telling the students that they're ready for secondary, ready for the workforce and then they get there and they're not, and so, just really focusing on providing accurate information to -- especially the historically underserved subgroups so that we can inform improvements and hope to close those achievement gaps but -- Yeah, I think that's arguably the biggest challenge. (205, P6)

This clear problem definition focusing on low academic performance distinguishes this cluster of thinkers from others in the study sample. However, there are important nuances within this group. To some, the motivation to improve academic performance had a strong social justice bent to better serve students that had been historically marginalized. A charter school advocate in California argued that differences of student academic performance by race and class—captured by the large achievement gap between poor and minority students and higher performing, wealthier White and Asian students—was inexcusable from a social justice perspective:

But I would say that we, as a state, and as a country, have an inexcusable achievement gap that we have not been able to address or improve really in any substantive way despite years of talking about it. I do see a lot of hope, particularly as I look through my charter lens, of people that are proving that kids' backgrounds don't define their destinies. But I continue to be heartbroken, and concerned, and infuriated, from a social justice perspective about the low outcomes that are happening for so many kids, particularly kids of color and low-income kids. (111, P5)

To others, especially among thought leaders in the business community in Tennessee, there was motivation to raise student achievement ranking in comparison to other states in order to bolster the state's economic standing. For years, Tennessee had been ranked at the bottom of U.S. states in terms of academic performance. In 2007, the U.S. Chamber released a report advertising Tennessee's low academic performance and called into question its legitimacy in reporting standards, motivating policymakers and the education community to improve their competitiveness in student academic achievement:

...I think it was in 2008 or something like that; 2009, 2010 we began pushing for higher standards. We got a big--you know the "F" from the US Chamber of Commerce, the truth in advertising, you know, how we would perform on NAEP versus how we would perform on our own test. There was a huge, huge gap, and so there was a huge effort to ratchet up standards. (205, P6)

The effort to improve the rigor of academic achievement translated into real economic gains in Tennessee, according to another member of the Nashville business community. He recounts a situation where a company opted to locate in North Carolina rather than Tennessee because they had a better educated workforce:

...you know, economic development says we've got this company that was looking at us or North Carolina to relocate, and they eventually chose North Carolina because the work force was, you know, better educated and they thought they could get better labor... So I think that's – it's really been a kind of a chamber, big business initiated workforce development thing. (203, P7)

The need to improve academic performance for competitive gain was echoed amongst Tennessee's conservative political actors. A prominent conservative state representative discussed the importance of academic achievement in terms of national rankings. He expressed that Tennessee needed to improve its performance since it had traditionally been near the bottom of state rankings:

If our policies are not working, change them, but the reality of it is in Tennessee...15 years ago we either dead last or close to it...Educational attainment in comparison with the other states, and we would always say, "Thank God for Mississippi..." (213, P7)

While there was a clear focus on identifying the policy problem as one of low performance, there were varying reasons why low performance was a problem. To some thinkers, trends in low academic performance had real ramifications for poor and minority students. To others, low performance meant consequences for the business community and the ability to attract companies to the state, or meant that the state lagged unacceptably behind other states in national rankings.

What causes the policy problem?

When asked to describe the causes of low school performance, about half of the thinkers were willing to acknowledge structural inequalities while the other half did not. Despite this difference, across the board, all 20 participants concentrated on schools as the opening in society where social mobility was possible and they all blamed teachers in low-performing schools for causing the problem of low performance and the achievement gap.

For those that were willing to talk about structural inequalities, they tended to be leaders of education advocacy organizations, leaders of school choice movements, or the executives of charter management organizations. This faction of thinkers would point in detail to issues of poverty, institutional exclusion, racial oppression, and hierarchical power relationships and they talked at length about the connection of these structural conditions to the root causes of educational inequalities. A leader of school choice initiatives in Tennessee spoke eloquently to this point:

And I don't think you could say there's only one thing that causes the achievement gap...you know I think on one hand, you can't discount historical systemic racism and neglect, to be quite candid. If you have it where literally, again, within our lifetime, within your parents' lifetime, your grandparents' lifetime, this is

not so long ago that systemically and through the government you're able to not fund certain communities on par with other communities based on race. Like, that's a big deal. That is a huge deal. So if you have it where you have-- taking resources out of the community, where you make it difficult for families to build wealth, through assets because you got policies that make it so you can't buy homes because they're not gonna give you a loan, like there is a bigger systemic issue right? And so, I don't find it to be a surprise that if you have the history that we've gone through, that is a very recent history, I'm not surprised that we're going to see gaps because the resources have not been shared and the opportunities have not been equitably shared. (212, P5)

They pointed out that systemic inequalities meant that poor and minority students often lacked access to adequate and equitable resources within schools, unequal access to high quality teachers, and unequal access to cultural experiences that wealthier students could easily pursue, all factors that they argued limited life opportunities for low-income and minority students. A school choice advocate in California brings home this point:

I mean, where we are sitting right now...there are kids that live here and the schools they can literally walk to, are doing a horrible job in serving them. They do not have equitable access to positive outcomes to jobs, to future careers, to exposure to innovative teaching skills, or sometimes not even to basic teaching skills. So just from the door when I say access I really mean like when you walk out of your house you should be able to walk or you know, reasonably get to a school that's going to do well, and there are so many kids that can't, that's not true, especially in California there's so many, so access starts there. Then once you get to school. Are you using a curriculum that's engaging and that is tapping into all the skills that you have and appreciating your background and culture in ways where you can see yourself and watch your learning and you can see the possibilities for people like you, who look like you? Are you seeing, are you being exposed to all the things that are out there in the world? Every kid can't travel to China but are you being engaged in a history class or some reading project where you're engagement with the world looks like and you actually see it? That's good education, not everybody has access to that. But that helps puts you on a career path or a future education path that other schools, other kinds of teaching styles don't. And every kid should have access to some of that, and they don't. (118, P5)

Despite the extended acknowledgement of the structural aspects that attributed to educational inequalities, this portion of the thinkers shared a firm and deep belief that *success in the education system* was the best way to overcome structural oppression and intergenerational poverty. To them, education was one of the only 'exits' or 'escape routes' from poverty. They saw power in individual agency to escape poverty via the school system and were willing to pursue education 'at all costs.' A strident leader of school choice in the Memphis community gave a few poignant examples from the Civil Rights movement and the violence Black communities were willing to endure in order to get access to higher quality schools and to escape poverty:

When you think about integration, it was black people who were willing to send their children to schools where they would be attacked by dogs and assaulted by adults and children for the promise of a great education, because we are-- I think black and brown communities realize, we need to get our education at all costs. Like, we need what--if this isn't working for us, we need to try something different. (222, P5).

...but that's no different to what black people did when they sent a six year old--like, a six year old went to school and sat in a classroom by herself for a whole year with a teacher. Like, that's how committed poor Black people are to education. (222, P5)

Because they saw schools as the institution that would allow individuals to overcome structural inequalities, this portion of participants channeled their focus on schools and school professionals as the cause of the achievement gap. The argument followed that individuals were capable of escaping poverty on their own if they succeeded in the education system. However,

within low-performing schools, they argued that there were ‘bad teachers’ and a ‘culture of low performance’ that prohibited students from advancing in the system and therefore attributed to their inability to escape poverty. Rather than address larger structural inequalities, conceptualizing the cause of the policy problem inside of schools led these thinkers to look for escape routes (i.e. exit low-performing schools via choice). In the words of a school choice leader in California:

Listen, it is not-- it's corny at this point or whatever when one says "We want schools that we could send your own children to". But if you're going to say that, you have to admit there's some schools that you would not dare send your kid to. This is not about improving, like continuous improvement. It's about there's some places that look like dungeons... Too many schools are just covered in graffiti. I mean I had some teachers that you know, Special Education teachers and it looked like they just like threw the box in the classroom, right? It wasn't acceptable for that classrooms that-- and this other class would be a beautiful place where kids are learning-- like there are some people that shouldn't be around kids, and there's some schools that don't do the job for the kids, we could get kids out of those-- parents have the power to get kids out of those schools and to point out where there are bad things happening to kids...(128, P5)

This belief in the power of the education system as an exit point from poverty resonated with the other half of thinkers who were less willing to recognize structural inequalities. Conservative business leaders, directors of laizze faire think tanks, and Republican-leaning lawmakers all agreed that schools were an exit point from poverty. A conservative state representative in Tennessee clearly expressed this point:

You know, there's--you know, education is the key to solving socioeconomic variances. You know, that's the key. Without education you're just not gonna work your way out of living in an environment that is struggling socioeconomically. So, education can pull you up through that opportunity. (213, P6)

Because of the consensus that schools alone were the access point to greater economic opportunity, across the board, all 20 thinkers within this cluster focused much of their energy on looking to school professionals as the cause of low school performance and the achievement gap. With a laser focus on teachers and school leaders, many of the participants within this cluster identified teachers’ racial and class biases or teachers’ low expectations as the core of the policy problem. Here are a few descriptive examples:

There are some folks that have the attitude that child--some children cannot learn. I don't agree with that. I think every child can learn and make progress...The idea is that you've gotta have the staff and the leadership that has the belief that children can succeed, and secondly, the idea of being is that we can make progress. (213, P7)

So, I guess that's the long way of saying like why our schools persist-- low performing over years and years. The bottom line is just they're stuck. And they need to be incredible in getting them from where they are to being super high functioning organizations. There are all these impediments to that happening where they're like highly bureaucratized and there's no competition in the system. People got guaranteed jobs. The school leaders have very low capacity to control who's on their team, makes change management so hard. These principals, most people would agree, are really not effective...And it becomes this, like, so many years and you can never have the restart of a culture of real high performance among the adults that's really needed. And so, all these schools, they're largely stuck. (115, P5)

This idea held true even for individuals who had spent time teaching within schools. A former teacher and now an outspoken advocate for school choice in Tennessee used her own experience as a teacher to justify her perception that school professionals were the cause of low academic performance:

I think [what causes the achievement gap] it's all kind of things, I think you have systematic inequalities, and yeah, you have low performing teachers and effective teachers and some of are, you know, schools with the highest concentration of poor kids, communities of color. And I've worked in a lot of schools, I think, in my last job, you know, where you just see sort of a culture of low expectations, right? ... But you know part of it is, when you think about... you know, when I was a teacher-- and so I try not to ever be the person like, 'teacher didn't do their job', right, cause I was a teacher and-- but there are a lot of weak teachers out there who are not, in my opinion, they're not in there for a right reason or it's time to go, or it's just they only want to teach certain kids, right? And so, there are always human variables that are very, very hard to control. (211, P5)

Regardless of their critique of the teaching profession, thinkers identified in this cluster nonetheless believed in the power of a teacher to influence the direction of students' lives. Individuals had high expectations for teacher behavior and strongly believed in the power of a teacher to 'turn the lights on' for students to help them navigate a successful life path. In the words of a politically conservative state representative in Tennessee:

There's millions of kids that have grown up in a very difficult environment, but have succeeded because somewhere along the way someone turned the light on. Somebody basically said, "You can succeed. Regardless of where you come from, you can go to another arena," and so, you know, I believe that... (213, P6)

He went on to describe the power of a teacher to transform students' lives by giving an example of the teacher from the movie, *Stand and Deliver*:

...and its kinda like that movie staged in California, with a school that about that fellow that was teaching calculus. And the kids were going to take the state exam and they took the state exam and they all aced it and they came in and accused them of cheating. Took it again and they all aced it and then the point being is that they achieved beyond anybody's perceived expectation, and the point being is that those kids took on the challenge. They say we wanna be the best and it worked. That was the best class of kids in the entire state of California, from one of the poorest sections in the state of California in calculus or pre-calculus. That's a movie I can't remember the name but it... But it staged in on of the sections of maybe in Los Angeles in the Spanish-American community. But I'm just saying that... kids could succeed beyond what we think they could succeed and given the chance, got the right teacher, the right motivation, the kids will do something and they did. (213, P7)

This sentiment was echoed by a school choice leader in southern California, who was at the other end of the political spectrum yet shared the same belief in the power of a teacher to 'level the playing field' for students:

When I think about what, in essence, we're all trying to accomplish in reforming education or in working towards equity-- I want to get a kid around a group of adults that give a shit about that kid, and they're really good at their job and they treat that child like the child is their own, and they see how wonderful and special person they are and believe that that young person, and, without that belief, by working hard, being good at their craft, by the blood, sweat and tears get what it takes to educates someone and respect someone. Like they believe that they follow through on the fact that like, that, that young person is as good as that young person anywhere and can do whatever any other young person has the potential to do... (128, P5)

A leader of a charter management organization in California took a 'no excuses' approach to tolerating bad teachers. He recounted an experience where he witnessed unacceptable poor teaching during a visit to a low-performing school:

I hate to say it, like if you had visited Pine High School [a pseudonym] before, I can give you some anecdotes, and I can give you some data. We visited Pine before we took over, we called them the Cinneplex. Five out of ten classrooms were just showing movies, there was not even an intention of trying

to teach. I'm not talking like historical movies, it was Netflix. They were just showing movies...I was doing classroom visits and there's this teacher sitting outside her classroom on a chair just literally talking with her friends, "hey girl blah blah blah", and you know. I'm like there on the side and I'm like standing by her and I'm looking inside at the classroom and these kids saw me. So and this woman sees me and does nothing. She literally keeps talking for fifteen minutes. And then when she finally hangs up, like sitting up she goes like, "what do you want?" I was like, "hey I'm from a CMO [charter management organization], like I'm visiting classrooms I'm just curious because this is a Home Ec? Home economics class?" She goes, "no it's an 11th grade government class". I was like "what are they doing?" "They are signing a quilt with the bill of rights," that's what her answer was.

Despite a stark difference between a set of participants who were willing to acknowledge structural inequalities and a group who were not, across the board, all 20 thinkers within this cluster reached a similar consensus that school professionals were the cause of the policy problem. For those that recognized structural inequalities, they saw the school system as an institution where individuals—regardless of race or socioeconomic status—could access social mobility and escape poverty. Therefore, they focused their attention on school professionals in 'failing' schools as the main impediment to social mobility. They argued that the cause of school performance and the achievement gap was under the control of teachers. Consequently, they turned to teachers as the cause of the academic achievement gap. The logic followed that if teachers performed well, then students would perform well, and if students did not perform well it must be because teachers did not perform well.

The other half of participants—mainly conservative lawmakers, members of the business community, or leaders of laizze faire think tanks—were not willing to make connections between structural inequalities and education inequalities, but nonetheless, reached the same conclusion about schools as the opening in the economic system where social mobility was possible. With this laser focus on schools in isolation from broader systemic or historic inequalities, it was easy for them to reach the same consensus that teachers and other school professionals were the cause of low school performance.

Making sense of the demise of NCLB

When asked to reflect on NCLB, thinkers that supported the Market Control Accountability model could admit that the former law was imperfect, but they generally thought that the design of NCLB was a step in the right direction. Several participants noted there were unintended consequences such as too much testing and narrowing of the curriculum, but they merely nodded at these drawbacks, and overall, showed strong support for the former law. The majority of this cluster of thinkers rather liked the strong focus on data, testing, and analysis by student subgroups. Take for instance an excerpt from a conversation with a school choice advocate in California, who quickly defended the former law when asked whether they perceived NCLB as a policy failure:

I don't see it [NCLB] as a failure. I thought some really decent data and information came out of it. It seemed to provide some clear structures for letting the community and interested parties know how schools were doing. And so, out of No Child Left Behind we actually got kind of clarity that we haven't had before. Perhaps not perfect clarity but definitely not as opaque as in previous years about how schools were performing, how students were doing. (118, P5)

Another supporter of Market Control Accountability in Tennessee was very forthright in her support of NCLB. She focused her feedback on the equity aspects of using data. She

appreciated that NCLB required states to disaggregate academic achievement by student subgroups so that poor and minority students would no longer be overlooked within the school system:

I'm a fan and an ally [of NCLB], I'm not one of those people who have tons of critic about, "Oh my God, it's over-reaching of the federal government. It's testing, testing, testing." I believe that kids need to be tested to see if they even know what they know, and especially to know what they don't know. I think before No Child Left Behind, it was easy... it was easy to mask the challenges of educating low-performing students and the minority subgroups in a way that I think No Child Left Behind kind of forced people to not be able to do. (222, P5)

Many individuals in this cluster revealed a striking support for sanctions and external pressure as part of accountability design. Again, several acknowledged that the sanctions under NCLB were imperfect, but it was common sense to these thinkers that sanctions could be a powerful force to motivate changes within schools. In the minds of several participants, sanctions were a necessary component of accountability. However, many wrestled with how sanctions could be better designed to avoid the shortcomings of NCLB. Take for example excerpts from conversations with three different participants:

I think that there definitely should be some sort of consequences for not having effective education systems and strategies in place. So I'm all for some sort of sanction and I'm all for, you know, like some sort of reasonable consequences when schools are failing, but I think under NCLB they were really kind of stringent and pushed people to say to be kind of cut throat like no matter what you've got to meet this and so that means cheating or if that means giving kids the answers to the state test or whenever, like I think it was Georgia where there was like really lots of bad practices happening just to make sure that they were meeting their adequate yearly progress goals or whatever was under NCLB. That I think is really problematic. (118, P5)

I don't think the sanctions [under NCLB] were absolutely awful, but without some real strong incentives sometimes, districts or individual schools actually, won't act in the best interest of students. The threat of loss of funding, and loss of resources, closures in some instances and take over, I think sometimes have really pushes people to work with a level of urgency in a lot of public schools I have not seen. (222, P5)

I mean, I think, you know, at the sort of policy level--whether it's state or federal--I mean, it is best when you've got like carrots and sticks. I mean, I think people need to feel a sense of urgency and accountability for results and they also need to feel like they've got resources to sort of deliver on those expectations. Again, I think the expectations were unrealistic and they were sort of mis-targeted, if you will, in terms of, you know, again, it was like all students meeting this like sort of 'line in the sand' as opposed to sort of growth. So, it wasn't necessarily a realistic set of expectations. So, I think the sanctions were sort of then mismatched because the expectations weren't realistic, but in general, I'm in favor of sort of having some amount of, sort of balance between accountability and sort of urgency and, you know, responsibility for results...(210, P6)

An influential conservative thought leader in Tennessee was so convinced that sanctions and accountability policy more broadly were effective forces for school change that the conception of NCLB remained unquestioned within his mind. This common-sense notion was reflected in this excerpt, where he posed a rhetorical question about what it would be like to go back to the pre-NCLB era. He expressed the sentiment that although NCLB had its shortcomings, it was better than no accountability at all:

You know, I tell people that, you know, for all the demons that No Child Left Behind brought, the question is, would you go back to what existed prior to that? And I have yet to find anybody on the [political] left or the right to support what was before that... (208, P7)

Despite the shortcomings of NCLB, the group of thinkers supporting Market Control Accountability was not willing to let go of many of the former law's key components. They liked the focus on data, subgroup analysis, external pressure, and a portion of the participants emphasized that they liked the former law's focus on closing the achievement gap. They struggled with how to re-think how consequences or external pressure could be redesigned to minimize the unintended consequences that NCLB produced, but they thought that external pressure was a key component to motivate changes in low-performing schools.

How do they try to solve the policy problem?

The Market Control Accountability cluster drew from ideas heavily saturated with market logic that they wanted to integrate into an accountability model. The participants relied on the concepts of choice, competition, and deregulation to solve the problem of low school performance. They were also more willing to use the state to monitor and regulate the work of individual school professionals. This section reviews the array of specific policy tools they preferred to use to solve the policy problem, drawing out important nuances in their preference for a 'market control' accountability model.

Data as a tool to undo social injustices and correct information asymmetries

Among this cluster of thinkers, there was strong consensus that data could help solve the problem of low school performance and could close the achievement gap. Across the board, data was an unquestionable policy tool that was integral to accountability policy design. To some, data had the power to undo social injustices within schools. Through the eyes of many participants in the school choice movement, data could reveal to school professionals their deeply held biases and could begin to undo unfair treatment of minority and low-income students. With conviction, a school choice advocate in California expressed this sentiment:

I think that data is the only way that some of those conversations get shifted and some action actually takes place because we've got data. Data is critical for that. Data is critical for getting reasonable, rational people who are racist and don't know it, or somehow have these views that only certain people are suppose to have them. Data is one of the strongest reasons to have these-- otherwise, rational people see, "Oh, my God. There really is an access issue." or "There's really an opportunity issue here that I didn't see before. Let's do something about it." Data is key. Yeah, data is it. (118, P5)

Moreover, they wanted clear and simple data with a focus on student academic achievement. This may come as little surprise given that thinkers within this cluster identified performance as the key policy problem. In the state of California, many of the participants who supported the Market Control accountability framework wanted the state to focus in on academic achievement rather than have an obtuse multiple measures accountability system that would make it difficult for parents to easily interpret. A leader of a parent engagement organization in California put it this way:

Yeah I would say one part about that though, is that it's why the fight right now is so important, because the work to support families, and organize families, and to hold school accountable, it happens within the context of the information and the tools available to us and to them. The more opaque and confusing and bureaucratic the accountability system is, the harder-- that was our whole argument with the current state of the accountability system and this is the dashboard and the 17 layers of subsidiarity that they're going to put in between real state responsibility and what happens in a child's classroom. The more complex it is, the harder it is for the average family-- forget about the low-income family-- the average family to say "I'm going to call your bluff on this and I know exactly what's supposed to be happening here and it's not

happening, I can see with my eyes it's not happening". And you think about the family that's undocumented, and the family who doesn't speak English and the family working three jobs and may not have a high-level education themselves and it's even harder... But if it's impossible to understand. There's all these barriers to entry than you really stifle at-- and we know that in other cases-- it's like the whole idea with the Voting Rights Act is you can't create a ton of barriers for participation. (128, P5)

To others, data was not seen as a tool to necessarily undo social injustices; rather, they saw data as a tool that helped to correct information asymmetries. Within this line of thinking, clear and transparent data could help parents make informed decisions about what school to send their student to. A conservative grassroots organizer in Tennessee assumed that parents did not always have access to information, and argued that more accessible data could empower parents to make much better educational choices for their students:

We think it's -- the easier we can make it for parents to come through the data from the school the better, the more digestible you can make it. And you know, just making sure that parents know exactly where their students are performing, and I know we're talking about school accountability, but you don't want a parent to get you know, three years into their child's education and realize that they've been undereducated for three years in a row. (205, P6)

In some cases, participants were challenged in their thinking when asked whether it was possible to engage all parents and families—even those who were non-native English speakers or recent immigrants—to engage with data and their child's school. This was the rebuttal from a school choice thought leader in California, who thought that exposure to data could make unengaged parents 'get hot enough to move':

Right. I think that's true. They don't have the ability on the surface of it, but there are people who are working with... there are people who are, who's job it is to work with parents who are English learners or in remote community or don't have internet access or are otherwise hindered from the data and are provided the data in a public friendly, very straight forward, parent friendly language so that information is accessible to them. I have seen with my own 2 eyes that those parents get mad enough sometimes or get informed in other ways that spurs on action... leadership emerges because people get, they see the data and get hot enough to move. (118, P5)

Evidently, the policy thinkers within this cluster expressed strong faith in data as a 'weapon' to undo teachers' biases or to correct information asymmetries. They thought that putting data into the hands of parents could help parents either make changes to the school directly, or express agency and choose to leave a low-performing school.

Consequences to motivate change

More so than any other policy type, across the board, thinkers supporting the Market Control Accountability model desired consequences to be part of an accountability system. Several of the participants noted that consequences were a natural part of professional work and some drew on their personal response to pressure to justify their outlook. Others talked about the sense of urgency that consequences created within the schools, noting that without external pressure, change was unlikely to happen. Take for instance a few excerpts from a conversation with a school choice leader in California who decisively made these points:

I think I respond to pressure, I think everybody kind of responds to pressure. I don't really like it, I don't really like being held accountable, but I like my Board of Directors, they are my boss. But like, that is just sort of how it is, I think and how it needs to be. Some pressure helps us to focus on what is important and make improvements where needed. (115, P5)

And so, if there's no pressure on the people and the system, that they kind of have to do this or there's going to be some consequences, then just, these things are going to be really slow. It's my worry. And slow for my kids, I don't accept slow. (115, P5)

Although these thought leaders quickly defaulted to favoring consequences, they were unsure of what consequences should look like in the next generation of accountability policy. In the following examples, the participants struggled to articulate how to best design school consequences to avoid the pitfalls of NCLB:

It's because I'm motivated by that kind of stuff but I realize that there are individuals that are not and that they go like "okay, that's too much, that's too much pressure, I'm feeling shut down." I don't know, I do think that they have-- maybe not pressure but there definitely has to be some sort of consequence, you know, and some looming consequence that you know what's going to happen if you fail on this specific ways and don't shape up. (118, P5)

I mean, it's best when you've got like carrots and sticks. I mean, I think people need to feel a sense of urgency and accountability for results and they also need to feel like they've got resources to sort of deliver on those expectations...in general, I'm in favor of sort of having some amount of sort of balance between accountability and sort of urgency and, you know, responsibility for results, but also sort of, you know, making sure that you've got the resources to, you know, aggressively move on those expectations. (210, P6)

...I'm motivated by doing a good job, I know that everybody is motivated by that [external pressure]. But I want to do a good and I want to get feedback that I'm doing a good job, and I want to hear feedback when I'm not doing a good job but I want to hear early so I can correct-- and I think that's kind of how school leaders feel on average, and so I feel like monitoring the performance of schools shouldn't just be this one shot at the end of the end of the year, you know, one shot in February or whatever, one shot in September where we now know how all the kids are doing, but there needs to be assistance in place and ESSA purports to do this we're not only doing the regular data checking so there can be some formatives, you know, change made if schools are really off-track or teachers and principals are really off-track, but there's also the markers of yearly progress and if you don't make that... you should feel some sort of way and you should be looking at that formative piece and the summative piece to say "ok what can I do to make this better?" And if, after the next year you aren't making it better, then you should be in fear that your school will close or that there's some real, harsh consequence for not reaching the kids...(118, P5)

A popular policy idea for consequences was to leverage 'school turnaround strategies' for persistently low-performing schools. Thinkers within the Market Control Accountability cluster commonly referred to school closures, firing the school principal or the teaching staff, and charter conversions to solve the policy problem. To thinkers with this policy conception, 'bad' or 'failing' schools needed to be vigorously 'shook up' to create changes for disadvantaged students, and there was no time to waste. This notion was common sense to many thought leaders. A former educator and now a vocal school choice advocate in California put it this way:

Part of the inertia of failing schools is that you have an entire-- and I'm not-- I was tenured as a teacher. I was tenured as a principal. I was the union rep at my school. I'm not against tenure. I'm not against teachers but, the truth is there are some toxic school environments out there where you have a ton of inertia around failure. What shakes that up? How far can you get in just like demand, like observing people, or trying to do better work and replacing retiring staff and transferring staff... The threat of the school being shut down and people's whole routine to be totally disrupted was also a motivating force...(125, P5)

Turnaround strategies were administered at the state level in Tennessee, and many interview participants from the state were avid supporters of the Achievement School District (ASD), the culmination of the state's authority to take over low-performing schools and implement turnaround strategies. A conservative lawmaker in Tennessee sums up the logic of using the ASD to takeover schools:

...if you've got a child in a particular school building and that school building has a history of failure, and when that child--ultimately, that school reaches that proprietary list, then it basically says, "You failed for X number of years," and most recent years--but it goes way back beyond that, generally that we're gonna come in. We're gonna take it over. We're gonna develop a plan of remediation. We're gonna develop a program to have those children an opportunity to succeed. Whereas, in the past, they were guaranteed failure...(213, P7)

But after several years of using the authority of the ASD in low-performing schools in Tennessee, many of the influential leaders in the state had second thoughts about how turnaround strategies should be used. Several started out by saying that after a school has been identified in the lowest rung of performers, those schools should first be targeted for additional resources and support. In the words of an influential thought leader in the Tennessee business community:

...because if you think about a model that includes taking over schools; not every school needs to be turned upside down, not every school needs to be taken over by the State. As the State has found out, it's hard to run schools, it's hard to turn around these schools and the track record with the Achievement School District is mixed in Tennessee if you look at the progress of schools that it has taken over or handed over to charter schools, 'cause it's hard work. And these are the lowest performing schools, so these are the most challenging. (205, P6)

A conservative state representative in Tennessee added an important caveat to the thinking about turnaround strategies, noting that once the school has been 'dealt with' by the intervention, the state needed to figure out a way to give the school back to local control. During this conversation, the participant emphasized that the state did not want to intervene in local affairs, but would do so as a last resort when schools were persistently low-performers and then the state would hand the school back to the district:

...and then after we fix it and create that program, whatever it takes to do it, then we turn it back over to the LEA. So, it's not a permanent kind of structure. It's "we're gonna deal with it for a period of time and then you've got it back and we've got various options and methods on how we arrange it or deal with it from that standpoint. (213, P6)

In California, the state had less experience with turnaround strategies. Adding caveats or new design strategies to the barebones of school turnaround ideas was less prevalent in the minds of California thinkers. Instead, participants were more forthright in their support of using the classical approaches of turnaround strategies as a consequence to shake up the school environment, for example, simply supporting school closures or firing the principal and the staff at a given school. A few school choice advocates in California shared this way of thinking:

And I'm really on board with that, there are some schools that I think have been around for a really long time and they haven't done well for a long long long long time and no one has kind of come in and turn it around successfully and they are still around. You know, is almost like if you do things out of tradition rather than what's really good for you, sometimes the best thing is just to close that school, you know, sometimes it really is, and I feel really strongly about it, there are some schools that's like "kids do not have the time, you know these 8 years that they're spending in this school and it's been failing for 20 years and we're still sending our kids there, that's not good for anybody. (118, P5)

And if a school over some number of years—three, four, five—if they aren't growing students in the way that we're measuring academically and hopefully some other ways; then there's the drop-dead data of you've come, tried your hardest... let's reorganize the thing. Meaning close, reopen, let's start fresh. Whatever is going on, we know kids can achieve at a really high level. We now have lots of examples of schools that are doing that. If you've been given a lot of opportunity to do it, you can do it. That's a valuable

school building. Let's put a different set of adults with a different plan in that school building to try to get it done. (115, P5)

It was clear amongst this cluster of thinkers that they supported the idea of punitive consequences, but several were reconsidering how and when punitive consequences should be used. Especially in Tennessee, they acknowledged that it was important to first invest resources and capacity building into low-performing schools, but if they 'failed' to improve over time, more severe consequences in the form of state sponsored turnaround strategies were used as a 'course of last resort'.

Targets of accountability

The target of accountability policy for this group of thinkers was unclear. Several talked about the role that all the 'adults in the system' had in ensuring student success, from teachers on up to state and federal officials. In the words of a school choice leader in California:

...but there has to be some district level accountability for each school and then it seems like there would have to be some sort of local agency or state that holds the district accountable and then the federal holds the state accountable. And so, the federal guidelines are ESSA. So, ESSA hands it down to the state. The state says, "Hey" the states say 'we're going to execute this and in our individual state it looks like this' and every district has to comply or there's these consequences. The district then say, "Okay. Here's what you all have to do. This is what compliance looks like here and the consequences without it." Each school has to do that and then each teacher within the school has to own it. So, like we're all in this together. (118, P5)

This sentiment was echoed by a conservative leader of a think tank in Tennessee:

I think ultimately, but it may be because of my experience that I would say this, but I think it's the school district, I think it's the superintendant who's hired by an elected board, you know to get a job done. And that includes oversight and management of a school district, but it better be about student achievement first, because that's what we're in the business of doing. And so ultimately I think the responsibility lies there, I think with ESSA now, there is going to be a whole lot on school accountability. It's not new for us in Tennessee...I think in the last few years, because it had been more directed with Race to the Top and some of the things there with our waiver, it had been more focused on the district, so now I think it's going to be a combination of those two, and there's going to be a nice balance to figure out exactly what that should look like, not everybody's going to like it, there's going to be some big growing pains for us. Ultimately, it's there. But I think given the scenario we've already painted for you, I think the state has a role in this, of support. Guidance and support and that kind of thing. But ultimately, the rubber meets the road in the district. (204, P6)

More so than any other cluster, individuals who supported Market Control accountability were more willing to reach inside classrooms with policy reforms in an effort to target individual teachers and hold them accountable for their performance. In this vein, this cluster of thinkers strongly supported using teacher evaluations and value-added models to monitor the work of teachers and to use results to make decisions about whether to keep or fire a given teacher, or to assign high quality teachers (as determined by value-added models) to low performing students. A leader of a charter management organization made rhetorical statements to get at the point that teachers should be held accountable for student learning:

The fact that we are in the twenty first century, we're still arguing whether a teacher should be held somewhat, a little bit accountable for how much students learn is stunning to me. But if you think about how we have -- there's actually debate about this where half the nation actually believes that it is crazy that you actually hold teachers accountable for student learning, it's kind of stunning if you think about it. I mean like what else would you hold teachers accountable for? Nothing. That's the only thing they should be

held accountable for. Like that's the only, like there is no measure whatsoever as to learning in a teacher evaluation system, it's stunning if you think about it. It's pretty stunning. (120, P5)

Moreover, this group of thinkers imagined that instruments to monitor teachers could be used to assign better teachers to high-need students. This was already happening in Tennessee's iZone district, where they used results from the TVAAS (the value-added models) to assign teachers to high needs classrooms.

...we think that having the TVAAS and growth data and to us are growth data is important for teacher to know, "Okay, like I've been underperforming in this part of my job." Or, "I've been doing great in this part of my job so they can figure out where they need to focus their efforts for improvement. (203, P7)

It was not totally clear whom this group of thinkers wanted to hold accountable. It can be inferred that they were on board with holding teachers, school leaders, district administrators, and to some extent state leaders accountable for school performance. It was very clear that they supported holding teachers accountable and the participants within this cluster were very willing to tightly monitor the work of teachers and to hold them accountable to the pressures of the market with policy tools like value-added models (i.e. if teachers do not perform well from year to year they can lose their jobs or lose access to tenure).

Stepping outside the bounds of the accountability paradigm?

Aside from integrating market-based policy ideas such as turnaround strategies or the Achievement School District into an accountability policy, there were other stand-alone ideas for school reform this cluster of thinkers supported. In Tennessee, the state developed a school Innovation Zone (iZone), which was an alternative to the traditional turnaround strategies and implemented in the Memphis community. The iZone was a deregulated public school district, meaning that the schools within the district operated more like charter schools than traditional public schools. Principals had more freedom to hire and fire teachers since teachers had limited ability to organize collectively, district actors had more freedom to allocate resources to different schools, and there was more room for new reform ideas to be implemented within the district such as wrap-around services. The iZone was an intermediary between turnaround strategies and stagnating traditional public schools that several of the thinkers in this policy cluster favored as a remedy for low performing schools:

Basically the iZone is working well in Memphis, has been successful, why? Because they dealt with those problems at the same time as addressing high quality instructions. Yes, we place such strongest principals and strongest teachers in the most challenging in the schools but you also put washing machines in the building so parents can do laundry. You also have asthma pumps in your nurse's office. You also make sure that kids have gloves and hats and thermal underwear in the wintertime. That's what the most successful turnaround schools in Memphis have done. (222, P5)

Participants in this cluster also converged in their support of school choice policies as a solution to improve school quality, and some even supported school vouchers. They thought that parents could exercise agency to exit the public school system and to make better schooling decisions for their children. With choice, they believed that students could have better long-term life opportunities. Here is an emotional response from a conservative political representative in Tennessee when asked to talk about his preference for school vouchers:

I visited some schools in Memphis and schools elsewhere and I left in tears. Kids didn't have a chance, and if you--you can--if you're in a failing school, you can't go to another school, at all, and I think and even

provided transportation, but you reach a point if you go pin and mark the schools that are failing. You know, your next school closest is failing. You know, then you reach a point that you go, "Well, here's one that's not failing, but it's full," so you can't get in there, and then you're winding up looking at maybe 45 minute bus trip or an hour to go over here, and the parent is saying--or the mom and dad, "I kinda want my kids closer. If there's a problem, I wanna be able to go there." Then, you look at the opportunities outside of that and therefore that becomes a viable option for parents, that saying, you know, I would maybe--there's a school two blocks down the road here, that is X and that could be something that my kid can go to and it's still in my community. So, therefore, that became the motivation to look at the voucher issue with the kids that were failing. (213, P9)

A leader from the Memphis school choice community expressed her support for vouchers as well. She described that vouchers helped poor students gain access to better schools that were usually privileged for the children of White elites. She argued that financially large vouchers could make a difference for minority students to access elite private schools:

Oh, I'm a big fan [of vouchers]...I'm a huge fan of quality, not just experience. I just don't need to go to private schools for the sake of going to private schools, I need kids to go to high performing private schools where they're gonna have to build a level of social capital that their wealthy, white counterparts are going to have, and we are not--in Tennessee--like, I'm all in because my thing is, I need poor families to have all the options that rich families have, right? So, that's my--yes I support it, want kids to have a bunch of opportunities, but what I want is I want kids to have vouchers that are \$20,000. That's what I want. I want vouchers to be high! I want them to be a lot of money. Right? So, I don't need 5,000--I don't want 5,000 vouchers for \$6,000. Get me 2,000 vouchers for \$20,000 because that will change the game for poor Black children. (222, P5)

Charter schools were another favorite policy tool that these thinkers believed could be game changers to lift student performance. Several of the participants espoused the mainstream talking points about the benefits of charters, such as the advantage of existing in a deregulated space and being able to make changes to classroom environments quickly, while also discussing the drawbacks of traditional public schools, such as their institutional sluggishness and bureaucratic red-tape. A representative of a large charter management organization gave his perspective, offering a unique angle. He argued that charter schools were better than traditional public schools at getting resources to poor communities and addressing the issue of poverty. The logic followed that without the bureaucratic and slow-moving constraints of the traditional public school district, charters—deregulated institutions operating in marketplace conditions—could move a lot quicker to deliver wraparound services to poor communities:

...there is more to what is going on in this student's life outside of school but that's why we come in with lots of mental support a lot of after school programming, with safe passage with working with families and doing community engagement. So it would be a lot for us to say it's just for the teachers in the classroom, that's the heart of our model, but we are also in this type of community...we do mental health, visual, dental and medical for the students and families. A lot of them have never visited a dentist, and never like, like nothing right. So we brought in all those programs. Listen, I'll be the first one to tell you that it's not easy to teach kids that are behind by high school time. And they live at extreme poverty and violent communities. (120, P5)

Some also argued that charter schools were deeply integrated into local communities and engaged parents and community members in a way that traditional public schools could not. A school choice leader in Memphis made the point that several of the charter schools were started by parent leaders, or were started by long-standing members of the Memphis community:

I think one of the things that's been wonderful to me here in Memphis is that Memphis, unlike many of the cities, we have chartered leadership that reflects our community in ways that a lot of cities do not. We are

majority a minority city, so some of our highest performing charters are made by people of color who are Memphis, if not natives, have lived here for a very long time. We have not had a huge influence of folks who have come in and started schools. There has been some, but even most people who started schools who might be from New Jersey or TFA, they've come to Memphis and had been here for 10 years or 20 years or made this a community, understand the dynamics, understand the families and have really tried to create schools that are responsive to that. (222, P5)

In sum, the policy influencers within this cluster favored other policy ideas that were saturated with market-based logic. They embraced the idea of charter schools, vouchers, innovation zones, and community schools that operated in deregulated spaces. To many of the participants, markets opened up the way for changes to be made more quickly to school environments and also made social mobility possible. While not stated explicitly in the findings presented above, several participants made small mentions that they drew these ideas from knowledge sources in their social networks. Some looked to national social justice networks and coalitions, while others trusted in influential conservative think tanks or powerful political actors (like Senator Lamar Alexander or Florida Governor Jeb Bush). Despite these shared policy preferences, three very distinct moral narratives supported this policy conception. The chapter now turns to the moral narratives.

What are the moral narratives underlying the policy consensus?

Underlying the policy consensus were important distinctions between the moral narratives of different thinkers within this group of thinkers. Each moral narrative is defined by unique worldviews toward interpersonal group relationships, human nature, and redistribution and fairness. This section reviews each of the moral narratives in turn, drawing on evidence from the conversations to reveal the moral undertones of their policy ideas.

Moral Narrative #1 – Social Justice Entrepreneurs

Twelve individuals, 7 from California and 5 from Tennessee had a unique moral narrative centered on discourses of historic, systemic inequality mixed with undertones of individual agency. Several of the participants were leaders of Charter Management Organizations or large-scale charter networks, two led parent empowerment organizations, and a few worked for single-issue education advocacy groups (for instance, organizations like Teach For America with a single focus on teacher quality).

Views of 'others' and group relationships

More so than any other group of thinkers, the 12 thinkers within this cluster were more than willing to talk about race, class, and power relationships in U.S. society. Across the board, the dynamics of group relationships were at the forefront of the conversation and were woven throughout their policy and moral ideas. To the 12 thinkers who embodied this moral narrative, they saw broader group relationships in the U.S. through the lens of systemic inequality that stratified opportunities and economic outcomes by race and class. They talked at length about power relationships based on race and class hierarchies, as well as historical patterns of institutional exclusion based on race. For many of these participants, historical racism and exclusion at the systemic level made it impossible for minority communities to accumulate wealth over time because of state and federal laws, norms, and institutions that prohibited them from accessing the same opportunities as White communities. A school choice advocate from

California made this point and connected the systemic argument directly to the school system. She described how issues of systemic exclusion and racial oppression were elements ingrained into the school system over time and made the point that the school system was inadequately designed to address the needs of minority, immigrant, and poor communities. She also hinted that these issues resonated within her own personal life experiences, which brought conviction to her argument:

Oh, God. It's historical -- See, this is me as a personal person and as a parent, of course, a personal person... The educational system in the United States wasn't built to -- originally, the people who got educated were White males, it was a privileged class who were invited to join the -- to be in schools or who were afforded the opportunity to go to schools, and then later it became okay to add other people to that mix. And while it became acceptable later to add other people to that mix of education the education system itself didn't change. It just said, "Okay. Let's add these people." And so, it had -- the system is not that old where it could self-adjust or without some real intentional change to a system like that... We have certain schools and we have certain districts... trying to right a wrong system but for the most part the education system not just in the state, but in the country, how schools are run traditionally isn't for everybody. And so, if you accept that then you can kind of understand why there's an achievement gap because it wasn't built for Black people, it wasn't built for students with disabilities. It wasn't built for English learners. It wasn't built for anybody that had any kind of range of different modalities and none of that was thought of when the goal was to educate these upper class privileged, White young folks, which is more of a -- so we're still -- schools are still failing because we haven't uprooted that system. (118, P5)

Despite the recognition of systemic inequalities, this group, which I term 'social justice entrepreneurs,' was convinced that education was an opening in the social fabric where social mobility was possible and believed that success in the education system was a way to escape poverty and experience greater socioeconomic opportunities. This point was emphasized in the section outlining the causes of the policy problem, but to clarify this point here, it was the social justice entrepreneurs who believed that low-income and minority students must get their education 'at all costs' to escape poverty. A leader of a charter management organization in California reinforced this belief:

So our fear is that the bottom five percent schools... states need to do something about it... The bottom five percent, low income tends to be the population that's mostly struggling in schools. We actually know what can be done with those populations, if you actually offer good schooling. You can get them out of poverty. They're one generation away from exiting poverty, if you actually educate them. But right now the system isn't educating them, at all. And so we are incredibly focused on that portion of the population. I don't give a shit about, frankly, accountability for the other 95%. (120, P5)

This belief was also reinforced by the personal, lived experience of many of the social justice entrepreneurs. A good portion of the social justice entrepreneurs were African American and had excelled in the education system, despite coming from impoverished communities. An African American leader in the Memphis education reform community briefly described how accessing elite academic institutions made it possible for her to not only to gain human capital, but also important social and cultural capital that was necessary for social mobility:

...but I, and my peers--Black folk going to the Harvard's and the Michigan's, the Carolina's and the Georgetown's, we had education leaders that put us in close proximity to wealthy White, privileged White people that we built levels of social capital and learned to navigate the world in a way that was transformative for our life...(222, P5)

Social justice entrepreneurs indicated that poor performing schools not only limited students' chances for social mobility, but also limited the human potential they were capable of.

Again, the African American leader from Memphis described her personal experience growing up poor but having a deep appreciation for dancing and artistic expression. She made the argument that her fundamental opportunities in life to express herself were limited by the school she went to as a child:

Like, I am a competitive dancer. Every time we--and I started like in ballroom, urban ballroom dancing, and people always ask, "Are you classically trained?" I was like, "No, I grew up in the poorest zip code in Memphis. I was not classically trained in anything," and I just think about, like, it's my joke. Like, I was on Broadway and I went to see *Fela!* and said, "Dammit. Like, if I was somewhere else, if I grew up in another community, if I went to a different kind of elementary school where we had art and we had dance and we had music, and we had teachers who weren't working on an itty bitty scrap of a budget anyway to provide those things for us, you know, if I went to a different school, I would have had a different life. I mean, would I have been a competitive dancer that spent my life dancing? You know, I might probably not, but I didn't ever get the opportunity...And again, that is informed by my own mandate. As a highly accomplished and highly successful poor child who is now a professional, but I was a great dancer. Not one ballet program in my neighborhood, not one modern dance program in my neighborhood. Like, where would I go and do that? They sure didn't do it at my schools, not in elementary school, not in high school, not in middle school... Like, we all hear a great story or we read--one kid who was super talented was picked out by some benevolent family, but dammit, I don't wanna rest on a kid hitting the lottery, or somebody hears them singing in the subway. Like, "Oh, you're talented. I should pay for you to go to Juilliard." Heck no, you're not getting a deal like that. (222, P5)

She went on to make the clear connection between the scant life opportunities provided to children in most low-performing schools and how it constrained human potential:

...Like, just because you're poor, you know...Like, anyone in this neighborhood wants do that, and a lot of students are artists. If they don't have art, guess what? Goodbye. Our student loves foreign language. They don't have foreign language at their school? Goodbye. Or if they don't have foreign language in their school, let's take them to a Chinese emergence center after school, let me take 'em to this, let me take 'em to that... Like, that feels unconscionable to me that poor families do not have the same opportunity. (222, P5)

When discussing poverty, social justice entrepreneurs also recognized class differences in the U.S. and discussed ways that class interacted with race, poverty, and the education system. There was a general thrust behind their moral discourse to help all oppressed communities escape poverty and reach better socioeconomic positions:

And so, there is a, so, there is a poverty dynamic, but in Tennessee, our poverty is so racialized, like in rest of America, and I think in our state is so distinctive. Like, in West Tennessee is predominantly African American, middle Tennessee is a little bit more of a mix of black, brown, and white, and then East Tennessee is disproportionately White, with a bit of brown. And so, I think it is, it is really easy to say that these are issues of race, they actually are issues of class because poor white children here in the state of Tennessee are educated in paternalistic, low-- you know, what I would call the pedagogy of the oppressed as well, that we don't expect poor children from rural Tennessee and Appalachia to aspire to college and we don't really expect-- that there's a factory or a mine or a local store that they'll work at and they'll be fine for the rest of their life. And it has been the government of our state that's saying, "No, actually we need to be able to compete globally and that means all of our children need a quality education." And so, I think it's had to come from the top, not just for Memphis, but it has to come from the top from Knoxville and Chattanooga too because it's easy like, like I think we are part of a coalition of folks who continue to say that this is justice for all children, but the poorest children in the state... (222, P5)

Another dimension of their view of group relationships was the articulation of systemic advantages maintained by wealthy Whites. A handful of social justice entrepreneurs at some point during the interview mentioned specific ways that elites created structures that prohibited poor and minority students from accessing equal educational opportunities. For example, a leader

of teacher reforms in Tennessee spoke at length about the advantages wealthy Whites had in the education system, pointing to elite boarding schools as an example of systemic exclusion. She argued that such schools maintained systemic inequalities because they were inaccessible to most with their expensive tuition. Here are a few excerpts from a conversation with her:

... and that's what--and that's what the resistance--that's what the community resistance is making because we have a system of schools that opened when they started integration to say we are gonna retreat and we want the price point at such a level that it won't be accessible for you guys...so they won't have to make these opportunities available to *those* children, because nobody wants *those* children, really. (222, P5)

Without acknowledging--like, you put a system in place. Like, there is a system in place that is a poor person, I cannot access the same things you access, or people say like --I gotta--you know, everybody has a good chance. Everybody gets public education--good education. Are you kidding me? Like, your education at Exeter is nothing like education in South Memphis. Nothing. We may as well be on different planets. But that's what people have to tell themselves to not believe that they are agents in that person's oppression. (222, P5)

View of human nature

As mentioned previously, there was consensus among the Market Control accountability thinkers that teachers were the primary cause of low academic achievement. Of the thinkers with the social justice entrepreneur moral narrative, they believed that teachers, through their inherent biases and low expectations for students, reproduced broader systemic inequalities; in this vein, they were very distrustful of human nature. Here is a school choice advocate in Tennessee who gave her definition of teacher bias:

I think people sort of just adjust to kids coming in behind and they don't see, they don't feel the urgency to get them, 2 grades... 2 grade levels, up right? And to actually get them up faster than you would normal kids to try to really just do whatever it takes and so, there is just passivity, right, about them coming in behind and we're just going to do the best we can, and I also don't think people see the long view right? They have these kids for 9 months and that's that. Instead of seeing a larger continuum. When I think to you have some inherit bias and racism involved. I think you have teachers who are uninterested or unable to connect with their students in a way that I think makes more meaningful learning environment...(211, P5)

In order to break the pattern of teachers who reinforced a 'culture of low expectations' they believed disadvantaged students needed access to the highest quality teachers who were willing to help poor and minority students overcome systemic oppression and historic inequality by helping students excel in the education system. A social justice entrepreneur who organized parents around school choice initiatives in California gave an impassioned description of his ideal teacher and what teachers ought to accomplish for students:

When I think about what, in essence, we're all trying to accomplish in reforming education or in working towards equity-- I want to get a kid around a group of adults that give a shit about that kid, and they're really good at their job and they treat that child like the child is their own, and they see how wonderful and special person they are and believe in that young person...by working hard, being good at their craft, by the blood, sweat and tears get what it takes to educate someone and respect someone. Like they believe that they follow through on the fact that like, that, that young person is as good as that young person anywhere and can do whatever any other young person has the potential to do, and they see their work as an act of dismantling those white supremacists, the racist structures and class structures in our country. ...Where their child is surrounded by the best people, who are the best at their jobs, and give a damn and get it, right. (128, P5)

However, it was difficult for social justice entrepreneurs to believe that high quality teachers could be found in the lowest-performing schools serving low-income and minority students. With great frustration, a leader of a charter management organization passionately expressed his dissatisfaction with school professionals at low-performing schools, recounting the impressions he took away from an experience at a high-poverty school:

Yeah, and so you kind of look at, like the attitude [from teachers] in those schools [very low-performing schools] is like “these kids are animals, these kids cannot learn, they are not ready,” and it's kind of true the kids are behind. They inherited those kids right? They inherited those kids without knowing how to read and write so you see these teachers going, “what the? How am I gonna fix that?” And so it builds a culture of, “what do you want me to do?” Like right? “It's the poverty, it's the community, those parents are animals.” It is the simmering, just racism. It's just like right there at the surface and if you don't like to change that completely -- and I'm not trying to be a jerk here...but actually going in and saying you know what, this situation has to stop. (120, P5)

More so than any other group of individuals, the social justice entrepreneurs talked at length about the connection between low quality teachers and their inability to help students escape systemic conditions of poverty that had been passed down from generation to generation. In their minds, bad teachers and failing schools kept the cycle of poverty in motion, and it was difficult for them to trust all teachers in low-performing schools wholeheartedly. To social justice entrepreneurs they disagreed with the argument that ‘poverty causes low-performing schools’. To them, the opposite was true: ‘low-performing schools cause poverty,’ and they held the line on this perspective with a ‘no excuses’ approach. Several leaders of charter school reforms clearly expressed this point:

Some of it [causes of the achievement gap] is very much about low expectations on behalf of kids. This is all we can expect, ‘they have hard lives. What else would you want us to do?’ It's really hard not to want to reach across the table and strangle them at that point. (111, P5)

Like, the other side of that, to me, is, you know--and I think, you know, California's kind of on the cusp of this is, like, to what extent do you just trust the, you know--there's an argument that teachers come in and say, “Oh, we're teachers. We care about education. Trust us to deliver education,” and there's an extent to which that is--like, I don't know if I'm that trusting. Like, I don't--I don't, you know--so, there's this model where you go too much to the other side of you saying well, like, there's this trust that you want to provide, but how do you make sure--like, we didn't just get to where we are in terms of kids not being able to read and having a challenge at achieving academically, and whether we could measure it previously or not, we know based on our current community that this has been happening for 20 or 30 years because we've got a community that is not well-established to be able to--I mean, we've got too high an illiteracy rate to have said that our system has been working for a long time, or we've got too high of a jobless rate or a poverty rate to be able to say that our school has been servicing folks well. So, this is not something that just happened. (224, P5)

...you know, if you look at the Watts zip code, this is less than 1 percent of residents that had a college degree. It is the lowest income zip code in California. And it has you know, we literally, we have students whose mother, grandmother and great grandmother dropped out of Pine High School [a pseudonym]. It's inter-generational. And the school caused it. I hate to blame it only on the school, but like, there's a point where you're like, for 30 years, have failed to just deliver on the basics. You gotta do something different. (120, P5)

To address their distrust towards teachers, social justice entrepreneurs strongly believed in the power of sanctions, external pressure, and external monitoring to motivate changes to the teaching profession and the traditional public school system. A school choice leader in California articulated her support for consequences:

... I don't know, I do think that they have-- maybe not pressure but there definitely has to be some sort of consequence, you know, and some looming consequence that you know what's going to happen if you fail on this specific ways and don't shape up....(118, P5)

This punitive view towards human motivation was common sense to the social justice entrepreneurs. Some directly related the concept of external pressure and consequences to their own lived experiences:

I do, I do agree with the external pressure. My mother externally pressured me as a child [laughter]. So, it worked for me as my own little narrow research perspective right there. (222, P5)

I think I respond to pressure, I think everybody kind of responds to pressure. I don't really like it, I don't really like being held accountable, but I like my Board of Directors, they are my boss. But like, that is just sort of how it is, I think, and how it needs to be. Some pressure helps us to focus on what is important and make improvements where needed. So yes, I think pressure and accountability are really important on public systems. Particularly on public systems where they are monopolies or close to being monopolies. (115, P5)

While the social justice entrepreneurs viewed school professionals and the traditional public school system morally responsible for reproducing systemic inequality, on the flip side, they also articulated undertones of individualism, believing in the power of the individual to express agency and choice to escape low-performing schools and under-performing teachers on their own. Social justice entrepreneurs strongly believed that individuals were agents of change; they were emboldened by the power of parents to choose better schools and to take responsibility for their students' education. And the marketplace provided them with the venue where parents had presumably better options. To a leader of a large school choice organization, choice in a marketplace was so natural as to be taken-for-granted. She revealed this notion by asking simple rhetorical questions:

...shouldn't parents get to choose where their kids go to school? Why should it be up to some random school district to decide that this parent is going to get X, and this other parent is going to get Y. It's public education. It's the taxpayer's money. I just don't know why it shouldn't be up to the parents and the families to find what's the best fit for them. (111, P5)

To the social justice entrepreneurs, policy instruments such as data were refreshing 'weapons' that parents could use to fight individual teacher biases and greater systemic oppression. Data became a tool where parents could challenge the status quo and be agents of change in their school environment. A school choice advocate in California deeply believed that when parents engaged with data they could be agents of transformative change in their schools and communities. She also drew on her own experience as a parent to engage with data at her child's school, deepening her belief in the power of parents to use data to create change in the behavior of school professionals:

I think that one of the most important voices and groups of people that can fight for that once they see data what's working and what's not, like really get reliable data of what's working and what's not, are parents. As a parent, I'll fight everyday for my kids like I am a momma bear. Like I'm not allowing bullshit to happen. They're my kids. And so, if -- and I have really strong views about what education should look like and what's possible in their school in the 8 years that they'll be in it or whatever. So, I have strong opinions, but I'm also realistic. I want to go in there and just bash people over the head and say, "This has got to change." but it can be very I am armed with data about which should and shouldn't happen at my kid's school level getting what I know about what should happen there. And so, I can advocate with them in a really strong but sometimes frightening way [chuckles] for those, for the folks at my school. I think they know that I am

sane and reasonable and approachable but I'm also like, I got compelling data so why is it the way it is and they go, "Oh sh--." [chuckles] (118, P5)

Further on in the conversation, she expressed her logic about how data could be used to undo the systemic inequalities that teachers reproduce in the classroom through their biases and low expectations:

I think that's powerful and I think that data is the only way that some of those conversations get shifted and some action actually takes place because we've got data. Data is critical for that. Data is critical for getting reasonable, rationale people who are racist or and don't know it, or somehow have these views that only certain people are suppose to have them. Data is one of the strongest reasons to have these-- otherwise, rational people see, "Oh, my God. There really is an access issue." or "There's really an opportunity issue here that I didn't see before. Let's do something about it." Data is key. Yeah, data is it. (118, P5)

It's an essential part without having some really sound data around how kids and schools are doing. It is difficult to convince anyone that there's a real critical, dyer issue in education right now. I think how human being function is just kind of 'creatures of habit'. And so, bad schools have always been around. So we've kind of trained ourselves to think, "Oh, they'll always be around." But if you kind of see some data that says, 'well these students, even though you have some expectation that these students are not going to do well, they actually doing really well under these particular circumstances under that particular light', and that can be really eye opening and in the right hands that can be really agitational to the point where people want to fight for that to be the model, and policymakers can do that fighting. Whoever has access to that data can do that fighting. (118, P5)

Aside from empowering parents with data, social justice entrepreneurs also believed that parents could innovate and be emboldened to create their own schools. A charter schools advocate with a background in grassroots organizing explained how he engaged parents to start their own charter schools in the Bay Area after taking a trip to New York City together:

...and so, we were learning about these things called "charter schools" and learned about what New York City had done, and I think district two in New York City, giving groups of teachers the sort of free reign to design amazing new prototype schools; they would be smaller and have more autonomy inside existing much larger school buildings. And so, we got fascinated by this idea of how districts could start new schools and as well as these new things called charter schools, that were just getting created, the idea was just coming about; there weren't any in the Bay Area at that time. And this big group of parents we went out, like a bunch of parents who hadn't been out of the Bay before, we went out and visited some of these schools in New York City, both charter schools and some of these new district schools. Parents got totally fascinated by it and saw kids just like their kids getting educated at this really, really high level and came back from that trip, to make the long story short, convinced like, we need to do this in the Bay Area. (115, P5)

The entrenched belief in the power of individual agency also played out in social justice entrepreneurs' thinking about the role of the state in education reform. While they did not outright express distrust of the state, the state stayed in the background of the conversation. Social justice entrepreneurs thought that the state had a role to play in policy functions such as setting standards, facilitating information for parents, producing good and easy to understand data, then putting pressure on schools in the form of consequences and intervening in failing schools with turnaround approaches. But they stopped short of casting moral responsibility onto the state to solve the problem of low academic achievement; instead, this moral shaming was reserved for school professionals.

Since they were extremely distrustful of the teaching profession, several participants mentioned that if more money was going to the schools, they thought the money might be wasted

on the profession instead of actually helping students. They tended to agree that money was part of the overall equation of school improvement, but the high degree of distrust trumped their willingness to see more money go blindly into the hands of school professionals. There was a sense that if more money were allocated to the schools, teachers and school professionals in low-performing schools would just ‘waste’ the money. A leader of a charter organization shared a vignette about the low-quality teachers he found in low-performing schools and described why he thought that more money should not go into the hands of the ‘rejects’ of the traditional public school teaching profession:

I mean, we find people like, they, Jesus, not to be -- there was some teachers in the school that first of all, there was a guy who was -- I was literally in the meeting with the teachers, and this guy was just drunk off his ass and wanted to fight me, wanted to box me. The teacher and I didn't know he was a teacher at this time, I was like, "who is this guy?" And he said, "just ignore him he's an alcoholic." And I'm like, "what is he, is he like a security guard?" "No no, he's a teacher". "And he teaches?" Like "well, he never shows up". And you know, the rejects of the system end up there [at the lowest performing schools]. Right? Because nobody wants to go there, everybody who's got a little bit of tenure bolts out of there. They get new teachers, or they get the teachers that every other school has kicked out. But they can't fire them, so they end up in this really terrible school and you have a circle where like the kids that need most help have like the worst teachers. So giving money -- I don't wanna be completely negative like because I think there might be situations where the state could send money and actually there's a willing, cause there is willingness, there are a lot of good people at the district who wanted to do the right thing. It's not like there's an evil system out there trying to screw kids. It's just their hands are very tied in what they can do. (121, P5)

He conceptualized the overarching problem of low-performing traditional public schools centering in on the low-quality teachers at the lowest performing schools. He argued that districts were unable to allocate the best teachers to the schools most in need of improvement, and therefore, giving low-performing schools more money was simply seen as a waste:

LAUSD cannot do that, cannot do it. This is an important point. They cannot do it by union contract, they cannot tell teachers to go to Pine High School [a pseudonym]. And every one of the best teachers in LAUSD, trust me, they live far away from Pine and they do not want to go work in Pine. They just don't want to. And so, the school is stricken the school is very -- so you'll end up with these option one's and option two's which is, "let's just take the money, change the principle, maybe like, you know, like start anew". But it just falls apart very quickly...(121, P5)

To those with direct experience in school turnaround strategies, they were more convinced that charter conversions or firing the school staff and starting ‘fresh’ was a much more effective strategy than continuing to invest more resources in low-performing schools and professionals. To them, putting money towards charter management organizations or other programs that could allocate the best teachers to low-performing schools was a better option than just giving more resources to the lowest-quality teachers at traditional public schools:

...just to summarize it in a phrase what we always say is just "Invest in success. Don't continue investing in failure." Like if we're gonna give the same money to the same school with the same actors who've been failing these kids... But the likelihood of them, like having like "shoosh"! Like a complete lobotomy and just, you know, all of a sudden being great for the kids is very unlikely. It's just very hard to do. (120, P5)

So listen, right. I get in trouble with this, I have never seen--the billions of dollars that were wasted. Yeah, from the federal government on school improvement grants. Only 5% of schools that achieved it [improvement from receiving SIG funding]. Absolutely nothing, it's stunning. The reality of schools like Pine High School [a pseudonym], they were in the bottom 5%. If you don't do something radical like all

these adults need to go, and you, and you said adults need to show up and actually do something radically different for kids like those schools are not gonna improve. That's my opinion. (120, P5)

...the truth is there's some toxic school environments out there where you have a ton of inertia around failure. What shakes that up? How far can you get in just like demand, like observing people, or trying to do better work and replacing retiring staff and transferring staff, like the right hires and inspiring people. The threat of the school being shut down and people's whole routine being totally disrupted was also a motivating force...(128, P5)

I would just say like I think I'm torn because we know how expensive it is to do turnaround so I would never wanna say "No money shouldn't go towards turn around". We'd wanna make sure though that the money that was going to school turn around was going to operators or organizations or programs that were actually invested in turning it around because there are so many reports out there that just show you, like, if you are just throwing money at the problem, you're really not doing anything except wasting money. (121, P5)

While distrustful of giving more resources to school professionals at low-performing schools, they advocated for more resources to go towards social services to schools located in low-income communities. They strongly believed that holistic reforms were missing from impoverished communities and envisioned that the 'community school' model could bring better services to both students and their families for what they lacked at home (i.e. food, clothing, medical services, Laundromats, etc.). In a sense, like the humanists, they recognized the lack of the welfare state but imagined that it could be built inside the school system. There was an important caveat to this point: they also thought that the marketplace, via charter schools, could be quicker to respond to these other community needs, and could more quickly integrate wraparound services into the school environment instead of waiting for the sluggish public school district and public programs to respond to local needs.

Views of justice

More so than any other moral narrative, participants who expressed a social justice entrepreneur narrative were more than willing to talk about equity as it related to minority and low-income students. They cared deeply about improving education opportunities for African American, Hispanic, and low-income students and saw immediate solutions to improve their education opportunities by seizing options in the marketplace. An interesting point arose during interviews when social justice entrepreneurs were asked about the concept of justice and fairness. A few participants were asked about the idea of equality versus equity as they related to social outcomes. To a school choice leader in California, the concept of equality made her uncomfortable. To her, opportunities had never been equal for minority communities over time. To her, equity was a more suitable concept to define how schools should provide opportunities to students to gain better social outcomes:

When you say equal that makes me uncomfortable. It should definitely be equitable. I don't know whether it's fair that it's 'now equal' because it's been unequal for so very long. Equitable would be like, "okay, it's your turn now. I've been waiting for 400 years". So that's why I'm kind of reacting to equal, just the word equal. But I think in essence of what you're saying yeah, student equity has more to do with making sure that everyone has access, that there's no one that's systematically being shut out of the system where we all have access to these great outcomes because I don't think now that's what happens. You know, there are people who, they're students and groups that do not have access to certain things that other groups have. (118, P5)

Arguably, her outlook towards fairness is connected to social justice entrepreneurs' perceptions of historic inequalities and their belief in strident individualism. Given that there have always been systemic inequalities, it was difficult and even uncomfortable for the participant quoted above to even think about the concept of equality in U.S. society. To her, the most that could be accomplished in the school system was to create systems for equal opportunities and to maximize the chances an individual has to climb the social ladder.

Summary

The social justice entrepreneurs' moral narrative was defined by individuals who tended to see the organization of U.S. society through the worldview of systemic inequalities based on race and class hierarchies and power relationships. They thought that there was a broader system in place that has evolved over time, privileging White elites and excluding poor people and minorities from equal opportunities, especially as systemic inequalities related to the education system. While they strongly defended this perspective for minority students, they also extended this moral narrative to poor White students as well.

The focus on systemic inequalities and an oppressive, hierarchical social system set the foundation of social justice entrepreneurs' moral narratives. Participants offered structural reflections freely without much probing. But imbedded into the structural argument was an unyielding belief in the power of an education to escape poverty. Several made passing reference to the Civil Rights movement and the violence Black communities were willing to endure in order to access higher quality schooling. With a mental frame focused on schools alone, when social justice entrepreneurs looked at the problem of low-performance in "failing schools" the cause to them was simple: Teachers were to blame for their apathy in breaking the cycle of poverty. They imagined that the best teachers should teach in the worst schools, and that when teachers were doing their jobs, students could excel in the education system and escape poverty. This argument held an important nuance. They expected teachers alone to undo structural inequality and the history of racial oppression. When they thought about how to improve low-performing schools, punitive consequences for teachers and for individual schools were a natural response. Several of the participants shared personal experiences growing up with discipline in their household or admitted that they faced external pressure in the jobs that they held.

Aside from putting more pressure on schools to improve, social justice entrepreneurs looked for 'escape routes' from the public school system, and ideas like charter schools and vouchers were natural fits. They believed in the power of individual agency and a marketplace venue with many different options for parents to send their children was seen favorably. They also thought that parents themselves could be innovators. At least two individuals mentioned that their respective organization engaged parents to start their own charter schools. Like the humanists, social justice entrepreneurs also warmed to the idea of community schools, but they preferred to see community schools integrated into a charter school since it was more likely for charters to have the freedom to address social services adequately.

Social justice entrepreneurs did not perceive the state as an agent of change, nor did they hold the state morally responsible for systemic inequalities. Instead, they tended to put faith in the power of the individual to create change through the market system. Social justice entrepreneurs also made strong connections between individual agency and the ability of parents

to use policy instruments such as data as a ‘weapon’ to undo the biases and low expectations of those who were the target of blame—public school professionals.

Given their strong distrust of school professionals, they did not think that giving more money to teachers at low-performing schools—where they believed the lowest quality teachers were located—would make a difference. Instead, some argued that using turnaround strategies such as charter school takeovers or school closure would be a much better strategy for school improvement since fresh programs or deregulated organizations could get the best teachers into the classrooms quickly.

Moral Narrative #2 - Paternalists

The *Paternalist* moral narrative, advocated by just four individuals in the sample, could most easily be identified by a belief system that valued discipline, external pressure, and support for rule-following and norms of appropriate behavior. All four Paternalists were from Tennessee and identified politically as Republicans or independent voters. Two represented a market-oriented think tank for school reform, one was a highly networked individual in the conservative policymaking community, and another was an influential state representative.

Views of group relationships

Conversations with this small group of individuals did not focus explicitly on interpersonal group relationships, even when questions were posed directly to address the concept of race. For example, when asked to respond to the critique that the Achievement School District experimented with impoverished minority communities, or when asked whether they thought heavy-handed reforms punished the poor, race and class issues were muted in their response since they tended to use technical language about ‘underperforming subgroups’, ‘failing schools’, or ‘poor academic communities’ to give their response. A few participants recognized that state-centered reforms in Tennessee, such as the Achievement School District, tended to be located in poor communities, but they stopped short of mentioning race and did not delve into the historic connection between race and poverty. Here are examples of how a few participants responded to critiques that centralized state policies punished or experimented with poor and minority communities:

So, I think the experimentation is not maybe the right word in the sense that when the ASD goes in it's using a method or a concept that they know the results. In other words, it has been applied here or here and it's worked. Which, if they come in with a recommendation, it's predicated on research that this concept or this charter program or this organization or this type school or this whatever it might be we know from, research works. (213, P6)

And I, you know, I would, I would contend the problem in that it, it's normal in education because ASD was set up under the Race to the Top. I mean it was built into that as a strategy that was all tied to all the work early work that was done then about how do you address historically, you know, schools who historically have not done right by kids, you know. They have failed, have a history of failing children over time and, and as my colleague called out, those just happen to fail because there are more schools in Memphis and Shelby County area you know, they happen to fall there. (207, P7)

Well, why do they impose it [the ASD] in Memphis? I mean, Memphis has been a problem in our state for forty years, fifty years, and there's no solution to how to address the situation except to go in school by school, hiring the most competent people, give them the resources they need--but you're dealing with--and I argue--societal issues that are not--that are beyond your measure. (208, P7)

While the Paternalists did not talk directly about race, they were willing to address the issue of class by talking about higher-income communities that were politically empowered. Political empowerment was prevalent during an interview with an influential individual strongly networked with the Republican policymaking community both inside the state of Tennessee and nationally. In the following excerpt, he argued that resources and political empowerment can influence whether or not a centralized state reform—such as the Achievement School District—will enter different types of communities:

I think it's interesting that the places that Achievement School District has gone. I mean, there's a school in Willow County [a pseudonym]--one of the most prestigious Lily White communities and very 'well to do'. They had a school, Birch Academy [a pseudonym], that didn't make its growth score. So, technically, it would've been a school that would have been subjected to being taken over by ASD. So, my question is, why didn't they take that? They didn't want that political fight. I mean, you got a lot of the leadership in there. Whereas, in Memphis it's easy to make a political fight...In that community they have--I mean, it's just--it's sheer number--I mean, their leadership, house--Charles Sergeant is the chair of the House Finance so he can keep it [the ASD] out. So, a budget comes in front of him, "Well, strike it out for my community." I mean, there's so much-- and for years in the Republican politics with Tennessee as a Democratic state, Willow County's [a pseudonym] probably the second most Republican district in the state and they fund a lot of Republicans around the state. Money's come out of there, but I mean, I'm--I just don't know that there's a willingness of--or a political appetite to make that fight. (208, P7)

He also drew broader comparisons to national politics and discussed whether or not the new Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, Betsy Devos, would implement school choice policies in wealthy, elite communities. The same point about political empowerment is elaborated but at the national level:

And but I don't think that she's [Betsy Devos] an evil person, she's a very nice person, I think she means well, but it's just the sheltered life...it's the same reason why you don't have an ASD school in Lewison county, I mean it's, you don't fight... we don't fight our own people you know, we don't, *we don't do that* [emphasis]. And is she gonna be big enough to go into a Republican district and say, you know, Westchester County, New York and 'we're closing all your schools down or something', you know... (208, P7)

Views of human nature

Within the overarching moral narrative of these four individuals, views of human nature were the clearest and at the forefront of the interviews. One of the most defining elements of the paternalists' outlook towards human nature was a deep belief in external discipline as a core component to improvement. The belief in external discipline meant that the policy influencers thought low-performing schools needed to be exposed to pressure and consequences if they were to improve. This idea played out in the four participants' belief in the power of goal setting, competition, rigorous standards, and consequences to motivate changes to the teaching profession. A prominent conservative policymaker summed up his view of external discipline and his vision of what discipline in schools could accomplish by referencing the 1990's movie, *Lean on Me*:

The other movie [*Lean on Me*] the guy in New Jersey, he says we are gonna be tougher on you. I don't care if you're black, white, rich or poor in this school were gonna be tougher, we gonna expect more out of you, more help from you, you're gonna say 'yes sir, no sir, yes ma'am, no ma'am.' He got a little bull horn and some people were not his supporters. He ultimately had issues with one thing or another but the reality of it was that the African-American—can't think of his name [Morgan Freeman]. It's another example of-- he

deliberately said it, "We are gonna be tougher." And that the expectations were much higher with regard to behavior. And every kid in that school knew that, so but that's the issue, in my opinion. (213, P9)

Paternalists' perception of external discipline played out in other ways as well. All four of the participants strongly believed in the power of high standards, goal setting, and competition as a way to impose external discipline onto the schools. For example, one participant was very involved in exploring the success of educational systems in the international community, including countries in Europe and Southeast Asia. Notably, what he took away from studying school systems outside of the US was their focus on high standards, a component of the educational system design that could discipline schools and teachers to reach higher levels of achievement:

Looked around the world, and we said, "Why is all of a sudden Poland one of the best systems in the world? Why is Estonia, you know, knocking the top off of it? Here they are, just relatively new to the world of democracy. They just started from scratch and created their own school system, and they developed concepts and programs, and so on and so forth," and we looked and studied--I mean, I studied those. I mean, I met with people from those countries. Now, I looked at issues in Canada. I looked at Singapore. I looked at, you know, South Korea and Japan and Taiwan. Taiwan is a top ten kind of environment in the world. You know, what is it and why is it? Then, I looked at us and we were not as rigorous. You know, our demands were of a lesser nature. (213, P6)

A former school principal and now an influential proponent of market-based reforms in Tennessee discussed the importance of competition and goal setting in fostering external discipline to motivate school professionals. These themes were interwoven throughout her interview:

I mean we're competitive you know and we see part of our role and the Commissioner lead us to the department and that kind of thing is reminding people because when you're in, you're own community and your doing the work and you got your head down it's hard to remember. So part of what and what we do with our educators we've worked with is reminding them and sharing with them things they don't know about the progress we've made because I think not everybody- well we know not everybody really understands all of that. (207, P9)

Goals have to-- goals should be very lofty in my opinion. They should be very lofty but they should be attainable. I never believed one hundred percent of children [should be proficient in NCLB] because children don't come in nice little packages. They're not little machines you know, and they have their challenges and have their issues and that kind of thing so. And our goals are very rigorous but could be achieved you know, they could be. If everybody is doing their part and we're working really hard, it's possible. (207, P9)

Another participant believed in the power of physical punishment as a way to discipline students and improve student achievement. His belief in physical punishment is revealed in the following excerpts:

But how about the punishment, it is there? And it's a tough situation because some of those kids are the product of their parents. You know, you don't inherently learn how to cuss. I've listened to kids that were in kindergarten and it's sad, and you know who they learn it from? An adult. They know the f-word every other word, g-d [inaudible] I mean its just any of it. But I think, its gonna be, we need to address it. But come in and say that those principals [who suspend or expelled kids] were racist is wrong, number one. Like the question you raise, is there fairness of doling out punishment? That's the issue. (213, P9)

...The difficulty with us is that we have a lot of legal concepts that come into play that the teachers now have to kinda follow in reference to touching a child, you know has potential lawsuits and things of that nature that now occur. (213, P9)

The strong belief in discipline was woven into the participants' view of the state's role in education reform. To these thinkers, "If they [the schools] fail, then the state's gotta come in as the heavy hand" (213, P6). In their minds, the state could put in place external pressures that would discipline schools that were not meeting performance standards by creating consequences or external threats, such as school takeover by the Achievement School District. In their minds, the threat alone of a state takeover was enough to motivate schools to be more disciplined. They also imagined that the state could push 'failing' schools into the marketplace arena by enforcing school choice policies or voucher reforms for students at the lowest performing schools. To thinkers with a Paternalist moral narrative, markets and charters could create conditions of competition and discipline that were necessary for school improvement.

Rule-following was another component of their worldview towards human nature that came out in different ways. When discussing the importance of having the state set standards of performance or to create uniform policy tools (such as teacher evaluations), an influential leader of market-based reforms made this tacit belief in rule-following explicit: "We're kinda Southern, you know we're Southern. And we, we believe in rules you know, and those kinds of things. Somebody's gotta be the Momma and somebody's gonna make some rules or Daddy, or whatever" (207, P9).

When discussing perceptions of poor families, the four thinkers grouped under the label of 'paternalism' tended to blame poor parents for not parenting well, or for not teaching their children the 'right standards of behavior'. In this sense, it could be inferred that the Paternalists tended to blame parents for the policy problem just as much as they blamed teachers. One participant put it this way: "You know, they [poor students] were born into poverty, they maybe don't have parents who don't have experiences or many would say they don't parent well, or don't do what they're supposed to do..." (207, P9). In the following excerpt, a conservative lawmaker grappled with this concept. He clearly stated that he expects children to know 'appropriate behavior', but he wrestled with understanding how standards of appropriate behavior could be complicated by different cultural interpretations:

I know that my expectation of every child is appropriate behavior. There are some kids, that because of where they have to live, they're emotionally, and their psyche is such, that it's a different kind of approach. There is a Dr. Barnett Pierce has a research system in regards to Communication Theory As Relation Interpersonal Communication, and the meaning of a particular word for you may be different than me. And the issue of "Are you behaving" may be perceived differently than 'am I behaving'. Whereas I grew up in the environment that the issue of behaving had to do with smarting off to somebody, was a problem. Whereas another child may grow up saying "Well, that's not a problem" but if I commit a crime that's a problem. (207, P7)

While the four paternalists were quick to blame parents for not teaching their children the right standards of behavior, they withheld any blame for the individual child. Within their moral narrative was a strong ethic of care for poor children. The following two participants each expressed this ethic of care in different ways and were willing to overlook the shortcomings of poor children's families in order to care for children up until adulthood:

I love the story that President Bush used to tell, he walked into a room...he walks into a room and he says, we were talking about it and he said, 'I do not have sympathy for a 40-year old man who cannot figure out that drugs and alcohol will ruin his life. I do have sympathy for a 15-year old kid or 12-year old' And in his, in his passion was for, was what he was saying, and I, I think it was the theory is that you know, we've got

to take care of the younger and vulnerable and the people like that, and you know, how do you turn it around? (208, P9)

No, it's more the mentality of 'bless their heart.' Have you heard that phrase before? We use it a lot in the south...But it's this thing of wanting to help those that can't help themselves. Not faulting the children or the circumstances they have...I don't think that's just a southern thing, but—but I think that most of the people in this state would think that they have a big heart about taking care of those kids. (207, P9)

Views of justice

During interviews with these four individuals, few comments revealed their view towards fairness and equity. One participant mentioned in passing that more resources were important in order to improve low-performing schools for the 'socioeconomic disadvantaged', but it was not a clear focus of the conversation:

Socioeconomic--there is a relationship with socioeconomic issues that those kids tend to struggle academically, and that whenever you establish your funding mechanism you need to take that into account that that requires more dollars to educate a child that comes from a socioeconomic disadvantaged environment. The same thing with ELL kids. That takes a little more money. Same thing with special ed kids. That takes a little more money per child to accomplish the objectives. (208, P7)

Some talked about the importance of funding teaching salaries. A conservative lawmaker noted that the state of Tennessee had increased funding for teacher salaries over the past few years, but this was merely mentioned in passing:

Tennessee is also the fastest growing salary improvement state in the country for educators. We were putting more money, unprecedented amounts of money into our salary components with the BEP than ever before. This will be the third year in a row that we've had substantial--without a tax increase issue--money go on into education salaries, to their salaries. (213, P7)

Again, ideas about equity were only mentioned in passing during one interview. When discussing the state's Achievement School District, a leader of a prominent think tank made the point that the state's top-down efforts were intended to help students, even if the reforms were tough on school professionals: "But we would contend that, but even more so a reason to make sure that they have every opportunity in the world. That your zip code, or your skin color or anything should not determine what kind of education you get." (207, P7)

Summary

None of the four thinkers were willing to talk directly about race or the historic connection between race and poverty. Instead, they used the language of 'underperforming subgroups', 'failing schools' or 'poor academic communities' to talk about policy problem without addressing issues of race and class. However, they were willing to talk about political empowerment, and one participant did recognize that well-resourced and politically empowered communities were more likely to steer clear of the consequences of the centralized state, whereas poor communities put up less of a 'political fight'.

Views of human nature were the strongest moral component in these interviews and were centered on a deep belief in discipline. Paternalists' belief in discipline extended to support for rigorous standards, goal setting, competition, and in one case, physical punishment. They blamed parents for not knowing standards of good behavior, yet expressed an ethic of care for students that came from impoverished backgrounds and could not help the circumstances of their birth.

However, at least one participant clearly indicated expectations that students should know standards of good behavior and those standards should be enforced in the school system. Several participants mentioned the rule-setting function of the state and believed in the power of the state to enforce standards of behavior using the disciplinary aspects of state takeover of low-performing schools or exposing low-performing schools to the competitive pressures of the marketplace.

Discussions of redistribution and fairness were almost non-existent. Just a few excerpts stood out that addressed these concepts; one participant recognized that it cost more money to educate students with special needs and also recognized that resources were needed to increase teacher salaries. Another participant briefly talked about her idea of fairness, but it quickly faded into the background of the conversation.

Moral Narrative #3 – Empiricists

There were only four individuals who expressed this unique moral justification. *Empiricists* could be identified by their over-reliance on research and data to justify their beliefs and outlook toward education reform. They were all from Tennessee and identified politically as belonging to the Republican party or they identified as independent voters. Two represented statewide education departments, one was a member of the business community, and another was involved in a grassroots school choice organization.

View of group relationships

Like the Paternalists, the empiricists did not directly address racial and class issues during their interviews, and instead relied on language such as ‘disadvantaged students’ ‘students from poverty’, or ‘problem schools’ as proxies for discussing low achieving students. Centrally, they relied heavily on data analysis to justify the way they saw the policy problem. For example, a leader of a state education department talked about the causes of the achievement gap by pointing directly at school professionals and used evidence from the state’s data collection efforts to justify why teachers were the target of the policy problem:

...I mean, I think the achievement gaps can be exacerbated. If students who are furthest behind don't have access year in and out to teachers who've, like, demonstrated effectiveness in moving students forward. So, that's one--like, in our equity plan that we submitted to the U. S. Department of Education and because Tennessee collects so much, like, sort of robust data at the sort of school and teacher level we can see kind of whether it's within a school or across schools that they have, like, a gap in terms of access to effective teaching, which again, I think is sort of part of the issue when you're looking at how you sort of crack the nut on, you know, lessening the achievement gaps. (210, P6)

Another participant was asked directly about minority and poor students, and why the Achievement School District tended to be implemented in communities serving those students. She came the closest to addressing race, but was quick to frame her response using the technical language of data analysis:

So to be clear, yes, overwhelmingly, that is the case, so when we look at our bottom performing schools again, you know we mapped this out, the correlation is huge between percent SES and overall absolute achievement, again though, let's be very clear: the vast majority of our poorest performing schools are in Shelby and those schools are very large homogenous populations of Black students. So, let's be very clear, like I don't want to say that there's not racial pieces of this because we want to highlight those gaps that exist, not just based on economic disadvantage, but also based on race. (209, P6)

A few of these thinkers were willing to acknowledge differences in political advantage, much like those that expressed the Paternalist moral narrative. Here are a few examples that came up during discussion about why the Achievement School District was implemented in the Memphis and Nashville communities, but not in other parts of the state where there were also low-performing schools. Throughout each of the following excerpts, the participants hint that there is a divide between the urban and rural areas of the state, alluding to the fact that often legislators are voting to implement state takeovers in Memphis and Nashville but not in their own communities:

So, to be clear, the intervention itself is only reserved for the worst performing schools in this state. And going forward, we're adding you know, a safe harbor for those that haven't got high growth, they will not be included. So really echoing the research, letting it trust for that a while ago looking at consistently stuck -- consistently low performing and stuck schools, right. That is who this intervention is reserved for. But, [laughter] it's five percent of schools at most, and just guessing, but I'm going to guess it's not any of the schools that kids from these legislators-- their kids don't go there, right? (209, P6)

And so you do have other schools in the state that pop up but I think the state -- I would assume the state is saying that we trust this district [in eastern Tennessee] to intervene in appropriate ways and not that they may not distrust Memphis, but Memphis has just had such a huge problem on their hands that they needed extra support, extra dollar, extra resources and flexibility for intervention. (203, P6)

Yeah and I think most of the conversations [in the legislature] tend to be on, you know, Memphis needs it [the ASD], and even though the ASD isn't restricted to Memphis, I think enough people and legislators in Memphis have championed support for the Achievement School District, or innovation and intervention in general, that just going to, you know, Republican or yeah, Republicans 600 miles away from Memphis and saying this is important to these communities and they typically -- they've been falling in line with that... (203, P6)

View of human nature

Like the Social Justice Entrepreneurs, the Empiricists also cast moral blame onto teachers and school professionals and did not exhibit a trusting perception of teachers. The Empiricists turned to teachers' low expectations as the root cause of the achievement gap. However, unlike the Social Justice Entrepreneurs, they did not refer explicitly to teachers' racial and class biases. The empiricists withheld a moral narrative of structural and systemic inequality based on race and class relationships in their description of 'low expectations'. Interestingly, as shown in the excerpt, this leader in the business community framed her argument about low expectations using technical language about 'results' and 'findings' from a survey:

...this is an urban district so a teacher that applies to this urban district, they're coming in with the mindset of 80% our kids are in poverty, poor kids. They're in poverty. So it's really each individual's mindset but districts have to do-- and I think the new Director of school said, yesterday he said, they had a transition team of business leaders that did a study of a school district, there were several from this report. One of their findings was low expectations. Expectations were too low of educators. It was like, there was a survey. And so the district has to build a mindset of those that they hire that they have high expectations. No matter what you do everything you can to ensure this child learns. You don't make an excuse and say, "Well it's because they're in Special Ed that they can't learn." That's really just about a mindset. (205, P7)

When looking at empirical evidence, to the 'empiricists' results on major surveys or quantitative studies were enough to convince them that external pressure was successful at making changes to human behavior. A representative of a state education department used claims of empirical evidence to justify her outlook towards human motivation:

So, I think that and there are some evidence...this threat or sanction or takeover can have some positive consequences. We've seen this even right -- and I think that evidence might be a little bit mixed -- but there is some evidence that suggests even how we think about the charter schools coming in an area and providing competition that, you know, there are -- I think some evidence that says that schools have improved. (209, P6)

But anyway, so I think that there is some evidence, and I think most people -- let's be real -- policy is not you know, digging into the literature, and being made solely based on the evidence to begin with. So I think that, you just think it from your gut when you think about our policy makers in the creation of that, it just seems sensical that having a threat of sanction and takeover would lead to school improvement. And I am not necessarily contrary to that belief. I think that, and it's hard to say, we have robust research study at partners at Vanderbilt that are doing this work, but we have seen improvement in Memphis, and that is where our intervention has been taking over schools. (209, P6)

There's implicit and an explicit consequences from accountability systems, and you know people fall out in different places in their thoughts on how big the implicit consequences are, right? So we think about transparency reporting, you know are the implicit consequences based on transparency reporting alone enough to ensure that achievement gaps are closing and equity is being pursued? And from a personal perspective, I would say, no, which is why I think the Department of Education in this state has taken, a very explicit approach to school takeover in those schools that have the lowest performing, which overwhelmingly are schools that serve homogenous populations of underserved subgroups. (209, P6)

Views of justice

Ideas about fairness were either not mentioned or mentioned in passing. When another influential member of the business community was asked about the motivation behind the business community in getting involved in education—a question designed to test whether ideas about student equity were at the forefront of the participant's thinking—she drove home the connection between a strong education system and a strong economy, indicating that student success had tangible gains for gross domestic product:

I mean, everything impacts the economy. It's about prosperity in a community and if you're at a 60% graduation rate-- I mean it's going to hurt your community, as far as jobs creation. We don't produce graduates to create jobs, I mean the jobs will come where the graduates are....I mean, that's really what in my opinion, it boils down to-- it strengthens your economy to have an educated workforce ...It's good for the economy... over one and a half million dollars of gross domestic product that we could have in this region with just having 10 percent more students score a 21 or higher on their ACT. (205, P7)

When it came to resources and redistribution, a prominent member of the business community did recognize that more resources were important for school improvement and thought that more resources could be put towards low-performing schools first before more 'dramatic' strategies were used:

So it makes sense to have a system where you are intervening with resources first and you're trying to see if that moves the needle. And then, if that doesn't or you see symptoms that are beyond the resource issues, you know, dysfunctional faculty, or poor leadership, and whatever it might be, you know, those are situations when I think it make sense to do dramatic-- you know, the State take over or charterize the school or close the school down, and have other students absorbed into other schools, whatever your dramatic strategy is. (205, P6)

However, when pushed to think about whether getting more resources from the legislature were possible, he quickly doubted this possibility:

I don't know about that. I mean, I think the extent is part of the federal flow-through dollars that are used for that, or you know the department dollars, because if you get right down to the low-performing schools, they're usually the Memphis or Nashville, there's a couple in Chattanooga. It's a rural dominated legislatures. The legislatures aren't going to get excited for rural areas about pouring more money into Memphis, Nashville and other places like that. So to the extent it could be... you know these dollars aren't or don't have to be appropriate by the legislature, I think you're in a better spot. (205, P6)

Summary

On the face of it, the moral narrative embodied by the empiricists might look comparable to the Paternalists. Like the paternalists, empiricists were light on discussing views towards redistribution and fairness and shared common ways of avoiding race and class issues directly. However, empiricists differed from the paternalists with their view of human nature; the moral narrative of the group was devoid of beliefs surrounding discipline and punishment and normative standards of appropriate behavior. Instead, empiricists were more utilitarian, and the thinkers rationalized their perception of human nature and justice using empirical evidence and data analysis.

Overall summary

Despite the stark differences between moral narratives, there was strong consensus for the policy ideas proposed by all 20 thinkers identified in the Market Control accountability model. They saw promise in the market as an institution where students and their families could more easily access higher quality schools, where changes could be made more quickly to a given school environment, or where competitive pressures could force schools to improve outcomes for students. Policy tools that opened up marketplace options such as charters, vouchers, and turnaround strategies resonated with the core policy ideas these individuals found attractive.

When thinking through the design of NCLB, most of the Market Control thinkers could admit that the design of sanctions was imperfect and had unintended consequences for schools, but several struggled with how to redesign sanctions to avoid the major shortcomings of the former accountability law. While they may have struggled to come up with new ideas for sanctions or consequences, they defaulted to believing in consequences as powerful motivators. Many tended to rely on turnaround strategies such as charter conversions or school closures as consequences for low school performance. In Tennessee, some pointed to the early success of the iZone as a deregulated space that had the potential to help improve low-performing schools.

The participants in this cluster thought about the policy problem in terms of low academic performance and saw teachers—with their biases and low expectations—as the main cause of the policy problem and the main force of fixing it, but mediated by institutional changes, incentives, pressures etc. They thought that if parents had access to clear and transparent data they could pressure school professionals to undo harmful practices inside the classroom. They also thought that data could be used to judge a teacher's performance, therefore they supported teacher evaluations and value-added models to make employment decisions.

There was evidence that some participants within this cluster of thinkers somewhat questioned the overall effectiveness of the accountability paradigm. As mentioned, some questioned the design of sanctions or consequences for low-performing schools in light of empirical feedback from NCLB, although nobody was willing to let go of this idea for school

improvement. In Tennessee, some participants acknowledge that state authority to take over low-performing schools was more challenging than they initially anticipated, but again, they were not willing to forgo or radically change this policy idea. The iZone was one of the most creative ideas to evolve from this cluster of thinkers, and the policy concept resonated with their core support for the idea of deregulation. As a result, the interviews did not reveal a major pivot from the accountability paradigm. Instead, it appeared that many of the ideas from the NCLB accountability paradigm remained firmly intact, although with slight modifications. Why did this group of Market Control thinkers not veer far from status quo? One could infer from their moral narratives that the policy ideas of competition, deregulation, choice, and monitoring stayed in place because they resonated with the participants' deeper worldviews and beliefs.

But these worldviews diverged quite remarkably. The social justice entrepreneurs saw the world through the lens of historic inequalities, racial oppression, and institutional exclusion. They were more than willing to open up about the issues of race and class and the importance of accessing high quality schools in order to advance social mobility. To them, the marketplace created an exit from oppressive public institutions that kept poor and minority students locked into cycles of intergenerational poverty. They believed in the power of schools as the opening in society where social mobility was possible. They also believed in individual agency and were drawn to policy ideas that reinforced the individual's ability to act: they strongly supported charters as alternatives to the traditional public school model and liked the idea of vouchers as a way for poor and minority students to gain access to higher quality, elite institutions. Social justice entrepreneurs had a strong distrust of the teaching profession, who they believed reproduced systemic inequalities. They held teachers morally responsible for reproducing systemic race and class biases for students that kept them trapped in poverty. Therefore, they strongly supported policy instruments that monitored and pressured school professionals. They saw data as a weapon that could be used to undo individual biases, and supported teacher evaluations and value-added models that held individual teachers accountable. Lastly, they recognized the importance of resources, but thought that the teachers who taught at the lowest-performing schools—the 'rejects' of the profession—would waste any new resources. Therefore they were more convinced that market options and turnaround strategies that put public schools into the hands of private charter management operators were better alternatives to guarantee school improvement.

Paternalists had a very different moral narrative, albeit one that led to the same policy preferences as the social justice entrepreneurs. They used discursive tactics to get around addressing race and class directly, but were willing to talk about differences in political empowerment as it related to communities that received different types of school interventions. To them, standards of appropriate behavior, rule setting, external pressure, and discipline were important dimensions of their moral outlook. They did not blame poor children for the circumstances of their birth, but they did morally blame their parents for not knowing how to raise their children in the 'right way'. They blamed school professionals for low expectations in causing the problem of low academic performance and were less likely to talk directly about racial or class biases that might be behind 'low expectations'. To overcome the shortcomings of poor families and 'failing' schools, they believed in the disciplinary aspects of the state and market to create the conditions for school improvement. To the paternalists, the state could provide the 'heavy hand' when schools failed and could move in swiftly to upturn the school environment leveraging turnaround strategies. The state could also open pathways to the market

via charter conversions or charter authorizations, which would inject the concepts of competition and discipline into the school environment. Tools such as teacher evaluations and value-added models seemed commonsense to them, since they put external pressure on teachers, turning up the heat on school professionals who paternalists perceived as morally responsible for the policy problem.

Empiricists were unique in that they tried to rationalize their beliefs with language from the dominant neoliberal paradigm. They also used discursive techniques to dodge the issues of race and class, instead drawing on language such as ‘underperforming subgroups’ or ‘historically underserved populations’. They constantly turned to data and empirical research to make sense of consequences, school choice, and state takeover policies, without delving into narratives of systemic inequalities or the complexity of the relationship between poverty and low performance. While they did not go into great detail, they often cited research literature to justify their support for market-based reforms such as charters and school vouchers. They did assign moral blame to school professionals, but tried to use data and empirical evidence to justify this blame.

Chapter 5, Section D

Discussion

Given the findings presented in Chapter 5, I found that the accountability paradigm remained firmly intact across both states. The core concepts of accountability—data, monitoring, pressure, targets, and consequences—were very much alive in the minds of the 65 policy influencers I interviewed. The paradigm was simply stretched into three distinct accountability models with distinct institutional arrangements: ‘Professional and Local control accountability’ was re-imagined under the control of school professionals, districts, local school boards, and community members with limited regulation from the state. Supporters of a ‘State Control’ accountability model put the state front and center in any policy idea. Thinkers who supported ‘Market Control’ accountability supported policy ideas that pushed low-performing schools to the marketplace where they thought that schools and school professionals would be more accountable under the deregulatory and competitive pressures of the market. While none of the participants expressed radical ideas that could shift the paradigm, stretching the accountability paradigm into new institutional venues resulted in what Peter Hall (1993) would call ‘first order’ or ‘second order’ paradigm shift.

Findings Section 5a described a cluster of 19 individuals that showed common support for a *Professional and Local Control* model of accountability who wanted to create a ‘paradigm shift’ in how people thought about accountability policy. Many participants within this cluster were former school professionals who had experienced the effects of NCLB first-hand. While they were frustrated and dissatisfied with the former accountability law, they still embraced the ideas embedded within NCLB such as data, monitoring, and consequences, but wanted to move those policy design elements inside the control of the profession and local districts, and away from punitive intervention from the state. Rather than focus on test scores alone, they wanted to expand the number of indicators used to measure school performance. Rather than ‘shame and blame’ low-performing schools, they imagined positive consequences such as additional resources and capacity building for school professionals. And rather than impose ‘external accountability’ onto schools with close monitoring from the state, they imagined ‘internal accountability’ with monitoring and pressure coming from parents and local community members. They saw a limited role for the state in facilitating school improvement via resource distribution and technical assistance and shunned the marketplace as an institutional venue for school improvement. Outside of the bounds of the accountability paradigm, they supported one new policy idea, the community schools model.

People that looked for policy solutions in the Professional and Local Control accountability model tended to embody a *humanitarian* moral narrative. Humanitarians were most clearly identified by their views towards human nature: they tended to trust people, including teachers and families, and used personal experiences to justify their trust. They also can be identified by their strong belief that human beings are better motivated if they are nurtured and supported rather than disciplined and punished. This worldview towards human nature played out in their outright rejection of NCLB’s moral narrative of failure, shame, and blame, and also fit into their more ‘nurturing’ policy ideas that supported school professionals with more resources and capacity building. Views towards redistributive justice and fairness also distinguished the individuals that shared this distinct moral narrative. Humanitarians expressed a strong preference for public institutions that they believed better served the interest of all

students in a democratic society. They stridently condemned charter schools, vouchers, and any other market-based reform that took resources away from public schools, stratified the student population, and commoditized the more egalitarian notions of education and citizenship.

In Section 5b, I reviewed the way 20 individuals thought about a *State Control* model of accountability. They tended to think about accountability policy design with the state front and center of their ideas. They believed in the power of the state to rectify inequalities and deficiencies in the education system and believed that with the right design the state could design the conditions for the achievement gap to close. The participants identified in this cluster relied heavily on the main components of the accountability paradigm such as data, testing, and consequences but framed the policy solutions in terms of how the state could use those policy instruments to initiate change. The participants embodied a *structuralist* moral narrative, meaning that they perceived the public schools as part of a larger interconnected system between districts, state departments, governing bodies like the state legislature, and legal structures such as the state constitution. They exhibited faith in the regulatory power of the state and were weary of the ‘dangers of localism’ that would evolve in local communities in the absence of a collective body of governance.

Findings Section 5c explored the policy ideas and moral narratives of a very different cluster of influential thinkers who supported a *Market Control* model of accountability. The 26 participants identified in this cluster saw great potential in the marketplace as an arena to solve the problem of low performing schools. They wanted to integrate market-based policy ideas into the Market Control Model that would move low-performing public schools to deregulated, marketplace conditions. They were supportive of an accountability model that narrowed in on academic achievement as the sole indicator of school performance, and privileged the power of the state to impose punitive consequences on schools that “failed” to improve academic performance over time, in the form of ‘turnaround strategies’. They thought that low-performing schools were more likely to be accountable for student achievement under marketplace conditions than if they continued to exist in a slow, unresponsive, and bureaucratic public sphere. Market Control accountability thinkers firmly believed in the concepts of deregulation, competition, monitoring, and discipline to guide school improvement, and therefore were strong supporters of other policy ideas like charter schools, vouchers, and “innovation zones” to guide the school improvement approach.

The policy ideas within the Market Control Model were undergirded by three distinct moral justifications. *Social Justice Entrepreneurs* were strong on describing historic and systemic inequalities, racial oppression, and institutional exclusion. However, they firmly believed in the power of education as a way to overcome structural inequality and believed that individuals could escape poverty on their own if they succeeded in the education system. They expressed a moral narrative that focused on the power of individual agency to escape low performing schools and conditions of poverty, and in this way, embodied an entrepreneurial spirit to work towards social justice causes. *Paternalists* articulated a moral narrative centered on the concepts of rule setting, norms of appropriate behavior, and discipline as a ‘way of life’ that was necessary for school improvement. To paternalists, markets created the disciplinary conditions needed for school improvement, and the state played an important role in either moving low-performing schools to the marketplace or opening up opportunities for students and families to exercise choice and agency using policy instruments like charters and vouchers.

Empiricists embodied a rational moral justification, and drew on data or empirical evidence to try and justify their moral outlook. In this way, they were utilitarian and attempted to make rational calculations of the costs and benefits of market-based reforms as solutions for school improvement.

Looking at the policy dimension in greater detail

Comparing aspects of the policy problem

In Table 1 below, I outline the differences between aspects of the policy problem across the three accountability models. As shown, the differences are stark. Professional and Local Control (PLC) thinkers conceptualized the problem as poverty and saw the welfare state deficit as the main cause of the problem. They consistently cited a lack of social services for poor communities (a welfare state deficit) as the cause of poverty, and they did not shy away from making connections between poverty as the primary cause of low performing schools and the achievement gap. They attributed the problem to market-based reforms—namely charter schools—that took scarce resources away from struggling schools and districts. They also blamed an overreaching state for the ‘shaming and blaming’ era of NCLB that they found to be highly ineffective. When formulating solutions, they turned to institutions of the profession and local control as the problem solvers capable of monitoring and pressuring schools to improve.

This was a very different perspective from how State Control (SC) thinkers perceived the policy problem. SC thinkers defined the problem squarely on the achievement gap with concerns for minority and low-income students, and mainly thought that inequalities in a broken education system were the cause of the achievement gap. They highly distrusted models of local control and thought the state (and to some degree families) were responsible for monitoring and pressuring schools to improve.

Market Control (MC) thinkers had an entirely different take on the problem definition, primarily pointing to the problem of academic performance. Thinkers who supported the MC model had a myopic view of schools as the source of the policy problem, and they were convinced that ‘bad teachers’ were the cause of the problem. They therefore blamed the profession for low-performing schools. Market Control thinkers had the inverse argument of the PLC accountability model; whereas the PLC thinkers thought that “poverty caused low-performing schools,” the MC thinkers thought that “low-performing schools caused poverty.” They turned to the market as an institution capable of being the problem solver.

Before even getting into the details of the core components of the accountability paradigm, it is apparent that perspectives of the policy problem varied widely. This is an important point since problem definitions often shape how actors define the solutions (i.e. Baumgartner & Jones, 1993). The thinkers within each of the three accountability models each pointed to very different problems and causes, and also attributed blame and responsibility to very different institution. From the get go, there was great misunderstanding between the 65 influential thinkers I interviews about how to define the policy problem.

Table 4. Key differences between aspects of the policy problem, by accountability model

	<i>Professional and Local</i>	<i>State Control Accountability</i>	<i>Market Control</i>

	<i>Control Accountability</i>		<i>Accountability</i>
Problem definition	Poverty	Achievement gap	Academic performance
Causes of problem	Welfare state deficit	Broken education system	Bad teachers
Problem attribution	State, markets	Local control	Profession
Problem solver	Profession, local control	State & Families/State alone	Market

Comparing the core features of accountability

Table 2 below compares the core features of accountability policy—including data, targets, pressures and monitors, consequences, goals, and knowledge sources—by accountability model. Again, the differences are stark. PLC thinkers wanted to collect more data in the form of ‘multiple measures’ of school performance and wanted to use that data to target districts with better resources and supports. They wanted to buffer teachers and individual schools from external monitoring and pressure by the state, and thought that performance could be locally controlled. PLC thinkers also believed that parents and community members could be monitors of school performance and could pressure schools to improve. They supported ‘positive’ consequences in the form of new resources and technical assistance and resoundingly refuted any continued use of NCLB era sanctions. They tended to draw on academic literature that bolstered the power of school professionals, largely developed by Linda Darling-Hammond, Michael Fullan, and Andy Hargreaves. While not stated explicitly by the participants in the PLC cluster, it can be inferred that the overarching goal of the PLC accountability model was to support and build up the public school profession given that many of their policy ideas included direct ‘inputs’ to school professionals. Outside of the bounds of the accountability paradigm, the PLC thinkers proffered one new policy idea, the community schools model, which was intended to better serve students and their families living in poverty.

In the SC model, all the participants wanted more data in the form of multiple measures of school performance, but about half also wanted to have one single indicator of overall performance. SC thinkers were unclear of the target of accountability, but generally agreed that the ‘all adults in the system’ needed to be held accountable. Some within this cluster saw the ‘state as a single actor’ and preferred that the state use punitive consequences to motivate schools to improve, while others saw the ‘state as a multiple actor’ that could leverage family engagement as another arm to monitor and pressure schools to improve and therefore, they supported positive consequences. Those who saw the state as a single actor reported working with their social networks to develop new ideas, but they had no clear source of knowledge for new ideas. For those who supported the state as a multiple actor, they tended to draw on knowledge sources from scholars like Linda Darling-Hammond and Michael Fullan. The participants identified within the SC model did not explicitly state the goals of this model, but it can be inferred from the evidence that they supported the goal to fix a broken education system. Outside of the bounds of the accountability paradigm, they offered vague ideas to improve the inputs of teacher quality and to reconceptualize the role and function of the state, but with no real plans to do so.

Participants within the Market Control model focused heavily on student achievement data and preferred to use performance data to target individual teachers, schools, and districts. They preferred that the state closely monitor the performance of under-performing public schools and put pressure on schools to improve. MC thinkers also relied on the competitive and deregulatory pressures of the market as a mechanism for school improvement. Across the board, it was clear that MC thinkers supported punitive consequences as a way to motivate school improvement. Participants within the cluster looked to national social networks for new ideas and knowledge sources, and some turned to conservative policy entrepreneurs and influential conservative think tanks for new ideas. Although not stated explicitly, it can be inferred that the overarching goal of the Market Control accountability policy was to push low-performing schools to marketplace and to tightly monitor the work of school professionals. When thinking outside of the bounds of accountability, the influential thinkers were drawn to policy ideas saturated with market logic. They liked the idea of charter schools, vouchers, innovation zones or iZones, and supported the community school model but preferred to see it in a deregulated, marketplace environment.

Table 5. Core features of accountability policy, by accountability model

	<i>Professional & Local Control Accountability</i>	<i>State Control Accountability</i>	<i>Market Control Accountability</i>
Data	More data	More data/More data + single indicator	Achievement data
Targets	Districts	Teachers, Schools, Districts	Teachers, Schools, Districts
Monitor & pressure	Parents, community members	State & family/state	State & market
Consequences	Positive	Positive/punitive	Punitive
Goals	Build up profession	Fix broken education system	Push low-performing schools to marketplace; tightly monitor teachers
Knowledge sources	Academics, i.e. Linda Darling-Hammond & Michael Fullan	Academics, epistemic communities	Epistemic communities, conservative policy entrepreneurs and think tanks
Ideas outside the paradigm?	-Community schools	-Inputs of teacher quality -Re-conceptualize the state	-Charters -Vouchers -iZone's -Community schools (as part of charters)

Discussion of the policy dimension

On the face of it, each of the accountability models appears coherent and logical and participants made seemingly rational arguments to support their policy preferences. Yet contradictions arose in each of the models.

The PLC model offered narrow solutions that were mismatched with how the participants defined the policy problem. As mentioned, the goals of the PLC accountability model was essentially to build up the capacity of the profession and to address the needs of students who came to school under the conditions of adversity. Yet this goal did not directly address the root cause of poverty. Rather than address the welfare state deficit and social programs like health care, housing, and redistributive policies, PLC thinkers offered myopic solutions focusing on schools alone. The only policy idea they offered that was outside of the bounds of the accountability paradigm—the community schools model—tried to address the welfare state deficit for poor communities. But rather than try to fund or build up other social policies, the participants supporting this idea imagined that the welfare state could be built within the schools through the community schools model.

Moreover, the PLC model greatly limited the role of the state in school reform. Participants who supported the PLC model were acting in direct response to NCLB and the overreaching state and therefore wanted to transform the relationship between the state, schools, and school professionals. However, several participants admitted that there was no empirical basis for whether the PLC model would be effective and this strategy was merely a reaction to the deleterious effects of NCLB. Yet the PLC model encouraged the state to take on a new role as a nurturer instead of a punisher with little evidence to back this up as an effective strategy. The PLC model also absolved the state from the responsibility to address the broader conditions of poverty and instead focus on resources and capacity building for schools alone. PLC supporters also imagined that the state could help with targeting additional resources and technical assistance to school districts to help with a process of ‘continuous improvement’. Yet the participants struggled to define what continuous improvement would look like on the ground, and how new federal ESSA funding would suffice to improve the components of low-performing schools.

For participants who supported a State Control model of accountability, they saw the state as the primary agent responsible for designing and implementing policy to alleviate public problems. In a way, this group most closely resembled the policy consensus supporting the design of NCLB, with the federal government setting goals, targets, and consequences for under-performance. However, when the participants I interviewed looked at NCLB they thought its failure was due to its technical implementation and lack of resources. They were trying to simply rectify the shortcomings of the state controlled model rather than think outside the box for new ideas.

There was also a key disagreement amongst participants who supported the SC model regarding whether or not parents could be an ‘arm’ of the state to put pressure on schools, or whether the state was the sole actor. This disagreement also played out in how they thought about consequences for schools. For those that thought parent engagement was possible, they preferred positive consequences for low-performing schools. For those that thought the state was the sole actor, they preferred more punitive consequences. Participants who believed that parent

engagement was possible typically relied on their personal experiences rather than empirical evidence to support their position. Moreover, it was unclear how they imagined all parents could be active participants in the school improvement process.

Participants who supported the Market Control model had strong faith in the market as a solution to low-performing schools. It was instinctual and common sense to turn to the deregulated and competitive pressures of the market as a policy solution. Yet within the logic of thinkers who supported the MC model was a core belief that schools were an opening in society where social mobility was possible. This consensus about the role of schooling allowed some of the participants who were willing to look squarely at historic and systemic inequality to focus and cooperate with other participants who were not willing to acknowledge systemic inequalities. Because of the strong belief that education was the way out of poverty, the market logic, connected to the technical and rational solutions offered by accountability, prevailed over structural or political solutions to the policy problem. Any idea outside of the accountability paradigm was centered on market logic as a response to the perceived sluggishness of public institutions.

Looking at the moral dimension in greater detail

As shown across the findings chapter, five unique moral narratives emerged from the 65 participants I interviewed. I looked at participants' worldviews and found distinct patterns across how people perceived interpersonal group relationships, human nature and motivation, and redistributive justice. Differences between worldviews are summarized in Table 3 below.

Views of group relationships

Despite frequent mentions of the achievement gap and student equity, humanitarians did not reveal strong discourses that acknowledged interpersonal group relationships. There was no underlying emotional anger towards class and race relationships in the U.S. nor was there strong recognition of historic oppression and structural exclusion over time based on race. Humanitarians were much more willing to talk about the effects and causes of poverty but did so without a deeply felt moral narrative of 'injustice' towards the history of American race and class relationships and the connection to poverty. Therefore, a worldview towards interpersonal group relationships was not inherently part of the humanist moral narrative.

Structuralists were more willing than the humanists to talk about race and class, but there was variation amongst the participants identified in this cluster. While all were willing to talk about the discriminatory nature of local control in the absence of state oversight, some were more willing than others to talk directly about race and class. Overall, the structuralist moral narrative is classified as being 'light' on worldviews of interpersonal group relationships.

More so than any other group, the social justice entrepreneurs revealed deep emotional undertones about their moral outrage towards social and racial inequalities. The social justice entrepreneurs were more willing to talk openly about issues of slavery, White supremacy, deep-seated racism, and institutional exclusion throughout American history. This narrative was deeply felt, especially among those who were minorities and had grown up in poverty. Overall, their moral narrative is classified as being 'heavy' on a worldview of interpersonal group relationships.

Empiricists and paternalists were not willing to talk about structural inequality and its connection to race, but they were willing to talk about political empowerment between wealthy and poor communities. They recognized that wealthy communities often had more political power and therefore were able to navigate how state policies shaped their communities. Thus, their worldviews toward interpersonal group relationships were limited to class relationships, but stopped short of addressing race relationships.

Views of human nature

Humanists had the most positive outlook towards human nature in comparison to any other moral type. They were trusting and nurturing of the human condition and thought that people could be motivated when they were supported and well resourced rather than punished and disciplined. This worldview stood in stark contrast to participants in all four of the other moral types. The structuralists, social justice entrepreneurs, empiricists, and paternalists all took a much more pessimistic outlook towards human nature and motivation. These other four types thought that human nature could not be trusted and generally thought that more punitive measures were necessary to motivate changes to human behavior.

Interestingly, there was a clear pattern running through the worldview of human nature along the dimension of discipline and punishment. Humanists outright rejected discipline and punishment in their worldview of human nature and motivation, but as one moves down the spectrum of moral narratives, views of discipline and punishment get tougher, with paternalists at the end of the spectrum holding the strongest supporting views of discipline and punishment as a motivator to human nature.

Views of justice

Differences were also found in worldviews towards justice (I focus on redistributive justice, in particular, in the table below). Across the board, there was evidence that all 65 participants acknowledged that more resources were an important component of school improvement. However, not everybody wanted to see more resources go to low-performing schools. Humanitarians and structuralists were very supportive of more redistributive policies targeted towards low-performing schools, while social justice entrepreneurs and paternalists thought that any more additional resources to the worst schools would simply be squandered by school professionals. Empiricists were somewhat undecided, and tended to consider resource redistribution on a case-by-case basis.

Table 6. Worldviews by moral narrative

	Humanitarian	Structuralists	Social justice entrepreneurs	Empiricists	Paternalists
Interpersonal group relationships	na	Light on class, race	Heavy on class, race	Class	Class
Human nature	+	-	-	0	-
Redistributive justice	+	+	-	0	-

Note: + indicates positive orientation; - indicates negative orientation; and 0 indicates neutral; na indicates ‘not applicable’

Other key distinctions in moral narratives played out in what institutions participants tended to trust. As shown in table 5, key differences emerged between the moral types.

Humanists trusted school professionals and families, but had mixed trust in the state and no trust in the market. Structuralists had strong trust in the state, but no trust in local control or the market, and had mixed trust in school professionals. There was a split amongst the structuralists on whether or not families could be trusted. Social justice entrepreneurs, empiricists, and paternalists all had strong trust in the market, they did not trust school professionals, and they all had mixed trust in the state. Differences emerged along these three moral types when it came to the issue of local control and trust in families.

Table 7. Trust in institutions, by moral type

	<i>Humanitarian</i>	<i>Structuralists</i>	<i>Social justice entrepreneurs</i>	<i>Empiricists</i>	<i>Paternalists</i>
Trust school professionals	Yes	Mixed	No	No	No
Trust local control	Yes	No	Mixed	No	No
Trust families	Yes	Yes/No	Yes	Yes	No
Trust state	Mixed	Yes	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed
Trust market	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Relationship between the moral and policy dimensions

Despite the variation in moral narratives, all 65 individuals identified in this study still firmly believed in the power of the accountability paradigm as a solution to the policy problem facing schools. At first glance, this may be surprising given that the participants came from very different ‘walks of life’ and from across the political spectrum. But arguably, the accountability paradigm remained firmly intact because the policy solutions offered by the paradigm resonated with the deeper epistemological perspectives of all participants. When given the freedom, people could take the ‘objective’ and ‘rational’ elements of accountability—such as data, monitoring and pressure, targets, and consequences—and filter the concepts through their worldviews and life experiences to bend and twist the concepts into their preferred accountability model.

Humanist moral narrative and the connection to Professional & Local Control accountability

For the humanists, many were former school professionals who believed in the virtue of public schools and made symbolic connections between public schooling and a democratic society. They tended to trust human nature, and were willing to justify trust in school professionals and families largely based on their personal experiences.

When looking at the problem facing low-performing schools, humanists put schools within the context of all public programs, and saw the problem in terms of poverty and a welfare state deficit. To them, schools were just one piece of the social safety net. Humanists' solution to the problem was to build up capacity for school professionals to address the issue of poverty, and they stretched the accountability paradigm to map onto their values and the way they perceived the policy problem.

There were important 'bridge' excerpts that tied the participants' worldviews to policy ideas. The following quote is from a teacher's union leader in California that captures the translation between moral and policy ideas in just a few sentences (this quote was also presented in the earlier findings section 5a, but it is reintroduced here to illuminate how moral ideas map onto policy ideas). The excerpt reveals the humanist narrative to trust teachers and address poverty and suggests the policy solution to build up the teaching profession:

But you're assuming that they [teachers] want to be there and want to do their job, that's why you go into to teaching. And I know very little, very few teachers that don't wanna see what's best for their student. It is everything we do...but when we focus, even on things like bargaining better salaries or good retirement, a stable retirement, or better health benefits or something, it's about attracting and retaining the best and the brightest in the profession. How are you gonna get the best and the brightest if they can't afford to feed their families while they're there, or give them healthcare or for the house? It's all tied to student learning, to improving student learning. That's why I'm saying if you have a school that is so bad-- that the facilities are so bad or so unsafe that an adult, the minute they get the opportunity of seniority to leave--what does it say about that school? And we're sending children there, and then wondering why it's not working? (132, P1)

When looking at low-performing schools humanists agreed that high quality teachers were an essential component to serving students in poverty, but they wanted to create the work conditions necessary for good teachers to be attracted to high-need schools. With this foundational perspective, humanists supported a Professional and Local Control model of accountability that reframed the core concepts of accountability to build up the profession in their pursuit of addressing poverty.

Structuralist moral narrative and connection to State Control accountability model

Structuralists revealed a strong faith in the state and a collective body of governance over the politics of local affairs. Importantly, they viewed the schools as part of an overall state system. They saw teachers connected to schools and districts and formal legal processes and legislative bodies. Structuralists also saw themselves as 'designers' or 'architects' that could create a container for change to happen within schools. They were more distrusting of human nature than the humanists, and wanted the state to closely monitor and intervene in low-performing schools to regulate against the 'dangers of localism'.

Below is an example of a 'bridge' quote where a lawyer in California discussed his common-sense understanding of the state's responsibility to be a 'backstop' against the discriminatory nature of local politics (again, this excerpt was presented in findings section 5b, but is reintroduced here to illuminate the bridge concept). He integrated a distrustful view towards human nature and emphasized a strong need for the state to regulate what happened in local communities, using Jim Crow laws as an example of what can happen without a 'strong federal backstop':

I think that many states, like the federal government as a whole, have been trapped by the nineteenth century romanticism about local control. But I think part of it [local control] is this Pontius Pilate phenomenon, "don't blame me, I washed my hands off it." And part of it is, there is certainly some, in many states a lot of distrust, but it's only natural for humans, especially humans of the politician subspecies, to be afraid to take on responsibility for things that may not be able to be fixed, things that look really hard to do. But local control is fine for affluent suburbs, and indeed doing something to limit local control triggers ire from affluent suburbs, whereas poor communities are likely not to have much political voice when these big decisions are made. And that is why I think a lesson of the Civil Rights movement, from my perspective, a lesson is, that the State and local dynamics around equity have been, in a long-run sense, unreliable in the absence of a strong federal backstop. And that's why Jim Crow was doing so well until *Brown v. Board* for such a long time. (139, P4)

The connection between the moral narrative and accountability design for structuralist thinkers was straightforward. Accountability policy gave structuralists a powerful regulatory framework for the state to measure, monitor, and intervene in low-performing schools and protect against the 'dangers of localism'. To the structuralists, accountability policy—in theory—helped the state ensure that every student could receive a high quality education without being subject to discrimination or bias. Structuralists largely kept inline with the design of NCLB although they were willing to slightly modify the core features of accountability to 'correct' the unintended consequences of the former accountability law.

Market Control accountability and three underlying moral narratives

Surprisingly, the Market Control model united individuals from very different walks of life with highly contrasting life experiences and outlooks towards the U.S. social structure. The social justice entrepreneurs embodied a powerful view toward intergroup relationships and talked at length about race and class. They needed no probing to divulge their inner frustration and anger about the history of race and class relationships in U.S. society. Arguably, several of the social justice entrepreneurs saw themselves (or the communities they served) as the individuals most oppressed by the social structure. Despite their systemic argument, they deeply believed in the power of an education—and an individual's success in the education system—as the crux of social mobility and the exit point from poverty. They firmly believed in the power of individual agency and showed strong instincts to escape poverty by gaining access to better schools 'at all costs'. Here is a bridge quote from a social justice entrepreneur that reveals their belief in the power of an education. A leader of a charter management organization made a clear connection between his belief in the importance of schools as the exit from poverty. The excerpt also indicated dissatisfaction with public schools for maintaining intergenerational poverty (this excerpt was also presented earlier in section 5c):

...you know, if you look at the Watts zip code, this is less than 1 percent of residents that had a college degree. It is the lowest income zip code in California. And it has you know, we literally, we have students whose mother, grandmother and great grandmother dropped out of Pine High School [a pseudonym]. It's inter-generational. And the [traditional public] school caused it. I hate to blame it only on the school, but like, there's a point where you're like, for 30 years, have failed to just deliver on the basics. You gotta do something different. (120, P5)

This logic made it possible for the social justice entrepreneurs to buy into the Market Control model of accountability. Putting pressure on teachers by closely monitoring their performance using value-added models made perfect sense to them. Exposing teachers to the competitive forces of the marketplace—where their job would depend on their ability to raise student test scores—was completely logical given that they saw teachers as morally responsible

for breaking cycles of poverty. This same logic also applied to their support for accountability solutions that would move ‘failing’ public schools to the marketplace if they did not make adequate improvement over time.

Somewhat ironically, neither the paternalists nor the empiricists were willing to address race and class head on, and they used discursive tactics to eschew addressing these possibly uncomfortable topics. In a sense, the discursive moves used by the Paternalists and Empiricists created ‘blind spots’ in their moral narratives; they could avoid talking about historical inequalities or racial oppression simply by drawing on the ‘objective’ language provided by the paradigm. Although the number of interviews with the Paternalists was limited, a clear moral narrative around rule-setting and rule-following, externally imposed discipline, and standards of ‘right behavior’ were embedded throughout their interviews. The best example of a bridge quote came from a conservative lawmaker in Tennessee who explained his ideal school setting by referencing the movie, *Lean on Me*. In the following excerpt (also presented earlier in section 5c), he idolized Morgan Freeman’s role as a ‘tough’ principal that could infuse a failing school environment with strict discipline:

The other movie [*Lean on Me*] the guy in New Jersey, he says we are gonna be tougher on you. I don't care if you're black, white, rich or poor in this school were gonna be tougher, we gonna expect more out of you, more help from you, you're gonna say ‘yes sir, no sir, yes ma'am, no ma'am.’ He got a little bull horn and some people were not his supporters. He ultimately had issues with one thing or another but the reality of it was that the African-American—can’t think of his name [Morgan Freeman]. It's another example of-- he deliberately said it, "We are gonna be tougher." And that the expectations were much higher with regard to behavior. And every kid in that school knew that, so but that's the issue, in my opinion. (213, P9)

To the paternalists, the Market Control model of accountability, with its punitive consequences and use of the market to discipline schools and teachers, was a natural fit for the way they perceived reality.

Only a few interviews captured the moral narrative of empiricists, but the four interviews were enough to determine that some people tried to leverage the quantitative capacity of the paradigm to its fullest. Empiricists revealed no personal beliefs, but rather tried to justify their perception of reality with data and empirical research. However, they subtly sided with policy ideas saturated with neoliberal logic, and they defaulted to citing studies that favored the success of market-based reforms. Here is a bridge quote from an empiricist from Tennessee who exemplified the relationship between a ‘rational’ moral narrative and a proclivity for market-oriented policy ideas (also presented earlier in section 5c):

But anyway, so I think that there is some evidence, and I think most people -- let's be real -- policy is not you know, digging into the literature, and being made solely based on the evidence to begin with. So I think that, you just think it from your gut when you think about our policy makers in the creation of that, it just seems sensical that having a threat of sanction and takeover would lead to school improvement. And I am not necessarily contrary to that belief. I think that, and it's hard to say, we have robust research study at partners at Vanderbilt that are doing this work, but we have seen improvement in Memphis, and that is where our intervention has been taking over schools. (209, P6)

By using evidence (even if it was used in a limited way) to justify market-based reforms, it was logical to the empiricists to move forward with a Market Control accountability model.

The power of the paradigm

Despite the stark difference between the social justice entrepreneurs who freely addressed race and class issues and the paternalists and empiricists who blocked interpersonal group relationships from their reality, there were two core agreements: That schools were the sites of social mobility in U.S. society and school professionals alone were responsible for student performance. This common agreement made it possible for people with vastly different social identities and life experiences to cooperate on a common policy agenda. Nowhere was this more ironic than in the relationship between social justice entrepreneurs—who argued they were fighting against the paternalist ideology that has oppressed poor and minority communities over time—and the paternalists who were working hand-in-hand with the social justice entrepreneurs in the education policy realm.

And despite the differences between all five moral narratives, the core features of the accountability paradigm still remained firmly in tact. Data, targets, pressure, and external monitoring were still common-sense solutions to solve the policy problem to a wide spectrum of people from all different walks of life. Because the core features of the accountability paradigm allowed for individuals to take policy designs and stretch them to their underlying beliefs, it was possible that people with very different moral narratives could converge on similar policy ideas. The paradigm was able to meet a range of very different moral needs: humanists, many of whom were school professionals themselves at some point in their career, perceived that accountability could be reframed to be more supportive and nurturing to school professionals, and that the core features of accountability could simply be tweaked to line up with their more trusting perceptions of teachers and local control. Structuralists defaulted to looking toward the state as a problem solver. They distrusted local control and at a core level believed that human nature was prone to discrimination. To structuralists, the accountability paradigm (as it existed under NCLB with state control) was an adequate way to address inequality because the state could monitor and intervene in local affairs; therefore, they budged the least amongst the study participants when it came to rethinking new institutional venues as problem solvers. Social justice entrepreneurs argued that the MC model of accountability helped poor and minority communities escape oppressive public institutions that kept them stuck in cycles of intergenerational poverty, while paternalists argued that the MC model provided discipline and external pressure that was required to have low-performing students and teachers adhere to norms of appropriate behavior and performance. Empiricists could look to empirical evidence and the ‘morality of the market’ to problem-solve low school performance.

This is the power of the accountability paradigm: its ability to stretch and fit neatly on to a wide range of moral narratives. Even in light of the collapse of NCLB, and the growing empirical base questioning the effectiveness of accountability to address education inequality, the influential thinkers I interviewed still found it convincing to draw from the core components of accountability and bend and twist the concepts to match up with their unique perspective of reality.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Following the collapse of the former federal accountability law, No Child Left Behind, I sought to understand how state-level policy influencers were thinking about accountability as a way to solve education inequalities. Did high-profile state-level policy influencers still rely on the core features of accountability to solve the problem, or were they beginning to doubt the paradigm’s effectiveness? To address this question, I looked at how 65 influential individuals across two states—California and Tennessee—were thinking about accountability policy for school improvement during fall 2016 and spring 2017 when accountability policy across states was in transition.

I draw from a growing theoretical literature on policy paradigms (Baumgartner, 2014; Campbell, 2002; Diagneault, 2014; Hall, 1993; Hogan & Howlett, 2015; Mehta, 2013) to design a conceptual framework that captures how the policy influencers defined the policy problem and how they thought about the causes, how they thought about solving the policy problem, and what moral justifications supported their policy ideas. This study draws upon literature from social movement theory (Benford & Snow, 2000), policy paradigms (Hall, 1993; Hogan & Howlett, 2015; Mehta, 2013), ideational scholarship (Hay, 2008), and moral theory (Koltko-Rivera, 2004) to more clearly define how policy paradigms are reproduced at the level of the individual. This is a multiple case study research design using in-depth interviews. Data was coded using both inductive and deductive theoretical approaches (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013).

Despite the widely known shortcomings of NCLB, it appears that the accountability paradigm remains firmly in tact. In both California and Tennessee, the leading policy influencers I interviewed reveal that the paradigm has not shifted in a radical sense, with the core features of accountability such as goal setting, testing and data collection, monitoring, and consequences remaining firmly entrenched in the minds of all participants within the study as an answer to the problem of system inequities. The influential thinkers I interviewed simply tried to stretch the paradigm into differing institutional arrangements depending on their underlying moral narratives. Simply put, I found support for three distinct accountability models—a ‘professional and local control’ model, a ‘state control’ model, and a ‘market control’ model, that were supported by five distinct moral narratives. The three accountability models and the corresponding moral narratives are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 8. Overview of accountability models and corresponding moral narratives

Professional and Local Control	State Control	Market Control
Humanitarian	Structuralist	Social Justice Entrepreneur Empiricist Paternalist

Despite the differing patterns in accountability models and moral narratives, all told, the 65 policy influencers I interviewed still conform their thinking to the essential components of the accountability paradigm. Arguably, the accountability paradigm remains intact because the policy solutions offered by the paradigm still resonate with the deeper epistemological

perspectives of all participants. People from all different walks of life could take the ‘objective’ and ‘rational’ elements of accountability—such as data, monitoring and pressure, targets, and consequences—and filter the concepts through their worldviews and life experiences, bending and twisting the concepts into their preferred accountability model.

I now turn to a reflection on how participants with starkly differing moral narratives continued to justify using accountability as a solution to solving the problem of education inequalities, even after the colossal failure of NCLB. Much like the neoliberal paradigm of economic policies that has stayed in place after the 2008 market crisis, the accountability paradigm has stayed in place even after NCLB folded. I provide a discussion about why the participants I interviewed still may have found it convincing to address educational inequality through accountability in the aftermath of NCLB.

Reflection on findings

As shown in the findings chapter, across the board, the participants I interviewed continued to grasp for the core elements of the accountability paradigm in order to solve the perceived policy problem, even after nearly every thinker admitted that accountability under NCLB was far from perfect. But what was even more remarkable was that there was such a large mismatch between the policy definition and the solution in almost all policy conceptions. Despite acknowledging policy problems like poverty, systemic inequalities, the academic achievement gap and chronically low-performing schools, accountability still was the go-to policy solution to solve this wide variety of problems. And the participants’ moral ideas often filled in the gap when logic was missing. In other words, the policy influencers could rely on their personal beliefs, presumably common-sensical, and experiences when there was cognitive dissonance between their perception of the policy problem and formulated solutions.

Professional and Local Control (PLC) accountability model

The supporters of the PLC model clearly defined the problem as poverty and a welfare state deficit. They admonished the lack of resources for poor communities and low-performing schools and the lack of social services for those communities. Yet their policy solutions were narrowly focused on schools alone and did not address the broader social safety net. Nearly all participants within this cluster focused on public schools and the teaching profession as the site of capacity building, but stopped short of discussing ways to build capacity in low-income communities. Arguably, they did offer one new policy idea to address the lack of social services in poor communities—the community schools model—a reform that would put welfare state services directly within schools. However, the participants did not integrate the idea into the PLC accountability model (for example, it was not offered as a potential ‘consequence’ for low-performing schools), nor did they offer realistic ways to bring the idea to scale.

As former school professionals, many participants in this cluster could recount numerous drawbacks of NCLB, such as teaching to the test or narrowing school curriculum to just testable subjects, and they were quick to point out that NCLB lacked adequate resources for school improvement. Yet despite their critiques of NCLB, they still reached for accountability as a solution to improve low-performing schools. In the minds of the PLC model supporters, they thought accountability was savable if it could do a 180-degree turn. Across the board, the PLC thinkers explained that the core components of accountability such as consequences could be

reframed in a positive light, and that collecting more data could be used to target better resources and technical assistance to low-performing schools. The reliance on this new model of accountability was especially astounding given that the participants could not think of new sources of funding aside from the new federal flow-through dollars to support this alternative model. Also, when pressed to explain how capacity building and technical assistance would work inside classrooms to create better learning environments, many could not explain how this process might work.

Underneath the policy ideas of the PLC thinkers were core beliefs about trusting teachers and parents, moral ideas about nurturing rather than punishing to motivate changes to human behavior, and egalitarian views towards democracy and public institutions. It was common for the participants to rely on these beliefs when they were challenged during the interviews to explain their thinking. Many relied on their experiences as public school teachers to justify the goodwill of teachers, and they often made categorical statements about why all teachers should be trusted. Some could also draw up images from their own childhoods about how their own parents engaged in their schooling despite growing up in conditions of poverty, while others could point to their own efforts as parents to improve low-performing schools for their children or communities. These personal experiences often justified their support for parent engagement and local control. An unyielding belief in the power of public institutions and their importance for a democratic society also shaped how this cluster of thinkers viewed charter schools and other market reforms that they thought ‘commoditized’ education.

Arguably, the PLC thinkers still saw promise in accountability because they could still attach their beliefs to the core policy ideas and did not need to reach for an alternative policy agenda. Perhaps they did not need an alternative paradigm in the aftermath of NCLB because there was now room for them to take the concepts from accountability and match them up to their own worldviews. This kept them reaching for accountability as a solution rather than develop a new policy alternative to solve their perceived policy problem, which they dramatically had identified as structural inequality due to poverty.

State control (SC) model of accountability

As to the SC model, the supporters defined the problem largely in terms of a structural deficit. They argued that a lack of funding and capacity building alongside other systemic deficiencies (such as poor teacher preparation programs) were the sources of the policy problem and caused the achievement gap. Despite this systemic problem definition, the SC thinkers also turned to accountability as a solution, with very little changes to the design of NCLB era accountability despite glaring policy failures.

Many in this group reported dissatisfaction with the former NCLB law and wanted to see changes, yet they lacked new policy ideas to turn to. Several participants expressed wanting to redesign sanctions but they struggled to think of alternatives. Some mentioned wanting to reform or reconceptualize the state to move it away from its ‘bureaucratic’ identity, but again none could describe how the state could be reformed. Nearly all within this group expressed concern for a lack of funding public schools, yet they saw a gridlocked political system that was incapable of generating new funds. In many cases, this group of thinkers wanted an alternative solution, but none could produce alternative ideas.

Arguably, the SC thinkers could not generate new ideas because they were constrained by their own state-centric reasoning. The SC thinkers were structuralists, and at the core of their moral narrative was a belief that it was a natural tendency for people to discriminate when left to their own devices. They believed that a collective body, an institution, such as the state, needed to regulate local communities. They had an unyielding faith in the state as a problem solver and a strong distrust for local control. These core moral ideas arguably played out in their policy ideas. Most important to these thinkers was the role of the state in solving policy problems. When it came to thinking through an accountability model, the SC model was the only option they considered. They were averse to local control and also weary of markets. Without an alternative state-centric solution, they maintained the status quo.

Again, what is remarkable is the way this cluster of thinkers felt constrained by a ‘lack of options’ and turned to a policy solution that was a mismatch for the problem definition. Rather than attempt to challenge the legislature or the economic elites for more funding in order to address systemic deficiencies, or rather than generate new ideas to reconceptualize the state, they embraced a model of accountability nearly the same as NCLB, with few modifications.

Market control model of accountability

Supporters of the market control model (MC model) clearly defined the policy problem in terms of academic performance. Theirs was not a structural causal analysis. At the heart of the named causes of the achievement problem was moral failure of local actors. They were thus clear on their perspective of teachers as the primary cause of the problem. The logic between the problem definition and the policy solutions was more straightforward for this group of thinkers. They wanted to build ‘market-based reforms’ into their accountability model because they firmly believed that academic achievement would improve if “failing” schools were pushed to an alternative institutional environment by the state, or if students and families could exit low-performing schools by exercising school choice. MC thinkers wanted a strong focus on student test scores and favored using punitive consequences for schools that failed to improve over time. They were more willing than thinkers from other accountability models to closely monitor the work of individual teachers and preferred to expose them to market pressures as well to make them more responsive to raising test scores. All told, the connection between the problem definition and the solutions was clearest in this policy conception. However, discrepancies between the moral justifications and the policy solutions were much starker, especially for the social justice entrepreneurs.

Across the board, the thinkers that supported the MC model of accountability held a strong belief in the power of the education system to advance social mobility. But nowhere was this belief stronger than for the Social Justice Entrepreneurs (SJE’s). They believed that schools and teachers could help students escape intergenerational poverty, and teachers were to blame if they failed to break the cycle of poverty. They imagined that the best teachers should teach in the worst schools, and that when teachers were doing their jobs, students could excel in the education system and escape poverty. They expected teachers alone to undo structural inequality and the history of racial oppression. This came as a surprise in the findings, given that the SJE’s also put forth the strongest narrative about systemic exclusion and historic inequalities for minority communities. Yet rather than hold the state morally responsible for intergenerational poverty, they held teachers morally responsible. Moreover, they did not see the state as an agent of change, but instead turned to the individual as the agent of change.

SJE's strongly believed in individual agency and the power of parents and students to escape low-performing schools via the marketplace. Several participants expressed their own ability to escape poverty through the schooling system, and many had done quite well by getting into elite universities and getting employed in upper-middle-class professional positions. Several participants mentioned instances of violence from the Civil Rights movement that African Americans were willing to endure just to access a better education and better opportunities, and the participants tended to mimic that 'survivalist' instinct to succeed in the education system by an 'any means necessary' approach. For the SJE's the market control model of accountability was a natural solution that rested on their belief in schools, markets, and the power of the individual to escape poverty on their own.

Others who embodied the Empiricist moral narrative had a strong preference for *laizze-faire* solutions to the policy problem and embraced the 'morality of the market.' Thinkers with this moral narrative expressed the closest alignment between their moral and policy ideas, although there were contradictions in their moral reasoning as well. Most notable was their use of select evidence to solve the policy problem. The four individuals within this cluster could cite quantitative studies about the empirical effectiveness of policy reforms like state takeovers, turnaround districts, or value-added models, yet they did not mention literature that addressed the effects such reforms had on issues of race, class, or democratic processes; nor did they cite studies with qualitative methodologies. With the quantitative studies they did cite, they did not provide specificity of the conditions when test scores did improve under certain reforms; rather, the studies were used as a categorical justification for a given reform.

Paternalists strongly believed in discipline, competition, goal setting, and norms of appropriate behavior, and the market control accountability model was a natural fit for how they saw the world. Arguably, the paternalists had the clearest connection between their moral and policy ideas; their logic was the most sound. Yet the Paternalists had many 'blind spots' in their moral ideas that ignored issues of race, historic inequality, institutional exclusion, and to some extent redistribution. When probed about their core beliefs, the participants within this cluster pointed to concepts or ideas that resonated with the way they saw the world, with one participant pointing to the movie *Lean on Me* as an example of what the ideal school should look like, while another referenced the importance of the state acting like a mother or father figure in setting goals and creating order. They admonished poor parents for not knowing standards of appropriate behavior and saw teachers as morally responsible for the policy problem. Yet rather than rely on empirical evidence to develop their solutions to the policy problem, the paternalists largely relied on their moral justifications to drive their policy ideas.

Why the paradigm remains in place

This study found that the accountability paradigm still holds a wide range of perspectives all under one roof, ranging from the nurturing beliefs of the humanists to the disciplining worldview of the paternalists. The findings suggest that the core ideas behind accountability remain paradigmatic because the rationale and technical concepts can be bent and stretched to meet unique epistemological perspectives, which keep the paradigm in place. Even after the failure of NCLB, there seems to still be room for influential thinkers to take hold of the core concepts and match them up to their internal realities. When their logic could not explain the connection between the policy problem and solutions, the participants could rely on their personal experiences to justify their policy ideas. The paradigm provides leeway for people from

different walks of life to take the core concepts and transform them to align with their own values and beliefs. In most cases the beliefs, personal experiences, and taken-for-granted norms expressed by the participants can ‘fill in the gap’ in the mismatch between how the thinkers define the policy problem and how they go about solving the problem. When rational logic is absent, moral reasoning fills its place.

Contribution to the literature

All told, the conceptual framework for this study is an adequate way to study policy paradigms at the level of the individual. The conceptual framework and the line of questioning developed in the interview guide (see Appendix) successfully uncovered the moral narratives of the study participants and illuminated important connections between moral narratives and policy ideas.

The conceptual framework makes a theoretical contribution to the study of paradigms at the level of the individual by bringing definition to the study of policy and moral ideas. I built on the study of policy ideas by creating a ‘policy dimension’ of a paradigm using Peter Hall’s (1993) early work on policy paradigms and integrated scholarship from other academics focusing their research on problem definition (Rocheftort & Cobb, 1994), problem attribution (Benford & Snow, 2000), goal setting (Stone, 2002), and knowledge sources (Ingram, Schneider, & DeLeon, 2007). The conceptual framework also brings definition to the ‘moral dimension’ of a paradigm by integrating theoretical literature on ‘worldviews’ (Koltko-Rivera, 2004).

The findings contribute to the theoretical development of the policy paradigm literature as well. I found a strong connection between the participants’ worldviews and preferred accountability model. As reviewed in section 5d, participants’ core beliefs tended to shape their policy ideas. I developed the concept of a ‘bridge idea’ to illustrate how a connection is made between a given person’s moral narrative and their policy ideas, which is a significant contribution to the literature. To reiterate an example here, a paternalist saw his worldview encapsulated in the movie *Lean on Me*—a movie that reflected his core beliefs of discipline, order, and rule following. The participant could then take that idea and look to institutions thought capable of creating the same order and responsiveness as seen in the movie. An entire accountability model based on market logics could be built around the core values reflected in *Lean on Me*. In addition to the concept of a bridge idea, the findings reveal an array of moral narratives that are behind a given paradigm. The five moral narratives I identified may contribute to the literature by establishing epistemological trends of different life experiences embodied by influential policy thinkers. If future studies are able to build on identifying and describing the moral narratives underlying different ‘ideologies’ within American politics, perhaps it will be possible to imagine new ideas that would resonate with a wide variety of people from different walks of life.

The finding that the accountability paradigm stretched into different institutional venues was remarkably similar to work by Romzek and Dubnick (1987), who found four different models of accountability. Arguably, I found three of their four accountability models—professional (which I call professional and local control accountability), bureaucratic (I call state control accountability), and legal (which I refer to as market control accountability). The only accountability model I did not find was what Romzek and Dubnick (1987) call ‘political’ accountability. Despite nearly every participant in the study acknowledging the importance of

redistribution, none called for a political accountability policy to hold elites or politicians responsible for addressing inequality.

The moral narratives I identified were also very similar to the worldviews identified by Mary Douglas (2002) in her grid-group cultural theory. Douglas identified an ‘individualist’ (which I call Social Justice Entrepreneur), an ‘enclave’ (which I refer to as the Humanitarian), a positional bureaucrat (which I refer to as Structuralists). However, Douglas also identifies an ‘isolate’ in her model, which I did not find. Outside of Douglas’ model, I identified Empiricists and Paternalists. The moral narratives I identified lend insights into cultural theory and the study of worldviews.

In general, findings from this study along with the conceptual framework may be of interest to scholars of policy paradigms and for those interested in the process of paradigm change (Baumgartner, 2014; Diagneault, 2014; Hall, 1993, 2014; Hogan & Howlett, 2015). Findings will also be of interest to those who study policy paradigms in education (Mehta, 2013; Quinn, Oelberger, & Meyerson, 2016). Findings related to the individual moral narratives in the education policy debate may also be of interest to education scholars. For example, the Social Justice Entrepreneur moral narrative may be of interest to scholars trying to understand the ‘neoliberal turn in black politics’ (Dawson & Francis, 2015; Dumas, 2016). Scholars of the politics of education may be interested in how people with differing epistemic realities and moral narratives can work together on common education reforms or how framing and problem definition can create new coalitions (Au & Ferrare, 2015; Debray, 2006). Lastly, the findings would be of interest to public administration scholars and cultural theorists who study different modes of control over government (Douglas, 1982; Hood, 1995; Lodge & Wegrich, 2005).

Implications for policy and practice

Findings from this study have several practical implications for policymakers and practitioners. From a policy perspective, the findings give definition to the accountability policy debate. In California, there was an impassioned debate between supporters of the professional and local control accountability model and supporters of the state control model. In Tennessee, the debate was mostly between a state control and market control model. Having clear definitions of different accountability models makes it possible to observe competing interests, coalition building, and the rationale for certain policy designs.

The five moral narratives I identified also have important policy implications. The moral narratives uncover how influential policy thinkers perceive public problems and how they develop solutions to policy problems by filtering their rationale through their own beliefs and life experiences. With this knowledge, it is possible to imagine new policy ideas that might resonate with different moral narratives and how new policy ideas might be framed to build coherence among unlikely actors and interests, and how a new paradigm could emerge.

On this note, the findings have practical implications for coalition building and policy framing. In the current political sphere, it struck me that humanists are fighting against social justice entrepreneurs in the education reform debate, when their moral narratives both surround the issue of poverty. There is a major contradiction in the framing of the problem between these groups (‘poverty causes bad schools’ versus ‘bad schools cause poverty’), but perhaps new policy ideas could marry the humanists and social justice entrepreneurs together in a common

policy agenda. As it stands, the social justice entrepreneurs are ironically working hand in hand with paternalists who have a moral narrative that is in complete juxtaposition to the narrative of the social justice entrepreneurs. Perhaps policy entrepreneurs and advocacy organizations could use these findings to create new alliances and a new common agenda for change in society.

Lastly, the findings uncovered many moral and policy ‘blind spots’. As reviewed in the discussion (section 5d), each moral narrative was expressed with different worldviews. For example, some participants were more willing than others to address race and class issues in a deep and focused way, while others overlooked those topics but could instead focus on topics like poverty or political empowerment. Uncovering the moral narratives may help policymakers and practitioners understand each other’s life experiences and perspectives as well as ‘blind spots’.

Limitations

Capturing a wide range of participants across two states was certainly a strength of this study, but it would have been beneficial to have a slightly larger sample size, especially to capture more empiricists and paternalists. As mentioned in the findings section, I only had four interviews with the empiricists and four paternalists. I found that having more than ten interviews for a given moral justification was enough to determine patterns. There may have been important nuances that I was unable to capture, or I may have overstepped the generalizations for the paternalists and empiricists.

While collecting data, I had no idea about what kind of moral narratives I would find. I generally recognized that people from certain types of organizations or political affiliations would be more likely to share certain worldviews over others, but I did not have a very good sense for ‘who was who’ (for example, I could not tell the difference between a structuralist and a social justice entrepreneur until I began the analysis). Had I piloted the study and developed these classifications early on, perhaps I could have been more precise during the interviews to test the core concepts more concretely.

The study would have been strengthened if I could have recruited economic elites and high-ranking public officials. As noted in the methodology, I was more successful at recruiting high-ranking professionals, but was unable to interview the state billionaires influencing the education policy debate in each state, nor was I able to interview the governor or U.S. senators from each state.

Areas for future research

There are several areas to take this research in the future. More research is needed to understand how worldviews connect to policy ideas at the level of the individual. I did not take time to understand the life histories of the participants I interviewed, but perhaps future oral history projects or ethnographies could go more in-depth into the life experiences and worldviews that shape how important policy influencers think.

Findings from this study could also be applied to the study of the ideologies of organizations. The participants I interviewed were often leaders of organizations and there were recognizable patterns between what they shared during the interview and the work that their

organization produced. If this research were applied to the study of organizations, it is possible that findings could be used to inform the coalition building literature.

Lastly, it is entirely possible that there were important influential policy thinkers that I did not include in the study that could have provided differing perspectives. For example, perhaps there are influential thinkers (maybe in other states) who are trying to radically shift the accountability paradigm. Another area for future research would be to identify and study radical thinkers and how they imagine shifting the accountability paradigm.

* * *

In the preface of Milton Friedman's (2009) book of lectures on the foundational ideas of neoliberalism, he notes:

"Only a crisis - actual or perceived - produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around. That, I believe, is our basic function: to develop alternatives to existing policies, to keep them alive and available until the politically impossible becomes the politically inevitable" (p. iv).

When crisis ensued in the decades leading up to the 1980s, Friedman's monetarism doctrine was ready to be picked up by policymaking communities resulting in a paradigmatic shift from welfarism to neoliberalism. When NCLB collapsed, it arguably created a crisis in education policy with potential to make way for the same kind of radical change. Yet this study finds that the accountability paradigm remains firmly in place. Perhaps no new ideas were lying around for the policy influencers I interviewed to draw from; at least no ideas were offered that were radical enough to shift the way most people thought about solving education inequality. Instead, the participants I interviewed continued to work within the confines of the existing paradigm and largely justified the status quo, despite the significant drawbacks of NCLB. It is up to scholars, activists, and other thinkers to develop new alternatives for solving the pressing problem of education and social inequalities and to integrate new ideas into policymaking circles. To conclude with words from another paradigmatic thinker, John Maynard Keynes: "the difficulty lies, not in the new ideas, but in escaping from the old ones..." (Keynes, 1936, p. vii).

Appendix A

Interview Guide

Introduction: Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. As I mentioned in the introductory email, I am a doctoral candidate at UC Berkeley and my dissertation is exploring how influential policy actors in the state of [California or Tennessee] are coming to re-think accountability policy for public schools in light of the new Every Student Succeeds Act that was recently enacted by Congress. I am interested in:

- Understanding your personal preferences (not the perspective of your organization)
- The underlying rationale for such policies
- How you develop policy ideas.

This study will have important contributions to the field of education research and policy. As a reminder, there are right or wrong answers, the questions are designed to gauge your own unique perceptions and experiences.

This interview will take about 90 minutes, and with your permission, I would like to audio record this interview. Please feel free to stop the recording at any time, and as a reminder, you are free to decline to answer any question that may make you feel uncomfortable.

Do you have any questions for me? Great! Let's get started.

Tell me a little about your professional background and how you ended up in your current position.

How long have you been in your current position?

Policy dimension (possible questions)

Concept

Question

Policy feedback

I'd like us to start out by focusing on the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. In December of last year, we saw partisan support from the federal government to abandon NCLB in favor of implementing another policy alternative, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). In your own opinion, do you consider NCLB to be a policy failure?

Motivation via external incentives and sanctions

As you know, the former federal policy focused on awards for high performing schools, and especially emphasized sanctions for low performing schools. In hindsight, when you look at the policy, do you think that sanctions were a powerful tool to close the achievement gap? What about awards—do you think that awarding high performing schools is a powerful policy tool?

Precision, measurement, adequacy

In your state, the [CA or TN accountability system] created an API [or AYP in case of Tennessee] in response to NCLB that was largely based on performance of students on standardized tests, creating one metric that indicated performance. Do you think measuring student performance based on standardized tests is a powerful tool for schools to close the achievement gap? Why or why not?

Problem definition

Overall, how do you conceive of the achievement gap? How do you think it is produced?

What role do schools play in narrowing the achievement gap? What role does policy/policymakers/the state play in narrowing it? What is the role of the teachers in all this? The districts? The role of families and students themselves?

Do you think it's realistic that the government at the state and federal level can solve these problems? What should policy solve, and how far does policy need to go?

Diagnostic framing - Problem attribution

What do you think are the *causes* of the problems facing low-performing schools? Moreover, what do you think are the causes of differential school performance (poor performing schools versus high performing schools)? Is anybody or anything to blame? Is there anybody that needs to be held responsible?
(Some possible classifications: Students, families, communities, teachers, schools, districts, government, society, poverty, inequality, etc.)

<i>Policy goals</i>	What are realistic policy goals? Is it realistic that public policy can close the achievement gap? What are the realistic goals for government to close the achievement gap? What's possible, and where is government powerless?
<i>Policy instruments</i>	<p>When you describe what you think is a realistic goal for policy [repeat here] what kinds of policies does government need to use to achieve that goal? What mix of instruments (taxes, capacity building, sanctions, incentives) should government use to accomplish these goals? What is your take on charter schools, vouchers, and school turnaround strategies?</p> <p><i>In the case that the individual supports punitive consequences:</i> When we close low-performing schools and point the finger at low-performance, some would argue that we are actually punishing the poor. What do you think of that? Do you think that with accountability policies, we are punishing the teachers that are teaching the poor?</p> <p><i>In the case that the interviewee supports relaxing accountability pressure on schools:</i> Why do you think that [your preferred policy design] will create enough pressure for schools to improve? Do you think it's possible to motivate change without making teachers and school leaders feel the pressure that was present in NCLB?</p> <p>How do you see your preferred policy instruments interacting with the Common Core standards?</p>
<i>Role of policy in progress (social engineering possible vs. not possible)</i>	In general, do you think that social policy can make a difference in the lives of citizens? How about in a more specific case: can policy make a difference for the schools? Why or why not?
<i>Perspective of institutions (government vs. market)</i>	<p>When thinking about public policy, there are different institutional venues that can operationalize government services. Do you think there are other powerful forces such as markets that are effective mechanisms to achieve the ends we are pursuing for schools?</p> <p>Do you think that the marketplace or government (or both) is better suited to organize society in America? What should be the role of the marketplace, and what should be the role of government? When should government intervene in society? Should government ever intervene in the market (as in the case of regulating or monitoring charters or private schools that accept vouchers)?</p>
<i>Knowledge sources</i>	<p>When thinking about what informs your opinion about accountability policy more broadly, and what to do in your state, what sources do you mainly draw from? What do they tell you? What written sources do you use? What organizations do you talk to?</p> <p>What organizations are you connected to? What organizations do you talk</p>

to normally? What organizations are important to you? Who are your competitors? Where do policy ideas come from within this community?

Prognostic framing - solutions

What is your plan for enacting your preferred accountability policy solution? What are your strategies for action?

Moral dimension (possible questions)

Worldviews

Views of justice

When thinking about the students or communities that are afflicted by low-performing schools, if government goes out of its way to provide resources to these schools and communities, do you think that they will avail themselves of the resources in productive ways, or is this a waste of energy and money?

Do you believe that the American contract is still alive today—that with hard work, people can get ahead and achieve what they want in life?

Do you think that people in the US have equal opportunities to get ahead in life? What do you make of the fact that there are differential life outcomes for individuals in this society?

What's your concept of justice in society? Is it that justice means that everybody has the same? That everybody has what they need? Does your concept of justice include the possibility of inequality (i.e. is inequality inevitable, and the result of human nature)? What role does government have in ensuring [your definition] of justice? What role do individuals play?

Views of human nature

Do you think we can trust school professionals to 'do right' by all students? Do you think we can trust local districts and actors to manage their own affairs, without government oversight? How about the state—is the state capable of monitoring and intervening in low performing schools? Do you think school professionals can be trusted to regulate themselves in a marketplace environment without government oversight?

What do you think motivates people best? (Hint: do you think that people are best motivated when they are nurtured and supported or disciplined and punished?) Why? Are there any personal experiences that inform your opinion? Is there any empirical evidence you lean on to inform your opinion?

View of 'others' and interpersonal group relationships

When you look at the demographics that are affected by the achievement gap, so many kids that are affected are students of color, immigrants, or poor white people. What do you make of that?

What do you think that these groups (students of color, immigrants, or

poor whites) deserve from government in America?

Personal experience

How does our conversation resonate with your daily life experience?
(Do you visit schools often, do you have children, do your moral worldviews resonate with the way you experience the daily world, etc.)

ASK ABOUT PERSONAL EXPERIENCE THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW. I'M TRYING TO UNDERSTAND HOW YOU CAME TO BELIEVE THIS...HOW DID YOU COME TO FORMULATE THIS IDEA? WHERE DOES THIS IDEA ORIGINATE?

Appendix B

Codebook

This codebook provides an overview of the key codes used in the analysis, definitions of the codes, and example quotes for the main constructs in the study.

Code	Definition	Example quote
<i>Worldview - Interpersonal group relationships</i>		
Otherness – race	Any reference to racial relationships in the U.S. Includes discussions of institutional exclusion, historic oppression, or education inequality based on race.	And I also think that we're hardwired as human beings to have a certain amount of mistrust for-- based on difference. Even fear based on difference. It's like it's really wired. It's like you're from that cave on the other side of the hill. "I can't trust you, you're not part of my clan. I'm worried about you, you're other." That's hardwired and at different moments in history, at different places, we seize on different forms of difference as the key issue. And because of our history, because of slavery, because of whatever. Here in America, it's often race. But this capacity to hate based on difference, it's in our breasts, it's cloaked like a serpent ready to lash out when triggered. But I think that just like our innate propensity to sin. That doesn't mean you give up on it. It's just mean you have to be prepared to wake up every day and struggle against it. And I think race is like that. I have to struggle against this. This is not like the enlightenment, where you can somehow be educated out of it. You read a book. You see a play. You have some friendships. You hear a sermon and you're cured. No, we still have this propensity to sin that you have to struggle with. And the same is true with race. (139, P4)
Otherness – class	Any reference to inequalities based on wealth.	So our fear is that the bottom five percent schools...states need to do something about it...The bottom five percent, low income tends to be the population that's mostly struggling in schools. We actually know what can be done with those populations, if you actually offer good schooling. You can get them out of poverty. They're one generation away from exiting poverty, if you actually educate them. But right now the system isn't educating them, at all. And so we are incredibly focused on that portion of the population. I don't give a shit about, frankly, accountability for the other 95%. (120, P5)

(continued on next page)

(Appendix B continued)

<p>Otherness – political empowerment</p>	<p>References to groups that are politically empowered versus disempowered.</p>	<p>And but I don't think that she's [Betsy Devos] an evil person, she's a very nice person, I think she means well, but it's just the sheltered life...it's the same reason why you don't have an ASD school in Lewison county, I mean it's, you don't fight... we don't fight our own people you know, we don't, <i>we don't do that</i> [emphasis]. And is she gonna be big enough to go into a Republican district and say, you know, Westchester County, New York and 'we're closing all your schools down or something', you know... (208, P7)</p>
<p>View of human nature - agency</p>	<p>Whether the participant believes individual agency creates change in society</p>	<p>I think that one of the most important voices and groups of people that can fight for that once they see data what's working and what's not, like really get reliable data of what's working and what's not, are parents. As a parent, I'll fight everyday for my kids like I am a momma bear. Like I'm not allowing bullshit to happen. They're my kids. And so, if -- and I have really strong views about what education should look like and what's possible in their school in the 8 years that they'll be in it or whatever. So, I have strong opinions, but I'm also realistic. I want to go in there and just bash people over the head and say, "This has got to change." but it can be very I am armed with data about which should and shouldn't happen at my kid's school level getting what I know about what should happen there. And so, I can advocate with them in a really strong but sometimes frightening way [chuckles] for those, for the folks at my school. I think they know that I am sane and reasonable and approachable but I'm also like, I got compelling data so why is it the way it is and they go, "Oh sh--." [chuckles] (118, P5)</p>
<p>View of human nature - structural</p>	<p>Whether the participant believes that institutions (such as the state) create change in society</p>	<p>Who should bear responsibility for making change happen? Who should feel a sense of agency, of responsibility for taking action? What concerns me about California's present course is the substantial abdication at the state level of agency. There is a Pontius Pilate 'washing of hands' in Sacramento and especially in the Governor's office of 'don't blame me if a district is in trouble', that's because they haven't done what they should have done with local control. So I think that that's both analytically and morally objectionable. (139, P4)</p>

(continued on next page)

(Appendix B continued)

<i>Worldview – human nature</i>		
Good vs. evil	Human beings are either ‘good’ and trustworthy by nature, or human beings are corrupt and need to be sublimated by a social system	And I also think that we're hardwired as human beings to have a certain amount of mistrust for-- based on difference. Even fear based on difference. It's like it's really wired. It's like you're from that cave on the other side of the hill. “I can't trust you, you're not part of my clan. I'm worried about you, you're other.” That's hardwired and at different moments in history, at different places, we seize on different forms of difference as the key issue. And because of our history, because of slavery, because of whatever. Here in America, it's often race. But this capacity to hate based on difference, it's in our breasts, it's cloaked like a serpent ready to lash out when triggered. But I think that just like our innate propensity to sin. That doesn't mean you give up on it. It's just mean you have to be prepared to wake up every day and struggle against it. And I think race is like that. I have to struggle against this. This is not like the enlightenment, where you can somehow be educated out of it. You read a book. You see a play. You have some friendships. You hear a sermon and you're cured. No, we still have this propensity to sin that you have to struggle with. And the same is true with race. (139, P4)
Motivation – supportive or punitive	Human nature is best motivated when people are nurtured and supported	“And really those, think about just how do people improve performance in kind of a fear and threat based way? How do you like, I mean—I have dogs, they're very ill-behaved right now, not getting enough attention, but you know, do you like—is it about fear and threats or is it about positive supports? That just seems so common sense to me as a teacher and I think it seems common sense to our education leadership right now. Where it's like, “We're going to help you to be better at what you do. We're not going to scare you or threaten you into doing a better job because we all know, nothing learns as well as it could from a place of fear.” You know, systems based on fear are not good. (114, P2).
Motivation – discipline, punishment	Human nature is best motivated when people are disciplined and punished	...The difficulty with us is that we have a lot of legal concepts that come into play that the teachers now have to kinda follow in reference to touching a child, you know has potential lawsuits and things of that nature that now occur. (213, P9)

(continued on next page)

(Appendix B continued)

<i>Worldview – distributive justice</i>		
Utilitarian	Discussions about distributive justice with an efficiency purpose; does not include rationale to target certain groups in society based on race or income.	I mean, everything impacts the economy. It's about prosperity in a community and if you're at a 60% graduation rate-- I mean it's going to hurt your community, as far as jobs creation. We don't produce graduates to create jobs, I mean the jobs will come where the graduates are....I mean, that's really what in my opinion, it boils down to-- it strengthens your economy to have an educated workforce ...It's good for the economy... over one and a half million dollars of gross domestic product that we could have in this region with just having 10 percent more students score a 21 or higher on their ACT. (205, P7)
Social justice	Discussions about justice with a social justice purpose; i.e. defending the interests of marginalized groups in society. May include conversations about equity or equality.	When you say equal that makes me uncomfortable. It should definitely be equitable. I don't know whether it's fair that it's 'now equal' because it's been unequal for so very long. Equitable would be like, "okay, it's your turn now. I've been waiting for 400 years". So that's why I'm kind of reacting to equal, just the word equal. But I think in essence of what you're saying yeah, student equity has more to do with making sure that everyone has access, that there's no one that's systematically being shut out of the system where we all have access to these great outcomes because I don't think now that's what happens. You know, there are people who, they're students and groups that do not have access to certain things that other groups have. (118, P5)
Resources	Any mention of the redistribution of resources in society; targeting elites or the political system for redistribution	I don't know about that. I mean, I think the extent is part of the federal flow-through dollars that are used for that, or you know the department dollars, because if you get right down to the low-performing schools, they're usually the Memphis or Nashville, there's a couple in Chattanooga. It's a rural dominated legislatures. The legislatures aren't going to get excited for rural areas about pouring more money into Memphis, Nashville and other places like that. So to the extent it could be... you know these dollars aren't or don't have to be appropriate by the legislature, I think you're in a better spot. (205, P6)
Trust in institutions	This code is used to document the participants' trust in different types of institutions (state, market, family, community, or profession)	...And there's not a teacher that hasn't bought food for students in their classroom. We know they don't --or a kitchen lady that doesn't sometimes, for some students, actually provide them with food for the weekend cause they won't get it at home or they can't get it at home. (132, P1)

(continued on next page)

(Appendix B continued)

Bridge ideas	Excerpts that connect moral narratives to policy ideas	The other movie [<i>Lean on Me</i>] the guy in New Jersey, he says we are gonna be tougher on you. I don't care if you're black, white, rich or poor in this school were gonna be tougher, we gonna expect more out of you, more help from you, you're gonna say 'yes sir, no sir, yes ma'am, no ma'am.' He got a little bull horn and some people were not his supporters. He ultimately had issues with one thing or another but the reality of it was that the African-American—can't think of his name [Morgan Freeman]. It's another example of-- he deliberately said it, "We are gonna be tougher." And that the expectations were much higher with regard to behavior. And every kid in that school knew that, so but that's the issue, in my opinion. (213, P9)
Problem definition	What participants identify as the policy problem	I think that schools also have to be conceptualized as more than just the school itself. The schools are imbedded in a community and that community is within a society that has a host of other features and factors that play into the burdens that kids come to school with the conditions at they're in at home, the families that they're in. There's so many other--the amount of healthcare, mental and just health care that they get or don't get. There's just so many -- the nutrition that they get or don't get. There's just so many features that play into how all of the people arrive at a school building and arrive in a school district that when we only think about it from a school perspective as the only thing, I think that's where we start to be limited. (119, P1)
Causes of the problem	What participants identify as the cause of their perceived policy problem	Yes, you know the achievement gap, you kind of have achievement gaps before kids get to school. So you can't blame achievement gaps on schools. It clearly exists in the broader society, in housing policy, in residential segregation, the inter-generational transmission of inequality. All the usual stories actually. I would say, personally, I would say those are reflected in schools. (117, P4)
Problem attribution	Who or what institutions is assigned blame for the policy problem	Who should bear responsibility for making change happen? Who should feel a sense of agency, of responsibility for taking action? What concerns me about California's present course is the substantial abdication at the state level of agency. There is a Pontius Pilate 'washing of hands' in Sacramento and especially in the Governor's office of 'don't blame me if a district is in trouble', that's because they haven't done what they should have done with local control. So I think that that's both analytically and morally objectionable. (139, P4)

(continued on next page)

(Appendix B continued)

Problem solver	Who or what institution is considered responsible to be the 'problem solver'	I think there is also-- what I'm working on right now, which is understanding the power of families, and knowing that you can't divorce student achievement from the experience that child is having in the home or in the community. That means that you have to pay as much attention to parent-family engagement as you do other factors in the schools. ...54% of the families we work with across the state come from another country, and they have no idea how our system works, and they're intimidated by it. I think gap closure also comes into play when the family's empowered to be a voice for their child, to understand the system, and to value the education that their child is receiving. It can go a huge way, and it doesn't have to cost a lot of money, but it does require for teachers and educators to be given the tools to work with families so they partner better. (113, P3)
Reflections on NCLB		
Positive aspects of NCLB	Reflections on the participants' perceived positive aspects of the former accountability law	I think, again, the intentions were good, right? What child are we going to leave behind? And I think some of the elements of No Child Left Behind were super helpful to us as states – or as a state or as states or as a country in general. Like, we should really be looking at things like achievement gaps and why is there such predictability about who is not achieving versus who is and don't we want some data to be able to base some goals and actions upon – right? Like, that intention was really good, and I think more transparency around what gap was there was brought about by No Child Left Behind, I think was good...(114, P2)
Negative aspects of NCLB	Reflections on the participants' perceived negative aspects of the former accountability law	The testing regime was ridiculous. There were weeks I would spend more time testing or prepping for testing when I was actually teaching. I saw the effect it had on my kids, the stress on them. I think a lot of the stuff was just developmentally inappropriate because they were pushing all these academics down to these younger children. We see it now in Kindergarten, first graders where they're filling out worksheets all the time. That is developmentally inappropriate for students. They would take away their recesses. They would not allow play. They wouldn't even teach them how to hold a pencil. We would be doing stations for example, moving around, but they were all paper-pencil stations or reading stations. They were being, I think, pushed inappropriately. Especially boys because boys, at that young age, are a little bit behind girls in terms of development-- when they are developmentally ready to learn to read, for example, just decoding essentially, and word recognition and stuff like that. I think there were a lot of negative effects. (132, P1)

(continued on next page)

(Appendix B continued)

Aspects of accountability		
Data use	Captures description of data use	And if we design a system, an accountability system, where all that matters is math and reading test scores, which some people kept sort of bringing back into the picture, because those were the easy things to measure and those were the data we already have, then we wouldn't see any change. So I would much rather see a really wide array of measures, a really innovative and different system... (124, P4)
Targets	What aspect of the education or political system the participants wants to target with accountability policy	So I think you got to look at each district, the Superintendent level. Hold the Superintendent and the school board accountable. Because ultimately, they set and implement policy. We're trying to -- we put too much emphasis on where we got to hold teachers accountable so-- we've tied their, their tenure decisions and their evaluations to the test scores, and even some teachers get evaluated on test scores of students they don't even have, or in non-tested areas. So, ultimately, I think that the school district level, Superintendent, school board need to be held accountable and I think they welcome that... (216, P2)
Pressures	The type and strength of pressure applied in an accountability model	I think I respond to pressure, I think everybody kind of responds to pressure. I don't really like it, I don't really like being held accountable, but I like my Board of Directors, they are my boss. But like, that is just sort of how it is, I think and how it needs to be. Some pressure helps us to focus on what is important and make improvements where needed. (115, P5)
Monitors	Who or what institution the participants desires to monitor school performance	What Anaheim Union is doing, they are using parents -- train parents in advocacy and civil rights folks -- as a part of their classroom walkthroughs. Where what they're doing effectively is-- and the Union's on board not manning the barricades and saying this is about evaluation. It's about educating local stakeholders about what's going on in classrooms...(140, P1)
Consequences	The type and strength of consequences applied to low-performing schools in an accountability model (i.e. positive or negative consequences)	...we're in a very different place now where we're trying as much as possible to encourage schools and districts to make good decisions based on local context, as opposed to Washington D.C. coming in with a set of sanctions that so very far-- I mean, even for Sacramento to come in with sanctions, I mean, punishment in an education system, what? That just that wasn't a good idea ever. I mean, it's not about punishment. It's about, 'What can we do to support you to be better,' as opposed to, 'You have failed. You would be -- you will be punished,' right? (114, P2)

(continued on next page)

(Appendix B continued)

Resources		<p>...we're going to create more providers. We won't-- we're gonna spawn more providers. And how we're gonna do that? We can withhold 7 percent of the ESSA money. We must withhold 7 percent. The state of California could withhold between \$150 and \$200 million of ESSA for state-wide purposes. Most grant, we needed more grant at the local school districts, we could accomplish all this. We could fund networks of districts for data...ESSA set-asides. \$150 to \$200 million, that's real money. We have to set aside by law. Seven percent of Title I. That's \$128 million. We're not in Rhode Island, so this is real money. (135, P2)</p>
New policy ideas	<p>Any policy idea outside of the scope of the accountability paradigm; ideas not related to the core concepts of accountability such as pressures, consequences, data use, etc.</p>	<p>...we've been really involved with some consortiums and some coalitions working around the idea of community schools, which we see is kind of the exact inverse of what the state's current intervention model is, which is this very top down, ASD will come in, take a school over, turn over its staff, turn over its leadership, hand it over to a charter operator, and basically in not so many words just blow the school up, with or without the consent of the community it's worth noting. So, we're interested very much in looking at different ways to do that, engaging with communities, engaging with parents and stakeholders, and figuring out what the unique needs of those communities are instead of this one size fits all model of intervention that the ASD has become, or this one star who more or less that just comes in and just wipes out a school. (220, P1)</p>

Appendix C

Demographics of study participants

	California (# of participants)	Tennessee (# of participants)
Age		
20-30	2	4
31-40	10	5
41-50	6	4
51-60	8	5
60+	7	0
Decline to answer	1	0
Gender		
Male	16	9
Female	17	9
Decline to answer	1	0
Race		
African American	4	5
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0
Asian	2	0
Hispanic or Latino/a	0	2
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	4	0
White	23	11
Other	0	0
Decline to answer	1	0
Ever worked in school		
No, I have not worked in a school	14	7
I was a teacher	15	9
I was a principal	1	1
I worked in another capacity	3	1
Decline to answer	1	0
Ever served on local school board^a		
Yes	24	14
No	2	4
Decline to answer	1	0
Level of Education		
High school diploma or less	1	0
Some college education	1	1
Associate's degree	0	0
Bachelor's degree	2	4
Master's degree	10	5

Professional degree	10	2
Doctorate degree	9	6
Decline to answer	1	0
Mother's highest level of education		
High school diploma or less	12	5
Some college education	4	1
Bachelor's degree	5	8
Master's degree	6	2
Professional degree	4	0
Doctorate degree	2	2
Decline to answer	1	0
Father's highest level of education		
High school diploma or less	11	7
Some college education	4	1
Bachelor's degree	3	3
Master's degree	2	2
Professional degree	5	1
Doctorate degree	7	4
Decline to answer	1	0
Political party affiliation		
Republican	0	3
Democratic	30	9
Libertarian	0	0
Independent voter	2	6
Decline to answer	2	0
Religious affiliation		
Agnostic/atheist	5	3
Catholic	0	1
Christian	14	7
Jewish	6	0
Protestant	0	5
Spiritually-inclined	4	1
Other	3	1
Decline to answer	2	0
<hr/>		
Sample size (N=52; 80% response rate)	34	18

Note:

^aThis question was not asked for the first 7 participants in California who filled out the demographic form, therefore, the sample size is smaller for the California response (N=27).

Bibliography

- Aberbach, J., & Rockman, B. (2002). Conducting and coding elite interviews. *Political Science & Politics*, 35(4), 673–676.
- Au, W. (2007). High-stakes testing and curricular control: A qualitative meta synthesis. *Education Researcher*, 36(5), 258–267.
- Au, W., & Ferrare, J. J. (Eds.). (2015). *Mapping corporate education reform: Power and policy networks in the neoliberal state*. Routledge.
- Aucoin, P. (1990). Administrative reform in public management: Paradigms, principles, paradoxes and pendulums. *Governance*, 3(2), 115–137.
- Ball, S. J. (2003). The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy*, 18(2), 215–228.
- Batterson, C., & Ball, S. J. (1995). Autobiographies and interviews as means of access to elite policy-making in education. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 43(2), 201–216.
- Baumgartner, F. R. (2014). Ideas, paradigms and confusions. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 21(3), 475–480.
- Baumgartner, F. R., & Jones, B. D. (1993). *Agendas and instability in American politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Beland, D. (2007). The social exclusion discourse: Ideas and policy change. *Policy & Politics*, 35(1), 123–139.
- Beland, D. (2009). Ideas, institutions, and policy change. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 16(5), 701–718.
- Beland, D. (2010). Policy change and health care research. *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*, 35(4), 615–641.
- Beland, D., & Cox, H. (2016). Ideas as coalition magnets: Coalition building, policy entrepreneurs, and power relations. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 23(3), 428–445.
- Beland, D., & Orenstein, M. A. (2013). International organizations as policy actors: An ideational approach. *Global Social Policy*, 13(2), 125–143.
- Benford, R. D., & Snow, D. A. (2000). Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26(1), 611–639.
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality*. London: Penguin Books.
- Berman, S. (1998). *The social democratic moment: Ideas and politics in the making of interwar Europe*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Berman, S. (2013). Ideational theorizing in the social sciences since “Policy Paradigms, Social Learning, and the State.” *Governance*, 26(2), 217–237.
- Berry, M. (2002). Validity and reliability issues in elite interviews. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 35(4), 679–682.
- Birkland, T. A. (2011). *An introduction to the policy process: Theories, concepts, and models of public policy making* (3rd ed.). New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc.
- Blyth, M. (2013). Paradigms and paradox: The politics of economic ideas in two moments of crisis. *Governance*, 26(2), 197–215.

- Bovens, M. (2007). Analysing and assessing accountability: A conceptual framework 1. *European Law Journal*, 13(4), 447–468.
- Bovens, M. (2010a). Two concepts of accountability: Accountability as a virtue and as a mechanism. *West European Politics*, 33(5), 946–967.
- Bovens, M. (2010b). Two concepts of accountability: Accountability as a virtue and as a mechanism. *West European Politics*, 33(5), 946–967.
- Brown, W. (2015). *Undoing the demos: Neoliberalism's stealth revolution*. MIT Press.
- California Department of Education. (2018). Fingertip facts on education in California - CalEdFacts. Retrieved from <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/ceffingertipfacts.asp>
- Campbell, J. (1998). Institutional analysis and the role of ideas in political economy. *Theory and Society*, 27(1), 377–409.
- Campbell, J. L. (2002). Ideas, politics, and public policy. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28(1), 21–38.
- Capano, G. (2003). Administrative traditions and policy change: When policy paradigms matter. The case of Italian administrative reform during the 1990s. *Public Administration*, 81(4), 781–801.
- Carnoy, M., & Loeb, S. (2002). Does external accountability affect student outcomes? A cross-state analysis. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24(4), 305–331.
- Carson, M., Burns, T. R., & Calvo, D. (Eds.). (2009). *Paradigms in public policy*. Berlin: Peter Lang Publishers.
- Cartensen, M. B. (2011). Paradigm man vs. the bricoleur: Bricolage as an alternative vision of agency in ideational change. *European Political Science Review*, 3(1), 147–167.
- Chubb, J. E., & Moe, T. M. (1990). *Politics, markets and America's schools*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.
- Cox, R. (2004). The path-dependency of an idea: Why Scandinavian welfare states remain distinct. *Social Policy & Administration*, 38(2), 204–219.
- Creswell, J. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Daigneault, P.-M. (2014). Reassessing the concept of policy paradigm: Aligning ontology and methodology in policy studies. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 21(3), 453–469.
- Daigneault, P.-M. (2015a). Can you recognize a paradigm when you see one? Defining and measuring paradigm shift. In J. Hogan & M. Howlett (Eds.), *Policy paradigms in theory and practice* (pp. 43–60). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Daigneault, P.-M. (2015b). Ideas and welfare reform in Saskatchewan: Entitlement, workfare or activation? *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 48(1), 147–171.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2007). Race, inequality and educational accountability: The irony of “No Child Left Behind.” *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 10(3), 245–260.
- Daugbjerg, C. (2003). Policy feedback and paradigm shift in EU agricultural policy: the effects of the MacSharry reform on future reform. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 10(3), 421–437.
- Dawson, M. C., & Francis, M. M. (2015). Black politics and the neoliberal racial order. *Public Culture*, 28(1), 23–62.
- Debray, E. H. (2006). *Politics, ideology, & education: Federal policy during the Clinton and Bush administrations*. New York: Teachers College Press.

- DeBray-Pelot, E., & McGuinn, P. (2009). The new politics of education: Analyzing the federal education policy landscape in the post-NCLB era. *Educational Policy*, 23(1), 15–42.
- Deutsch, M. (1975). Equity, equality, and need: What determines which value will be used as the basis of distributive justice? *Journal of Social Issues*, 31(3), 137–149.
- DiMaggio, P. (1997). Culture and cognition. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 23(1), 263–287.
- Douglas, M. (2002). *Natural symbols*. Routledge.
- Drori, G. S., Meyer, J. W., Ramirez, F. O., & Schofer, E. (2003). *Science in the modern world polity: Institutionalization and globalization*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Dubnick, M. J. (2007). *Situating accountability: Seeking salvation for the core concept of modern governance*.
- Dumas, M. J. (2016). My brother as “problem”: Neoliberal governmentality and interventions for Black young men and boys. *Educational Policy*, 30(1), 94–113.
- Elazar, D. L. (1994). *The American mosaic: The impact of space, time, and culture on American politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Esping-Andersen, G. (1999). *Social foundations of postindustrial economies*. Oxford: OUP Oxford.
- Feather, N. (1999). Judgments of deservingness: Studies in the psychology of justice and achievement. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 3(2), 86–107.
- Fensterwald, J. (2017, February 28). How does California rank in per-pupil spending? It all depends. *EdSource*. Retrieved from <https://edsources.org/2017/how-does-california-rank-in-per-pupil-spending-it-all-depends/577405>
- Fensterwald, John. (2018, January 16). California to explain but not change school improvement plan federal officials criticized. *EdSource*. Retrieved from <https://edsources.org/2018/california-to-explain-but-not-change-school-improvement-plan-federal-officials-criticized/592607>
- Ferguson, T., & Rogers, J. (1987). *Right turn: The decline of the democrats and the future of American politics*. Macmillan.
- Figlio, D., & Loeb, S. (2011). School accountability. In *Handbook of the economics of education* (Vol. 3, pp. 383–421). The Netherlands: North-Holland.
- Frederickson, H., Smith, K., Larimer, C., & Licari, M. (2012). *The public administration theory primer*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Freedberg, L. (2014, January 22). Gov. Brown reemphasizes local control of state’s public schools. *EdSource*. Retrieved from <https://edsources.org/2014/gov-brown-reemphasizes-local-control-of-states-public-schools/56544>
- Friedman, M. (2008). The methodology of positive economics. In D. M. Hausman (Ed.), *The philosophy of economics* (3rd ed., pp. 145–178). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Friedman, M. (2009). *Capitalism and freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fusarelli, L. (2004). The potential impact of the No Child Left Behind Act on equity and diversity in American education. *Education Policy*, 18(1), 71–94.
- Gewirtz, S. (2002). *The managerial school: Post-welfarism and social justice in education*. New York: Routledge.
- Ghianni, T. (2011, June 1). Tennessee limits collective bargaining rights for teachers. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-unions-states-tennessee/tennessee-limits-collective-bargaining-rights-for-teachers-idUSTRE75071I20110601>

- Gilbert, N. (2004). *Transformation of the welfare state: The silent surrender of public responsibility*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York.
- Gourevitch, P. A. (1984). Breaking with orthodoxy: The politics of economic policy responses to the Depression of the 1930s. *International Organization*, 38(1), 95–129.
- Grey, P. (2018, March 26). Once-secret nuclear facility in Clarksville now a ghost town of tunnels. *Leaf Chronicle*. Retrieved from <https://www.theleafchronicle.com/story/news/local/fort-campbell/2018/03/26/secret-nuclear-facility-clarksville-now-ghost-town-tunnels/458875002/>
- Gruening, G. (2001). Origin and theoretical basis of New Public Management. *International Public Management Journal*, 4(1), 1–25.
- Grunig, J. E. (1992). *Excellence in public relations and communication management*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Haidt, J. (2001). The emotional dog and its rational tail: A social intuitionist approach to moral judgment. *Psychological Review*, 108, 814–834.
- Hall, P. A. (Ed.). (1989). *The political power of economic ideas: Keynesianism across nations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hall, P. A. (1993). Policy paradigms, social learning, and the state: The case of economic policymaking in Britain. *Comparative Politics*, 25(3), 275–296.
- Hall, P. A. (2013). Brother, can you paradigm? *Governance: An International Journal of Policy and Administration*, 26(2), 189–192.
- Harrow, J. (2010). Capacity building as a public management goal: Myth, magic, or the main change? *Public Management Review*, 3(2), 209–230.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hay, C. (2008). Constructivist institutionalism. In S. A. Binder, R. A. W. Rhodes, & B. A. Rockman (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*.
- Hero, R., & Tolbert, C. (1996). A racial/ethnic diversity interpretation of politics and policy in the states of the US. *American Journal of Political Science*, 40(3), 851–871.
- Hogan, J., & Feeney, S. (2012). Crisis and policy change: The role of the political entrepreneur. *Risk, Hazards & Crisis in Public Policy*, 3(2), 1–24.
- Hogan, J., & Howlett, M. (Eds.). (2015a). *Policy paradigms in theory and practice*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hogan, J., & Howlett, M. (2015b). Reflections on our understanding of policy paradigms and policy change. In J. Hogan & M. Howlett (Eds.), *Policy paradigms in theory and practice* (pp. 3–18). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hogan, J., & O'Rourke, B. K. (2015). The critical role of ideas: Understanding industrial policy changes in Ireland in the 1980s. In J. Hogan & M. Howlett (Eds.), *Policy paradigms in theory and practice* (pp. 167–188). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hood, C. (1991). A public management for all seasons? *Public Administration*, 69, 3–19.
- Hood, Christopher. (1995). Control over bureaucracy: Cultural theory and institutional variety. *Journal of Public Policy*, 15(3), 207–230.
- Hull, J. (2013). Trends in teacher evaluation: How states are measuring teacher performance. Center for Public Education.

- Huo, J. (2009). *Third way reforms: Social democracy after the golden age*. Oxford, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Ingram, H., Schneider, A., & DeLeon, P. (2007). Theories of the policy process. *Theories of the Policy Process*, 2(1), 93–126.
- Jal Mehta. (2014). When professions shape politics: The case of accountability in K-12 and higher education. *Educational Policy*, 28(6), 881–915.
- Jenson, J. (1989). Paradigms and political discourse: Protective legislation in France and the United States before 1914. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 22(2), 235–258.
- Kantor, H., & Lowe, R. (1995). Class, race, and the emergence of federal education policy: From the New Deal to the Great Society. *Educational Researcher*, 24(3), 4–11 + 21.
- Kantor, H., & Lowe, R. (2006a). From New Deal to no deal: No Child Left Behind and the devolution of responsibility for equal opportunity. *Educational Researcher*, 24(3), 4–21.
- Kantor, H., & Lowe, R. (2006b). From New Deal to no deal: No Child Left Behind and the devolution of responsibility for equal opportunity. *Harvard Educational Review*, 76(4), 474–502.
- Kantor, H., & Lowe, R. (2013). Educationalizing the welfare state and privatizing education: The evolution of social policy since the New Deal. In P. L. Carter (Ed.), *Closing the Opportunity Gap* (pp. 25–39). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Katz, M. B. (2008). *The price of citizenship: Redefining the American welfare state*. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press.
- Katz, M. B. (2013). *The undeserving poor: America's enduring confrontation with poverty* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Katzenstein, P. J. (1996). *The culture of national security: Norms and identity in world politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kern, F., Kuzemko, C., & Mitchell, C. (2015). How and why do policy paradigms change; and does it matter? The case of UK energy policy. In J. Hogan & M. Howlett (Eds.), *Policy paradigms in theory and practice* (pp. 269–292). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Keynes, J. M. (1936). *The general theory of employment, investment, and money*. London and New York: Har-court, Brace and Co.
- Kingdon, J. (1995). *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Kingdon, J. W., & Thurber, J. A. (1984). *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Klingner, D. E., Nalbandian, J., & Romzek, B. S. (2002). Politics, administration, and markets: Conflicting expectations and accountability. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 32(2), 117–144.
- Kluckhohn, F. R. (1950). Dominant and substitute profiles of cultural orientations: Their significance for the analysis of social stratification. *Social Forces*, 28, 376–393.
- Kluckhohn, F. R., & Strodtbeck, F. L. (1973). *Variations in value orientations*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Koltko-Rivera, M. E. (2004). The psychology of worldviews. *Review of General Psychology*, 8(1), 3–58.
- Kuhn, T. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Larsen, C. (2007). The institutional logic of welfare attitudes: How welfare regimes influence public support. *Comparative Political Studies*, 40(1), 83–101.

- Le Grand, J. (1997). Knights, knaves or pawns? Human behavior and social policy. *Journal of Social Policy*, 26(2), 149–169.
- Lee, J. (2006). Tracking achievement gaps and assessing the impact of NCLB on the gaps: An in-depth look into national and state reading and math outcome trends. The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University.
- Legard, R., Keegan, J., & Ward, K. (2003). In-depth interviews. In J. Ritchie & J. Lewis (Eds.), *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers* (pp. 138–169). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Lieberman, R. C. (2002). Ideas, institutions, and political order: Explaining political change. *American Political Science Review*, 96(4), 697–712.
- Lilleker, D. G. (2003). Interviewing the political elite: Navigating a potential minefield. *Politics*, 23(3), 207–214.
- Lopez, M. H. (2014). In 2014, Latinos will surpass whites as largest racial/ethnic group in California. Retrieved from <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/01/24/in-2014-latinos-will-surpass-whites-as-largest-raciaethnic-group-in-california/>
- Lotspeich, K., Fix, M., Ost, J., & Perez-Lopez, D. (2003). A profile of the foreign-born in the Nashville economic market. The Urban Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/59516/410916-A-Profile-of-the-Foreign-Born-in-the-Nashville-Economic-Market.PDF>
- Lovett, B. L. (2005). *The Civil Rights Movement in Tennessee: A narrative history*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press.
- Lowe, R. (2013). Educationalizing the welfare state and privatizing education: The evolution of social policy since the New Deal. In P. Carter (Ed.), *Closing the opportunity gap* (pp. 25–39). New York: Oxford University Press.
- MacGregor, S. (1999). Welfare, neoliberalism and new paternalism: Three ways for social policy in late capitalist societies. *Capital & Class*, 23(1), 91–118.
- Mahoney, J. (2000). Path dependence in historical sociology. *Theory and Society*, 29(4), 507–548.
- March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (2011). The logic of appropriateness. In R. E. Goodin (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*.
- Martin, J. D., Blair, G. E., Nevels, R. M., & Brant, M. M. (1987). A study of the relationship between a personal philosophy of human nature (good or evil) and self-esteem. *Psychological Reports*, 61, 447–451.
- McAdam, D., Tarrow, S. G., & Tilly, C. (1996). *Towards an integrated perspective on social movements and revolution*. New York: Lazarsfeld Center at Columbia University.
- McAdams, D. P. (1999). Personal narratives and the life story. In L. A. Pervin & L. P. John (Eds.), *Handbook of personality* (pp. 478–501). New York: The Guilford press.
- Mead, L. M. (1986). *Beyond entitlement: The social obligations of citizenship*. New York: The Free Press.
- Mehta, J. (2006). *The transformation of American educational policy, 1980-2001: Ideas and the rise of accountability politics*. Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.
- Mehta, J. (2010). The varied roles of ideas in politics: From “whether” to “how.” In D. Beland & H. Cox (Eds.), *Ideas and politics in social science research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Mehta, J. (2013). How paradigms create politics: The transformation of American educational policy, 1980-2001. *American Educational Research Journal*, 50(2), 285–324.
- Mehta, J. (2015). *The allure of order: High hopes, dashed expectations, and the troubled quest to remake American schooling*. Oxford University Press.
- Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83(2), 340–363.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Mintrom, M. (2000). *Policy entrepreneurs and school choice*. Georgetown: Georgetown University Press.
- Mintrop, H., & Sunderman, G. (2009). Predictable failure of federal sanctions-driven accountability for school improvement--and why we may retain it anyway. *Educational Researcher*, 38(5), 353–364.
- Mintrop, Heinrich, & Sunderman, G. L. (2013). The paradoxes of data-driven school reform. In D. Anagnostopoulos, S. A. Rutledge, & R. Jacobsen (Eds.), *The Infrastructure of Accountability* (pp. 23–40). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Mintrop, R. (2018). Neo-liberal managerialism and professionalization in U.S. schools. In R. Normand, M. Liu, L. M. Carvalho, D. A. Oliveira, & L. LeVasseur (Eds.), *Education policies and the restructuring of the profession* (pp. 189–204). Singapore: Springer.
- Molle, F. (2008). Nirvana concepts, narratives and policy models: Insights from the water sector. *Water Alternatives*, 1(1), 131–156.
- Morgan, D., & Watson, S. (1991). Political culture, political system characteristics, and public policies among the American states. *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, 21(2), 31–48.
- Morris, Z. S. (2009). The truth about interviewing elites. *Politics*, 29(3), 209–217.
- Nagle, N. N., Gustafson, R., & Burd, C. (2012). A profile of Hispanic population in the state of Tennessee. The University of Tennessee: Center for Business and Economic Research. Retrieved from <http://cber.bus.utk.edu/census/hisp/bfox288.pdf>
- National Commission on excellence in education. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform: A report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education, United States Department of Education*. The Commission.
- Naugle, D. K. (2002). *Worldview: The history of a concept*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Nielsen, B. (2018, August 22). Stagflation, 1970s style. Retrieved from <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/economics/08/1970-stagflation.asp>
- Nielsen, J. M. (1990). *Feminist research methods: Exemplary readings in the social sciences*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Nilsson, A. (2007). *Worldview: Personal ideology, values and beliefs concerning metaphysics, epistemology, human nature and morality*. Lund University.
- Olasky, M. (2000). *Compassionate conservatism: What it is, what it does, and how it can transform America*. New York: The Free Press.
- Oliver, M. J., & Pemberton, H. (2004). Learning and change in 20th-century British economic policy. *Governance*, 17(3), 415–441.
- Osborne, D., & Gaebler, T. (1992). *Reinventing government: How the entrepreneurial spirit is transforming the public sector*. New York: Penguin Books.

- Peck, J., & Tickell, A. (2007). Conceptualizing neoliberalism, thinking Thatcherism. In H. Leitner, J. Peck, & E. S. Sheppard (Eds.), *Contesting neoliberalism: Urban frontiers*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Peters, T., & Waterman, R. (1982). *In search of excellence: Lessons from America's best-run companies*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Pollitt, C., & Bouckaert, G. (Eds.). (2011). *Public management reform* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Powell, L. A. (2005). Exploring the multidimensional nature of distributive justice perception: The challenge for cross-cultural psychology. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *31*(1), 9–13.
- Quinn, R., Oelberger, C., & Meyerson, D. (2016). Getting to scale: Ideas, opportunities, and resources in the early diffusion of the Charter Management Organization: 1999-2000. *Teachers College Record*, *118*, 1–44.
- Radaelli, C. M. (1995). The role of knowledge in the policy process. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *2*(2), 159–183.
- Raum, S., & Potter, C. (2015). Forestry paradigms and policy change: The evolution of forestry policy in Britain in relation to the ecosystem. *Land Use Policy*, *49*(1), 462–470.
- Rawls, J. (2009). *A theory of justice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Rayner, J. (2015). Is there a fourth institutionalism? Ideas, institutions and the explanation of policy change. In J. Hogan & M. Howlett (Eds.), *Policy paradigms in theory and practice*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rein, M., & Schon, D. (1996). Frame-critical policy analysis and frame-reflective policy practice. *Knowledge and Policy*, *9*(1), 85–104.
- Reinharz, S. (1992). *Feminist methods in social research*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rhodes, J. H. (2011). Progressive policy making in a conservative age? Civil rights and the politics of federal education standards, testing, and accountability. *Perspectives on Politics*, *9*(3), 519–544.
- Ritchie, J., & Lewis, J. (Eds.). (2003). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Rochefort, D. A., & Cobb, R. W. (Eds.). (1994). *The politics of problem definition*. Kansas City, KS: University Press of Kansas.
- Rokeach, M. (1973). *The nature of human values*. New York: Free Press.
- Romzek, B. S., & Dubnick, M. J. (1987). Accountability in the public sector: Lessons from the Challenger tragedy. *Public Administration Review*, *47*(3), 227–238.
- Rothstein, R. (2017). *The color of law: A forgotten history of how our government segregated America*. New York: Liveright Publishing Co.
- Sabatier, P. (1998). The advocacy coalition framework: Revisions and relevance for Europe. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *5*(1), 98–130.
- Sabatier, P., & Jenkins-Smith, H. (1993). *Policy change and learning: An advocacy coalition framework*. Boulder: Westview.
- Salant, W. S. (1989). The spread of Keynesian doctrines and practices in the United States. In P. A. Hall (Ed.), *The political power of economic ideas: Keynesianism across nations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Schmidt, V. (2008). Discursive institutionalism: The explanatory power of ideas and discourse. *American Review of Political Science*, 11(1), 303–326.
- Schneider, A., & Ingram, H. (1993). Social construction of target populations: Implications for politics and policy. *American Political Science Review*, 87(2), 334–347.
- Schneider, A. L., & Ingram, H. M. (Eds.). (2005). *Deserving and entitled: Social constructions and public policy*. Albany, NY: University of New York Press.
- Schon, D. (1983). *The reflective practitioner*. New York: Harper & Collins.
- Scott, J., Lubienski, C., & DeBray-Pelot, E. (2009). The politics of advocacy in education. *Educational Policy*, 23(1), 3–14.
- Scott, J., & Quinn, R. (2014). The politics of education in the post-Brown era: Race, markets and the struggle for equitable schooling. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 50(5), 749–763.
- Searle, J. (1995). *The construction of social reality*. New York: Free Press.
- Smith, D. (2017, March 18). Nashville lies at the heart of a divided country: “Trump got bubbas to the polls.” *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/mar/18/donald-trump-nashville-republicans-democrats>
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Stone, Deborah. (2002). *Policy paradox: The art of political decision making* (Revised). New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Stone, Diane. (2012). Transfer and translation of policy. *Policy Studies*, 33(6), 483–499.
- Strauss, V. (2015, April 1). How and why convicted Atlanta teachers cheated on standardized tests. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2015/04/01/how-and-why-convicted-atlanta-teachers-cheated-on-standardized-tests/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.478bbd80a40c
- Sue, D. W., & Sue, D. (1999). *Counseling the culturally different* (3rd ed.). New York: Wiley.
- Surel, Y. (2000). The role of cognitive and normative frames in policy-making. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 7(4), 495–512.
- Swidler, A. (1986). Culture in action: Symbols and strategies. *American Sociological Review*, 51(2), 273–286.
- Swift, A., & Marshall, G. (1997). Meritocratic equality of opportunity: Economic efficiency, social justice, or both? *Policy Studies*, 18(1), 35–48.
- Tatter, G. (2015, December 15). As Tennessee finishes its Race to the Top, teachers caught in the middle of competing changes. *Chalkbeat TN*. Retrieved from <https://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/tn/2015/12/15/as-tennessee-finishes-its-race-to-the-top-teachers-caught-in-the-middle-of-competing-changes/>
- Taylor, A. (2012, June 25). The secret city. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2012/06/the-secret-city/100326/>
- Taylor, D. E. (2000). The rise of the environmental justice paradigm: Injustice framing and the social construction of environmental discourses. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 43(4), 508–580.
- Tennessee Charter School Center. (2018). Turning choices into change. Retrieved from <http://www.tnchartercenter.org/>
- Tennessee Department of Education. (2018). State report card. Retrieved from <https://www.tn.gov/education/data/report-card.html>

- The Economist. (2011). Origin of the species: From Athens via Switzerland to the Wild West. *The Economist*. Retrieved from <https://www.economist.com/special-report/2011/04/20/origin-of-the-species>
- Thornton, P. H., Ocasio, W., & Lounsbury, M. (2012). *The institutional logics perspective: A new approach to culture, structure, and process*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tolofari, S. (2005). New Public Management and education. *Policy Futures in Education*, 3, 75–89.
- Tompkins, S. S. (1965). Affect and the psychology of knowledge. In *Affect, cognition, and personality* (pp. 72–97). New York: Springer.
- Troyna, B., & Vincent, C. (1995). The discourses of social justice in education. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 16(2), 149–166.
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce. (2007). Leaders and laggards: A state-by-state report card on educational effectiveness. U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Retrieved from <https://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/2007-us-chamber-leaders-and-laggards.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2015). Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/essa>
- van Cuilenburg, J., & McQuail, D. (2003). Media policy paradigm shifts: Towards a new communications policy paradigm. *European Journal of Communication*, 18(2), 181–207.
- Wacquant, L. (2009). *Punishing the poor: The neoliberal government of social insecurity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Weible, C. M., Heikkila, T., & Pierce, J. J. (2015). The role of ideas in evaluating and addressing hydraulic fracturing regulations. In J. Hogan & M. Howlett (Eds.), *Policy paradigms in theory and practice* (pp. 217–238). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Weiss, R. (1995). *Learning from strangers: The art and method of qualitative interview studies*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- White, L. A. (2012). Must we all be paradigmatic? Social investment policies and liberal welfare states. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 45(3), 657–683.
- Willcoxon, N., & Willcoxon, G. (2011). The political economy of decline in California. *California Journal of Politics and Policy*, 3(1), 1–8.
- Winkler, A. M., Scull, J., & Zeehandelaar, D. (2012). How strong are U.S. teacher unions? A state-by-state comparison. Fordham Institute.
- Wison, C. A. (2000). Policy regimes and policy change. *Journal of Public Policy*, 20(3), 247–274.
- Wood, M. (2015). Puzzling and powering in policy paradigm shifts: Politicization, depoliticization and social learning. *Critical Policy Studies*, 9(1), 2–21.
- Woodward, C. (2011). *American nations: A history of the eleven rival regional cultures of North America*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Workman, S., Shafran, J. S., Hogan, J., & Howlett, M. (2015). Communications frameworks and the supply of information in policy subsystems. In *Policy paradigms in theory and practice* (pp. 239–268). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wrightsmann, L. S. (1992). *Assumptions about human nature* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.
- Yin, R. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Young, I. M. (2011). *Justice and the politics of difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Zernike, K. (2015, October 24). Obama Administration calls for limits on testing in schools. *The New York Times*.

Zhu, Y.-P. (2013). Policy networks and policy paradigm shifts: Urban housing policy development in China. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 22(82), 554–572.