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LOST GROUND: NEOLIBERALISM, CHARTER SCHOOLS, AND THE END OF DESEGREGATION IN ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

by

NICHOLAS J. EASTMAN

Under the direction of Deron Boyles, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

During the final decades of the twentieth century, U.S. urban education policy experienced a sea change in its orientation toward equity. Mid-century social liberalism and its programs for expanding access to public education resources through desegregation and more equitable funding gave way to neoliberal reforms focused on improving outcomes through deregulation, accountability regimes, and market discipline. Charter schools are the vanguard of neoliberal education reform. While much of the research on charters aims at either substantiating or critiquing their success claims relative to traditional public schools, in this dissertation, I examine the role of charter schools within the larger processes of urbanization. Specifically, I focus on St. Louis, Missouri, where, in 1998, a single piece of education reform legislation (Senate Bill 781) legalized charter schools and set an end for the largest and longest-running school desegregation program in U.S. history. Rather than legalize charters statewide, SB 781 restricted them to St. Louis and Kansas City, Missouri's only two metropolitan areas to have operated court-enforced desegregation programs. Combining critical policy analysis and

economic geography, I link both desegregation and charter schools to urban neoliberalization, arguing that racialized processes of accumulation structured (and continue to structure) uneven development in such a way to make educational equity-based reforms necessary and their failures inevitable. Here too, St. Louis has an important story to tell. With deindustrialization and suburbanization resulting in a 63 percent decline in population in just over 60 years, St. Louis, like many other Rust Belt cities, has wholly embraced neoliberalism's entrepreneurial ethos. Through public-private partnerships and a portfolio of tax incentives, St. Louis has sacrificed public education in its efforts to attract capital back to the city. Rather than mitigating these issues, the neoliberal restructuring of public education in St. Louis has embraced the same market logics that contributed to educational divestment and school segregation. I argue for a more expansive approach to critical policy analysis in education, one that addresses the limitations of reform within the existing political economy and relocates educational issues and their solutions within a larger struggle for racial and economic justice.
INDEX WORDS: Charter schools, Desegregation, Urbanization, Neoliberalism, Critical policy analysis

LOST GROUND: NEOLIBERALISM, CHARTER SCHOOLS, AND THE END OF DESEGREGATION IN ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

by

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A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the

Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Social Foundations

in

Educational Policy Studies

in

the College of Education and Human Development

Georgia State University

Atlanta, GA

2017

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To Holly, your love sweetens every joy, and your support eases every burden.

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CHAPTER ONE

CHARTER SCHOOLS AND URBANIZATION

The most significant development in U.S. urban education policy of the last three decades has been the emergence of charter schools. Accounting for approximately 6 percent of the country's public school student population, charters have spread to forty-three states and the District of Columbia since Minnesota opened the first charter in 1991.[1] In urban spaces, especially those most segregated by race, charters enroll a far higher percentage of students, and their growth in these markets is accelerating. When the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools began publishing an annual report on cities with the highest concentration of students enrolled in charter schools over a decade ago, New Orleans was the only city in the country with more than 30 percent of its public school students attending charters. Today, 17 districts have charter enrollments exceeding 30 percent, and charter schools account for over 10 percent of enrollment in 190 districts nationwide.[2] The causes for the charter movement's rapid growth nationally are numerous, but the purported *raison d'etre* of school choice-based reforms—that the creation of a public school marketplace will spur competition and improve quality—remains decisively unsubstantiated. Battles over whether and to what degree charter schools are superior or inferior to their traditional public school counterparts with respect to prevailing accountability and school performance metrics (e.g. standardized test scores and attendance and graduation rates) constitute a considerable bulk of the academic literature and show no signs of abating, nor

[1] National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, "A Growing Movement: America's Largest Charter Public School Communities and Their Impact on Student Outcomes," November 3, 2016, 2, http://www.publiccharters.org/get-the-facts/publications-research/.
[2] Ibid.

should they.[3] Critically examining both the evidence of charter school "success" and the broader neoliberal logic of school choice reforms remains a vital part of the larger discussion of what successful U.S. public schools are and what they ought to be. Critical scholars must confront the prospect that no study, no matter how effectively it demonstrates that charters fail to substantiate their claims of superiority even on their own positivistic terms, is likely to have much effect on the charter school juggernaut.[4] If the growth of charter schools depended on an empirical proof of concept, charters never would have become such a paradigmatic solution for public school reform.

On what, then, does charter growth depend? The larger task for critical scholarship on charter schools is to theorize the differentiated underlying and often unacknowledged structural forces driving charter school growth. Such theorizing is precisely the aim of this dissertation. In this first chapter, I address two questions vital to understanding charter school growth and regional concentration: Why has charter growth concentrated in cities, and why is charter school concentration clustered in the depopulated and racially hypersegregated cities of the Rust Belt and St. Louis in particular? Taken together, these questions create a thread that runs through every chapter in this dissertation and inform the central problem of how urban public education

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[3] See, for example, Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO), "National Charter School Study" (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University, 2013), http://credo.stanford.edu/research-reports.html; Andrew Maul and Abby McClelland, "Review of National Charter School Study 2013" (Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center, 2013), http://nepc.colorado.edu/thinktank/review-credo-2013; Philip Gleason et al., "The Evaluation of Charter School Impacts: Final Report" (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, 2010); National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, "Separating Fact and Fiction: What You Need to Know about Charter Schools," 2014, http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Separating-Fact-from-Fiction.pdf; Gary Miron, William Mathis, and Kevin Welner, "Review of Separating Fact & Fiction" (Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center, 2015), http://nepc.colorado.edu/files/ttr-charterclaims-mmw-1.pdf.

[4] I use the term *critical* both in the sense of those who are skeptical of the benefits of public education markets and supportive of public education as a fundamental institution of liberal democracies as well as the Marxian connotations associated with critical theory. My own belief is that the latter have a far more robust theoretical apparatus for explaining why charter schools enjoy bipartisan support from elites and have flourished under neoliberal and neoconservative administrations.

equity is perpetually thwarted by the broader policies and processes of urbanization. These are essentially questions of race and political economy, which I treat as distinct but deeply interpenetrating philosophical and sociological categories. Urbanization is a political economic process that is, at least in the U.S., is infused with racialized and class-based injustices. This dissertation explores the multi-faceted struggle for urban social justice and educational equity in St. Louis, Missouri. I maintain that the origin and concentration of charter schools in St. Louis is both a process and consequence of urbanization, which historically is not a solution to but a cause of the city's racialized class oppression. Beneath appeals to equity and innovative reform characteristic of the charter school movement in St. Louis lies a revanchist response to federally enforced school desegregation and economic interests determined to use charter schools to extract private wealth from public education and revalorize property devastated by racial segregation and relentless urban decline.

Issues of educational equity and its relationship to race and class figure prominently in the larger charter school movement and are even its discursive justification. By this, I mean that prominent charter school advocates and the hegemonic diffusion of the movement's "common sense" explanations for racialized inequity in urban education position charter schools as an innovative solution to traditional public school failures regarding marginalized populations. Such a view broadly holds that traditional public schools are institutionally incapable of overcoming—or might indeed exacerbate—the structural (i.e. racial and socioeconomic) barriers to educational equity, necessitating a new institutional form (i.e. charter schools) modeled on market entities, governed according to market principles, and propagated by market logics. The imposition of market logics on every social issue and even on conceptions of the human subject is the *leitmotif* of neoliberalism. In countering the common sense explanations and market logics

of the charter school movement, I utilize a critical theoretical approach to argue that marketization of public education intensifies educational inequity. Neoliberalism promotes markets as social mechanisms that foster fairness and efficiency while masking the current and historical record demonstrating their inefficiency and tendency to intensify inequity. The history of public education and urban revitalization in St. Louis provides a stark illustration of the difference between such assumptions of neoliberalism and their real effects on urban life. It is not historical amnesia that results in market-based solutions to problems created and intensified by market logics. Rather, such actions are the *modus operandi* of capitalism, which seeks growth opportunities within the crises it creates.

Throughout the dissertation, I alternate between a close-up focus on public education and urbanization in St. Louis and more panoramic view of urban neoliberalization regionally and nationally. My reason for doing so is to situate education policy, specifically the end of school desegregation in St. Louis and its replacement by charter schools and neoliberal accountability regimes, within much larger spatial scales and processes of neoliberalization and their development over time. As will become evident, there are benefits as well as drawbacks to such an approach. The benefit of focusing closely on St. Louis's processes of urban neoliberalization and their concomitant public education reform policies provides evidence of the path dependency of neoliberalization. In other words, charter school concentration must be studied at the local, regional, national, and even global policy levels not in isolation from one another but in a dialectical tension. A panoramic view helps to draw out neoliberalism's themes, aims and processes, while analysis at the local level highlights particularity and differentiation that is lacking in primarily macro-level analyses. To focus solely on one scale of neoliberalization is to miss how each scale affects and is affected by the others. Herein lies the problem and also the

significance. For reasons of practicality, I must impose boundaries on my analysis. A detailed regional history is simply too large a project for this dissertation. I pay close attention, however, to the historical development of charter schools in relation to urban neoliberalization in St. Louis while also situating such developments within the larger regional and national processes of neoliberalization. More work is necessary—especially within the other hypersegregated, deindustrialized, and depopulated cities of the Rust Belt—in order to form a more complete picture of how the charter school movement capitalizes on and intensifies the crises of urban political economy in late capitalism, yet this work constitutes a significant contribution to a larger regional analysis of charter schools and urban decline.

In addition to its potential contribution to a regional analysis, exploring the dynamics of public education policy within the larger policy ecology of a declining city is another primary significance of this dissertation. Both in the popular and academic presses, interest in the history and present effects of public school desegregation programs is resurgent. Too often, social issues like wealth inequality, economic and racial segregation, deindustrialization, and public education equity are discussed and explored in isolation from one another. While I have not here forged a novel metatheory of educational, racial, and economic equity, focusing on St. Louis allows my work to bridge historical efforts at desegregation with urban neoliberalization and charter schools. This dissertation, therefore, offers an historically robust critical analysis of education policy that unites several of the most pressing issues of neoliberal governance, urban revitalization, and public education equity in the early twenty-first century.

Overview of the Dissertation

In this first chapter, I argue that the regional and local manipulation of the crises resulting from racial segregation and urban decline have been the case for the charter movement categorically, but I pay close attention to their effects in the Rust Belt, particularly within Kansas City and St. Louis, Missouri. The second chapter provides historical and theoretical context of neoliberalism's emergence as a reaction to Keynesian liberalism and its implications for urban policy. While not a literature review in the same sense as a qualitative inquiry dissertation, it fulfills a similar function of grounding the other chapters in a tradition of critique of political economy with particular emphasis on urban neoliberalization. The third chapter addresses critical policy analysis as a methodology and in relation to tensions between structural neo-Marxist critiques and poststructural critical policy analyses. The tension between structural and poststructural critiques emerges out of the previous chapter's discussion of neoliberalism. I argue that structural concerns about capital accumulation and urban revitalization must exist alongside methods of critical analysis that focus on the mutation and transfer of policy through time and space in order to retain coherence within critical policy analysis as a theoretical framework. Also in Chapter Three, I turn toward St. Louis as an illustration of urban decline and revitalization with special attention to how education policy and schools themselves are implicated in David Harvey's spatio-temporal theories of urban neoliberalization. Chapter Four explores the history of urban revitalization in St. Louis as its relationship to the city's landmark desegregation program. This history is crucial in understanding the policy context that produced Senate Bill 781, a sweeping education reform bill that effectively ended the city's school desegregation efforts and ushered in charter schools as the new paradigmatic approach to public education equity. I argue that St. Louis's transition from federally enforced interdistrict

desegregation to local, state, and federally supported intradistrict school choice illustrates a realignment of urban education policy in accordance with the political and economic interests of urban neoliberalization, which I analyze through the lens of Harvey's theory of accumulation by dispossession. Lastly, the final chapter addresses the increasing instability of urban neoliberalization and points to necessary macro-structural changes in political economy that are possible paths toward stable and robust forms of educational equity and social justice in racially segregated and declining cities like St. Louis.

Charter Growth as an Urban Phenomenon

Advocacy groups like the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools offer few explanations beyond trite slogans for the rapid growth of charters in the nation's economically impoverished and racially segregated cities. Bromides like the charter movement being "a leader in innovation" or "unleashing an environment of creativity" fail to explain exactly what is innovative about the movement or exactly how an environment can be *unleashed*.[5] Setting aside questions about the ideological content of charter school *innovation* and *creativity*, these simplistic accounts paradoxically celebrate the urban concentration of charters while leaving out explanations for why charters are not more geographically diffused. Presumably, if charters lead in innovation and unleash creativity, and if these are unquestionable educational goods, then charters would enjoy reasonably even growth across all geographic regions as suburban and rural districts desire innovation and creativity no less than urban schools. Similarly, if school choice *empowers* families and students or produces better educational outcomes for all students,

[5] National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, "A Growing Movement: America's Largest Charter Public School Communities and Their Impact on Student Outcomes," November 3, 2016, 1, http://www.publiccharters.org/get-the-facts/publications-research/.

especially those on the bottom of the "achievement gap," surely suburban and rural districts would find it as compelling as urban districts. Yet, the rapid concentration of urban charters over the last decade has brought about the decline in suburban charters as an overall percentage during the same time period,[6] and the seven states remaining without any charter school laws are some of the most rural in the country.[7] It would seem that there is more to charter school growth than the movement's relationship to innovation and creativity.

There is no single explanation for why charter schools concentrate in cities. Population density provides some explanation for why urban charters are more viable than rural charters, which make up only around 16 percent of all charter schools.[8] Rural school districts that have the population and resources to sustain only one P-12 school system cannot inject "school choice" into their public school system and expect either the charter or traditional public school to remain open. Rural areas also lack the built infrastructure either of vacant school buildings or other facilities charters can convert into schools common in urban areas, a rather simple and straightforward explanation of how charters are a function of urbanism. At around 20 percent of all charters, suburban charters account for a slightly larger percentage of charter schools than

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[6] Richard Whitmire, "More Middle-Class Families Choose Charters," *Education Next*, Summer 2015, 34.
[7] The seven states without charter laws include Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Vermont. Those states that have most recently passed charter school laws (Alabama, Maine, and Mississippi) are also rural. Even though the number of rural charters has grown over the last decade, much of this growth has come from online charter schools. Virtual charters claim to meet the needs of rural students for whom transportation over long distances is difficult. Virtual charters are also not encumbered by the facilities issues associated with brick and mortar charter schools, and the technological infrastructure, while still lacking in many regions, has also grown dramatically during the last decade. However, virtual charters have often proved so disastrous that even mainstream charter advocacy groups have distanced themselves. See Lauren Camera, "Charter Groups Call Out Virtual Schools," *U.S. News & World Report*, June 16, 2016, http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2016-06-16/charter-school-groups-call-out-virtual-schools; James L. Woodworth et al., "Online Charter School Study" (Stanford, CA: Center For Research on Education Outcomes, Stanford University, 2015), https://credo.stanford.edu/pdfs/OnlineCharterStudyFinal2015.pdf.
[8] National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, "Details from the Dashboard: Charter Schools by Geographic Region," 2012, http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Geographic-Location-Details-from-the-Dashboard-Report_20120224T143955.pdf.

their rural counterparts while remaining a fraction of the number of urban charters.[9] Given that poor performance on standardized testing and attendance and graduation rates—the metrics associated with the "achievement gap"—propel the narrative of corporate education reform, suburban schools have historically had less of an incentive to experiment in new forms of public school governance due to the strength of their performance data relative to urban and rural schools.

There is, of course, the peculiar relationship between charter schools and poverty. It is not just rare for low-income students to outscore their middle-class and affluent peers categorically on state-mandated tests; it is unheard of.[10] Charter advocates acknowledge the correlation between poverty and low academic achievement but view the persistence of the achievement gap as a failure of individual and institutional will power or creativity or both.[11] The dominant narrative of the charter school movement is that traditional public schools, particularly those in high-poverty, nonwhite, and urban communities have failed students for decades. Rather than transcending racism or socioeconomic disadvantages, traditional public schools reinforce those limitations through policies and common practices that have enjoy the support of intractable public sector bureaucracies like teachers unions. Deregulation would allow charter schools to innovate with curriculum and governance structures, while the creation of a public education marketplace would spur competition and improve the quality of services both in traditional public schools and charters. Better services would narrow or close that stubborn achievement gap, which according to this view, provided considerable explanatory

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Christopher Tienken, "The Influence of Poverty on Achievement," *Kappa Delta Pi Record* 48, no. 3 (2012): 106.

[11] The literature on the relationship between poverty and academic achievement is far too large to provide a representative sample, but for a relevant meta-analysis, see Selcuk Sirin, "Socioeconomic Status and Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analytic Review of Research," *Review of Educational Research* 75, no. 3 (Autumn 2005): 417–53.

power for intergenerational and racialized poverty. In other words, structural issues outside of school walls manifest themselves in educational outcomes and performance data, but the "right" approach to educating oppressed groups—presumably impossible within the confines of traditional public schools—can overcome structural oppression not just individually but categorically.

Charters holding to meritocratic explanations of how poverty forms and how it ought to be solved must walk a fine line between acknowledging the significance of structural barriers like racialized poverty while also advertising their own proprietary formula that enables every child to succeed. Most, particularly those adhering to "no excuses" models, see overcoming the correlation between family income and educational outcomes as their primary mission. Indeed, the name of Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) schools, which have become the standard bearers of the no excuses charter model, reflects KIPP's message that its schools transcend structural poverty through trademarked character development programs and a strong emphasis on academic rigor and discipline. While working in Houston as Teach for America (TFA) corps members, KIPP founders Dave Levin and Mike Feinberg were inspired by fellow educator Harriet Ball, who sought to motivate her students by reciting mantras like "You gotta read, baby, read, / The more you read, the more you know, / 'Cause knowledge is power, / Power is money, and / I want it."[12] This etiological anecdote does much to explain KIPP's position as the exemplar of the neoliberal school reform. In addition to the meritocratic fantasy that the most well-read and knowledgeable are those with power and money, Ball's mantra promotes the notion that the solution to structural poverty is an individualistic one, something "I want." KIPP and indeed all neoliberal anti-poverty strategies ignore the historical evidence that structural

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[12] Jay Mathews, "Harriett Ball Dies: Teacher Who Inspired KIPP Charter Schools Was 64," *The Washinton Post*, February 10, 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/02/10/AR2011021000211.html.

poverty is most effectively addressed by the collective *we* rather than the individual *I*. It is also worth mentioning that the views of liberals who oppose charter schools as threats to public education share much of the same vision of public education as a panacea for poverty as charter school advocates, the major exception being their differing views on structural changes to school governance and state education bureaucracies. The liberal goal, it would seem, is one of equal opportunity to succeed within the political economy of late capitalism, which produces and even *demands* the sort of inequality the public schools seek to overcome. Liberal politics is distinct from leftist or radical politics in the sense that liberals seek equal opportunities to thrive within the middle and affluent classes. Radical politics seeks liberation from the very system that produces and is built upon class inequality, alienation, and exploitation from the start. The continued relevance of Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis's criticisms of schools as mechanisms for assimilating students into the class structures of capitalism attest to the need to distinguish *leftist* positions on education from *liberal* positions, which in terms of class, are often quite conservative.[13] Nonetheless, KIPP and other charter management organizations (CMOs) that target high-poverty populations would seem to have a natural incentive to locate in high-poverty communities. If many high-poverty rural communities lack the population density or infrastructure to support charter school growth, then high-poverty urban communities would seem to be the obvious place to grow. However, the notion that the location of charter schools simply tracks poverty, that, as advocates would say, they go where they are needed, obscures more than it explains.

[13] Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America: Education Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life* (Chicago: Haymarket, 1976).

One problem with such an explanation is that contrary to the stereotype, the poor in the United States are increasingly suburban. Although cities still have the highest rates of concentrated poverty, poverty has exploded in the suburbs since the year 2000:

> With this dramatic expansion in suburban poverty during the 2000s, metropolitan American crossed an economic Rubicon: for the first time, more of its poor lived in suburbs than in cities…this shift had already occurred by the middle of the decade, and the increase continued steadily through the rest of the 2000s. By 2010, 15.3 million poor individuals—55 percent of the metropolitan poor population—lived in suburbs, almost 2.6 million more than in cities.[14]

Gentrification and redevelopment within the urban core of U.S. cities either squeeze low-income, predominately nonwhite populations into increasingly concentrated tracts of segregated urban poverty or force those populations into the already racially and economically segregated suburbs. When states like Missouri—the focus of this dissertation—crafted their charter school legislation in the 1990s, they did so with racialized urban poverty in mind and showed either little interest in—or were actively hostile to—charter schools turning suburban public school systems into education markets.

Before returning to charter schools and urbanism nationally, allow me to briefly illustrate how and why state legislation shields rural and suburban communities from charter schools. Missouri's charter legislation (part of 1998's Senate Bill 781) purposefully restricted charter schools to cities with populations of 350,000 or greater, which meant they could operate only in the state's two major metropolises, Kansas City and St. Louis. At the time the legislation passed, these two cities accounted for over half of Missouri's black population, and both cities played pivotal roles in the nation's efforts to desegregate its schools.[15] The legalization of charter

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[14] Elizabeth Kneebone and Alan Berube, "Confronting Suburban Poverty in America" (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2013), 18.

[15] St. Louis's black population has steadily fallen during the last two decades due in large part to its movement to the segregated suburbs of northern St. Louis County, a specific example of the increasing suburbanization of racialized poverty.

schools stemmed from Missouri elites' ire over desegregation and their longing to bring the power of markets to bear on the problems of public education, provided such an experiment would be limited to the state's majority black and low-income urban school districts. Because markets are driven by profit rather than just efficiency in the abstract, charter schools presented more than just a new path forward for what elites saw as a perennial problem. They presented property developers with a new tool for revalorizing property decimated by strategic and structural disinvestment of black neighborhoods.

Kansas City's public schools, the subject of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Missouri v. Jenkins* (1995) decision, were under a federally enforced desegregation program that required the state to assume the massive costs of upgrades to urban schools, the creation of magnet schools, and suburban-urban desegregation busing after finding the state of Missouri legally liable for having created and maintained a segregated public school system. After more than a decade of bitterly contesting court-enforced desegregation, the political elites of Missouri had the verdict they were looking for in *Jenkins*. The U.S. Supreme Court's 5-4 decision found that desegregation programs must be limited in time and scope and that their end should be guided by the desire to return schools to state and local control rather than the more difficult and nebulous goal of having reversed the effects of segregation through federally enforced programs. Writing shortly after the ruling, Gary Orfield compared the case to the court's infamous *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) decision: "The courts assume today, as the *Plessy* Court did, that local agencies with a history of treating blacks unfairly could now be trusted to treat them fairly with no outside supervision."[16] Conservative groups cheered the verdict as proof that pouring money into a

[16] Gary Orfield, *Dismantling Desegregation* (New York, NY: The New Press, 1996), 36.

struggling urban school system was not the answer to poor performance.[17] Yet scholars have since criticized this conclusion for its failure to place Missouri's desegregation spending in Kansas City within the proper historical context of the state's systemic underfunding and within the proper relative context of the increased costs associated with comparable levels of urban poverty.[18] In any case, too narrow a focus on urban-suburban education policy misses the larger reasons why urban schools were and are struggling. The economic devastation of urban economies brought on by deindustrialization and the inequality and class antagonisms that issue from urban revitalization are only mitigated—not overcome—by liberalism's efforts to redistribute resources to combat historical structural inequality, capital disinvestment, and racial animus. Federally enforced desegregation, conservatives argued, had been tried and found wanting, yet the belief that racial and economic inequality centuries in the making could be undone by one decade of a desegregation program, even one as extensive as Kansas City's, was one of political convenience rather than historical reality. The myopic obsession with the persistent "achievement gap" serves as a useful distraction to avoid dealing with more painful and complex systemic issues associated with what Gloria Ladson-Billings refers to as the "education debt."[19]

The *Jenkins* ruling also prefaced the end of St. Louis's historic desegregation program.[20] A parent-led lawsuit first filed in 1972 and later settled in 1983 had led to the largest and longest-running voluntary interdistrict desegregation program in U.S. history. As with Kansas City, the

[17] See Paul Ciotti, "Money and School Performance: Lessons from the Kansas City Desegregation Experiment" (Washington, DC: The Cato Institute, 1998), https://www.cato.org/publications/policy-analysis/money-school-performance-lessons-kansas-city-desegregation-experiment.
[18] Preston Green and Bruce Baker, "Urban Legends, Desegregation and School Finance: Did Kansas City Really Prove That Money Doesn't Matter?," *Michigan Journal of Race and Law* 12, no. 57 (Fall 2006): 57–105.
[19] Gloria Ladson-Billings, "From the Achievement Gap to the Education Debt: Understanding Achievement in U.S. Schools," *Educational Researcher* 35, no. 7 (October 2006): 3–12.
[20] I cover *Liddell v. Board of Education of the City of St. Louis* extensively in Chapter Four.

Liddell settlement made the state of Missouri responsible for the bulk of the program's costs. Then Missouri Attorney General John Ashcroft appealed the settlement to the U.S. Supreme Court but was denied. Undeterred, Ashcroft made his opposition to desegregation a central plank of his successful gubernatorial campaign, but there was little he or any other Missouri politician could do to oppose the Eighth Circuit Court's enforcement of the *Liddell* settlement until the *Jenkins* ruling came a decade later.[21] By that time, charter schools offered a new "Third Way" forward for issues of educational equity that appealed to the then dominant neoliberal left (unquestionably an oxymoronic label) in a way that public education privatization schemes like school vouchers never did. This dissertation focuses on St. Louis rather than Kansas City for a number of reasons. Prominent among them is the fact that St. Louis's political elites were the driving force behind Missouri's charter law. Additionally, the end of the *Liddell* settlement is so thoroughly intertwined with the legalization of charters that understanding either demands understanding both. Lastly, while Kansas City's problems of segregation and urbanization persist, few cities capture the devastation of deindustrialization and the political economy of urban neoliberalization as poignantly as St. Louis.

The roots of St. Louis's persistent class antagonisms and intense racial segregation run far deeper than the emergence of charter schools, deeper even than *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*'s blow to *de jure* segregation. Indeed, St. Louis has been at the center of the country's ongoing struggles with race and property from Missouri's compromised entrance into the union to the infamous Dred Scott case to the U.S. Supreme Court's *Shelley v. Kraemer* decision to end racially restrictive housing covenants in 1948. In terms of education policy, the end of enforced desegregation and the emergence of charter schools as an alternative marks the completion of

[21] Gerald W. Heaney and Susan Uchitelle, *Unending Struggle: The Long Road to an Equal Education in St. Louis* (St. Louis: Reedy Press, 2004), 127.

Missouri's transition from the era of politically liberal notions of social justice through redistribution to the era of neoliberal notions of social justice through consumer choice within a public education market. Paradoxically, the usual pro-charter narrative of educational salvation through "freedom of choice" is untenable as an explanation in St. Louis since the introduction of charter school choice was predicated on the ending of the court-enforced school choice offered through the city-suburb desegregation program. Put simply, if choice is what improves public education, then there must be some other motivation for replacing one system of choice with another. My position is that the structural forces that underlie urbanization—the ideologies that form and reform urban life and space—explain far more about the location and expansion of charter schools than do platitudes about "choice."

Public Goods vs. Private Growth

Scholars should take the charter school movement at its word when it comes to matters of markets and competition. Studying charters as corporate actors—that is, as business entities that are either franchises or startups—rather than as public schools in the more conventional sense explains more about where and how they grow than studying their curriculum, instruction, or governance patterns either in isolation or as compared to traditional public schools. To draw an analogy to corporate franchising, McDonalds does not decide where to open a new location by evaluating the costs and quality of local restaurants and determining where they can offer a better meal at lower prices. Rather, McDonalds looks to exploit existing vulnerabilities and create new market opportunities. It drives expansion through a favorable regulatory framework coupled with aggressive branding and advertising until saturation and the prospect of diminishing returns force it to expand elsewhere.

As public institutions, traditional public schools are ill-equipped to operate within competitive markets. Far from signaling their inferiority, traditional public schools' non-competitive nature is an underappreciated asset in a culture increasingly insistent upon evaluating according to market logics. Despite the chorus of neoliberals deriding traditional public schools as educational monopolies, it is only possible to consider a public institution a monopoly through considering public services commodities rather than as entities designed to stabilize civic life and support the common good. Public schools have no more a monopoly on public education than public police forces have a monopoly on law enforcement, or public courts have a monopoly on the justice system, or public election commissions have monopolies on securing and tallying the votes in a democracy. The instability that would ensue from having competing legal and electoral systems should be obvious to all but the most strident free market ideologue.[22]

The danger of applying such principles to public education should be no less obvious. Educational services are rightly understood first and foremost as intrinsic social goods rather than as commodities. Once market logics and categories become dominant within public education, however, there is no reason to think that market actors within public education or the commodities/services they offer will behave much differently than their private sector counterparts. As Trevor Norris rightly points out, "the expenditure by corporations on advertisements and image creation has grown exponentially and now often far outstrips the costs

[22] Ever pushing the boundaries of sanity with neoliberal experiments, New Orleans has authorized a private police force comprised primarily of off-duty police officer to work alongside the New Orleans Police Department in order to protect the tourism industry in the French Quarter. Even if it is not in competition with the NOPD, the dangers of having a police force comprised of overworked officers who moonlight with a private company for extra money are obvious. See Matthew Speiser, "How a Guy Dubbed the 'Trash King of New Orleans' Created His Very Own Private Police Force.," *Business Insider*, August 11, 2015, http://www.businessinsider.com/businessman-funding-private-police-force-2015-8.

of the physical production of commodities."[23] If, as Norris argues, we approach public schools not as citizens or members of a community but as consumers looking to exercise choice within a marketplace, we can expect the proprietors of educational commodities to treat us as such. The consequence of this market relationship is that schools shift their attention (and funds) from providing public goods to marketing them. As in the corporate world it mimics, those who achieve dominance in a public education market would not necessarily be those who provide the best services but instead those that are best positioned to elevate their brand and exploit vulnerabilities. There are consequences beyond diverting funds from education toward advertising. In the era of native advertising and target marketing, the separation between public interest journalism—that which takes seriously the role of investigative reporting and professional editorial standards—and what is often called infotainment or sponsored content is increasingly difficult to maintain. The massive civic and material investments in public education are jeopardized when reporting on such an important fulcrum of public interest becomes just another avenue for advertising.

There is clear evidence that the consequences of public education marketization are not just abstract or potential problems. Exploring the argument that school choice is an issue of civil rights in that it offers disadvantaged populations the opportunity to secure a quality public education, Christopher Lubienski, Charisse Gulosino, and Peter Weitzel analyze the ways in which charter schools move through education markets in three distinct contexts: Detroit, Washington, D.C., and New Orleans. The authors claim that market incentives, even those put in place to achieve equity (a concept as anathema to market logic as any), cause schools to maximize self-interest rather than public good:

[23] Trevor Norris, *Consuming Schools: Commercialism and the End of Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 6.

> The patterns emerging in the geospatial analyses are telling, in light of the substantive differences between the three [local education markets]. Overall, there appears to be a high level of market acumen among charter schools and private schools, as well as in some public districts. In Detroit, profit-oriented charter schools, behaving like business entities, are apparently willing to pay premiums to locate in more affluent neighborhoods. While initially focusing on areas with greater needs, even mission-oriented charter schools increasingly appear to target students in more advantaged neighborhoods where they can maximize market advantages but avoid "undesirable" students.[24]

While the authors found slight variations in organizational behavior and charter school location in Washington, D.C. and New Orleans, these variations are to be expected given the different possibilities for profit or interest maximization afforded by those respective contexts. In other words, charter schools—and to some degree public schools—showed "institutional isomorphism toward profit-seeking models" in all three cities regardless of differences in their purported mission or the political and geographic terrain.[25] Market solutions require market motives, and market motives can *never* produce equity. Competition draws public schools into a fight they will lose. The corporate support of charter schools comes in more forms than just philanthropic funding. Corporate organizational models and operational logics provide the ideological tools for expansion and interest maximization.[26] The problem is not that these things do not work; the problem is that they *do* work. When traditional public schools are drawn into market competition, they either lose because they lack the models and logics that produce success in such an environment, or they lose because they adopt those logics (the institutional isomorphism) and cease to operate according to *public* governance models and *public* aims.

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[24] Christopher Lubienski, Charisse Gulosino, and Peter Weitzel, "School Choice and Competitive Incentives: Mapping the Distribution of Educational Opportunities across Local Education Markets," *American Journal of Education* 115, no. 4 (August 2009): 639–40.
[25] Ibid., 640.
[26] Elizabeth DeBray et al., "Intermediary Organizations in Charter School Policy Coalitions: Evidence from New Orleans," *Educational Policy* 28, no. 2 (March 2014): 175–206.

If the charter school movement is best understood through the lens of the same market logic it adopts, then the task remains to see where the vulnerabilities are and how it has gone about entering and exploiting these markets at the regional level. The NAPCS is correct that the number of urban districts with more than 30 percent market share of public education students has risen dramatically over the last decade, but it remains the case that such growth is quite uneven as Figure 1 shows.[27] St. Louis and Kansas City accompany more high profile cities like New Orleans and Washington, D.C., whose battles over charter expansion have largely played out under the national spotlight given the unprecedented restructuring of public education in New Orleans and mass media coverage of Washington, D.C.'s charter reforms during and following Michelle Rhee's tenure as that city's public school chancellor. Looking at the map in Figure 2, the geographic patterns of charter concentration are even more apparent.[28] The stark concentration of charters in the Rust Belt suggests a steady and systemic pattern of concentration.

New Orleans's experiment with an all-charter district is certainly dramatic in its intensity and the circumstances surrounding its takeover,[29] but geographically speaking, it is an outlier as are San Antonio and the two California districts. Charter expansion has clustered in the racially segregated and deindustrialized cities of the Rust Belt with nearly mechanical precision. As with all market entities, nothing fuels growth like growth itself, and charter school growth and concentration is clearly regionally specific.

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[27] National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, "A Growing Movement: America's Largest Charter Public School Communities and Their Impact on Student Outcomes," 3.
[28] Ibid., 8.
[29] See Kristen L. Buras, *Charter Schools, Race, and Urban Space: Where the Market Meets Grassroots Resistance* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

THE LARGEST PERCENTAGE OF CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS BY DISTRICT, 2015-16

School District	State	Charter Enrollment	District-Run Enrollment	Total Enrollment	Enrollment Share
New Orleans Public School System	LA	44,190	3,690	47,880	**92%**
Detroit City School District	MI	51,240	46,100	97,340	**53%**
School District of the City of Flint	MI	5,940	5,360	11,300	**53%**
District of Columbia Public Schools	DC	38,910	48,440	87,340	**45%**
Gary Community School Corporation	IN	4,950	6,480	11,430	**43%**
Kansas City Public Schools	MO	10,570	15,580	26,150	**40%**
Camden City School District	NJ	4,880	9,290	14,180	**34%**
Philadelphia City School District	PA	63,520	132,180	195,700	**32%**
Indianapolis Public Schools	IN	13,580	29,580	43,160	**31%**
Dayton City School District	OH	6,300	13,970	20,270	**31%**
Cleveland Municipal School District	OH	16,920	37,750	54,670	**31%**
Grand Rapids Public Schools	MI	6,890	15,590	22,480	**31%**
Victor Valley Union High School District	CA	4,220	9,590	13,810	**31%**
San Antonio Independent School District	TX	18,710	42,750	61,460	**30%**
Natomas Unified School District	CA	4,270	10,020	14,290	**30%**
Newark City School District	NJ	15,020	35,330	50,350	**30%**
St. Louis Public Schools	MO	10,380	24,500	34,870	**30%**

At the time of publication, 2015-16 enrollment data were not available for Arizona.

Figure 1: Cities with the Greatest Concentration of Charter Schools

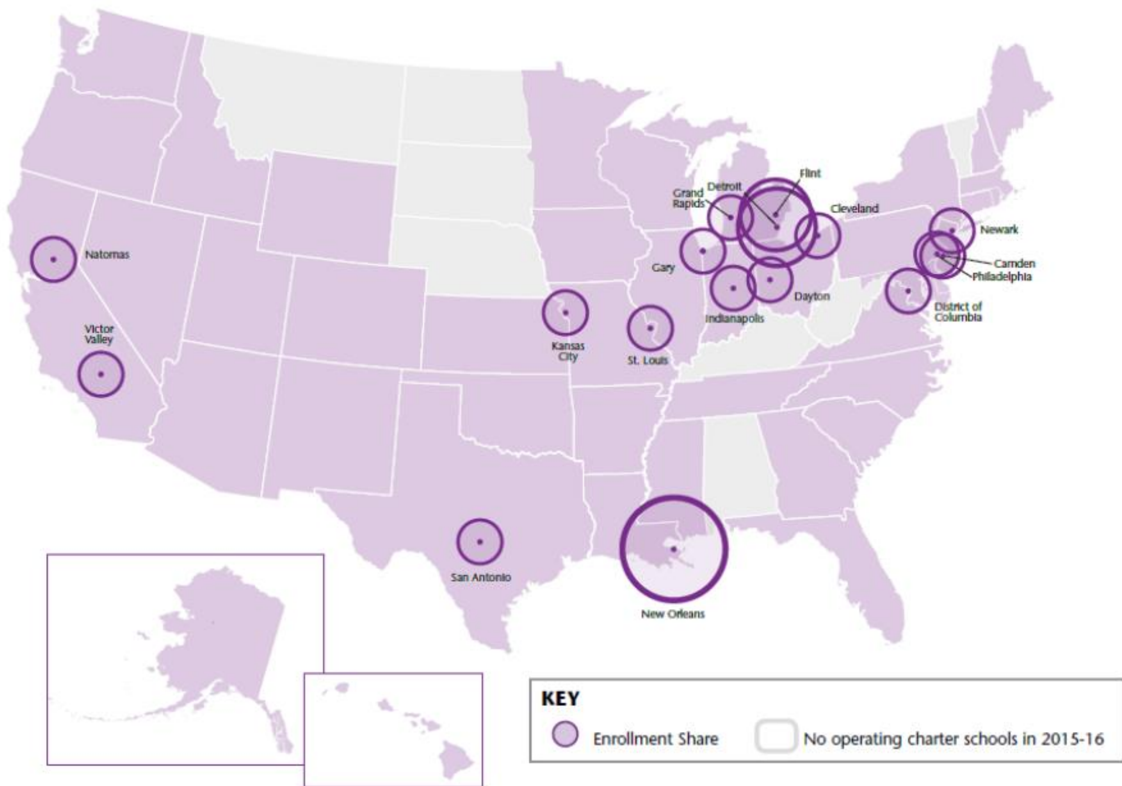

Figure 2: Regional Clustering of Charter-Concentrated Districts

State law unquestionably plays a role in geographic concentration. States with little regulatory oversight or those seeking to incentivize charter expansion with favorable funding and infrastructure laws create opportunities for charter startups and franchise expansions within multiple urban areas. Seeking to promote advantageous state-regulatory environments for the charter movement, the Center for Education Reform published a ranking of states with laws most conducive to charter growth, which it defined according to the following criteria: "The existence of independent and/or multiple authorizers; the number of schools allowed and state caps; operational and fiscal autonomy; and equitable funding."[30] These criteria encapsulate the contradictions of the now dominant form of the neoliberal state that still clings to its classical economic liberalism's faith in the purported efficiencies and virtues of market competition while requiring the state to take an active role in creating, maintaining, and funding markets. Rather than the state actively governing public services, it should step out of the way—after initially favorable (de)regulation is in place, of course—of independent service providers working through multiple authorizers. Government planning should not erect artificial caps or obstacles to growth once the (artificial) market is established, even or especially to protect existing educational bureaucracies, labor interests, or communities hostile to charter school growth. And the state must provide equitable funding both for institutions it governs and those over which it exercises little to no control. In other words, "free" market principles are at play only once the state has artificially created the market and suitably funded its independent actors.

State laws alone, however, are an insufficient explanation for charters' regional concentration. States that earned an "A" from the Center for Education Reform include some of

[30] The rankings include Washington, D.C. "Charter School Laws Across the States: 2015 Rankings and Scorecard" (Center for Education Reform, 2015), 4, https://www.edreform.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/CharterLaws2015.pdf.

the nation's most heavily chartered public school districts, for example Michigan, Indiana, and Washington, D.C. In contrast to their charter concentration, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey all received a very mediocre "C," while Missouri earned a more favorable "B."[31] Heavily populated states such as California, Florida, and New York have high overall numbers of charter schools, abundant infrastructure, and the sort of legal environment the charter movement desires (B-range), yet they fail to achieve the degree of market saturation found in the Rust Belt. Some degree of legislative and executive favor at the level of state government seems necessary for charter concentration but insufficient to account for its regional dominance. The argument that charter concentration in the postindustrial Midwest is simply a matter of an arbitrary regional consensus on public education reform and corresponding legal framework ignores the political economic conditions that favored charter legalization and its uneven development regionally and nationally. In other words, both the favorable regulatory environment and the potential for growth of a given market are themselves functions of the same uneven processes of regional urbanization. It is necessary then to look at the structural forces that underlie urbanization in the Rust Belt to advance this dissertation's claim that charter school growth in St. Louis is driven by racialized class interests and capital accumulation over and against public interests and educational equity.

Racial Segregation and Urban Decline in the Rust Belt

Three prominent and interwoven themes define Midwestern urbanization since the mid-twentieth century: racial segregation, deindustrialization, and depopulation. It is important to keep in mind that, while racial segregation and deindustrialization are national phenomena, their

[31] Ibid., 7.

unevenness and differentiation across regions and even within an individual metropolitan area are matters of historical processes and the particularities of place. As geographer and Marxist scholar David Harvey contends, "It is impossible to understand space independent of time."[32] What Harvey is getting at here is Marx's conviction that the material conditions structuring a given society's political apparatus and social relations are historical processes. Because those historical processes and resultant social relations also structure the ways human societies use urban space and the various resources afforded by the environment, space itself, particularly the built environment of cities, becomes the contested terrain of past and present social relations and the physical expression of local economies' relationship to global capital. Let us, therefore, look at how these three historical processes have made Midwestern cities such fertile ground for the growth and concentration of charter schools, beginning first with racial segregation.

Racial segregation is a dense and multifaceted phenomenon, so it is helpful to start out by defining one key dimension. *Dissimilarity* is one way of measuring racial segregation that perhaps most closely corresponds to common notions of racial segregation. Racial dissimilarity describes the degree to which people of different races spread unevenly throughout a metropolitan area. The range of moderate racial segregation is 30-60 on the dissimilarity index. Census tracts with rates below 30 have low levels of racial unevenness, while those above 60 have high rates. The index corresponds to the percentage of residents that would need to move to other tracts for the given area to achieve even racial distribution.[33]

This dissertation discusses the ways in which St. Louis has historically engineered its racial segregation in greater detail later, but for now, it is worth pausing to draw attention to the

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[32] David Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development* (New York: Verso, 2006), 122.

[33] John R. Logan and Brian J. Stults, "The Persistence of Segregation in the Metropolis: New Findings from the 2010 Census" (US2010 Project, March 24, 2011), 25, http://www.s4.brown.edu/us2010/Data/Report/report2.pdf.

magnitude of the obstacles to metropolitan residential desegregation in St. Louis, where racial unevenness is so high that 70.6 percent of the population would have to move to achieve an even demographic distribution. Whatever the percentage of people who support desegregating cities in the abstract, the percentage of people willing to move to advance this goal is miniscule, a rounding error. In addition to whatever overt racial prejudice informs their housing decisions or lurks within their subconscious to structure preferences, the housing market *qua* market attaches material and social consequences to efforts to desegregate. Aside from other disincentives associated with inadequate infrastructure or services and increased pollution or crime, those with modest amounts of purchasing power risk their economic future by investing in neighborhoods with unstable or declining market values, which due to the racialization of poverty, are heavily segregated. Even when such neighborhoods are stabilized or *revitalized*—seemingly the highest aim of urban planning in late capitalism—long-term residents often find themselves priced out of the homes they were unlikely to have owned to begin with and driven to less "up-and-coming" neighborhoods, unfamiliar places with familiar problems. Gentrification is not a solution to urban poverty's uneven development, it is the uneven capitalization and consequent displacement of urban poverty—the cyclical ebbs and flows of capital destruction and revalorization. The notion that racial dissimilarity in St. Louis or anywhere else can be addressed within the parameters of the market without the "gains" being achieved through population displacement fails to recognize that, as Neil Smith argues, "The uneven development of capitalism is structural rather than statistical."[34] The geography of poverty is not a market failure; it is a market necessity. The point here is that antagonisms of race and class are mutually reinforcing forms of oppression, but capitalism will produce geographic patterns of uneven

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[34] Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*, 3rd edition (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 4.

development regardless of whether it can utilize race to do so. In St. Louis and other areas in which urban poverty is racialized, resistance to both forms of oppression must occur simultaneously. Otherwise, it aspires only to the pyrrhic victory of desegregating market victimization.

Demographers studying black-white segregation in U.S. metropolitan areas focus primarily on areas with the largest black populations, since it is highly unlikely that cities with historically low black population would have or be able to achieve a relatively even distribution of black and white households. They simply lack the diversity to diversify the city. According to analysis of the 2010 census, of the 50 metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) with the largest black populations, the Midwest accounts for five of the ten most segregated (Detroit, Milwaukee, Chicago, Cleveland and St. Louis) and the Northeast accounts for four more (New York - White Plains/Wayne and Suffolk/Nassau, Newark, and Philadelphia). Miami is the only MSA outside of the postindustrial Midwest and Northeast that makes the top ten.[35] When segregation is measured by an index of isolation rather than dissimilarity, Southern cities such as Memphis, Jackson, New Orleans, and Birmingham—those most commonly associated with Jim Crow segregation—dominate the top ten.[36] This difference is because isolation accounts for the lack of exposure to groups of other races within a given tract rather than geographical dissimilarity. In other words, cities in the U.S. South tend to be more racially isolated than those in the Midwest and Northeast because their larger black populations live in predominantly black neighborhoods rather than racially mixed neighborhoods. Still, several Rust Belt cities (Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Cleveland) are also among the ten most racially isolated cities, with St. Louis as

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[35] Logan and Stults, "The Persistence of Segregation in the Metropolis: New Findings from the 2010 Census," 6.
[36] Ibid., 8.

the eleventh. In any case, the notion that segregation is exclusively or even primarily a phenomenon of the U.S. South is utterly untenable.

Keeping in mind the temporality of spatial phenomena, it is necessary to consider not just present segregation in Rust Belt cities but its persistence over time. Comparing the 2010 census to those over the last several decades shows that black-white racial segregation reached a national high point during the 1960s and 1970s and has been slowly but steadily declining over the last four decades.[37] At first glance, this would seem to be an encouraging trend for those concerned about racial justice broadly as well as particular issues of equity and racial segregation in public education. Much of the momentum within this trend, however, has not come from meaningful housing and economic reforms in cities beset by racial isolation and concentrated poverty. Rather, it is the result of the suburbanization of black populations as well as their movement into cities that historically had fewer black people and less entrenched residential segregation.[38]

The Rust Belt, not the South, has had the most persistent racial segregation over the last thirty years. Eight metropolitan areas have dissimilarity indices of greater than 80 for the 1980 census and greater than 70 for the 2010 census. Logan and Stults refer to these cities as the Ghetto Belt, which includes New York, Chicago, Detroit, Newark, Milwaukee, Gary, Cleveland, and St. Louis.[39] Expanding on Logan and Stults's data, Massey and Tannen describe the persistence not just of racial dissimilarity or isolation but of *hypersegregation* in U.S. cities, which offers a more holistic account of racial segregation. Massey and Tannen break down the five components of hypersegregation as follows:

[37] Ibid., 4.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid., 9–10.

> *Unevenness* is the degree to which blacks and whites are unevenly distributed across neighborhoods in a metropolitan area; *isolation* is the extent to which African Americans live in predominantly black neighborhoods; *clustering* is the degree to which neighborhoods inhabited by African Americans are clustered together in space; *concentration* is the relative amount of physical space occupied by African Americans within a given metropolitan environment; and *centralization* is the degree to which blacks reside near the center of a metropolitan area.[40]

Massey and Tannen list the MSAs in which black and white populations were hypersegregated at any time between 1970 and 2010. Of the 52 areas on the list, the South is the regional leader, followed by the Midwest and then the Northeast. Only Denver and Las Vegas represent the West. Many of the Southern cities that were hypersegregated during the 1970s or 1980s no longer remain so. By 2010, 21 cities qualify as hypersegregated, meaning they have high scores across at least four of the categories. Massey and Tannen divide those cities into those that scored highly (greater than 60) across all five categories of hypersegregation and those with high scores in four categories. Those with high rates across all five categories show both the greatest persistence and intensity of hypersegregation, making them the most segregated cities in the country. The eight cities that make up this unenviable list are Baltimore, Birmingham, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Flint, Milwaukee, and St. Louis. Apart from Baltimore and Birmingham, both of which are Southern postindustrial cities, the most segregated cities in the country are in the Rust Belt. After averaging the scores across all five categories, only Milwaukee and Detroit are more hypersegregated than St. Louis.[41]

The concentration of charter schools within these most hypersegregated cities is staggering. Setting aside the Southern cities of Baltimore and Birmingham,[42] charter schools

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[40] Douglas S. Massey and Jonathan Tannen, "A Research Note on Trends in Black Hypersegregation," *Demography* 52, no. 3 (June 2015): 1027.
[41] Ibid., 1031.
[42] Alabama legalized charter schools as recently as 2015, so it is no surprise that Birmingham is not among the cities with the largest concentration of charter school students.

have a significant presence in each of the most hypersegregated Rust Belt cities. While gaining only a 14 percent market share of Chicago Public Schools (CPS), Chicago charters have the fourth highest overall enrollment of charter school students (over 59,000) in the country.[43] In spite of Arne Duncan's tenure as head of CPS and strong support from mayors Richard M. Daley and Rahm Emmanuel, charters have not gained the same footing in Chicago as in regional neighbors such as Detroit or Cleveland. The reasons for this are many, but forceful opposition from Chicago's relatively strong teachers union (CTU) has without a doubt been an obstacle to the movement's rapid expansion within the district.

Milwaukee, the nation's undisputed heavyweight champion of segregation according to Massey and Tannen's metrics, does not breach the 30 percent charter market share threshold, but at 21 percent, it remains a significant market all the same. Moreover, Milwaukee's absence from the top tier of charter concentrated districts is the result of its failure to keep pace with the other cities. When the NAPCS issued its first report on the cities with the highest charter market share in 2006, Milwaukee was tied with Cleveland for seventh at 16 percent.[44] During the last decade, Cleveland has nearly doubled its charter market share to 31 percent, while Milwaukee has put up five percentage points. Only a few years removed from Governor Scott Walker's and the state legislature's successful dismantling of collective bargaining rights for Wisconsin's public sector unions, it remains to be seen whether the charter movement will capitalize on the union's weakened state or the Milwaukee teachers union (MTEA) will build momentum with the social justice unionism model that has been so successful in neighboring Chicago.[45] Like Cleveland,

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[43] National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, "A Growing Movement: America's Largest Charter Public School Communities and Their Impact on Student Outcomes," 6.
[44] Todd Ziebarth, "Top 10 Charter Communities by Market Share" (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, September 2006), 2, http://www.publiccharters.org/get-the-facts/publications-research/page/4/?posts_per_page=50.
[45] See Bob Peterson, "How Teachers Unions Must Change - by a Union Leader," *The Washington Post*, February 13, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2015/02/13/how-teachers-unions-must-change-by-a-union-leader/.

St. Louis has passed the 30 percent charter school cutoff, while Detroit and Flint both have 53 percent of public school students in charter schools.

Of these six hypersegregated Rust Belt cities, Flint is the smallest in population by more than 200,000, and at just under 6,000 charter school students, its overall numbers are overshadowed by the other districts' numbers, particularly its neighbor Detroit. Flint, nonetheless, punches well above its weight in terms of its impact on public discourse. The city has become a symbol of postindustrial dystopia and the ebbs and flows of capital. The water crisis that began in 2014 sharply accented the tragedy of Flint's long decline when city management switched the public water supply to the contaminated Flint River to save money, poisoning its majority-black population with toxic levels of lead. Unsurprisingly, the appointed city manager who presided over the switch, Darnell Earley, left Flint's city government to become the emergency manager of Detroit Public Schools before leaving that post amid controversy only a year later.

A full analysis of the genesis and growth of charter schools within each of these hypersegregated Rust Belt cities lies outside the scope of this dissertation, but the correlation between hypersegregation and charter school concentration is irrefutable. Charter schools' dominance within segregated urban spaces speaks volumes about the state's willingness to transform majority-black public school districts into education markets. Taken together, the five dimensions of hypersegregation provide a sort of commentary on the black population's (un)freedom to move through and shape urban spaces and public institutions according to rights as citizens or political subjects in a democracy. Each of these categories of racialized urban space is inherently a category of class as well, since political economic power is what delineates the geographic boundaries of residential and commercial capital or the lack thereof. In other

words, it is possible to imagine that distinctive racial or cultural populations may wish to live in the same neighborhoods, but it is impossible to imagine that they would prefer those neighborhoods to be poor. If urbanization is the process by which capital moves through and (re)shapes space, then hypersegregated urban areas are those that capital has constructed to both create and preserve racialized class difference as a mechanism for advancing its goal of accumulation.

The twinned tragedy to the Rust Belt's hypersegregation is its depopulation during the last half century. Swollen by industrialization, the Great Migration, and the manufacturing boom of World War II, many Midwestern cities were preparing for perpetual growth during the 1950s and 1960s. What subsequent decades delivered was just the opposite. Suburbanization gained momentum after the war as cheap land, low taxes, and newly paved highways lured people and capital out of the cities and into what Kenneth Jackson famously referred to as the "crabgrass frontier."[46] The uneven development of U.S. cities after 1950 demonstrates that suburbanization exacerbated the effects of depopulation in the Midwest, but it was not the sole cause. Southern and Western cities showed fairly stable growth rates during the last half of the twentieth century in spite of their own suburbanization woes. For cities in the Midwest and Northeast, however, suburbanization intensified their loss of capital and population brought about by already shifting macroeconomic concerns and regional demographic shifts. Many of the manufacturing jobs that shaped the industrial Midwest and Northeast were automated out of existence or began leaving for the reserve labor armies of foreign populations and the less organized and regulated labor pools of the U.S. South. People also sought a "friendlier" climate as air conditioning and seemingly endless sources of fresh water made what were relatively sparsely populated areas in

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[46] Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

the U.S. South and West much more attractive to those who were no longer tied to the regional and local economies of the Midwest and Northeast and their often punishing weather.[47]

It would be a mistake to assume that either the fruits of growth of the effects of loss are distributed evenly to different cities in the same region. To put it differently, not all of the Rust Belt is equally rusted. Just as national economic gains are not evenly distributed across regions, metropolitan and municipal variations can offset or intensify regional trends. New York, for example, experienced strong growth despite the regional decline in manufacturing and heavy industry, and Chicago, Minneapolis, and Kansas City have had modest success in mitigating deindustrialization's effects during the last half of the twentieth century. Other cities tell much more tragic stories. St. Louis lost 59 percent of its population from 1950 to 2000. Today that figure is closer to 63 percent. The populations of Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Detroit, and Buffalo all fell by more than 45 percent over the course of their half century of continuous decline.[48] Several factors account for these intra-regional variations in population trends, but the relationship between the municipalities and their larger metropolitan areas appears to have played a decisive role in the gains or losses. For example, of these five cities showing the largest median rate of continuous population decline during the final five decades of the twentieth century, metropolitan area decline drove much of Pittsburgh's and Buffalo's population loss. St. Louis's and Detroit's losses were more municipal than metropolitan, while Cleveland's was a combination of both.[49] Conversely, the evidence suggests the cities that have either continuous population growth or were able to reverse declines during this same time period did so by achieving some degree of mutual benefit between the municipality and the larger metropolitan

[47] Jordan Rappaport, "U.S. Urban Decline and Growth, 1950 to 2000" (Kansas City: Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, 2003), 22, https://www.kansascityfed.org/publicat/econrev/pdf/3q03rapp.pdf.
[48] Ibid., 18.
[49] Ibid., 28.

region. In some cases, cities grew by annexing their former suburbs, while in other cases the cities benefited from strong metropolitan area growth that offset municipal declines.[50] I will provide a detailed examination of the racial and economic antagonisms between St. Louis and its metropolitan statistical area later, but at present, it is worth highlighting the differentiation of population growth and decline among and within regions.

It is also worth emphasizing that population shifts must be understood as political economic shifts rather than mere residential preferences. Suburbanization was not the result of an arbitrary change in lifestyle but of concrete economic incentives flowing from both public policy and private accumulation schemes.[51] The same can be said of deindustrialization. Political economy structures the decisions of individuals and social groups, but it does not determine them. Technological development and class alliances between capital and the state make possible the automation and offshoring of the Rust Belt's manufacturing jobs, but these developments are neither "natural" nor inevitable. They are ideological. Ideology can limit choices, but it cannot make decisions. The political power that structures uneven development around the accumulation of capital is the result of a specific set of class interests. Different configurations of class interests could restructure development according to different imperatives, more robust notions of the common good or cooperative rather than competitive economics are just a few examples.

The relationship between charter school concentration and population decline is complex. As I have already indicated, the regional concentration of charter schools in the Rust Belt reflects their ability as market actors to exploit growth opportunities particular to that region. The

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[50] Ibid., 32.
[51] See Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996).

hypersegregation common to the Midwest and Northeast is one crisis of urbanization that strongly correlates to charter school expansion, and so many of the region's most hypersegregated cities are also those that have suffered continual population decline since 1950. Moreover, those whose declines seem to be matters of municipal rather than primarily metropolitan population instability (St. Louis, Detroit, and Cleveland) all have much a much higher concentration of charter schools than those cities in which metropolitan declines were a more decisive factor (Pittsburgh – 12 percent charter school market share and Buffalo – 20 percent charter school market share).

On the other hand, Indianapolis, which has experienced strong population growth since 1950, still has one of the nation's most heavily chartered public school districts at 31 percent. What accounts for Indianapolis's variation from the triad of segregation, depopulation, and charter concentration is cause for further investigation, though there is strong evidence that Indianapolis's racial segregation and its state's charter-friendly legislation have needed no assistance from the destabilizing effects of depopulation to create the sort of conditions conducive to charter expansion. Although Indianapolis's metropolitan statistical area lacks the black-white segregation of St. Louis or Detroit, it remains the nation's fifteenth most segregated city in terms of dissimilarity, just above the heavily chartered cities of Washington, D.C. and New Orleans.[52] Like St. Louis and many other Midwestern cities, Indianapolis Public Schools was found liable for violating desegregation mandates in the 1970s. Like St. Louis Public Schools, IPS was brought under a court-enforced interdistrict desegregation busing program in

[52] Logan and Stults, "The Persistence of Segregation in the Metropolis: New Findings from the 2010 Census," 6.

the early 1980s, and just like St. Louis, that program ended in 1998 to be replaced by "school choice" as the principal mechanism for achieving educational equity.[53]

As for legislation, charter reform advocates consider Indiana a national leader with an "A" ranking from the Center for Education Reform.[54] Their favor is unsurprising considering that Indiana is the only state in the nation that allows its mayors to authorize charter schools. From the passage of its charter school law in 2001 to 2015, Indianapolis's mayors alone authorized 25 charter schools.[55] Neoliberal education reform advocates have long hailed the benefits of mayoral control of public schools,[56] but having the mayor's office act as an independent charter authorizer adds a different dimension to those aims. Arguments for mayoral control of all district schools center on claims of streamlining public education bureaucracies and greater accountability to the electorate, which tends to turn out in greater numbers and is more informed about mayoral elections than for those that constitute local school boards. Of course, local private and corporate interests also prefer running public education from the mayor's office since doing so creates a single point of influence that dispenses with the maneuvering necessary to gain majority control over an elected school board. Besides, local capital—dominated by property developers and corporations and organized through chambers of commerce and other policy advocacy groups—have long-established relationships with the mayor's office and candidates likely to fill it. Their ability to influence public policy is, therefore, *streamlined*. Critical scholars have pointed to the corrosive effects of mayoral control on the democratic

[53] Mark L. Stein, "Public School Choice and Racial Sorting: An Examination of Charter Schools in Indianapolis," *American Journal of Education* 121, no. 4 (August 2015): 605. Indiana's charter law came in 2001, three years after Missouri's.
[54] "Charter School Laws Across the States: 2015 Rankings and Scorecard," 7.
[55] Stein, "Public School Choice and Racial Sorting: An Examination of Charter Schools in Indianapolis," 606.
[56] See, for example, Frederick M. Hess, "Looking for Leadership: Assessing the Case for Mayoral Control of Urban School Systems," *American Journal of Education* 114, no. 3 (May 2008): 219–45; Michelle Rhee, "What It Takes to Fix Our Schools: Lessons Learned in Washington, D.C.," *Harvard Law & Policy Review* 6 (January 1, 2012): 39–66.

governance of public education and the myriad ways it burdens low-income communities of color.[57] With Indianapolis's mayor as an authorizer, charter interests can appeal directly to an office and bypass district bureaucracies entirely.

Kansas City provides another interesting example of the complexities of racial segregation, depopulation, and charter school concentration. Despite several decades of population loss, Kansas City had some success in reversing that trend during the last two decades.[58] After Missouri legalized charter schools in 1998, Kansas City immediately set to work chartering much of its majority-black public school district. Kansas City's charter interests mobilized so quickly that St. Louis mayor Clarence Harmon lamented the fact that his city had not gotten any charters up and running during the year following charter legalization while Kansas City already had 17 charters.[59] After all, St. Louis elites had been the ones to draft the state's charter law and had restricted charter operations to only Kansas City and St. Louis. It must have appeared to Mayor Harmon that St. Louis was being beaten at its own game. When the National Alliance for Public Charters began tracking the cities with the greatest charter school concentration in 2006, Kansas City came in fourth overall with 20 percent market share.[60] During the last decade, it has fallen two spots to sixth overall but has nonetheless doubled its percentage to 40.[61]

[57] See Pauline Lipman et al., "Should Chicago Have and Elected Representative School Board? A New Review of the Evidence" (University of Illinois at Chicago: Collaborative for Equity & Justice in Education, February 2015), http://ceje.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/CEJE-ERSB-Report-2-16-15.pdf.
[58] Rappaport, "U.S. Urban Decline and Growth, 1950 to 2000," 18; Yael Abouhalkah, "Kansas City Metropolitan Area Thumps St. Louis in New Population Growth," *The Kansas City Star*, July 25, 2015, http://www.kansascity.com/opinion/opn-columns-blogs/yael-t-abouhalkah/article28605484.html.
[59] Clarence Harmon, "What Is the Holdup on Charter Schools?," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, May 27, 1999, B7.
[60] Ziebarth, "Top 10 Charter Communities by Market Share," 1.
[61] National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, "A Growing Movement: America's Largest Charter Public School Communities and Their Impact on Student Outcomes," 3.

As with many urban school districts in the Midwest, black students make up a greater percentage of Kansas City's public school district than they do as residents of its geographic boundary, even though the district boundary tracks closely to city's heavily segregated urban core.[62] The correlation between charter market share as a percentage of the larger public school district and segregated black poverty is, therefore, particularly strong in Kansas City since its public school district already corresponds to the demographic conditions conducive to rapid charter expansion. The whiter areas of Kansas City lying outside the majority-black district's boundaries do not have a similar concentration of charter schools.[63] Put differently, Kansas City's charter schools are concentrated in the black neighborhoods that are concentrated within the confines of Kansas City Public Schools. Both Kansas City charter schools and KCPS's black student population became even more concentrated after a predominantly white area in the northeastern part of the district decided in 2007 to annex itself and become part of suburban Independence Public Schools.[64] The boundary change contributed to Kansas City's already significant charter school market share, which moved from 20 percent in 2007[65] to 23 percent in 2008[66] and as high as 29 percent by 2009, a nine point swing in two years.[67] The district's declining population has been a role in charter schools' doubling of their market share during the

[62] Green and Baker, "Urban Legends, Desegregation and School Finance: Did Kansas City Really Prove That Money Doesn't Matter?," 61.
[63] Bruce Baker, "Exploring the Consequences of Charter School Expansion in U.S. Cities" (Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, November 4, 2016), 16, http://www.epi.org/publication/exploring-the-consequences-of-charter-school-expansion-in-u-s-cities/#_ref14.
[64] Ibid., 27.
[65] Todd Ziebarth, "Top 10 Charter Communities by Market Share: 2006-2007" (Washington, DC, October 16, 2007), 2, http://www.publiccharters.org/publications/top-10-charter-communities-market-share-2006-2007-annual-edition/.
[66] Todd Ziebarth, "2008 Top 10 Charter Communities by Market Share" (Washington, DC, October 30, 2008), 1, http://www.publiccharters.org/publications/2008-top-10-charter-communities-market-share/.
[67] "Top 10 Charter Communities by Market Share" (Washington, DC: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, October 2009), 2, http://www.publiccharters.org/publications/top-ten-charter-communities-market-share-4th-annual-edition/.

last decade.[68] In this light, charter schools appear less a phenomenon of *choice* and more a matter of *restriction*. With Missouri already restricting charter schools to its majority-black districts of Kansas City and St. Louis, Kansas City narrowed that restriction further by keeping white residents outside the boundary of KCPS and therefore outside of a district vulnerable to a charter school takeover. Again, majority-white suburban and urban school districts' interest in charter schools seems largely to do with increasing "school choice" for majority-black districts and preserving their own "choice" to disassociate themselves from these districts.

The politics of choice are never purely about racial segregation, at least in any sense that such segregation can be thought of separately from class antagonisms. I have already touched on how Kansas City, Missouri, School District (KCMSD, now KCPS) became both a symbol and a sort of rallying call for the nation's conservative backlash against federally enforced desegregation orders during the 1980s and 1990s, particularly those that found state governments liable for creating and operating segregated public schools before and after *Brown* and imposed extensive funding redistribution mandates on them. To many (white) reactionaries in Kansas City's (and St. Louis's) suburbs and the vast rural middle of Missouri, KCMSD's desegregation order represented "big government" forcing the state to pour "taxpayer money" into mismanaged (black) urban public school districts with little or no meaningful improvements in student achievement. The effect of the *Missouri v. Jenkins* decision was to shield wealthier and whiter suburban districts from their moral and financial obligations to majority-black urban public school districts under the guise of "local control." *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974) had already made mandatory suburban-urban desegregation incredibly difficult by requiring proof of suburban districts' intent to segregate urban schools. Unlike St. Louis's desegregation program, Kansas

[68] Baker, "Exploring the Consequences of Charter School Expansion in U.S. Cities," 27.

City's never involved mandatory interdistrict desegregation, likely because of the difficulty of such a measure post-*Milliken*. Instead, the judge imposed an expensive educational infrastructure and spending program in order to draw suburban white students back into city schools. In a sense, *Jenkins* finished what *Milliken* began. White suburban students could not be forced to desegregate urban schools, and white rural and suburban tax dollars could not be redistributed indefinitely by the state to desegregate urban schools. Again, we see the closeness of both population and wealth distribution and redistribution, what George Lipsitz refers to as "the possessive investment in whiteness."[69]

Neoliberalism's "Free" Markets

There is something about charter concentration in cities like St. Louis and Kansas City that goes beyond racial segregation and beyond even racialized class oppression. Racialized class oppression, after all, predates charter schools and even the idea of public education itself by centuries and is a thread woven through the fabric of U.S. history.[70] The hegemony of neoliberalism is what unites the phenomena of charter concentration, racial hypersegregation, and the class politics of deindustrialization. The market logic embedded in charters' governance models and their expansion and accumulation strategies deviates from previous forms of state-sanctioned racialized class oppression such as those of post-World War II liberalism.[71] The American *trente glorieuses*—the thirty years of national economic prosperity that followed the end of World War II—reinforced and exacerbated long-established forms of racialized economic

[69] George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Benefit from Identity Politics* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2006).
[70] See, for example, Manning Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1983).
[71] Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*. Sugrue's account focuses on Detroit but is masterful at cataloging the racism of federal policies, programs, and agencies such as Social Security, the FHA, the GI Bill, and many others.

discrimination. Indeed, the neoliberal era has sanitized U.S. history to such a degree that the race *and* class issues that fueled the Civil Rights Movement and the struggles for black liberation are often decoupled. Neoliberalism's erasure of class politics from discourses of race is not an oversight but the strategic weakening of opposition to political economic oppression. It is important to remember that Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated when he was organizing striking black sanitation workers in a majority black city. Exactly one year before his assassination, he had this to say about global political economy:

> the Western nations that initiated so much of the revolutionary spirit of the modern world have now become the arch antirevolutionaries. This has driven many to feel that only Marxism has a revolutionary spirit. Therefore, communism is a judgment against our failure to make democracy real and follow through on the revolutions that we initiated. Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism.[72]

The transformation of mid-twentieth century social democratic liberalism (capitalism dulled by welfare state programs) to neoliberalism's refusal to understand any facet of life or social organization in nonmarket terms is capital's revolutionary development of what King called the "arch antirevolutionary" spirit. Defining racial progress in terms of a more diverse ruling class—or more commonly the ruling class's greater "sensitivity" or "responsiveness" to the oppressions racial minorities endure—preserves hierarchies of class *and* race. As for global poverty or militarism, neoliberalism can easily accommodate both as market opportunities.[73] Moreover, neoliberalism weakens the possibility that parts of the state apparatus could intervene on behalf of oppressed populations, even to protect them from other state apparatuses. Federally enforced desegregation was just such a measure. The state, acting through the federal judiciary,

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[72] Martin Luther King, Jr., "Beyond Vietnam," April 4, 1967, http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/documentsentry/doc_beyond_vietnam/.
[73] See Linsey McGoey, *No Such Thing as a Free Gift: The Gates Foundation and the Price of Philanthropy* (New York: Verso, 2015); Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (New York: Verso, 2006).

sought to redress systemic discrimination created and upheld by other state agencies and bureaucracies from local to federal levels. Under neoliberalism, the state's role is to create and preserve markets by deregulating protections and incentivizing market activity, even within the state institutions and bureaucracies themselves. The result is a sort of self-cannibalization by the state driven by the logic of accumulation.

Missouri's charter schools provide an excellent illustration of neoliberalism's contradictions and cannibalistic nature. The purposeful concentration of low-income black populations within particular public school zones or even the boundaries of an entire urban district is the *leitmotif* of black public education in America. However, in dialectical fashion, the resegregation that has followed the dismantling of federally enforced desegregation programs like Kansas City's and St. Louis's has not reverted to the same segregation of the past. Rather, it has been commoditized by neoliberalism. The white flight and redrawing of district boundaries in Kansas City, for example, is now accompanied by the privatization of concentrated black districts themselves. These redistributive measures of neoliberalism differ significantly from the redistributive measures of social liberalism. Whereas social democratic liberalism sought to equalize opportunity by redistributing people and funds across divisions of race and class, neoliberalism makes a market of racialized inequality that effectively redistributes public assets and students to for-profit operators directly or through nonprofit entities that are often operated by for-profit companies[74] or those that function as tax shelters or tenants for rent-seeking capitalists.[75]

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[74] Gary Miron and Charisse Gulosino, "Profiles of For-Profit and Nonprofit Education Management Organizations" (Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center, November 2013), http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/EMO-profiles-11-12.

[75] Bruce Baker and Gary Miron, "The Business of Charter Schooling: Understanding the Policies That Charter Operators Use for Financial Benefit" (National Education Policy Center, December 2015), http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/charter-revenue.

Neoliberalism's contradictions make it as profitable as it is unsustainable. For example, charters typically receive state money either directly in the form of state aid payments or as "pass-through" funds that flow from the state to the district and then to the charter. Charter advocates frequently argue that these approaches do not drain funds from traditional public schools because state aid corresponds to attendance. If the school does not have the expenses of educating the student, then there is no obvious financial loss when those funds follow that student to another "public" school. While this argument ignores economies of scale and the use of charter schools as tax shelters, we can set those issues aside and accept the theoretical premise of the argument. Bruce Baker contends, however, that such arguments do not apply in Missouri, where "the state…provides direct aid to the charter, but reduces the district aid by the amounts of both the state aid that would have been received and the local revenue that would have been allocated, per student."[76] The unique charter funding formula Baker references is outlined in the following Missouri statute:

> A charter school that has declared itself as a local education agency shall receive from the department of elementary and secondary education [DESE] an annual amount equal to the product of the charter school's weighted average daily attendance and the state adequacy target, multiplied by the dollar value modifier for the district, plus local tax revenues per weighted average daily attendance from the incidental and teachers funds in excess of the performance levy…plus all other state aid attributable to such pupils. *If a charter school declares itself as a local education agency, [DESE] shall, upon notice of the declaration, reduce the payment made to the school district by the amount specified in this subsection and pay directly to the charter school the annual amount reduced from the school district's payment.*[77]

Charter schools in Missouri, therefore, impose *extraordinary* burdens on traditional public school districts rather than the ordinary burdens resulting from the loss of economies of scale. Charter advocates continually insist that charter schools *are* public schools in spite of their

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[76] Baker, "Exploring the Consequences of Charter School Expansion in U.S. Cities," 33.
[77] Missouri Revised Statutes, *Schools-General Provisions*, 2016, sec. 160.415.1, http://www.moga.mo.gov/mostatutes/stathtml/16000004151.HTML. My emphasis.

competitive relationship to traditional public schools and their lack of public oversight of funds.[78] Mere receipt of public funds, however, does not make an institution public. If it did, purely private institutions would be quite rare as they would have to have avoided government subsidies, tax breaks, and contracts to qualify as *private* to say nothing of indirect forms of government assistance. Though charters' claims as *public* institutions are categorically dubious, in Missouri they further strain credulity. Missouri charters are not just a substitution for desegregation, a change in the conversation from a costly program of redistribution to a more economically efficient path to educational equity. They are a revanchist response to majority-black urban districts. Kansas City's and St. Louis's public school districts were not just returned to hypersegregated urban spaces; they were returned and systemically weakened in such a way as to hobble future claims to suburban-urban or state-urban redistribution. In replacing desegregation with heavily chartered black districts, the St. Louis suburbs were freed from court-ordered involvement in desegregation and shielded from charter schools by population restrictions.

Aside from the particularly adversarial relationship between charters and traditional public school districts in Missouri, charters pose an existential threat to any urban district facing the sort of issues of depopulation I have covered at length. The truth is that when dealing with rapid overall population decline and deindustrialization in urban areas, economies of scale are tremendously important. Moody's Investors Service warned in 2013 that "The dramatic rise in charter school enrollments over the last decade is likely to create negative credit pressure on

[78] John Higgins, "State Supreme Court: Charter Schools Are Unconstitutional," *The Seattle Times*, September 8, 2015, http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/education/state-supreme-court-charter-schools-are-unconstitutional/.

school districts in economically weak urban areas."[79] The financial services firm highlighted four factors that make an urban school districts especially vulnerable to charter schools: pre-existing financial pressures and weak demographics; inflexible operational and governance structures; location within a larger school choice friendly statutory environment; and integration with a dysfunctional or economically struggling local government. Moody's points to Cleveland, St. Louis, Detroit, Kansas City, and Washington, D.C. as characteristic of such factors and, therefore, at a heightened risk when at least one-fifth of their public school students are in charters. St. Louis has the lowest charter school market share among those cities and is currently closer to one-third than one-fifth.

The risks posed by expanding charter schools in areas of continuous population decline, weakened regional and local economies, and historical systemic racial discrimination by public and private institutions (St. Louis, Detroit, and Cleveland) should be so obvious that the platitudes about "empowerment through choice" and "innovation" fail to gain traction. Here it is important to distinguish between *risk* and *threat*. When the matter pertains to the public as a social body concerned with the common good, the two are synonymous. That which puts the public *at risk* is that which *threatens* it. When viewed through the lens of the capital's relationship to the market, however, the word most closely associated with *risk* is not *threat*, but *reward*. Capitalism maintains that the higher the risk, the higher the payoff. Highly unstable public institutions in the depopulated and economically weakened cities of the Rust Belt present risk opportunities with significant potential upside. The analysts at Moody's certainly need not be reminded that lower credit ratings come with higher interest returns, though considering their

[79] Michael D'Arcy and Naomi G. Richman, "Charter Schools Pose Greatest Credit Challenge to School Districts in Economically Weak Urban Areas" (Moody's Investers Service, October 15, 2013), https://www.moodys.com/research/Moodys-Charter-schools-pose-greatest-credit-challenge-to-school-districts--PR_284505.

role in the Great Recession, they perhaps need reminding that systemic risk can also be catastrophic.[80]

Indeed, scholars specializing in education finance have drawn alarming comparisons between the housing crisis and the increasing concentration of charter schools. The aggressive promotion of charter schools by local, state, and federal authorities despite their inherent credit risks and with little meaningful oversight strongly resembles the government's aggressive promotion of home mortgages issued by the financial industry and the similar abdication of its regulatory responsibilities.[81] As with the housing market, though, until the bubble bursts, there is money to be made. Most traditional public schools finance their facilities costs through general obligation bonds. These bonds are inherently low-risk because they are usually only issued following an approved ballot referendum and are guaranteed by the municipal government. Voter and municipal support means they are typically low-risk, low-return investments for the financial firms that purchase public debt. Because charter schools cannot levy taxes like a local school board, their bond ratings are much lower than general obligation bonds and, therefore, carry higher rewards (in the form of interest) for their higher risk.[82] Baker and Miron argue that the interest rate difference between traditional public school bonds commonly rated AA and charter school bonds commonly rated BBB- or BB+ is more than 1.5 percent, which can amount to substantial sums over time. Charter schools have financed more than $1.2 billion in BBB-, around $1 billion in BB+, and over $4.3 billion in unrated debt since 1998.[83] With debt this size, a 1-2 percent different in interest rates relatively quickly amounts to millions of dollars in

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[80] "The Credit Rating Controversy" (The Council on Foreign Relations, February 19, 2015), http://www.cfr.org/financial-crises/credit-rating-controversy/p22328.
[81] Preston Green et al., "Are We Heading Toward a Charter School 'Bubble'?: Lessons from the Subprime Mortgage Crisis," *University of Richmond Law Review* 50, no. 3 (March 2016): 783–808.
[82] Baker and Miron, "The Business of Charter Schooling: Understanding the Policies That Charter Operators Use for Financial Benefit," 28.
[83] Ibid., 31.

diverted education spending. Moreover, with most of this debt not set to mature until after 2040, there is a substantial risk that the public will be left holding bad debts long after some or many of the charter operators that initiated such debts have gone under.[84] Whether that debt is labelled public or private matters little. With trillions in public funds used to absorb the fallout from reckless investing and mismanagement in the auto, housing, and banking industry, the public has little cause for faith that the state will not be called on to absorb the losses and shield the fraudulent investors and companies of the charter bubble should it burst.

The problem is not just with charter schools' higher financing costs. As I previously mentioned, charter schools concentrating in urban school districts with pre-existing financial concerns and struggling local economies place greater burdens on the finances of those already struggling traditional public schools, hence Moody's warning against increasing charter concentration in depopulating and deindustrialized Rust Belt cities. When charters exacerbate local public financing issues, those municipalities' bond rating degrades, and their interest rates increase in what Baker and Miron call a "lose/lose deal."[85] Such public financing "losses" extend beyond their purely fiscal dimensions. Voter approval of tax levies proposed by democratically elected school boards provide a greater degree of public oversight of public funds. Certainly, there are problems with those funds often coming from regressive forms of taxation—those that disproportionately burden low-income people—like sales taxes, lottery funds, "sin" taxes, and licensing fees, but there is at least the semblance of local control of schools and public oversight of their funding. Since charter schools are governed by unelected boards and often receive money directly from the state, any degree of public oversight is buried within the arcane statutes and formulas of state aid disbursements and is hardly consistent with

[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid., 32.

anyone's definition of local control, which is why the State Supreme Court of Washington found charter schools unconstitutional.

In addition to the loss of local control and democratic oversight, there are several important educational consequences for financing "public" charter schools through higher interest bonds. The most obvious problem is that higher interest rates require a greater portion of the school's budget devoted to nonproductive debt payments (higher interest rates and financial transaction fees) rather than to instructional (teachers' salaries, special education services, enrichment and fine arts programs, etc.) or physical infrastructure improvements. Charter schools already enroll fewer students with special needs[86] and English Language Learners[87] and devote a greater portion of their funding to administrative costs than traditional public schools;[88] therefore, greater interest payments and fees flowing to the owners and brokers of charter school debt means that charter schools devote a significantly lower proportion of their budgets on actual instructional costs, particularly when those costs involve students who are more expensive to educate. Further, the ELL and students with special needs in charter schools face an increased risk of their schools reducing services in quantity or quality to cover higher debt expenses. All charter school students, in fact, face such pressures as charter schools attempt to reduce labor costs by hiring less experienced teachers, increasing student-teacher ratios, and reducing the number of nonacademic services.[89] In theory, the same concerns exist for students in traditional public schools, yet those districts typically have lower interest payments, educate more cost-

[86] "Additional Federal Attention Needed to Help Protect Access for Students with Disabilities" (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, June 2012), http://www.gao.gov/assets/600/591435.pdf.
[87] Gary Miron et al., "Schools Without Diversity: Education Management Organizations, Charter Schools, and the Demographic Stratification of the American School System" (Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center, February 2010).
[88] Gary Miron and Jessica L. Urschel, "Equal or Fair? A Study of Revenues and Expenditures in American Charter Schools" (Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center, June 2010).
[89] Ibid.

intensive student populations, and have clearer governance structures and paths to legal action when traditional public schools fail to provide legally guaranteed services adequately.   With charter schools concentrating in areas of racialized poverty where those educational costs are far greater than in more affluent suburban and rural areas, the result of charter debt is students with the greatest educational needs receive the least in proportional instructional spending. This despite charter school movement's continual appeals to putting "students first."

In addition to diverting funds from instructional spending toward higher interest rates, charter schools incur their high-interest debt largely through higher facilities costs. Charter advocates have argued for greater state and federal funding earmarked specifically for facilities costs, but here again, the perennial argument about what constitutes an actual public institution reasserts itself.[90] Charter advocates want to increase public funding and access to public facilities while retaining essentially private governance structures, labor relations, and operational opacity.[91] Like the ride-sharing darling Uber reclassifying itself as a communications company to avoid the regulations imposed on traditional cab companies, charter schools are *public* only so far as such a designation fuels their market growth. When ProPublica investigated a string of charter schools operated by the for-profit Education Management Organization (EMO) National Heritage Academies, it found local appointed boards had little understanding of how the funds they transferred to National Heritage were spent. Rather than governing the charters, the boards existed simply to lend the appearance of legitimacy and regulation. State auditors, seemingly vested with the authority to audit public institutions like "public charter

[90]See Lisa Grover, "Facilities Funding for Charter Public Schools" (Washington, DC: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, September 2016), http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/facilitiesfundingsnapshot2016_FINAL9262016.pdf.
[91] Preston Green, Bruce Baker, and Joseph O. Oluwole, "Having It Both Ways: How Charter Schools Try to Obtain Funding of Public Schools and the Autonomy of Private Schools," *Emory Law Journal* 63, no. 2 (2013): 303–37.

schools" found much to their surprise they lacked the authority to audit privately-run management firms that operated those "public charter schools."[92]

Similarly, in profiling several of the nation's most charter-saturated education markets (Washington, D.C., Detroit, Columbus, Dayton, Cleveland, Kansas City, Newark, and Philadelphia), Bruce Baker found many of the country's most predatory for-profit EMOs including National Heritage Academies, White Hat Management, and Imagine Schools have the greatest presence in these highly competitive markets.[93] Imagine Schools is an especially egregious example of how for-profit EMOs profit off of charter school facilities. Before the Missouri Board of Education forced Imagine, Inc. to close its six schools in St. Louis in 2012, the for-profit franchise had enrolled 3,800 students or about 10 percent of all public school students in the city. Imagine expanded aggressively in St. Louis, opening one school in 21 days, and kept costs down by overcrowding students and neglecting health and safety codes.[94] Imagine used a subsidiary organization called SchoolHouse Finance to acquire properties, upgrade the facilities, then flip the properties (for a sizable profit) to a Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) called EPR (Entertainment Properties of Kansas City) that specializes in property management of charter schools and movie theater chains.[95] Imagine Inc., having already made a profit from its original property purchase, would then pay exorbitant rent to EPR using public funds that were supposed to be spent educating St. Louis's low-income black students. As I have

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[92] Marian Wang, "When Charter Schools Are Nonprofit in Name Only," *ProPublica*, December 9, 2014, https://www.propublica.org/article/when-charter-schools-are-nonprofit-in-name-only; Marian Wang, "NY State Offical Raises Alarm on Charter Schools - And Gets Ignored," *ProPublica*, December 16, 2014, https://www.propublica.org/article/ny-state-official-raises-alarm-on-charter-schools-and-gets-ignored?utm_source=et&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dailynewsletter&utm_content=&utm_name=.
[93] Baker, "Exploring the Consequences of Charter School Expansion in U.S. Cities."
[94] Elisa Crouch, "Imagine Schools' Real Estate Deals Fuel Company Growth," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 30, 2011, http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/education/imagine-schools-real-estate-deals-fuel-company-growth/article_dbf9b959-0c73-586c-97e7-6fca3a729b39.html.
[95] Baker and Miron, "The Business of Charter Schooling: Understanding the Policies That Charter Operators Use for Financial Benefit," 35.

already explained, charter schools already spend more per pupil on infrastructure costs than traditional public schools. Imagine Academy of Careers, Imagine Academy of Environmental Science and Math, and Imagine Academy of Academic Success spent 20.6, 16.4, and 14.7 percent of their respective state revenues on rent. For comparison, City Garden Montessori, a locally-run charter spent 3.7 percent of its state revenue on rent.[96]

Imagine Inc.'s dealings in Kansas City are hardly any better. Between 2007 and 2012, Kansas City's Imagine Renaissance Academy, spent only about 28 percent of its funding on instructional costs, well below the 65 percent national average. Rather than enriching the minds of young students, the charter was enriching itself through its subsidiary SchoolHouse Finance by obtaining lower leasing rates but continuing to charge the board at a previous higher rate. The board was so clueless about its own regulatory responsibilities that it did not even know SchoolHouse Finance was owned by Imagine Inc. The board's naiveté was, however, no random stroke of luck for Imagine Inc. Imagine had stacked Renaissance's board with those who would not ask too many questions. Those who did inquire into Imagine's dealings were not around for long because Imagine had obtained "pre-signed undated resignation letters from board members at the time they joined the board so that board members could be expelled at any time he or she exerted too much authority."[97] Such is the power of the market to bring innovation and "what works" to struggling urban districts. Surely there are some who would argue the market has worked in a sense. Imagine Inc.'s Kansas City and St. Louis schools were closed, and despite the considerable sums they extracted from public coffers through the exploitation of

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[96] "Charter Schools' Rents, Mortgages," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 29, 2011, http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/education/charter-schools-rents-mortgages/article_4df2beb1-1e15-576d-b62b-afa107b260c6.html; Baker and Miron, "The Business of Charter Schooling: Understanding the Policies That Charter Operators Use for Financial Benefit," 35.

[97] Joe Robertson, "Imagine Schools Inc. Ordered to Pay Nearly $1 Million to Now-Closed Kansas City Charter School," *Kansas City Star*, January 26, 2015, http://www.kansascity.com/news/local/article8166348.html.

public school children and their families, they failed within those markets. However, Imagine remains one of the largest charter management organizations in the country with over 33,000 students and maintains a presence in 11 states and D.C., including Rust Belt states such as Ohio. In 2015, following the rather embarrassing ruling from the federal judge in the Kansas City case, Imagine's founder, former co-founder and CEO of energy giant AES Corp., Dennis Bakke and his wife Eileen "generously gifted their entire ownership of Imagine Schools, Inc. to Imagine Schools Non-Profit, Inc., making it possible to complete Imagine Schools to a non-profit entity."[98] No doubt the Bakke's "generosity" will be rewarded by the new non-profit's CEO, Barry Sharp, the former president of Imagine's property holding company SchoolHouse Finance.

Struggling urban school districts in the racially segregated, depopulated, and deindustrialized Rust Belt can scarcely afford to handle their own various operational and funding crises without added threats posed by charter schools' draining public funds through high-interest bonds and property scams. Even honestly and responsibly managed charter schools create redundancies within the "public" school systems and deprive many already overburdened districts of potentially necessary economies of scale. Moody's, hardly a socialist *agitprop* agency, admits charters are an especially dangerous idea in the economically contracting cities in which they concentrate. Why, then are these Rust Belt cities the very place they concentrate when common sense and hard evidence militates against such a location? As was the case with New Orleans, capital thrives on crisis. Although the charter takeover of New Orleans was a unique opportunity brought on by a natural disaster, the Rust Belt presents similar opportunities brought on by the slower, but no less severe, ebbs and flows of capital. Occasionally, more forthright motives bubble up through the wash of platitudes of "empowerment through choice"

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[98] "Imagine Schools Completes Transition to Non-Profit Status," August 18, 2015, http://www.imagineschools.org/2015/08/imagine-schools-completes-transition-to-non-profit-status/.

and "innovations that produce results." One such example came during the ten-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. Betsy DeVos, Michigan's billionaire school privatization financier and the U.S. Secretary of Education was hosting a conference through her dark-money lobbying group American Federation for Children. Rebecca Sibilia, CEO of the education reform nonprofit EdBuild, made the following comments during a panel discussion:

> When you think about bankruptcy…this is a huge opportunity for school districts. And this is something that EdBuild is going to focus on. Like bankruptcy is not a problem for kids; bankruptcy is a problem for the people governing the system, right? So, when a school district goes bankrupt all of their legacy debt can be eliminated. And when we are answering questions…like how are we going to pay for the buildings, how are we going to bring in new…operators when there is pension debt? Like if we can eliminate that in an entire urban system, then we can throw all the cards up in the air, and redistribute everything with all new models. And so, you've heard it first: bankruptcy might be, like, the thing that leads to the next education revolution.[99]

The Rust Belt is the primary laboratory of neoliberal education experimentation. Much like neoliberal theory coming out of the Chicago school was first tested in the Global South by reactionaries like Chile's Pinochet before Reagan and Thatcher imported it back to its birthplaces, the full marketization of public education is being tested first in the majority-black space of New Orleans and more systemically in the hypersegregated and deindustrialized spaces of the Rust Belt. Whether it will remain in those spaces is difficult to tell. However, just as Arne Duncan took Chicago's program of closing traditional public schools in majority-black and low-income neighborhoods and replacing them with charters to the national scale as Secretary of Education, the Midwestern model of targeting majority-minority districts for privatization appears poised to intensify under the Betsy DeVos's leadership. As a national leader in school choice, Michigan is also a national leader in charter school corruption.[100] With her husband's

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[99] Jonas Persson, "Exclusive: Bankruptcy Is a Huge Opportunity to Privatize Schools Says EdBuild" (The Center for Media and Democracy's PRWatch, September 23, 2015), http://www.prwatch.org/news/2015/09/12932/bankruptcy-huge-opportunity-privatize-schools-says-edbuild.
[100] Baker, "Exploring the Consequences of Charter School Expansion in U.S. Cities."

family's fortune coming from Amway, a multi-level marketing scheme with a sort of prosperity gospel message, and her brother's success founding and running the mercenary military contractor Blackwater USA, DeVos is an ideological thoroughbred of hard-right neoliberalism. It is reasonable to assume that, as U.S. Secretary of Education, DeVos will advance a public policy portfolio that will not only further the expansion of urban charter schools but also the deregulation of public education through various forms of privatization that have been mostly off the federal policy table for the last few decades. In 2000, her family spent $5.6 million dollars in their failed effort to expand school choice in Michigan by legalizing public school vouchers.[101] In promoting a national school voucher program, DeVos has a powerful ally in Vice President Pence, who as governor of Indiana, expanded his state's voucher program to the largest in the country at over 32,000 students.[102] Ohio has multiple smaller voucher programs that cumulatively outnumber Indiana's voucher recipients, yet Indiana remains the largest unified program, followed closely by Wisconsin.[103] Taken together, there is every reason to believe that Midwestern right-neoliberalism will fashion national education policy according to the privatization model it has spent decades forging and testing in the Rust Belt. Although charter schools make up only 6 percent of public schools nationwide, federal education policymakers are now the very same people who have helped to push them above 30 or even 50 percent in the postindustrial heartland. Should this remain the case during the next decade, pro-charter

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[101] Stephen Henderson, "Betsy DeVos and the Twilight of Public Education," *The Detroit Free Press*, December 6, 2016, http://www.freep.com/story/opinion/columnists/stephen-henderson/2016/12/03/betsy-devos-education-donald-trump/94728574/.
[102] Claire McInerny, "Five Years Later, Indiana's Voucher Program Functions Very Differently," *Indiana Public Media*, August 19, 2016, http://indianapublicmedia.org/stateimpact/2016/08/19/years-indianas-voucher-program-functions-differently/.
[103] Michelle Ye Hee Lee, "Mike Pence's Claim That Indiana Has the Largest School Voucher Program," *The Washinton Post*, August 12, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2016/08/12/mike-pences-claim-that-indiana-has-the-largest-school-voucher-program/?utm_term=.c201a83e31b7.

consulting group Bellwether Education Partner's prediction of 20-40 percent of public school students in charters by 2035 is certainly possible.[104]

In this chapter I have argued that the charter school movement largely retains the rhetoric of educational equity and social justice; however, charter schools have a much closer institutional resemblance to private corporations that enter markets and grow by creating and exploiting opportunities. Two of those most salient growth opportunities are racial hypersegregation and urban decline resulting from deindustrialization. In exploiting such markets for growth, charter schools have threatened the future viability of public education by forcing traditional public school districts battling the effects of racial segregation and urban decline into market competition. Such perpetual crises are created and maintained by the state through public policy. Contrast the state's role in financing and promoting charter growth and public education privatization with the previous era of desegregation funding and busing programs and you will see two very different approaches to redistribution. From the *Brown* decision until the Reagan Justice Department's dismantling of desegregation programs, the state created a significant equity-driven redistribution program that, although imperfect and inadequate, recognized institutional racism and systemic abuse inflicted on majority-black urban school districts. With the advent of charter schools and their quasi-public financing structures and high-interest bonds, the state is similarly engaged in a program of public fund redistribution, only this time, the funds are redistributed upward to those who hold charter school debts or the properties those debts finance or both. Harvey posits that this redistributive reversal is characteristic of the neoliberal state's drive toward accumulation by dispossession in which the

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[104] Sara Mead, Ashley LiBetti Mitchel, and Andrew J. Rotherham, "The State of the Charter School Movement" (Bellweather Education Partners, September 2015), 60, http://bellwethereducation.org/sites/default/files/Charter%20Research%200908%20FINAL.pdf.

ruling class recaptures physical, institutional, and conceptual space from lower class gains won under regimes of social democracy. The neoliberal state "does this in the first instance through pursuit of privatization schemes and cut-backs in those state expenditures that support the social wage. Even when privatization appears as beneficial to the lower classes, the long-term effects can be negative."[105] The conversion of pubic assets (whether funds or physical space) to private assets either through higher bond debt or facilities poses an existential threat to traditional public schools in segregated and declining urban spaces. Even if this trend could be reversed—and again, evidence points decisively towards intensification rather than reversal—charter schools and education privatization has already captured the institutional bureaucracies and conceptual space of public education. By this, I mean that charter schools and neoliberal education reform has bipartisan support at every level of bureaucracy. Conceptually, education reform resembles Margaret Thatcher's neoliberal TINA thesis: There Is No Alternative at the level of public policy. Many charter school advocates undoubtedly have good intentions, and many parents who choose charter schools, especially from within circumstances where no real meaningful choices exist, are by no means enemies of public education. However, privatizing education will invariably occlude nonmarket justifications of public education. Indeed, this largely seems to have already occurred. The notion that the state should invest in public education out of a commitment to furthering human dignity and the common good is anachronistic and drowned out by the chants of "college and career readiness." Robust concepts of *equity* have lost out to thin slivers of *opportunity*. If a reversal, or more crucially, a new path is to be cleared for urban education policy, the paradigmatic neoliberal state must cease to exist. Urban education policy, the anchor for all education policy, inevitably reflects the state's approach to urbanization writ

[105] Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development*, 48.

large. Before commencing the long march through the institutions to effect change, it is necessary to understand the ideology that governs those institutions and shapes and reshapes those spaces. It is to urban neoliberalization that I turn in Chapter Two.

CHAPTER TWO

NEOLIBERALISM, CLASS ACCUMULATION, AND DISCIPLINE

Neoliberalism has meant, in short, the financialization of everything.

-David Harvey[106]

To understand the effects of urban neoliberalization on public education and charter school concentration in St. Louis, it is necessary to bring some theoretical clarity to a concept that permeates the previous chapter's analysis of charter schools and urbanization and will be a theoretical touchstone for each subsequent chapter. *Neoliberalism* is a term that has come to represent myriad and sometimes competing critiques of the ways capitalism has changed as it has spread across the globe over the last four decades. While I will not attempt to give an exhaustive account of its major theorists, this chapter will sketch neoliberalism's major tenets and assumptions, its origins in and transformation of free market ideology, its revanchist response to the Keynesian liberal or social democratic welfare state, its perpetual mutations, and its uncontested status as the paradigmatic form of urban (re)development and governance. By exploring each of these facets of neoliberalization, I ground the previous chapter's description of charter school concentration in Rust Belt cities such as St. Louis in the larger theoretical context of late capitalism. My central claim within this chapter is that neoliberalism's market ideology/idolatry can remain highly differentiated and contradictory without abandoning structural concerns of class power and capital accumulation. In fact, neoliberalism's contradictions and accumulation imperatives help to explain the reckless charter school concentration described in the first chapter as well as the broader ideological terrain within

[106] David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 33.

which St. Louis's education and urban (re)development policies have taken place. These latter concerns serve as the basis for the subsequent chapters' critical policy analysis of St. Louis's public education reforms and urban neoliberalization.

As its name suggests, neoliberalism is the political economic progeny of liberalism, whose founding fathers included social contract theorists like John Locke and free market economists such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo. Classical liberal thought holds that human liberty is best secured through a social contract with a limited government that provides little beyond the necessities of free trade such as establishing a common currency, adjudicating contract disputes, and perhaps providing for military defense against hostile foreign or domestic powers. Freedom for classical liberals is inseparable from the right of the individual's autonomous pursuit of self-interest undergirded by the sovereignty of property ownership. Individuals are free to enter whatever contracts they see as aligned with their property interests, or as Thomas Jefferson would have it, their pursuit of happiness.

Competing notions of what we mean when we say *freedom* have driven political theory in the modern era and the development of various iterations of liberalism. Classical liberals favor negative freedom, a freedom *from* rather than what they see as more prescriptive positive notions of freedom *to*. Interventions by the state or any other institutional body (e.g. religious hierarchy) into private life and market transactions infringe upon the individual's right to define and advance his or her political economic interests. Indeed, the language of rights, specifically property rights, lies at the heart of liberalism. Negative freedom's maximization of individual property rights and minimization of institutional interference is the theoretical basis of free market economics.

The forefathers of economic liberalism, particularly Smith and Ricardo, were convinced that economics was an empirical natural science like Newtonian physics. The mathematical formulae used to describe market forces were, on this view, analogous to equational descriptions of gravity. The freedom to flourish in the market, therefore, corresponds to human nature. Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* renders liberal economics as art. Upon finding himself shipwrecked and forced to live in the "state of nature," Robinson flourishes by economizing his island according to the laws of capitalism. He makes an inventory of his assets, regiments his time, and domesticates his environment through primitive agriculture. His is not a tale of the perils of seafaring but of the freedom of man to govern himself and the environment according to the "natural" laws and processes of capital accumulation. Karl Polanyi authoritatively refuted the naturalization of liberal economics, arguing that liberal economics had not *discovered* universal market laws. Rather, liberalism *universalized* the social relations of productions particular to modern capitalist nation-states of Western Europe by ignoring the fact that nearly all societies existing in less "civilized" places and times organized themselves differently. Polanyi maintains that economic factors always limit social organization, yet "Nineteenth-century civilization alone was economic in a different and distinctive sense, for it chose to base itself on a motive only rarely acknowledged as valid in the history of human societies, and certainly in everyday life, namely, gain. The self-regulating market system was uniquely derived from this principle."[107] As liberals (etymologically "those who are free") reorganized their own societies—and those of less civilized peoples—around individual gain within the framework of the capitalist nation-state, they did so under a political philosophy that erroneously saw

[107] Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1954). For a more recent anthropological critique of liberalism, see David Graeber, *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

capitalism as a process for raising human kind to its natural state. To this day, mainstream economics remains largely wedded to the idea that its organizing principles reflect the immutable laws of nature.

The problem with mistaking the laws laissez-faire capitalism with the laws of nature, as Polanyi exposes, is that the "free market" has never and indeed cannot exist without the help of the capitalist nation-state in defining and enforcing the social relations of commodity exchange. Commodities are goods produced specifically for sale in markets. This is not unique to capitalism but has been true under every form of political economy in human history. Capitalism, however, requires the commoditization of goods that were never previously considered commodities, namely land, labor, and money. These three elements are essential to capitalist markets, yet it is obvious to anyone that they were not *produced* for sale in a market in the way a pair of shoes or a loaf of bread is. For land, labor, and money to be bought and sold as other commodities are in a market, the state must first organize society around the regulation of these "fictitious commodities," and the state must continually intervene to maintain and stabilize these fictions. Polanyi contends, "no society could stand the effects of such a system of crude fictions even for the shortest stretch of time unless its human and natural substance as well as its business organization was protected against the ravages of [the] satanic mill" of the unregulated market.[108] Capitalism exhausts resources and thrives on scarcity. With each capitalist striving toward monopolization and market saturation, capitalist competition itself becomes impossible without state regulations and interventions. A truly unfettered market would exhaust both land and labor to the point that society could not reproduce itself and money would cease to hold value.

[108] Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 77.

Once capitalism industrialized, it became clear that the state would have to intervene significantly on behalf of the labor commodity, since so many capitalists' freedom was gained by the enslavement (wage or chattel) and degradation of their fellow human beings. Utopian thinkers like Henri de Saint-Simon, Robert Owen, and Charles Fourier attempted to create new models of social organization that humanized industrial production, while radical critics such as Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Karl Marx presented robust intellectual challenges to the "natural" science of bourgeois liberal economics. Liberalism itself underwent a change as thinkers like John Stuart Mill and later John Maynard Keynes challenged the tyrannical nature of free market capitalism. Freedom for these social liberals, especially Keynes, was conceived as more egalitarian and social than unrestricted and individual. Classical liberalism's conception of human nature was radically decontextualized from actually existing forms of political power. It could hardly be argued that those born into the bondage of slavery and poverty would ever be able to exercise their natural human freedom in the same way as the scion of an industrialist. Equality of opportunity became the mantra of this new form of welfare or social liberalism.

Keynes was especially influential in advancing social liberalism in economic policy. Unlike Marx or Proudhon who rejected the necessity of capitalism's class hierarchies and inherent antagonisms, Keynes believed the state could broker a compromise between the capitalist class and working class that advanced the interests of both. Keynesian economics posits that it was not the minimally regulated market that brought stable and widespread economic gains but the properly regulating and redistributive state that promoted capitalism's stable long-term economic growth. In a sense, Keynesian economics attempts to save capitalism from capitalists by maintaining a well-regulated social order that provides capitalists with things they both need and cannot maintain without state intervention: effective demand and social

stability. Capitalists need both laborers and consumers to generate profits. They can increase profits by lowering wages, but if all capitalists pay poverty wages, then no one will have the money to continue producing and consuming goods. When massive swaths of society cannot purchase necessities, revolutionary conditions arise that are, to say the least, bad for business. Capitalist competition, though, discourages voluntary increases in wages and standard of living; therefore, state regulations (e.g. labor laws or a minimum wage) allow capital to preserve competition without eroding effective demand. Also, during times of financial crisis, the state can inject money (e.g. Fed policy following the Great Recession) and create jobs (e.g. the Works Progress Administration) when capital contracts to preserve individual and institutional wealth. In exchange for a portion of its surpluses redistributed by the state through taxation and social programs, capital enjoys social stability and benefits from state expenditures like education and infrastructure. With social liberalism, the core of capitalism's beloved rights discourse and individualistic pursuit of gains is preserved, but following the Great Depression and the widespread adoption of Keynesian policies, it was "embedded" within "a web of social and political constraints and a regulatory environment that sometimes restrained but in other instances led the way in economic and industrial strategy."[109] The embedded liberalism of the Keynesian compromise dominated the middle of the twentieth century from the end of the Great Depression until the stagflation of the 1970s and the ascendency of neoliberalism.

Although social liberalism held sway in federal policy for much of the twentieth century, it never fully eclipsed free market theory. While the U.S. was applying Keynesian solutions to dig out of the Great Depression and fuel the broad economic growth of the American *trente glorieuses* (1945-1975), Europe faced competing forms of totalitarianism in fascism and

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[109] Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 11.

Stalinism. Free market economists Ludwig von Mises and his intellectual successor in what became known as the Austrian School of economics, Friedrich Hayek saw classical liberalism's minimal state and maximal "freedom" as a counter to both leftist and rightest totalitarian regimes. Whether Keynesianism was capable of increasing GDP, it relied on a strong state's intervention in the market, which on their view, was an inevitable threat to human freedom. Attempting to find a synthesis between classical liberalism's free market individualism and the failure of capitalism to respond to pressing social needs like poverty and housing, a colloquium convened around the American intellectual Walter Lippmann in 1938 for the purpose of reconstructing Western liberalism. Both Von Mises and Hayek were influential at the Colloque Walter Lippmann, but the onset of World War II put a hold on the wider dissemination and policy instantiation of what had begun to be called *neo*liberalism.[110] After the war had ended, Hayek convened a similar meeting in 1947 in Mont Pelerin, Switzerland, from which a think tank and free market policy advocacy organization called the Mont Pelerin Society emerged.

Hayek's views on the antagonistic relationship between state power and individual freedom had found a receptive audience in the economics department at the University of Chicago. The University of Chicago Press had published what would become Hayek's most influential work, *The Road to Serfdom*, in 1944 after three publishers had rejected the manuscript.[111] When Hayek established the Mont Pelerin Society in 1947, University of Chicago economists Milton Friedman and Frank Knight were among its founding members. The Austrian School of economics had taken root in the U.S. as the Chicago School of economics, but Keynes's influence and social liberalism was still dominant in the policy frameworks of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and later Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs. Following

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[110] Michael A. Peters, *Neoliberalism and After?* (New York: Peter Lang, 2011), 12–16.
[111] Ibid., 16.

Augusto Pinochet's 1973 right-wing coup in Chile—supported by U.S. Cold War strategies of paramilitary support and antidemocratic socialist containment—the "Chicago Boys" had their first national stage on which to test their free market theories. Ironically, it took the intervention from a foreign state (the U.S.'s CIA) and a brutal dictatorship notorious for suppressing dissidents for the "free" market to flourish in Chile. After an initial economic boost from foreign investment in the new capital friendly country, Chile's economy faltered during a regional debt crisis, and neoliberalism's free market adapted by becoming increasingly reliant on an authoritarian state to manage the chaos of a now fully global capitalist market.[112] With the election of Ronald Reagan in the U.S. and Margaret Thatcher in Great Britain, the free market experiment that had been planned in the Global North and tested in the Global South was reintroduced back into the U.S. and Great Britain.[113]

The reintroduction of neoliberalism in the U.S. and Great Britain was a repudiation of Keynesian policies. Capital had become discontent with the Keynesian compromise and believed the state had become too bloated and labor too powerful. Government programs and higher union wages, both of which had been instrumental in preventing a working class revolution during the Great Depression, were now seen as a drain on profits. Technological improvements in transportation and communication made capital more mobile than ever before. Effective demand was, therefore, less of an issue for capital, since it had become much easier to tap into labor and consumer markets all over the globe. Social liberalism had once again come to infringe upon capital's right to seek unrestrained dominance in the market. The rollback of Keynesian civil protections and social redistributions that began in the mid-1970s has continued

[112] It is fitting that in 1947 von Mises wrote an indictment of the centrally planned economies of socialism called *Planned Chaos*. A better descriptor for authoritarian neoliberalism could hardly be found. See Ludwig Von Mises, *Planned Chaos* (New York: Irvington-on-Hudson, 1947).
[113] Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 8–9.

largely unabated whether the party in power is the Democrats or Republicans.[114] Capital's global consolidation of power and the waning potency of organized labor in the U.S. has made neoliberal the unchallenged policy paradigm for the last four decades, a timespan that has now surpassed Keynesian social liberalism. It is now the socially redistributive Keynesian state that is the aberration and neoliberalism the new norm of capitalism.

Ideological Flexibilization

How then do we define neoliberalism when it is so shiftless and contradictory? Why is it that the "free market" keeps tending toward either a "conservative" authoritarian state's heavy use of military power or a "liberal" interventionist state's privatization of nonmarket goods and services under the banner of equalizing opportunity? David Harvey holds that neoliberalism is fundamentally "a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade."[115] Essentially, these are the features of classical liberalism. The *neo*, therefore, in *neoliberalism*, pertains, in part, to the often contradictory role of the state and the various methods it deploys to maintain the primacy of markets through centrally planned monetary policy (e.g. the Federal Reserve or the European Central Bank), de/reregulating existing markets, and creating markets where they have not traditionally existed.[116] For classical liberals, the state

[114] This is not to say that the respective parties do not put their own ideological inflection on neoliberal policies. Republicans have largely favored a neoliberalism wedded to foreign militarism and a return to domestic hierarchies of race and gender. Democrats have tended to favor the sort of neoliberal privatization that preserves the egalitarian rights discourse of social liberalism while replacing the redistributive social programs with incentives that promote opportunities for individual rather than class advancement.
[115] David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 2.
[116] Examples of such neoliberal market engineering have most often included the privatization of public institutions like education or social security, but regulatory regimes themselves are open to marketization under neoliberalism.

by its very nature was an impediment to the natural order of markets and ought to play as small a role in the social relations of production and the markets as is possible for the maintenance of capital accumulation. For neoliberals, perhaps even to the dismay of foundational thinkers like Von Mises and Hayek, the state takes an active role in deregulating and regulating the market in such a way that social redistribution of wealth is preserved. The difference with neoliberal redistribution though is that it flows upward as the state assumes an active role in capital's accumulation processes.

The contortions of free market ideology in the neoliberal age are inevitable. Free market theorists have no credible explanation for why concentrated authority in state bureaucracies threatens individual freedom while concentrated power in a capitalist class does not, especially when the capitalist class can redefine and redeploy state bureaucratic power to accumulate capital and increase wealth disparity. The neoliberal era is, after all, marked by an explosion of repressive public-private partnerships such as private prisons, military contractors, and a collusive national security surveillance apparatus. It is important, therefore, to see neoliberalism as more than just a political movement built around free market principles. Instead, neoliberalism's inherent contradictions are best understood as a flexible and pragmatic "project to achieve the restoration of class power."[117] If capital sees a way to restore the powers it compromised under Keynesianism and increase its profits by deregulating markets, it will do so. If it sees a path toward accumulation that depends on state intervention and state funding, it moves in that direction. Harvey's description of the tension between theoretical and practical neoliberalism is worth quoting at length:

One such example is mitigating climate change through "cap and trade," which creates a market out of pollution credits.
[117] Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 16.

> The theoretical utopianism of neoliberal argument has…primarily worked as a system of justification and legitimation for whatever needed to be done to achieve [restoration of power to elites]. The evidence suggests, moreover, that when neoliberal principles clash with the need to restore or sustain elite power, then the principles are either abandoned or become so twisted as to be unrecognizable. This in no way denies the power of ideas to act as a force for historical-geographical change. But it does point to a creative tension between the power of neoliberal ideas and the actual practices of neoliberalization that have transformed how global capitalism has been working over the last three decades.[118]

Viewed in the light of Reagan's corporate tax cuts, the titans of the automotive and financial industries no doubt applauded his famous statement that the nine most terrifying words in the English were *I'm from the government, and I'm here to help*. Did they still harbor those views when the Obama administration injected trillions of dollars into both industries in the wake of the 2008 recession? Paradoxically, yes. Rather, it is more accurate to say that both instances are manifestations of the same larger relationship between capital and the neoliberal state. Both are examples of the state's assistance in capital's processes of accumulation and restoration of class power. For Reagan, that help came in the form of deregulation and tax cuts that tore large holes in the safety net of social liberalism. For Obama, that help came in the form of massive federal protections against criminal prosecutions and the loss of wealth for the one percent in the wake of the largest economic crisis in the U.S. since the Great Depression. Such protections came at the expense of millions of working class Americans, especially those in nonwhite communities, who lost their homes and savings. Reagan Era neoliberalism enshrined trickle-down economics wherein the economic benefits of deregulation would eventually make their way down to the working class. The Obama administration's response to the Great Recession was a sort of trickle-down rescue. Rescuing the class and industries responsible for the crisis would protect the working class against further devastation if those industries were allowed to collapse, or so the argument went. The social safety net stretched across the bottom of society was no longer

[118] Ibid., 19.

the apt metaphor to describe state intervention in times of crisis. Neoliberal state intervention is more of a lifeboat that removes priority passengers off a sinking ship. In its final analysis, neoliberalism's market ideology is the ideology of revanchist class accumulation, not the ideology of individual liberties realized in a free market protected against state interference.

Neoliberalism and Racialized Class Discipline

Considering that neoliberalism is a means of consolidating class power and redistributing public resources as well as an ideology that legitimates those processes, it becomes clear why neoliberalism has come to mean so many things within academic discourse. A totalizing system of class accumulation will look different depending on when, how, and where such accumulation occurs. This is a crucial point for understanding the highly differentiated growth and crises tendencies of charter school concentration in St. Louis and throughout the Rust Belt. The growth opportunities are at once locally specific and regionally thematic. Put differently, neoliberalism is broadly consistent and narrowly adaptive. It thrives in contradiction. For example, charter concentration and neoliberal education privatization rely on the very system of public education they threaten to dismantle. The threats of long-term instability are not a deterrent to short-term exploitation because capital will simply adapt its tactics will preserving its strategy of accumulation. Wendy Brown captures neoliberalism's Janus-faced contradictions and pragmatic opportunism in saying:

> This dappled, striated, and flickering complexion is also the face of an order replete with contradiction and disavowal, structuring markets it claims to liberate from structure, intensely governing subjects it claims to free from government, strengthening and retasking states it claims to abjure…It seeks to privatize every public enterprise, yet valorizes public-private partnerships that imbue the market with ethical potential and social responsibility and the public realm with market metrics. With its ambition for unregulated and untaxed capital flows, it undermines national sovereignty while

> intensifying preoccupation with national GNP, GDP, and other growth indicators in national and postnational constellations.[119]

To this catalog of contradictions, I would add that neoliberalism relies on and abhors class-based politics, though under neoliberalism, it is the capitalist class that acts in revolutionary solidarity. The systematic dismantling of Keynesian social welfare policies and the aggressive subjugation of nonmarket facets of public and private life to market conditions and the profit imperative could only be the work of well-coordinated class politics. Mobilized in constellations of industry and policy advocacy groups and able to dominate electoral politics at every level, the politics of late capitalism's upper classes is contradictorily highly competitive and highly cooperative. Such organized political action, nevertheless, is the work of men and women (mostly men) extolling the virtues of individualism: personal responsibility and the sacrosanct rights to the fruits of their radically decontextualized labor.

The famous Powell Memo, written in 1971 by former corporate lawyer and eventual Supreme Court Justice Lewis F. Powell, Jr., is as good an illustration of neoliberalism's collective individualism as any. The diligent stewardship of his own company's affairs, Powell argues, is no longer sufficient to protect the capitalist's prosperity and honest way of life against a tide of barbaric and largely ignorant leftists radicalized by their university education in the liberal arts. Independent actions against such a tide would ultimately prove futile for the capitalist class. Instead, "Strength lies in organization, in careful long-range planning and implementation, in consistency of action over an indefinite period of years, in the scale of financing available only through joint effort, and in the political power available only through united action and national organizations."[120] Powell called for the collective financing of

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[119] Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2015), 48–49.
[120] Lewis F. Powell, Jr., "Confidential Memorandum: Attack of American Free Enterprise System," August 23, 1971, http://reclaimdemocracy.org/powell_memo_lewis/.

political action to be coordinated through national and regional groups like Chambers of Commerce, which grew from a base of about 60,000 firms around the time of the Powell memo to over a quarter of a million a decade later.[121] Realizing the importance of creating widespread ideological support for a class politics that by necessity pertains only to a small heavily privileged segment of society, Powell called for the establishment of pro-capitalist think tanks and the strategic placement of ideologically aligned professors in American universities.[122] He also pointed to the judicial branch as an underutilized resource for business, remarking that "with an activist-minded Supreme Court, the judiciary may be the most important instrument for social, economic and political change."[123] To bring the broader culture on board, he suggested strict monitoring and enforcement of pro-business programming or at the very least "equal time" given to proponents of free-enterprise to counter its critics. With most of television programming under the control of a handful of corporations, coordination on that front would present few challenges, and the communication industry has since become increasingly consolidated in spite of the assumed fracturing and differentiation the internet makes possible.

Harvey's assessment that it is difficult to determine Powell's direct influence on the propagation of neoliberal ideology seems correct as does his cautiousness in underestimating the memo's influence.[124] As a lawyer in a well-respected corporate law firm, Powell was surely in a position to advance capitalist coordination, and his subsequent appointment by Nixon to the Supreme Court—a seat he held for fifteen years (1972-1987) during the entrenchment of neoliberal policy at the federal level—put him in a prime position to make the courts useful to such a project. Given the accuracy of the Powell memo in describing how the capitalist class

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[121] Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 43.
[122] The Heritage Foundation and the Cato Institute were founded in 1973 and 1977 respectively.
[123] Powell, "Confidential Memorandum: Attack of American Free Enterprise System."
[124] Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 43.

would coalesce around neoliberal politics, it is tempting to read the memo as the epicenter of capitalism's tectonic shift. What is more likely is that Powell was one of many who recognized the myriad opportunities for mobilizing the capitalist class against the Keynesian state. His blueprint for how to do so and his position of influence in and outside of government were perhaps rare and highly effective but not entirely unique. The class compromise of the New Deal was one of pragmatic self-interest, not beneficence or a sense of civic responsibility. By the 1970s, the possibility for a different sort of response to social unrest arose. For those who shared Powell's class position and political perspective, social liberalism had emboldened the varied and often successful populist movements of the 1960s and the growing radicalism surrounding anti-racist and anti-imperialist politics. It was not a class compromise but class discipline that would emerge as neoliberalism's paradigmatic solution to social unrest.

Class discipline can come as a carrot or a stick, and neoliberalism makes use of both. The dramatic rise in incarceration and the prison-industrial complex exemplify the repressive side of neoliberal class discipline and its particularly devastating effects on communities of color. The withdrawal of the material benefits provided by the Keynesian state intensified the brutality of the neoliberalism's reliance on carceral class discipline. During the decade of the 1990s, the number of families enrolled in Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) fell 50 percent while the prison population rose by 50 percent.[125] This was not coincidence. The message was clear: either the poor make themselves useful to capital accumulation by accepting the poverty wages of low-skill industries, or they will be subjected to the penal system, which had itself become a lucrative industry. Soss, Fording, and Schram maintain that "welfare and criminal justice operations now function as integrated elements of a single system for managing

[125] Joe Soss, Richard C. Fording, and Sanford F. Schram, *Disciplining the Poor: Neoliberal Paternalism and the Persistent Power of Race* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 112.

marginal populations."[126] *Marginality* here pertains to the inseparable dimensions of race and class, but as I argued in the first chapter, racial and class-based politics are also spatial politics. The political class carries out management and discipline of racialized class hierarchies through geographically specific policy regimes. While it is true that neoliberalism has become the paradigmatic form of governance from local to global levels, it has done so in a highly differentiated manner.

The tactical rollback of Keynesian federal protections has intensified this differentiation by creating space for local regimes to discipline the underclasses. In other words, the absence of a centralized authority willing to protect marginalized groups and preserve the gains they achieved under Keynesian social liberalism has left those marginalized groups vulnerable to regional and local political blocs wishing to reassert their political and economic dominance. I will return to neoliberalism's relationship to geography later in this chapter, but for now, it is useful to show how neoliberal discipline, whether repressive or ideological, is geographically situated. Soss, Fording, and Schram offer the following description of neoliberal class discipline's spatial dimension:

> The disciplinary turn was driven by political mobilization and, in states and localities, took on different forms depending on who controlled political institutions. Labor market conditions were equally important. From the 1970s to the 1990s, benefit cutbacks and restrictive [ADFC] waivers were pursued most vigorously in states where benefit levels encroached on wages for low-skilled workers.[127]

Low-skilled labor had no incentive to accept the conditions of low-wage jobs when the benefits of those jobs were comparable to those the welfare state offered. Such wage encroachment was highest in areas with large populations of low-skilled workers and weak labor organizations that would otherwise drive up wages. Rather than raise wages to make low-skill work more

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[126] Ibid., 295.
[127] Ibid.

attractive, capital was able to preserve its profit margins by getting the state to decrease those benefits, making remaining benefits conditional on accepting the poverty wages, and increasing the threat of incarceration when the first two incentives are insufficient. Destitution and prison are persuasive disciplinary tools. Anyone wishing to avoid them had to accept whatever conditions the market demanded.

We can see variations on this theme by looking at the geography of labor history, which can serve as a useful proxy for capital's perennial need to discipline the working class. When the U.S. Congress overrode President Truman's veto to pass the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947, capital had taken its first step in rolling back the labor gains under Roosevelt's New Deal. The first states to pass right-to-work laws were the former Confederacy and a few states in agricultural economies of the Midwest and Great Plains. The historical reasons why these states espoused a political conservatism that championed their right to regulate their own labor pools free from federal intervention is self-evident. Following the federal shift from Keynesian social liberalism to neoliberal class discipline, right-to-work has experienced a "great migration" up from the South. The states that have passed right-to-work laws since the welfare and criminal justice reforms of the 1990s are Oklahoma (2001), Indiana and Michigan (2012), Wisconsin (2015), and West Virginia (2016).[128] Ohio is yet to pass statewide right-to-work legislations, but as of 2016, local governments are free to pass similar laws. Missouri's Republican officials have had their past attempts at statewide right-to-work legislation thwarted by Democratic Governor Jay Nixon but have found success with Republican Governor Eric Greitens in 2017.[129] With the exception

[128] "Right-to-Work States" (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2016), http://www.ncsl.org/research/labor-and-employment/right-to-work-laws-and-bills.aspx.
[129] Will Schmitt, "'Right-to-Work' Legislation, Supported by Greitens, Filed by Lawmakers in Jefferson City," *Springfield News Leader*, December 2, 2016, http://www.news-leader.com/story/news/politics/2016/12/01/right--work-legislation-supported-greitens-filed-lawmakers-jefferson-city/94738164/.

of Oklahoma, we see neoliberal wage discipline prospering in the same soil from which U.S. labor activism sprang: the industrial heartland and Appalachian coal country. Excepting West Virginia and Oklahoma, we also see class discipline concentrating in the very same hypersegregated Rust Belt states in which charter schools have concentrated most heavily. The racialized class discipline associated with "no-excuses" charter schools is, thus, strongly correlated with neoliberalism's larger project of racialized class discipline.

Neoliberalism's political devolution or decentralization of power down to state and local disciplinary regimes should not be understood as the federal government's abdication of power. Rather the federal government is instrumental in propagating the discourse and policies of racialized class discipline utilized at the lower levels. The Reagan administration's systematic rollback of the Keynesian welfare state—the deregulation of business and finance, the tax cuts, the dismantling of civil rights legislation—was preceded by the candidate Reagan's campaign promises to discipline the "welfare queen" driving her Cadillac and "young fellow" (modified from his Southern stump speech of "strapping young buck") buying a T-Bone steak with food stamps.[130] The thinly-veiled rhetoric was not the only thing sending a clear message that the federal government would clear the path to restore the power of local governments to discipline their racial underclass. Reagan launched his campaign from Philadelphia, Mississippi, a town made famous by the Klan's lynching of three civil rights activists: Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman, and James Chaney. Lest repressive neoliberal discipline be mistaken for a partisan phenomenon, it is worth noting that Bill Clinton delivered strikingly similar messages, though with more temperate rhetoric, during his presidential campaigns. He bolstered his candidacy by

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[130] Ian Haney-Lopez, "The Racism at the Heart of the Reagan Presidency," *Salon*, January 11, 2014, http://www.salon.com/2014/01/11/the_racism_at_the_heart_of_the_reagan_presidency/; See also Ian Haney-Lopez, *Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism & Wrecked the Middle Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

highlighting his record as a tough-on-crime Southern governor who also promised to end "welfare as we know it" once he became president.[131] In terms of policy, Clinton was even more successful than Reagan in utilizing welfare and criminal justice reforms to discipline the lower classes. His 1994 Violent Crime Control and Prevention Act was the largest crime bill in the history of the federal government. With his signature, Clinton laid the groundwork for the largest expansion of the U.S. prison population to date.[132] The bill provided $10 billion in federal funding for new prison construction while eliminating federal funding for inmate education.[133] Welfare reform came as promised in 1996 with the eminently neoliberal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). PRWORA remade ADFC from a means-tested entitlement program into the time-restricted Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), which the federal government disbursed as block grants to states that could set their own restrictions and sanctions for noncompliance.[134] By replacing welfare with workfare, the federal government and subsequently state and local governments "reimagined [assistance] as a way to immerse the poor in a market experience and teach them self-discipline through paternalist direction and supervision."[135] Like education reform, welfare and criminal justice reform are thoroughly bi-partisan because they are essential components of class discipline, which transcends party affiliation in the neoliberal era.

The genesis, growth, and concentration of charter schools mirrors the broader political devolution and consolidation of class power. Like right-to-work legislation and the transition to

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[131] Soss, Fording, and Schram, *Disciplining the Poor: Neoliberal Paternalism and the Persistent Power of Race*, 37–38.
[132] See Robert Perkinson, *Texas Tough: The Rise of America's Prison Empire* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2010); Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2012).
[133] Premilla Nadasen, "How a Democrat Killed Welfare," *Jacobin* (Winter 2016): 59.
[134] Soss, Fording, and Schram, *Disciplining the Poor: Neoliberal Paternalism and the Persistent Power of Race*, 38.
[135] Ibid., 113.

block granting development funds, charter schooling furthers the consolidation of local capital and political power. Keynesian social protections slowed such consolidation through regulation. During the era of enforced desegregation, local economic and political elites were not as free to define an adequate public education as they were before and immediately after *Brown.* As with the above examples of neoliberal deregulation and devolved policy frameworks, the federal government has assumed an active role in promoting decentralized charter growth and regional concentration. In other words, the federal government did not just remove restrictions on subordinate political and economic powers, it facilitated their redefinition of social justice and educational equity in accordance with state and local interests. As Chapter Four of this dissertation makes clear, Missouri's power bloc of political conservatives vehemently opposed federally enforced desegregation busing in St. Louis and Kansas City. Following the emergence of neoliberal education policy in the 1990s and its subsequent intensification, those same conservatives have joined with political liberals to facilitate charter school growth and the federal interventions that support it. Conservative principles about the limited role of government are flexible insofar as government remains useful for consolidating class power and accumulating capital. Likewise, the political center-left has fully capitulated to corporate interests, forsaking its unrealized goals of universal protections of public goods like education in favor of opportunities to assimilate marginalized populations into the very mechanism of their marginalization: the market. Neoliberalism's bi-partisan class alliance across levels of governance has eroded both the capacity to imagine and realize a common educational space. By transforming public education into a semi-private marketplace, citizens become either consumers or entrepreneurs. Both these roles have historically been a burden rather than a means to empowerment or emancipation precisely because they subject marginalized populations

to the tyranny of the market. Quality public education becomes a commodity the market agent must pursue rather than a right the public citizen demands. Like all commodities, its value becomes tied to scarcity and its reform tied to the cycles of devaluation and revalorization. This provides an important link to St. Louis's policies and processes of urban educational and neighborhood revitalization explored in the third and fourth chapters.

We Are All Entrepreneurs Now

Always brand conscious, neoliberalism moderates its overtly brutal forms of repressive class discipline with discourse and tactics that are more positive and socially palatable, though no less ideologically ruthless. Here the mantra of personal responsibility and atomized notions of freedom are particularly effective. The neoliberal state disempowers forms of working class collective political action with one hand while promoting the narrative of individual responsibility for problems and concomitant solutions that are necessarily social. The narrative of neoliberal individualism devolves class discipline all the way down to the individual. The human being as a political animal, the *homo politicus*, is remade as *homo oeconomicus* the economic animal. The struggle to direct the polis toward human flourishing is replaced by atomized individuals struggling to maximize their self-interest within markets.[136] In this way, neoliberal governance, what Foucault called *governmentality*, subsumes politics within self-regulating ideologies of control and discipline that permeates social relations and even self-understanding.[137] In transforming social relations to market relations, neoliberal logic jumps its banks of a mode of statecraft and takes on epistemological and ontological qualities.[138] Truth

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[136] Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*, 87–99.
[137] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France, 1978-1979*, ed. Michel Sellenart, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008).
[138] Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*, 62.

itself becomes contingent on its market viability, and as rational market actors, human beings reshape and reorient their lives around the fluctuations of such market "veridiction."[139] To borrow a phrase from Henri Lefebvre, neoliberal rationality is capital's colonization of everyday life.[140]

This dissertation argues the problem with neoliberal rationality is that it frames complex social issues like concentrated poverty in terms of radically decontextualized individual choices as though such choices were not conditioned by historical, political, and spatial factors that lie outside any individual's control. By individualizing politics, neoliberalism offers those born into concentrated poverty little beyond ideological fantasies of escape, the so-called "ladders of opportunity" which the poor must use to rescue themselves from their historical conditions. During his second inaugural address, President Obama invoked America's civil religion of capitalism in stating, "We are true to our creed when a little girl born into the bleakest poverty knows that she has the same chance to succeed as anybody else, because she is an American; she is free, and she is equal, not just in the eyes of God but also in our own."[141] In light of such a statement, what could *the bleakest poverty* possibly mean except the geographic concentration of individuals who fail to understand properly their own Americanness, and by extension, their inherent freedom and equality? Clearly, poverty is no obstacle for anyone who knows, *really knows*, she is American and, therefore, has the *same chance to succeed as anyone else*. To be American is to be so radically free and equal as to cloak the myriad forms of unfreedom and "the bleakest" material and social inequalities with a threadbare sort of nationalism. Here we see the

[139] Ibid., 67.
[140] Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, trans. John Moore (Brooklyn: Verso, 2014).
[141] Barack Obama, "Inaugural Address by President Barack Obama" (The White House, January 21, 2013), https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/01/21/inaugural-address-president-barack-obama.

truth of Althusser's claim that "ideology has no history."[142] The bleakest of poverty described here exists without having been produced. It is a hazy backdrop from which the star, an American girl, emerges. Time and space are paradoxically necessary and irrelevant. Americanness as described by Obama obliterates the historical political struggles that are supposed to provide the very ideational content of the trope of American perseverance in the face of severe obstacles. The geography of her poverty is inconsequential, but the geography of her nationality is paramount. This girl born into the bleakest of poverty need not concern herself with the injustice of her circumstances since the benefits of real and imagined struggles against injustices in the past are transferred to her by birthright as an American. Obscuring the historical and geographic determinants of class is arguably the most effective form of class discipline. Less physically brutal than repressive forms of class discipline, dissolving the causes and solutions for poverty into tepid patriotism and individualism is also less honest. Discipline achieved through the threat of starvation or prison is unequivocal about class relations. Discipline achieved by obliterating notions of class altogether is psychological class warfare.

Devolving responsibility for poverty to the individual furthers the project of restoring class power by absolving elites from their responsibilities to the common good and by fostering ideological conformity to market logics. When everyone thinks like an entrepreneur, there is little that could threaten the capitalist's place atop the social hierarchy. Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Waquant refer to neoliberal discourse as "the new planetary vulgate," noting the ubiquity of terms like *globalization, flexibility,* and *the new economy* and the telling absence of words like *capitalism*, *exploitation*, *inequality*, and *domination.*[143] These omissions are instrumental in

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[142] Louis Althusser, *The Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, trans. G.M. Goshgarian (New York: Verso, 2014), 174–76.

[143] Pierre Bourdieu and Loic Wacquant, "NewLiberalSpeak: Notes on the New Planetary Vulgate," *Radical Philosophy* 105, no. 1 (February 2001): 1.

maximizing the scope of neoliberal rationality that positions fairness and justice equal opportunity to advance individual economic interests within a highly exploitative class hierarchy while disregarding the evidence that, out of necessity, capitalism generates as much inequality as it does wealth.[144] Shallow forms of labor and identity politics thrive under a regime of market rationality. Political constituencies of race or class no longer demand participatory democracy and a more egalitarian economy. They instead acquiesce to the logic of late capitalism and hustle for a spot among its upper echelons and better "choices" as citizen-consumers.[145]

Neoliberal logic erases the demarcations of who (or what) are entrepreneurs and within what spheres they practice their entrepreneurialism. After creating a wave of new regulatory agencies (e.g. the EPA and OSHA) and advancing Clean Water and civil rights legislation, Richard Nixon remarked, "We're all Keynesians now."[146] Perhaps that might have seemed like a fitting description for very moment at which Keynesianism was making its last stand, but as a prediction, Nixon's claim could hardly have been more inaccurate. Following the neoliberal turn that Nixon facilitated and that characterized his successors in both parties and has come to permeate all levels of government, we might say instead, "we're all entrepreneurs now." Having made markets the ubiquitous arbiters of value and extended their reach beyond traditional proprietary goods and services to all facets of life, neoliberalism requires both institutions and individuals to demonstrate their worth as quantitative return on investment instead of notions of justice or individual and common goods. For example, early childhood education is *good* because it leads to more productive future workers and saves taxpayer money on remedial

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[144] Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*, 3rd edition (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008).
[145] Lester K. Spence, *Knocking the Hustle: Against the Neoliberal Turn in Black Politics* (Brooklyn: Punctum Books, 2015).
[146] Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 13.

education and incarceration.[147] Neo-imperialist wars of aggression waged in petroleum producing countries are *bad*—at least after the first five years when broad economic benefits of defense spending have dissipated—because their costs leach into other sectors of the economy.[148] No doubt those who make such economistic arguments would point to other more human benefits or harms, yet in the realpolitik of neoliberal statecraft and policy implementation, return on investment is the guiding principle.

Within the entrepreneurial framework of neoliberal education policy, public schools justify their own institutional existence in market terms of efficiency and the returns of a workforce that is sufficiently college and career ready. In other words, their viability as institutions is predicated on their capacity to produce what Louis Althusser would call properly interpellated neoliberal subjects. Althusser in fact claims that schools are the most powerful of the several ideological apparatuses at the state's disposal, having displaced the Church as most influential vehicle for perpetuating capitalist social relations. Only schools, argues Althusser, have "the obligatory (and not least, free) audience of the totality of the children in the capitalist social formation, eight hours a day for five or six days of seven."[149] At the individual level, the state reinforces the ideal of *homo oeconomicus* who sees education only in terms of career

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[147] "The Economics of Early Childhood Investments" (Washington, DC: The White House, December 2014), https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/early_childhood_report1.pdf.

[148] Dean Baker, "The Economic Impact of the Iraq War and Higher Military Spending" (Washington, DC: Center for Economic and Policy Research, May 2007), http://cepr.net/documents/publications/military_spending_2007_05.pdf.

[149] Althusser, *The Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, 252. Althusser's claim that schools are the dominant ISA is no longer tenable given the power of communication technology and popular culture, which Althusser lists among the various forms of ISAs, to shape the subjectivity of young people. For evidence, one need only look at the degree to which schools vacillate between championing and controlling students' use of technology and social media in the classroom. In many cases, individual and institutional efforts to integrate technology come off as rather desperate attempts to remain relevant both to capital and to the students themselves. In this sense, schools are following rather than leading the dominant ideological apparatus. While Althusser is correct that schools have a captive and impressionable audience for a considerable block of time, ubiquitous entertainment culture and mobile technology is never off. Schools remain the primary vehicle for credentialing, and as such, have a sort of regulatory role in reproducing capitalist relations, but when it comes to identity/subjectivity formation, they simply cannot compete with communication technology and media influence.

advancement. By shifting higher education costs proportionally away from public sources toward private tuition and fees, the state decreases the viability of a university education for enlightenment purposes or any other reason outside of developing what Gary Becker refers to as human capital.[150] The cultivation of the habits of life-long learning becomes less about the richness of one's intellectual life and more about maintaining viability for an economic future defined by precarious employment, little or no labor protections, and the steady withdrawal of all protections previously provided by the welfare state. A recent report from the National Bureau of Economic Research argues the U.S. has significant unmet work capacity within its aging population, with men between ages 70-74 working 39 percent less than the researchers estimate to be the capacity level.[151] The researchers conclude that their findings could have significant implications for social security reform, confirming Brown's argument that patriotic sacrifice for neoliberal subjects requires that they "bear up uncomplainingly in the face of unemployment, underemployment, or employment unto death."[152] As a consequence, formal education no longer justified as an endeavor to cultivate cognitive and social development for the flourishing of the individual and the broader society. It is repurposed as a form of on-demand training by which the individual can develop and redevelop as human capital at all stages of life.

Neoliberalism governs institutions according to merciless market logics that it governs individuals. Organizing and governing nonmarket institutions in line with market demands naturalizes competition and places tremendous importance on even the most blatantly arbitrary systems of ranking. Holding entrepreneurship as a supreme ethic leads to a false and socially

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[150] Gary Becker, *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
[151] Courtney Coile, Kevin S. Milligan, and David A. Wise, "Social Security and Retirement Programs Around the World: The Capacity to Work at Older Ages - Introduction and Summary," NBER International Social Security Project (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, January 2016), 18, http://www.nber.org/papers/w21939.pdf.
[152] Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*, 218.

catastrophic faith that market competition inevitably clears out the weak or insufficiently flexible individuals and institutions like some sort of cleansing brushfire that makes way for new growth. Economist Joseph Schumpeter argued this was a natural cycle of capitalism transformation that "incessantly revolutionizes the economic structure *from within*, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one. This process of Creative Destruction is the essential fact about capitalism. It is what capitalism consists in and what every capitalist concern has got to live in."[153] On the institutional level of education policy, the neoliberal state facilitates this process of internal revolutionizing by creating and managing the perpetual threat of public school failure through the popular tools of austerity or accountability regimes. The state brings schools that do not produce results according to the desired (if also continually shifting) metrics of accountability in line through threats of closure or takeover. While both are real possibilities, the threats themselves are enough to discipline schools into conforming to and even embracing policies that do very little or nothing at all to address structural social issues like poverty, racism, and sexism that were manifest in the schools' struggle to "perform."

Neoliberalism as a Global Process of Local Politics

Marx opens the fourth chapter of *Capital* with a simple sentence that contains a complex idea: "The circulation of commodities is the starting point of capital."[154] Marx's point here is one that runs throughout *Capital*. Capital is not a fixed and stable thing; it is a process. Capitalism certainly holds to some basic ideological commitments and is characterized by regular patterns of development and social relations, but what is most regular (that is, most

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[153] Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1942), 83. Emphasis in the original.

[154] Karl Marx, *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. Lawrence H. Simon (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1994), 255.

reliable) is that development and social relations will be marked by unevenness and inequality. Capital's stark geographic differentiation is evident in the disparities that often exist between the points of production and consumption, between the Global North and South, between the urban and suburban, and even between those who live on one side or end of a given street and those on the other. This is because capitalism is not one uniform process but a dynamic system in which many different processes shape and are shaped by differing geographic and political circumstances. As the dominant phase of capitalism, neoliberalism operates according to the same global processes of local differentiation.

Neoliberalism stands in relation to globalization, but it the two terms are not synonymous, even if neoliberalism in all its iterations is what is exported across the globe. Mark Olssen correctly states that "should neoliberalism not have replaced Keynesianism as the dominant economic discourse of western nations, [globalization] would still constitute a significant process."[155] One difficulty in understanding neoliberalism's relationship to space is distinguishing local from global interests. During capitalism's Fordist phase, globalization was well underway, but industrial production anchored local economies and seemed as though it always would. Manufacturers produced goods for a global market, but much of the production process was regionally embedded in parts manufacturers, assembly lines, and distribution hubs. This embeddedness profoundly affected how people within these regional economies understood public schooling and what they saw as, to use Weber's term, their life chances. Although part of a global economy, their local economy seemed stable and comprehensible. The rise of neoliberalism and exodus of a regional manufacturing economy that had arisen only a few

[155] Mark Olssen, "Neoliberalism, Education, and the Rise of a Global Common Good.," in *Re-Reading Education Policies: A Handbook Studying the Policy Agenda of the 21st Century*, ed. Maarten Simons, Mark Olssen, and Michael A. Peters (Boston: Sense Publishers, 2009), 434.

generations before – imbued with both a psychological and architectural sense of permanence – has left many deindustrializing cities scrambling to define themselves for a less predictable global economy. Brenner and Theodore argue, "Paradoxically, much of the contemporary political appeal to the 'local' actually rests upon arguments regarding allegedly uncontrollable *supra*local transformations, such as globalization, the financialization of capital, the erosion of the nation state, and the intensification of interspatial competition."[156] The process of relatively rapid deindustrialization shows that local manufacturing economies were never as *controllable* as they seemed, but a heavily financialized economy is even less predictable and controllable than the Fordist economies of the twentieth century.

The financialization of capital occurs when economic activity increasingly moves from circuits of productive capital to circuits of money capital. In the productive circuit, capital is invested in the processes for producing commodities for sale. This requires a great amount of fixed capital—investments required for the production process that are not used up and are often geographically anchored (e.g. a factory). Finance capital is much more fleet-footed than its productive relative because it invests in other financial commodities (e.g. bonds or the notorious mortgage-backed securities and credit default swaps) rather than in the production process itself, and in doing so, it avoids fixed capital costs and relative immobility. In bundling mortgages and municipal bonds into investment products for sale across the world, finance capital further enmeshes the local and global economies. The absurdity of this process was evident following the collapse of the housing market in 2008 when homeowners whose property values were under water tried to determine who actually owned their mortgage, which is another way of asking who

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[156] Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, "Preface: From the 'New Localism' to the Spaces of Neoliberalism," in *Spaces of Neoliberalism: Urban Restructuring in North America and Western Europe*, ed. Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), v.

actually owned their house.[157] Those who logically thought it was the bank that issued the loan were likely quite surprised to discover that their debt (and by extension, their house) was owned by a baffling array of institutions and investors all over the world. Unencumbered by fixed capital and exchanging commodities that can circle the globe at speeds impossible for physical commodities, finance capital puts down very shallow roots in the local economies in which it concentrates.

When local political entities compete with others to entice businesses in the neoliberal economy, they are increasingly courting highly mobile capital likely to stay only until a more favorable offer comes along. This incentivizes ever more drastic forms of inter-spatial competition in the form of states and municipalities suppressing the labor costs of their own population and offering a host of tax incentives and zoning (de)regulations (e.g. abatements, TIF-funded development projects, enterprise zones) that drain funds from public coffers. This limits the ability of the public sector to provide quality essential services like sanitation, public health programs, safety, and education, which in turn becomes further justification for their privatization.[158] Although attracting national and international businesses to invest in local economies seems like it would be a local municipality's interest, when the process degrades rather than enhances the public infrastructure, it becomes clear whose interests are actually being met. The result is the vicious cycle of neoliberal austerity, which furthers neoliberalism's project

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[157] David Dayen, *Chain of Title: How Three Ordinary Americans Uncovered Wall Street's Great Foreclosure Fraud* (New York: The New Press, 2016).

[158] For an examination of such practices on a global scale, see Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Picador, 2007) and Anthony Lowenstein, *Disaster Capitalism: Making a Killing Out of Catastrophe* (New York: Verso, 2015); for a focus how this affects education in the U.S., see Kenneth Saltman, ed., *Schooling and the Politics of Disaster* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Kenneth J. Saltman, *Capitalizing on Disaster: Taking and Breaking Public Schools* (Boulder: Paradigm, 2007); Kristen L. Buras, *Charter Schools, Race, and Urban Space: Where the Market Meets Grassroots Resistance* (New York: Routledge, 2015); and David W. Hursh, *The End of Public Schools: The Corporate Reform Agenda to Privatize Education* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

of restoring class power through the upward distribution of public assets. This dissertation's third and fourth chapters illustrate this process in St. Louis, where over the last five decades, city officials have vigorously courted capital to the detriment of social stability and the longevity of its public school system. Moreover, these chapters demonstrate that educational austerity is not just a consequence but an integral component of urban revitalization under neoliberal governance.

As with all forms and phases of capital, understanding neoliberalism is a matter of understanding its processes. For this reason, Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell prefer *neoliberalization* rather than *neoliberalism* because the former, like *globalization*, emphasizes the phenomenon as a contingent process rather than a fixed state.[159] Understanding neoliberalism as contingent, or path-dependent, foregrounds the importance of existing political institutions, local and regional economies, demographic uniqueness, historical conflicts, cultural practices, and myriad other ways neoliberalization works on and through a given space. Brenner, Peck and Theodore emphasize the difference between path-dependency and "purely 'ground-up,' inductive or self-consciously 'low-flying' approaches to studies of neoliberalization that are sometimes associated with poststructuralist modes of analysis."[160] In other words, the complexity and heterogeneity of political economic structures should not be understood in such radically contingent terms that critiques of neoliberalization require the process be re-conceptualized in every instance, nor is it sufficient to graft one critique onto a different context simply because both are manifestations of neoliberalism. Harvey refers to path-dependent analyses of neoliberalism as acts of constructing a "moving map" that accounts for patterns and

[159] Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell, "Neoliberalizing Space," in *Spaces of Neoliberalism: Urban Restructuring in North America and Western Europe*, ed. Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 36.
[160] Neil Brenner, Jamie Peck, and Nik Theodore, "After Neoliberalization?," *Globalizations* 7, no. 3 (September 2010): 333.

stability as well as flux.[161] In their efforts to synthesize neoliberalism's global and hegemonic rationalities, patterns of uneven development, and policy transfers with poststructuralist concerns for multiplicity and contingency, Brenner, Peck, and Theodore theorize "variegated neoliberalization," (VN) which:

> encompasses two foundational aspects of contemporary regulatory transformation: (a) *the uneven development of neoliberalization*—the differentiation and continual redifferentiation of market-oriented regulatory forms; and (b) *the neoliberalization of regulatory uneven development*—the constitution and continual reconstitution of marketized macro-spatial institutional frameworks, or rule regimes, which govern processes of regulatory experimentation and cross-jurisdictional policy transfer.[162]

In paying attention to the ways that neoliberalization, as a mode of governmentality, develops unevenly as it moves through various political geographies containing different governing networks, variegated neoliberalization captures the nuance and heterogeneity poststructuralists find lacking in orthodox and many neo-Marxist analyses. Additionally, VN takes seriously the ways in which capital structures uneven development through policies issuing from the macro-level as part of its accumulation process. Neoliberalism's regulatory frameworks, therefore, reflect the same sort of dynamic processes and multiplicity of forms as capitalism. Both change shape as they move across time and space, but that movement is, itself, reflective of class relations and profit motives that are totalizing and structural drives. Both reflect contradiction as well as continuity.

One expression of neoliberalization's continuity is the family resemblances of policies that have been transferred to different contexts. A simple explanation for this phenomenon is that, in many cases, the same organizations and even individual actors move across multiple governance networks, bringing their policy tool-kit (perhaps more accurately *catalog*) with them

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[161] Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 87.
[162] Neil Brenner, Jamie Peck, and Nik Theodore, "Variegated Neoliberalization: Geographies, Modalities, Pathways," *Global Networks* 10, no. 2 (2010): 207.

and adapting their solutions to fit (or not) the specificities of the problems at hand. Individual actors move laterally (from one city to the next) or vertically (from city to state or federal) through contexts. An example of the former who will be pertinent to later discussions of St. Louis is William Roberti, who went from "Chief Restructuring Officer" of St. Louis Public Schools in 2003 to a similar advisory role with Orleans Parish School System shortly before and after Hurricane Katrina and later to a public debt consulting position with the City of Detroit in 2010. The federal cabinet position of Secretary of Education provides examples of vertical movement through policy networks. Arne Duncan scaled up his neoliberal restructuring of Chicago Public Schools to the national level, and Betsy DeVos is poised to bring Michigan's privatization policy portfolio to the U.S. Department of Education. Institutions similarly enjoy both lateral and vertical movement. KIPP's expansion from Houston to cities all over the country shows the lateral expansion of an education franchise, while Teach For America's scaling up to a position of international influence as Teach For All demonstrates vertical movement.

Peck and Tickell locate another explanation in the deliberate shortening of the time between articulating policy "problems" and enacting policy "solutions," which leads to "a growing propensity to adopt 'off-the-shelf,' imported solutions in the place of the (usually slower) process of in situ policy development."[163] The manipulation of crises and real or contrived urgency is, no doubt, beneficial to policy elites who stand to profit either politically or financially or both from using in network providers when enacting these readymade policies.[164] When this expedited form of politics goes awry, as it so often does, there is diminished

[163] Peck and Tickell, "Neoliberalizing Space," 51.
[164] For a discussion of how policy markets incentivize short policy cycles, see Elizabeth DeBray et al., "Intermediary Organizations in Charter School Policy Coalitions: Evidence from New Orleans," *Educational Policy* 28, no. 2 (March 2014): 175–206.

accountability within the complex networks of hired consultants, appointed managers, local and state regulatory agencies, philanthropic influencers, and the ground troops of bureaucracy who end up enforcing policies they played no role in creating and, in the case of teachers, are those most professionally vulnerable to the fallout. Those most personally and politically vulnerable to the fallout are inevitably those who are furthest from the network actors politically and professionally: the (mostly) poor and non-white populations who are the perpetual targets of policy experimentation and so often its victims. Lacking the economic and political power necessary to influence policy construction, these populations similarly struggle to find justice in the wake of its fallout.

The Entrepreneurial City and the Politics of Urban "Revitalization"

I have already touched on the fact that financialization of capital increases inter-spatial competition and destabilizes the long-term economic health of cities, but it is worth taking a closer look at the consequences of entrepreneurial rather than political urban governance. With globalization eviscerating the U.S. labor movement, political elites—even or especially those aligned with the left—have embraced entrepreneurial solutions to local political struggles. Doing so has divorced electoral politics from class politics, since elections in the neoliberal era are contests of whose ruling class networks get to govern rather than struggles for working class access to the instruments of state power.

Neoliberalization naturalizes institutional and interspatial competition within the public sphere; therefore, institutional failure and local economic instability are presupposed rather than collectively resisted. Robert Goodman presciently observed in 1979 that "As governments assume more and more of business's financial risk, business, using government regulations, low-

cost government loans, and government contracts for its products, has been able to move toward greater concentrated power and more peaceful and cooperative ways of redistributing the country's wealth among its own community."[165] This led Goodman to argue that it is not corporate capitalists but city governments—drawn into fierce intercity competition for the favor of corporations—that are the last entrepreneurs of late capitalism. Goodman's insight is important but only partially correct. Neoliberalization preserves competition within the private sphere; it just devolves it down to individuals, or concentrates it within a few global providers (e.g. the communication industry, specifically internet service providers).[166] Still, Goodman rightly points out that when governments (whether local or federal) assume responsibility for a huge portion of capital's risk, they upwardly distribute the private profits from those ventures while socializing the consequences.

When elected officials engage in entrepreneurial (rather than political) governing, the public-private partnership becomes their class weapon of choice. Loading up the public side of the partnership with the risk and the private with the rewards means that the city itself must pursue economic development whatever its political or social costs. To do otherwise would risk losing support from both capital and the public. Harvey argues that this leads to a preference for place-based rather than territorial development. The difference, in his view, is that territorial development focuses on the broader conditions that enhance local quality of life for citizen-residents (e.g. quality affordable housing stock, good schools, reliable public transportation, pollution controls), whereas place-based development focuses constructing enticements for

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[165] Robert Goodman, *The Last Entrepreneurs: America's Regional Wars for Jobs and Dollars* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), iii.

[166] Amazon.com has become notorious for its brutal quest to maximize its worker productivity. For example, see Jodi Kantor and David Streitfeld, "Inside Amazon: Wrestling Big Ideas in a Bruising Workplace," *New York Times*, August 15, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/16/technology/inside-amazon-wrestling-big-ideas-in-a-bruising-workplace.html?_r=0.

capital investment, tourism, and citizen-consumers (e.g. industrial parks, sports arenas, shopping centers).[167] Development of place over territory fits with the short-term cycles of elections and capital investment projects, and despite its usefulness as advertising fodder for campaigns and chambers of commerce, it often does little for long-term territorial improvements. Many of the social issues city entrepreneurialism aims at addressing are decades in the making. Short-term development of place usually leaves the underlying structural issues of the political economy intact, making civic entrepreneurialism ineffective but highly lucrative for those in finance, construction, and real estate who can position themselves to profit from each successive wave of tax-supported urban revitalization. Whether or to what degree place-development benefits some residents is not the central point. The larger consequence is that the urban environment is remade to satisfy the demands of capital and consumerism rather than stability, sustainability, and justice within the political economy.

Shifting the focus from entrepreneurial place development to political territorial development would require elected leaders to confront the structural issues of capitalism that foster the racism, inequality, and uneven development at the heart of territorial instability. Very few political leaders have the popular support to sustain such a confrontation of entrenched power regimes.[168] Entrepreneurialism instead rewards those most willing to subordinate local interests to national and global interests that come and go as they please. Peck and Tickell describe the tragic futility of this process:

> In selling themselves, cities are therefore actively facilitating and subsidizing the very geographic mobility that first rendered them vulnerable, while also validating and reproducing the extralocal rule system to which they are (increasingly) subjected…Thus, elite partnerships, mega-events, and corporate seduction become, in effect, both the only games in town *and* the basis of urban subjugation. The public subsidy of zero-sum

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[167] David Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism," *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 71, no. 1 (1989): 7–8.
[168] The late Chokwe Lumumba's brief but influential work as Mayor of Jackson, Mississippi, provides an example.

> competition at the interurban scale rests on the economic fallacy that every city can win, shored up by the political reality that no city can afford principled noninvolvement in the game.[169]

Civic entrepreneurialism relies on the mobility of capital during its courtship phase; it must woo capital from where it is or where it was otherwise planning to be and convince it to relocate. Yet capital is restless and disloyal, and the mobility that brought one city its favors is the same that will seek what it can elsewhere after the honeymoon phase is past. Even success within the intense competition of urban entrepreneurism disempowers local leaders and incentivizes only more extreme forms of competition. The analogy of addiction and withdrawal comes to mind. What eases the pain is the fix that makes the addict more vulnerable and dependent and less healthy over time. In either case, with tax incentives and low labor costs being the most common ways municipalities sell themselves to capital, those who are already most devastated by deindustrialization or an otherwise struggling local economy are those who shoulder most of the burdens of civic entrepreneurialism. It is their neighborhoods, their public institutions, their municipal services, their health and general quality of life that are risked in order to attract capital that will likely bring few if any tangible improvements to their lives, even when civic entrepreneurship succeeds.

Although unstable in the long-term, civic entrepreneurialism seems almost too beset by its own contradictions to function even in the short-term. Even in the finance-heavy economy of late capitalism, people still need to buy and sell physical commodities and local services for cities to sustain and reproduce their populations. If cities disciplined wages and reduced public services to such a degree that they became almost unlivable, businesses would not build there no matter how sweetened the tax-incentives. Some balance is necessary to continue to attract

[169] Peck and Tickell, "Neoliberalizing Space," 46.

business as well as consumers to relocate to a given city since a city without tax revenue cannot bear any entrepreneurial risk and is without funds to assist with capital's relocation or startup costs. But this is not a new problem. It is not even essentially a problem unique to neoliberalism. In fact, it is the very same contradiction Marx describes between capital's relation to labor. Capitalists maximize profits by minimizing the wages they pay to laborers, yet laborers make up most of the buyers of commodities and, therefore, are the source of profits at the point of consumption as well as production. Increasing profits by decreasing wages ultimately decreases profits by diminishing purchasing power. Marx further elaborates on the contradiction:

> the periods in which capitalist production exerts all its forces regularly turn out to be periods of over-production, because production potentials can never be utilised to such an extent that more value may not only be produced but also realised; but the sale of commodities, the realisation of commodity-capital and thus of surplus-value, is limited, not by the consumer requirements of a society in general, but by the consumer requirements of a society in which the vast majority are always poor and must always remain poor.[170]

As I previously explained, Keynesian economics tried to overcome this issue by using state redistributions and worker protections to increase effective demand. Capitalism, however, does not depend on profits but on *growth* of profits. When it could no longer achieve profit maximization through compromise, it disciplined labor through mobility (e.g. offshoring or intranational relocations) or technology (e.g. automation) after the neoliberal turn. Effective demand was propped up by growth through credit rather than wages, which led to even shorter cycles of boom and bust. But it also meant that capital turned to rent-seeking practices and public sector privatization and the devalorization/revalorization processes of neoliberal urbanism to increase its rate of profit. To simplify, capitalism's growth imperative and mobility creates

[170] Karl Marx, *Capital: Volume II: A Critique of Political Economy*, ed. Friedrich Engels, trans. I. Lasker (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1956), 195, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1885-c2/.

poverty and then recycles that poverty through new cycles of reproduction with the help of the state. What the "spatial turn" in critical theory exposes is that this production-consumption relationship does not just pertain to commodities like shoes and chairs but to urban space itself. Harvey writes, "Production here means the production of space, and realisation takes the form of capital gains on land rents and property values, thus generally empowering the developers and the rentiers as opposed to other factions of capital."[171] When the product is urban space itself, the same class processes lead to the same results. The lower classes, who by necessity account for the greater population in the relations of production (i.e. workers must significantly outnumber capitalists) do not see the greatest benefits of and are vulnerable to their own overexploitation through the valorization process. The state must intervene to manage overproduction and overexploitation. When production centers on urban space itself, the neoliberal state's intervention consists in assisting capital in extracting value from the city.

Urban Neoliberalization's Tools of the Trade

Entrepreneurial cities court capital by subsidizing the costs of construction in several ways including infrastructure investments and zoning laws, but a dizzying array of tax incentives have become the hallmarks of neoliberal urban revitalization. Among the most popular of these are tax-increment financing (TIF), tax abatements, and enterprise zones. TIF occurs when a city issues debt in the form of bonds (long-term) and notes (short-term) for redevelopment projects within a designated area. The bond money is used to subsidize upfront infrastructure, land acquisition, and construction costs. The property tax rate is frozen for a given period of time (usually around 20 years), and a portion of the increased tax revenues that resulted from the

[171] David Harvey, *Seventeen Contradictions and the End of Capitalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 85.

redevelopment is used to pay off the long-term debt. In essence, the city borrows from future long-term tax revenues to pay for the short-term costs of redevelopment intended to revitalize the local economy and increase tax revenues. TIF is more advantageous to the developer than a tax abatement, which simply reduces the developer's tax obligation for an agreed upon amount of time. With TIF, the benefits of the subsidy are upfront, while the developer must wait the length of the abatement term to realize the deal's full benefits.[172] Finance capital prefers TIF to tax abatement because TIF bonds can be bundled and sold on financial markets—yet another way to link local development with global capital. Enterprise or Empowerment Zones (EZ) are redevelopment districts in which investors receive tax credits and abatements according to the size of the business investment in terms of both profits and jobs added.

All three forms of tax incentives demonstrate the interdependence of capital and the state under neoliberal redevelopment regimes, but TIF requires even closer coordination in the accumulation process. Because TIF borrows from future earnings to fund upfront costs, timing is far more crucial than with abatements, which involved fixed incentives regardless of the future rise or fall of property values. Rachel Weber explains:

> If TIF designation occurs at both (a) the nadir of the value curve and (b) when there is initial speculative interest in the properties, TIF can maximize the surplus appropriated from the property. Only a coalition of municipal officials and affiliated real-estate capitalists possesses both the local knowledge and the police powers to be the first movers in such a small window of opportunity.[173]

Here the interwoven facets of neoliberal repressive and ideological forms of discipline are laid bare. Urban revitalization is as ideologically driven and as disingenuous as neoliberalism's

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[172] Kenneth P. Thomas, "A Primer on TIF: What It Is, Why It's Controversial" (The Sierra Club, November 2006), 2, https://sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/sce/eastern-missouri-group/committees/TIFPrimer.pdf.
[173] Rachel Weber, "Extracting Value from the City: Neoliberalism and Urban Redevelopment," in *Spaces of Neoliberalism: Urban Restructuring in North America and Western Europe*, ed. Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 188.

discursive fantasies of pure meritocracy and American exceptionalism. Urban neoliberalization is about making cities more profitable, not more livable. The collusion between the state and property redevelopers exists both during *devaluation* and *revaluation.* The state's subsidization of suburban development, racially restrictive zoning policies, racially specific policing practices, and various other practices define and devalue racially segregated working class space. The state then works closely with capital to subsidize and revalorize that same space at the exclusion and expense of the people it confined there during accumulation's first phase. TIF requires that city officials and city developers become even more deeply involved and coordinated in this process because the processes of creative destruction are sped up. Accumulation waits for no one.

As public subsidies for private enterprise, all three of these neoliberal redevelopment tools have a *prima facie* contentious relationship to public school financing since every public dollar directed toward place redevelopment is a dollar that does not go toward public schools and other territorial developments that would mitigate systemic issues schools confront (e.g. childhood poverty, domestic or community violence, homelessness). The counterargument is that, when place development is successful, the local economy improves and the quality of life for all residents (not just those who benefited directly from redevelopment) advances as new businesses spring up around redeveloped sites and tax revenues increase – a variation on the perennial "rising tide lifts all boats" argument. The fallacy of this argument for at least two of these redevelopment tools should be obvious. Enterprise zones issue state (and sometimes federal) tax credits for jobs added through that development as well as local property tax abatements. Considering that around 90 percent of school funding comes from state and local taxes (with the local taxes primarily in the form of property taxes) abating those taxes for two decades or more is hardly a sound plan to increase school funds.

TIF projects are not very different in this regard. Property taxes are frozen at a base level, so while they are not abated below the threshold of the year of the project they remain fixed for a period of 15-25 years despite inflation and rising public education costs as schools take on greater technology costs, more extracurricular social services like health care and nutrition programs, and a revolving door of state and federal accountability mandates. Consider the rising costs that schools have incurred over the timespan of a 20-25 year TIF project completed in 2016. Since the early to mid-1990s, schools have had to build and upgrade their entire technological infrastructure multiple times. Expectations for a few computer labs have given way to expectations of one (or as close to one as is feasible) computer per student as well as an array of courses in programming, robotics, CAD, and other technology heavy offerings, all of which have had to be replaced multiple times over the last two decades. Setting aside state accountability mandates, schools have had to adjust to two major federal overhauls of education policy since the 1990s, both of which have required massive investments in standardized testing materials and training. Most states have seen an explosive growth of charter schools and neo-voucher programs that redirect students and funds away from the traditional public school system. In addition to these and many other curricular and policy shifts, schools have weathered the largest recession in eighty years. The Great Recession led to sharp declines in state funding for education, funds which have still not been restored to their pre-recession levels. Increased property tax revenues (the *increment* of TIF) resulting from the TIF development went directly into paying off the development's debt, and any revenues beyond bond payments were folded back into a special allocation fund reserved for TIF projects. In short, education costs ballooned while educational funding within TIF developed areas was stuck in the 1990s.

In addition to freezing property tax levels and redirecting the benefits of redevelopment away from public services and towards property developers, corporations, and financiers, TIF has drastically reshaped the built environment of cities and suburbs to *reflect* rather than mitigate inequality. To maximize the benefits of TIF, city entrepreneurs look to development projects that are likely to generate the greatest incremental returns. There is far less benefit in turning a blighted area with rock-bottom real estate values into a slightly better low-income neighborhood than there is in speculating on transitional neighborhoods with the potential for a surge in real estate value. As Rachel Weber argues, "municipalities have had better luck demonstrating blight and engaging in redevelopment activities when they do not seek to implicate use values but instead focus on those areas where rent gaps are wide and where potential for revalorization is great."[174] One consequence of this is publicly owned properties in transitional neighborhoods become ideal opportunities for maximizing TIF's benefit to developers since they exist as use value rather than exchange value, meaning they are unproductive as far as capital is concerned. Property, whether real estate or other assets, that could be generating profits but is not, is anathema to neoliberal logic. When neoliberalization suffuses the public sphere with an entrepreneurial ethos, public property itself begins to look like wasted space. Another consequence is that developers seek TIF incentives in neighborhoods where they already have a high probability of return rather than in those that TIF incentives are theoretically supposed to redevelop. Developers can utilize TIF incentives for projects in already gentrified neighborhoods to reduce initial costs and maximize longer-term rental income in an environment of rising property values. Such actions violate the "but for" provision of TIF agreements since development was almost guaranteed to happen and be profitable without the tax incentives, yet

[174] Ibid., 187.

as St. Louis illustrates, local developers' capture of the political process ensures that neoliberal redistribution of public funds flows toward greed rather than need.

In sum, the apparent chaos of neoliberalism's many contradictions becomes intelligible when viewed as part of capital's larger and ongoing project of accumulation. In terms of statecraft, neoliberalism is the result of the capitalist class's coordinated and reactionary response to the protections and provisions of Keynesian liberalism. The retreat of the state from social welfare provisions and the rise of a hardened social Darwinian form of market idolatry suggested to many a sort of transitional or even schizophrenic state. In 1992, around the dawn of the Third Way governments of center-left neoliberalism, Bourdieu claimed that "the left hand of the state has the sense that the right hand no longer knows, or, worse, no longer really wants to know what the left hand does. In any case, it does not want to pay for it."[175] Such an analysis was plausible following the Reagan and Thatcher governments' characterization of the Keynesian state as an incompetent behemoth trampling on the individual's freedom and poised to rob Western nations of their economic vitality with their bloated entitlements programs. But following the Third Way reforms of the 1990s, critical theorists began to see the left and right hands of the neoliberal state working in a sort of symbiotic relationship. The two sides were certainly not ignorant of each other, and although their relationship appeared antagonistic, these antagonisms were the contrapuntal voices of capitalism's endless opera. The *rollback* of the Keynesian state through deregulation was the first phase that preceded the *rollout* phase of new forms of market governance and regulatory regimes designed to manage neoliberalism's contradictions.[176] Deregulation allowed for the creative destruction of public institutions and socially redistributive programs, which cleared a space for new "depoliticized" modes of

[175] Pierre Bourdieu, "The Left Hand and the Right Hand of the State," *Variant*, Summer 2008, 3.
[176] Peck and Tickell, "Neoliberalizing Space," 49.

managerial or technocratic governance and upward redistribution of public funds in the form of public-private partnerships, austerity-privatization cycles, and capitalist welfare (e.g. bailouts, tax incentives, and fines in lieu of prosecution and imprisonment). Instead of Hayek's and classical liberalism's free markets, both traditional markets and newly created marketplaces (e.g. public education or government healthcare programs) must be "*engineered* through explicit forms of political management and intervention and new modes of institution-building designed to extend the neoliberal project, to manage its contradictions, and to secure its ongoing legitimacy."[177] In this way, the left and right hands of the state are both integral parts of capital's accumulation. Peck and Tickell describe this process as a form of "'metaregulation,' a rule system that paradoxically defines itself as a form of *anti*regulation."[178] Capitalism has always relied on the state for its legitimacy and regulatory necessities, but the technological, geographic, and political complexities of the late 20th and early 21st centuries have forced the state into new logical contortions and perverse relationships in order to maintain the fictions and manage the contradictions of free market ideology.

Although neoliberalism's rhetoric is highly depoliticized and couched in the supposedly neutral and unquestionably virtuous language of market rationality, neoliberalism seeks to discipline the class and political constituencies that Keynesian economics and social democratic reforms had sought to shelter from the often biased and brutal "free" market. Repressive disciplinary policies such as gutting welfare and food assistance, increasing incarceration, and closing "underperforming" schools in low-income and majority-minority neighborhoods exist alongside policy regimes seeking to obliterate critical analysis—particularly at the class-race nexus—by deploying fantastical meritocratic discourses laced with words like *opportunity* and

[177] Ibid.
[178] Ibid., 53.

achievement and devoid of terms like *oppression* and *exploitation*. Race and class, if they come up at all, are categorically separated and reconstructed within the discourse of human capital development within a pure meritocracy. The result is a totalizing and self-rationalizing system in which ethical categories like *justice* or *value* are subsumed within market imperatives. Appeals to the protection of human dignity against either exploitation or destitution are unintelligible outside of the market-oriented metrics of growth and return on investment.

The "spatial turn" in critical theory developed by Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey, and others has shown how market logic, capital accumulation, and class discipline structure and are structured by urban space.[179] In theorizing spatial processes of class discipline and capital accumulation such as gentrification, Neil Smith describes neoliberal urbanism as form of *revanchist* politics. Smith borrows the term from the French authorities' brutal reactionary response to working class uprising against Napoleon III and the Second Empire, which culminated in the Paris Commune. The short-lived but highly symbolic success of the Commune elicited a response from the state that went beyond seeking victory or even suppression of dissent. It sought *revenge*. Smith draws a parallel between right-wing populist nationalism of *fin-de-siècle* French urbanism, which sought to retake the city from the lower classes, and the neoliberal urbanism that has characterized Western cities since the 1970s. In both instances, the state and capital colluded not to pacify the working class by making the cities into more humane

[179] See Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991); Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, ed. Elizabeth Lebas, trans. Eleonore Kofman (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996); David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City*, Revised edition (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009); David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital* (New York: Verso, 2006); Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Theory* (New York: Verso, 1989); Smith, *Uneven Development*. The "spatial turn" is a common but not entirely accurate phrase, since these theorists and many others associated with Marxian and postmodern geography have found earlier articulation of these ideas in the writings of Friedrich Engels, Peter Kropotkin, Rosa Luxemburg, and of course, Karl Marx himself.

spaces. Instead, they sought to retake urban space by force and discipline those who dared to challenge their authority. Physical power clears the city, but ideological power remakes it.

Neoliberal education reform, which I contend cannot be understood outside of neoliberal urbanism, follows this narrative arc. After being forced to surrender its control over the physical, social, and political space of urban public education as a result of desegregation and socially liberal redistributions, the capital's ruling class sought not just to retake that space but to restructure it according to its will. In St. Louis, the deregulation and abandonment of civil rights mandates aimed at educational equity cleared the way for new regulations (e.g. charter schools and positivistic growth measurement and accountability regimes) aimed not at redistributive equity but at meritocratic opportunity. Having chastised desegregation programs like magnet schools and busing as needlessly expensive and hopelessly bureaucratic, officials replaced these programs with what Kenneth Saltman refers to as new market bureaucracy.[180] Despite neoliberal reformers' and the revanchist political class's rebuke of public schools for being beholden to "special interests," it was property redevelopers who drafted and campaigned for the charter school legislation, which they saw as a new tool for neighborhood revitalization. The new decentralized market bureaucracy has *less* transparent oversight and democratic accountability than ever before. Charter entrepreneurs, property developers, and financiers have found myriad ways to divert public education funding from instructional spending to private accumulation, and the operation of parallel systems of public education has creative massive redundancies and inefficiencies in an era of public sector austerity. Private accumulation and class discipline are the only efficient parts of the process. While I do not wish to suggest that those who work in or send their children to charter schools are actively, consciously, or culpably participating in the

[180] Kenneth J. Saltman, *The Failure of Corporate School Reform* (Boulder: Paradigm, 2012), 54–79.

political class's revenge against redistributive social liberalism, I am suggesting that charter schools as a national phenomenon and particularly within the context of St. Louis function for the purpose of disciplining public schools and their students and furthering the accumulation of capital and the restructuring of urban space according the market imperatives. In support of such claims, I turn to critical policy analysis and a close examination of the end of desegregation in St. Louis and the attendant rollout phase of neoliberal regulatory regimes directed toward the class accumulation and consonant processes of spatial revitalization. In doing so, I provide evidence of how education policy fits within a larger policy ecology of neoliberal urbanization, which in turn, provides an explanation for the concentration of charter schools in St. Louis and perhaps the broader interrelated phenomena of urban hypersegregation and postindustrial decline.

CHAPTER THREE

CRITICAL POLICY ANALYSIS AND URBAN SCHOOL REVITALIZATION

Having described charter schools' concentration and market saturation in hypersegregated and deindustrialized cities in the first chapter and neoliberalism's revanchist response to the Keynesian state in the second, I turn now to methodological concerns and analysis of the "actually existing neoliberalism" of public education reform in St. Louis, Missouri. [181] As the first two chapters evince, I maintain that movements to reform public education cannot be understood outside of political economy and neoliberalism's effects on modes of governance and spatial restructuring of cities. But how, where, and why neoliberalization occurs is a complex affair that sweeping generalizations about capital accumulation or governmentality do little to illuminate. Eventually, critical responses to neoliberalization as a political project must contend with processes of neoliberal policymaking.

But is there an important difference between *politics* and *policy*? Of Europe's global languages, only English makes a strong distinction between the two words.[182] Policy is otherwise understood in terms of the procedural, statutory, or managerial forms of politics. This closeness in meaning is sensible in terms of political economy. If the modern democratic state has always been necessary for regulating and organizing the social reproduction of capitalism's class relations and commodity production processes, then the symbiotic state-capital relationship is expressed through policy. In other words, Marx's claim that the state is nothing more than the

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[181] Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, "Cities and the Geographies of 'Actually Existing Neoliberalism,'" in *Spaces of Neoliberalism: Urban Restructuring in North America and Western Europe* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 2–32.
[182] Maarten Simons, Mark Olssen, and Michael Peters, "The Critical Education Policy Orientation," in *Re-Reading Education Policies: A Handbook Studying the Policy Agenda of the 21st Century* (Boston: Sense Publishers, 2009), 22.

form and organization of the bourgeoisie depends upon policy as the practical instantiation of that theoretical arrangement.[183] With the state taking a more active role in managing the contradictions of capital accumulation in the neoliberal era, academics have increasingly turned their attention to policy analysis. After all, policy is integral to neoliberalism's rollback and rollout phases.

Policy studies as an academic discipline has not, however, always subscribed to Marxian conceptions of the state, nor has it shared Marxian modes of analysis. Policy science emerged as a corollary of the Keynesian welfare state's desire to rationally govern an expanding network of social services through social science research.[184] Such traditional notions of policy analysis presumed that social problems had relatively straightforward causes in need of rationally developed and efficiently deployed solutions. Policy science was, therefore, epistemologically positivistic and oriented toward increasing bureaucratic competence and value-neutral problem solving at the hands well-trained and informed specialists. In this respect, policy sciences under the Keynesian welfare state and those of technocratic neoliberalism share an epistemology as well as a manager's distrust of populist models of governance. The difference lies primarily in their view of a just society and the state's responsibilities and roles therein.

A very different approach to academic policy analysis had emerged in Germany during the early twentieth century. Marxist scholarship had found a home at Frankfurt University following the Russian revolution and its ripple-effect throughout continental Europe. Under Max Horkheimer's leadership and propelled by the brilliance of theorists such as Walter Benjamin and Theodore Adorno, the Institute for Social Research synthesized Marxian critiques

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[183] Karl Marx, "The German Ideology," in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. Lawrence H. Simon (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1994), 154.
[184] Daniel Lerner and Harold Dwight Lasswell, *The Policy Sciences* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1951).

of the historical social relations of capitalism with cultural analysis. Not exclusively or simplistically concerned with policy analysis as a discrete academic discipline or science, the Institute explored the nexus of politics (and by extension policy) and culture. Following the rise of Fascism, the Institute—better known as the Frankfurt School—moved to the U.S., where the descriptor of *Marxist* or *Marxian* was strategically dropped in favor of *critical* theory. The Frankfurt School confronted issues with orthodox Marxism—its insufficient theorizing on superstructural forces like culture's influence on base relations of production, for example. The Frankfurt School also endeavored to explain why some historical materialists' seemingly formulaic predictions of socialism's revolutionary overthrow of capitalism never fully, well, materialized. In theorizing these two sets of issues, the Frankfurt School bequeathed to the humanities and social sciences two gifts of inestimable importance: 1) robust theories of the mutually constitutive relationship between social relations under capitalism and the production of culture, and 2) robust theories for why and how capitalism continually adapts those social relations in a seemingly perpetual revolution. Douglas Kellner sketches the quasi-methodological contours of critical theory as follows:

> Critical Theory strives to provide both a substantive social theory of the present age and a meta-theory concerning theory and method. On the one hand, it involves a set of ways of looking at theory and the world and a set of investigative, research, textual and political practices. On the other, it provides a substantive, comprehensive theory of the present age, as well as a methodological orientation for doing social theory and research and for relating theoretical work to radical politics.[185]

Critical theory is "supradisciplinary" rather than "interdisciplinary" because it attempts to synthesize multiple disciplines within a larger project of social critique rather than utilizing them as isolated tools that can be borrowed and politely returned to their respective departments when

[185] Douglas Kellner, *Critical Theory, Marxism, and Modernity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 44.

the researcher is finished with them.[186] Strict adherence to the methods within each and every relevant discipline would not only be logistically difficult, it might actually prove theoretically incoherent.

Critical theory's supradisciplinary nature means that it has become associated with many different theorists and expanded to account for different ways to conceptualize social critique and radical politics (e.g. the spatial turn). It nevertheless shares some fundamental assumption about how numerically small groups exercise power over much larger groups by controlling economic relations and/or maintaining a rationalizing ideological system that supports their hegemony. Critical theory as an intellectual tradition has sometimes played an active role in political movements, yet in other contexts, it has assumed a more detached, some would say *aloof*, praxis. In any case, critical theory holds political emancipation via critique of modernity as its end in view.

The centrality of hegemony and ideology within critical theory's critique of the assumptions and practices of modernity made public education—with its normative discipline, mass enculturation, and emphasis on reproducing capitalist social relations—fertile ground for critique. Paulo Freire's synthesis of critical theory and Catholic liberation theology as a praxis of emancipatory education opened the door to what would become known as critical pedagogy.[187] Explorations of public education's relationship to hegemony and ideology[188] and reproduction theory[189] soon followed and laid a foundation for critical theoretical analyses of education.

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[186] Ibid., 7.
[187] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2000).
[188] Michael W. Apple, *Ideology and the Curriculum*, 3rd ed. (New York, NY: RoutledgeFalmer, 2004); Henry A. Giroux, *Ideology, Culture, and the Process of Schooling* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981).
[189] Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America: Education Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life* (Chicago: Haymarket, 1976); Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1977); Jean Anyon, "Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work," *Journal of Education* 62 (1980): 67–92; Peter McLaren, *Life in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education*, 6th ed. (New York: Routledge, 2016).

Critical theory and education are similarly structured in the sense that they are both at once process and outcome oriented. In other words, they focus on what is happening in the present but always with a view to a better future for the individual and society. Kellner touches on this similarity in stating:

> The Marxian sense of systematically criticizing the assumptions of an established hegemonic discipline, as in Marx's critique of political economy, and the construction of an alternative theory and practice, suggest the need for radical criticism of existing ideologies and practices of education and the need for far-reaching transformation to free individuals from the fetters of consumer capitalism and to help make possible a free, more democratic and human culture and society.[190]

Embedded within Kellner's remarks is critical theory's rejection of a false value-neutral position in education or within any other political spaces. Education has long been and remains plagued by a deeply ideological value-neutrality masquerading as non-ideological assemblages of facts and skills. Such assumptive practices have thrived in the age of neoliberalism, which itself so often takes the form of politics disguised as apolitical technocracy exercised according to supposedly universal "best practices" of self- and social governance.

Critical theory's rejection of value-neutral positions and modes of evaluation transformed the field of policy analysis. As I have argued, the traditional policy sciences were in line with positivistic and technocratic assumptions present within the Keynesian state. Following critical theory's influence on both policy analysis and education scholarship, education policy scholars split policy analysis into a binary of analysis *of* policy and analysis *for* policy.[191] Distinguishing between analysis of historical or current policies and analysis that seeks to be of use to current or future policies either as a source of advocacy or improvement can be helpful in describing the relationship between politics and policy. As Bob Lingard explains:

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[190] Douglas Kellner, "Toward a Critical Theory of Education," *Democracy & Nature* 9, no. 1 (2003): 53.
[191] Ian Gordon, Janet Lewis, and Ken Young, "Perspectives on Policy Analysis," *Public Administration Bulletin* 25, no. 1 (1977): 26–30.

> Research that has the most direct and immediate effect on policy is that commissioned by policy-makers for a purpose and framed by a problem-solving disposition. This is research *for* policy. Interest groups often sponsor this type of research as well. However, the more academic exercise, research *of* policy, fits within a critical framework and seeks to deconstruct the problem as constructed by policy and to deconstruct many of the 'taken for granteds' of the contemporary world.[192]

Taken as a form of existing policy advocacy, research *for* policy benefits from and reinforces neoliberal ideology education practices. Simply put, analysis of policy critically examines the political processes, assumptions, interests, and outcomes of creating and implementing policies within education or any other area of statecraft, while analysis for policy seeks to streamline or clarify those political processes without acknowledging or examining their ideological content. Although politics effects everyone, policy is created by elites and therefore is inseparable from hegemony. Theoretical reflection on the distance between policy and polity in terms of social class and political power distinguishes traditional from *critical* policy analysis.[193]

As I have already mentioned, critical theory never relied on methodological orthodoxy, partly because rigid methodologies were far too siloed within respective academic disciplines to be of much use to critical theory as a supradisciplinary project. Critical theorists also made significant contributions to Marxian analysis by incorporating influences from philosophy's peripheral disciplines of sociology (e.g. Weber) and psychology (e.g. Freud) as well as reinterpretations of Nietzsche, Hegel, and many others from the canon of Western philosophy. Critical policy analysts today also eschew methodological orthodoxy, which they regard with considerable suspicion for its supposed totalizing and or positivistic commitments. Diem and

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[192] Bob Lingard, "The Impact of Research on Education Policy in an Era of Evidence-Based Policy," *Critical Studies in Education* 54, no. 2 (June 2013): 127.
[193] John J. Prunty, "Signposts for a Critical Educational Policy Analysis," *Australian Journal of Education* 29, no. 2 (August 1985): 133–40.

Young nevertheless offer five common concerns gleaned from their meta-analysis of critical education policy scholars:

> (1) concern regarding the difference between policy rhetoric and practiced reality; (2) concern regarding the policy, its roots, and its development…(3) concern with the distribution of power, resources, and knowledge as well as the creation of policy 'winners' and 'losers;' (4) concern regarding social stratification and the broader effect a given policy has on relationships of inequality and privilege; and (5) concern regarding the nature of resistance to or engagement in policy by members of non-dominant groups.[194]

Here we see the critical theory's commitment to analyzing how the state, in tandem with other capitalist apparatuses, exercises power over some groups and on behalf of others. We also see critical theory's commitment to political struggles for emancipation. In their meta-analysis, Diem and her colleagues, however, describe the landscape of critical policy analysis as marked by "theoretical and methodological eclecticism" and "epistemological variety."[195] Such complexity and heterodox approaches to analysis offer counter-explanations and counter-narratives to neoliberal technocracy's overly simplistic discourse and apolitical framing of the genesis and purpose of policy. Diem, et al. explain:

> Two features…set the work of critical policy analysis apart: the theoretical frames from which critical policy analysts draw and the purposes for which critical policy analysts put their scholarship to work. Scholars reasoned that multi-theoretical and interdisciplinary approaches to policy analysis enable deeper and broader understanding of educational issues, such as why certain changes are occurring within the field of education, why certain options tend to be chosen as policy options and solutions, and how such pathways have impacted or are likely to impact children and their communities. The resulting analyses of educational policies, they argue, have more depth and breadth than traditional methods and theoretical frameworks allow.[196]

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[194] Sarah Diem and Michelle D. Young, "Considering Critical Turns in Research on Educational Leadership and Policy," *International Journal of Educational Management* 29, no. 7 (2015): 843.
[195] Sarah Diem et al., "The Intellectual Landscape of Critical Policy Analysis," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 27, no. 9 (2014): 1084.
[196] Ibid., 1085.

Here I see an important rupture from the original concerns and purposes of critical theory. While critical theory from Horkheimer's leadership of the Frankfurt School on has sought theoretical distance from the deterministic economism of some orthodox Marxists, the foundational thinkers of critical theory never lost sight of the fact that the interdependence of a multiplicity of social relations and cultures is still an interdependency that exists *under capitalism*, which *is* a totalizing system that affects social relations and cultures. Although capitalism has proved highly malleable, highly differentiated, and subject to myriad non-economistic cultural forces, it is not *post*structural. The thought is incoherent.

Diem and her colleagues' use of *interdisciplinary* sheds light on what I see as a major problem with the landscape of critical policy analysis today. Its methodological eclecticism and suspicion of objectivity has significantly weakened critical policy analysts' capacity to be *critical* and *political*. I will take each of these claims separately. First, critical theory should rigorously interrogate truth claims, but it should not reject them on the grounds that they *are truth claims*. When it does, it loses the capacity to criticize oppression. Either oppression objectively exists, or it does not. Critical policy analysts who suppress or reject notions of objectivity for its positivistic assumptions or totalizing notions of truth, vacate the ground from which they must launch *critiques* of power and its policies. Second, the refusal to locate politics within reach of the social relations of production and the reproduction of society and culture (i.e. the realm of economy), similarly evacuates *politics* of any coherent meaning. Lester Spence offers a clear definition of politics as "the group competition over scarce resources, as well as the various activities that comprise this competition."[197] Those resources cannot be simplistically reduced to money, but they nonetheless must stay within the logical boundaries of political economy if

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[197] Lester K. Spence, *Knocking the Hustle: Against the Neoliberal Turn in Black Politics* (Brooklyn: Punctum Books, 2015), 5.

politics is also to retain its conceptual coherence. Surely there are coherent nonpolitical explanations of oppression (e.g. the varied accounts for the existence of evil), but these do not depend on group competition for scarce resources within a social sphere.[198] In vaunting *interdisciplinarity*, critical policy analysis has lost its *supradisciplinarity*, which was methodologically diverse but oriented toward a coherent critique of the historical development of capitalism and culture. Indeed, Kellner describes a similar problem within the trajectory of critical theory as a whole, arguing that, following the deaths of its foundational theorists, it "has frequently been deficient in empirical and historical research, and has often failed to provide clear historical presentations of its theoretical positions."[199] While I agree with Kellner's claim that "This has been the result of academization of Critical Theory," I disagree with his claim that such academization was born of "an excessive focus on its foundations and philosophical components at the expense of developing radical social theory and cultural critique connected to transformative politics."[200] I take the opposite view in fact and contend that critical policy analysis (and perhaps also critical theory) has focused too closely on developing a cultural critique and transformative politics that in many instances blinds it to the philosophical foundations of a coherent social theory.

Foucauldian Poststructuralism and Neoliberal Accumulation

In part, critical policy analysis's issues with interdisciplinarity and theoretical eclecticism is a problem of academic work, which is predicated on what Thomas Kuhn described as the

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[198] For example, even a committed Marxist like Terry Eagleton will reject economic explanations of evil in a book called *On Evil* and follow it up a year later with a book called *Why Marx Was Right*. Terry Eagleton, *On Evil* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Terry Eagleton, *Why Marx Was Right* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).
[199] Kellner, *Critical Theory, Marxism, and Modernity*, 232.
[200] Ibid.

processes of doing "normal science."[201] Methodologies are various tools that scholars can take out and put back according to the strategies and tactics of academic publishing. But part of the lack of and even distrust of theoretical coherence comes from the dominance of postmodern and poststructural theories within the humanities and social sciences.[202]

I do not have the time or space to cover sufficiently the perennial debates between Foucauldians and assorted forms of postmodernists and poststructuralists and Marxists and the various subcategories of neo-Marxist. Some familiarity with this debate is, however, useful to this dissertation since neo-Marxist critiques have tended to downplay or ignore the role of policy development and implementation in neoliberalization. Critical policy analysis, especially within the field of education studies, has been heavily influenced by poststructuralism. While poststructural policy analysis has highlighted the importance of policy as a discourse of neoliberal legitimation, poststructural critiques have tended to downplay or ignore altogether neoliberalism's capital accumulation imperative and class politics. Because my analysis weds structural concerns with critiques of neoliberal policy and legitimation processes, background in this debate is useful to advancing the claims in this dissertation.

Foucauldian critiques of neoliberalism focus on its governmentality or modes of governing and disciplining the self within systems of rationality that are related to but not dependent on economic relations. Criticizing Marxist and neo-Marxist explanations of neoliberal rationality as the logic of capital accumulation and revenge on the Keynesian state, Dardot and Laval claim:

> we cannot make do with the teaching of Karl Marx or Rosa Luxemburg to reveal the secret of neo-liberalism's peculiar ability to extend itself everywhere, notwithstanding its crises and the rebellions it provokes the world over. For fundamental theoretical reasons,

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[201] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).
[202] Diem et al., "The Intellectual Landscape of Critical Policy Analysis," 1082.

> the Marxist interpretation, howsoever 'updated,' proves patently inadequate here. Neo-liberalism employs unprecedented techniques of power over conduct and subjectivities.[203]

For their part, Marxists (and more heterodox *Marxian* scholars) struggle to find a coherent explanation of the state or of political power in general within Foucauldian notions of bio-power and the many schools of postmodern and poststructuralist thought. Power just seems to sort of exist as a fundamental property of biology or the universe that coalesces into regimes of veridiction that are harnessed and deployed by the state. Liberation thus becomes a matter of individually re-appropriating one's own biopower. Marxists have never held that class power and accumulation occur monolithically, and Gramsci among many others have offered rich accounts for how capitalist hegemony disseminates ideological methods of rationalization.[204] Moreover, Engels himself refuted the notion that Marxist thought was overly determined economism in claiming, "the *ultimately* determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life…Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the *only* determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase."[205] Discussing the debate between Marxists and postmodernists and poststructuralists within urban theory, Neil Smith argues:

> The postmodern and poststructuralist concern with subject positionality began as a very useful and necessary means to "decenter" the universal subject in social, political and cultural discourse. In some treatments, however, thee postmodern turn has come full circle…In the appropriation of postmodernism as a script for gentrification, "postmodern urbanism" has for many passed into a vehicle for the radical *re*centering of the subject on the author him- or herself. If decentering taught us that the author was in the world rather than somehow above it, and encouraged us to see the world in the author, a rather reactionary version of postmodernism flips the equation: "we *are* the world."[206]

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[203] Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval, *The New Way of the World: On Neoliberal Society* (New York: Verso, 2013), 7.

[204] See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971); Louis Althusser, *The Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, trans. G.M. Goshgarian (New York: Verso, 2014).

[205] Friedrich Engels, "Engels to J. Bloch in Koenigsburg" (Progress Publishers, 1972), https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1890/letters/90_09_21.htm.

[206] Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 43.

Although not within the Marxian tradition, Wendy Brown echoes Neil Smith's critique of Foucault and postmodernism's hyper-individualistic tendencies in claiming that the language of Foucauldian governmentality reflects "an oddly liberal idiom…There is no *political* body, no demos acting in concert (even episodically) or expressing aspirational sovereignty; there are few social forces from below and no shared powers of rule or shared struggles of freedom."[207] Thus, for all its rhetorical commitment to political emancipation and struggle, the eclecticism of postmodern and poststructural academic discourse and research significantly hobbles its significance for organizing and mobilizing political movements against forms of oppression.[208]

The debates between Foucauldian poststructuralism and postmodernism and Marxism have occurred within educational policy studies as well. Contrary to Brown's and Smith's assertions, Mark Olssen and Michael Peters claim that Foucault's conceptual differentiation regarding forms and manifestations of power and oppression aid rather than detract from postmodernism's usefulness for democratic struggles. Foucauldian notions of individuated subjectivity and truth, they claim, are more amenable to local sites of resistance and notions of liberation that are ignored by Marxism's totalizing explanations of oppression and repressive utopian visions of emancipation.[209] Moreover, they argue that Foucauldian differentiation accords to a "new political economy" that combines the ambition of nineteenth century political economy with the analytical tools of contemporary social sciences.[210] In line with Diem et al, Peters and Olssen maintain that the Foucauldian poststructuralist and broadly postmodern academic praxis offers "an integrated analysis that draws on a range of concepts and

[207] Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2015), 73.
[208] I am in no way making a claim about whether Marxists or postmodernists are individually or collectively more engaged in political struggles. I am simply making a case that the Marxist tradition has produced more robust theories of collective political struggle.
[209] Mark Olssen and Michael A. Peters, "Marx, Education and the Possibilities of a Fairer World: Reviving Radical Political Economy Through Foucault," *Linguistic and Philosophical Investigations* 14 (2015): 58.
[210] Ibid., 45.

methodologies without favoring adherence to one particular school, method or theoretical approach."[211] This new postmodern political economy has a peculiar relationship to ethics and social justice. Because postmodernism rejects Christian ontology and ethics and Marxist conceptions of social justice on the grounds that both are totalizing systems, postmodernism is left with the task of developing:

> a different set of precepts to guide action…however, such rules will not dictate or define conduct for each individual for every situation. While the tasks and requirements of survival will dictate some general, although historically specific, precepts and "rules," different contingent imperatives at different times and places will also operate, so the individuals' mode of ethical comportment will also reflect decisions, choices and commitments which *only* he/she can decide in particular situations.[212]

What then is the point of critical policy analysis or, indeed, any critical poststructuralist approach that purports to aid in political struggles? Even setting aside the fantasy that poststructural and/or postmodern scholarship will produce a coherent set of "rules" (a word these authors cannot even commit to) that inform hyper-individuated political struggles, those struggles, while carried out in a social arena, are in their final instance matters of radically contingent individual choice. It would seem we have arrived back to a model that curiously resembles the market theories of classical liberalism, albeit dressed up in the language of radical politics. Liberal economic theory holds that there is no just way to rank individual preferences and interests, so the mechanism of the market (the invisible hand) would determine value according to laws of supply and demand and the aggregate interests of rational individual actors. At least such a system was arranged around the buying and selling of commodities and services. Poststructural ethics as presented by Peters and Olssen amounts to radical relativism, and like liberal market theory, remains agnostic regarding an individual's ethical judgements. Like the rational market

[211] Ibid., 63.
[212] Ibid., 61. My emphasis.

actor, only the poststructural/modern individual can decide if he or she is acting ethically, since only he or she is capable of knowing the relevant contingencies, the historical situatedness of his or her positionality. Anything else would be too *totalizing*. This is liberal individualism, not radical politics.

For Peters and Olssen, it is education that holds the potential to unite individuals and various groups scattered like the people of Babel amidst all this wreckage of poststructural contingency. The authors cite Foucault's claim that "After all, we are all members of the community of the governed, and thereby obliged to show mutual solidarity."[213] Odd that when it comes to political organization, Foucault speaks in a distinctly Marxist register of class-solidarity, only here there is no mention of class, since that term is too economistic, too rigid, too totalizing. It is education, Peters and Olssen argue, that can link the radically contingent individual and local struggles to a larger global struggle for emancipation. What are the grounds for solidarity within all that contingency? Emancipation from what? Poststructuralism in general and these authors in particular have already rejected Christian ontology and ethics that supply the theological and philosophical content for global solidarity across local contingency. They have done the same for Marxism's class analysis, which provides the philosophical and sociological content to link localized oppression to global movements for emancipation. Education here functions as a conceptual necessity void of any actual content.[214] Presumably education is as radically individuated as ethics, but somehow it unites atomized individuals not just to each other but across the globe in a process of liberation from governance that itself

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[213] Ibid.

[214] Appeals to democracy are sometimes similarly nebulous, wherein democracy as a concept functions as some sort of a priori common good or political goal. As Jodi Dean points out, democracies have historically legitimized and been quite amenable to the various forms of capitalist oppression. See Chapter 3 of Jodi Dean, *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies: Communicative Capitalism & Left Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).

resists any definition outside of its own solipsism. Poststructuralism provides only a conception of oppression devoid of any notion of the common good. It cannot provide a conception for the common good because it rejects the existence of the common good as anything more than a totalizing and rationalizing discourse that elevates some at the expense of others. Marx retains a conception of the common good that is dependent on but irreducible to the elimination of capitalist models of alienation and exploitation, but to be fair, it lies mostly within his early work and centers on his undertheorized and nebulous concept of *species-being*.[215] Nevertheless, the economic analysis provides at least something of a unitive function that Foucauldian poststructural and otherwise postmodern analyses are powerless to account for. It is at least theoretically possible that education could play a role in uniting local and global resistance movements against neoliberalization (there have in fact been limited successes from Chilean student uprisings to various European protests against neoliberalism's austerity cuts to the opt-out movement against standardized testing in the U.S.), but such resistance has not and cannot coalesce around hyper-individuated political struggles at the expense of coherent theories of neoliberalism's strategies and tactics of class accumulation.

Stephen Ball's Contributions to Critical Policy Analysis

Within critical policy analysis, Stephen J. Ball has made the greatest contributions to a coherent critique of neoliberal governance via Foucauldian notions of governmentality.[216] He

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[215] Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts," in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. Lawrence H. Simon (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1994), 54–97; for a necessary corrective to Marx's underdeveloped moral theory and ontology, see Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, Third Edition (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).

[216] Stephen J. Ball, "What Is Policy? Texts, Trajectories, and Toolboxes," *Discourse, Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 13, no. 2 (1993): 10–17; Stephen J. Ball, *Education Reform: A Critical and Post-Structural Approach* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1994); Stephen J. Ball, "The Teacher's Soul and the Terrors of Performativity," *Journal of Education Policy* 18, no. 2 (March 2003): 215–28; Stephen J. Ball, *Foucault, Power,*

has done so by returning again and again to descriptions of the ruling class regimes of neoliberal statecraft. Ball accomplishes this by drawing connections between Foucauldian critiques of performativity found within common practices of teaching and learning and local, national, and international class-based education governance networks that instantiate and disseminate those rationalizing discourses within the creation and transfer of policy. Ball describes his work in the early 1990s as "his first attempts to explore the precarious ontological hinterland which separates ethnography from Foucauldian post-structuralism—that is, the speaking subject from discourse, agency from subjectification."[217] Ball has continued to develop this line of thought in more recent books in which he and his colleagues "seek to have [their] ontological cake and eat it too [by] mov[ing] promiscuously between creative agency of teachers…and the ways in which policy discourses and technologies mobilise truth claims and constitute rather than reflect social reality."[218] Parallel to this theme of the discursive construction and reconstruction of subjectivity within and through policy, Ball has sought to develop a coherent critical framework for how policy discourse and modes of neoliberal rationality and governance are at once contextually distinctive and global in scope. Ball explains:

> While it may well be possible to discern a set of principles or a theoretical model underlying policy—neoliberalism, new institutional economics, public choice theory or whatever—these rarely if ever translate into policy texts or practice in direct or pristine form. National policy making is inevitably a process of bricolage: a matter of borrowing and copying bits and pieces of ideas from elsewhere, drawing upon and amending locally tried and tested approaches, cannibalising theories, research, trends, and fashions and not infrequently flailing around for anything at all that looks as though it might work.[219]

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and Education (New York: Routledge, 2013); Stephen J. Ball, "What Is Policy? 21 Years Later: Reflections on the Possibilities of Policy Research," *Discourse, Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 36, no. 3 (2015): 306–13.

[217] Ball, "What Is Policy? 21 Years Later: Reflections on the Possibilities of Policy Research," 306.

[218] Ibid., 307.

[219] Stephen J. Ball, "Big Policies/Small World: An Introduction to International Perspectives in Education Policy," *Comparative Education* 34, no. 2 (1998): 126.

It is perhaps fitting that we see a parallel to the theoretical eclecticism of critical policy analysis. In other words, if policy is forged in such highly differentiated contexts, if policy is bricolage, then it could be argued that critical policy analysts would draw from such a multiplicity of theoretical and methodological frameworks from which to fashion their critiques. Indeed, in an admiring and gently critical way, Michael Apple describes Ball himself as "a bricoleur, drawing theoretical perspectives from both structural and poststructural traditions."[220] I agree with Apple's evaluation of Ball's work on two accounts. First, Ball's work in mapping the constellations of power and influence within regimes of neoliberal governance that are global in scope has helped a great deal in illuminating "the ways in which neoliberalism actually works as a *movement*."[221] Ball's recent work has been particularly useful in exploring education policy as a global industry[222] and neoliberal statecraft as a deeply political form of networked post-political governance.[223] Secondly and perhaps most importantly, I agree with Apple that "Postmodern and poststructural approaches are *not* replacements for more structural understandings."[224] I will not speak for Apple—though I suspect he would agree—but I have yet to come across a Foucauldian poststructuralist explanation for national and supranational governance that adds anything consequential to Gramscian or neo-Gramscian concepts of hegemony.[225] The same is true of Foucauldian governmentality and broadly Marxian theories of ideology.

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[220] Michael W. Apple, "Between Traditions: Stephen Ball and the Critical Sociology of Education," *London Review of Education* 11, no. 3 (2013): 213.
[221] Ibid.
[222] Stephen J. Ball, *Global Education, Inc.: Policy Networks and Edu-Business* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012).
[223] Stephen J. Ball and Carolina Junemann, *Networks, New Governance and Education* (Chicago: The Policy Press, 2012).
[224] Apple, "Between Traditions: Stephen Ball and the Critical Sociology of Education," 209.
[225] Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*; Robert W. Cox, "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 12, no. 2 (1983): 162–75.

Among Ball's more recent methodological contributions to the eclectic field of critical policy analysis has been his development of "network ethnography." Neoliberalization has relied on post-political—that is, unelected, unaccountable, and often unknown—networks that govern locally, nationally, and internationally. In distinction from notions of democratic and representative government, neoliberal *governance* is comprised of ruling class constituencies and interests that form and implement policy from within networks or dense nests comprised of individuals, non-governmental institutions (NGOs, often fueled by corporate donors), quasi-governmental institutions (QUANGOs or public-private partnerships), for-profit corporations, and the remaining apparatuses of the Keynesian welfare state. Rather than having a stabilizing effect, these diverse networks are "made up of a set of more or less unstable methods and relationships which, if they do not work as expected, can be dispensed with and replaced."[226] Because network governance provides a sort of shadow state, there are few if any lasting consequences for those who craft and work to implement neoliberal reform policy. Those in fact most vulnerable to blowback from policy failure are not the philanthrocapitalist foundations or individual actors who can move on to other projects in the wake of policy failure but the government bureaucracies formally responsible for developing, implementing, and regulating public policy.[227] I say government institutions suffer rather than elected individuals because, even when voted out of office as a result of blowback from policy failure, government officials rely on their neoliberal networks to "fail upwards" into new and often far more lucrative positions in the corporate for-profit and nonprofit world. The institutions, however, remain and

[226] Ball and Junemann, *Networks, New Governance and Education*, 8.
[227] For example, Bill Gates's formidable influence on public education reform and policy did not diminish following the disasters of his foundation's small schools initiative in the early 1990s. Instead, he had an even greater influence through the now rapidly deteriorating Common Core State Standards initiative as well as through his promotion of charter school legislation at all levels of government.

are subjected to the public's deep and often warranted distrust and ire. Such ire provides fuel for the further neoliberalization by the same or similar ruling class coalitions responsible for previous policy failure. Hence, the rollback and rollout phases are both orchestrated by capitalism's political class. Ball's notions of post-political governance and the class politics of neoliberal crisis management and manipulation is particularly useful to the context of neoliberal policymaking and implementation in St. Louis's public education reforms. Public-private partnerships effectively shield class interests from the negative effects of education reform and urban revitalization efforts while leaving low-income black families and public schools vulnerable. Similarly, the significant public expenditures on revitalization and stagnant or declining quality of life for most residents shows the public-private partnership shields the most vulnerable populations from any benefits produced by the partnership and revitalization. Moreover, the issues of an unelected, unaccountable, and unknown shadow-state are magnified under global neoliberalism and the opening up of public policy—and as is the case with charter schools, public school infrastructure financing—to the governance networks of global capitalism.

For all his rich description of neoliberal governance Ball's work has a curious relation to class analysis. As I mentioned, a strength of his analysis has been in describing network governance—the dynamism of it constellations of power and policy that break apart and are reconstituted across time and space—but Ball keeps the concept of class at arm's length. He focuses instead on how these networks wield power and demand performativity from the subjects upon which they are imposed. Apple praises Ball's more recent work that has turned to issues of race and neoliberal discipline, while arguing Ball's analysis "is largely [a] Foucauldian reading of this process, one that at times I wish was grounded in more structural ideas about the

racial state and the political economy of empire."[228] This criticism of insufficient structural concerns regarding race and the political economy of empire applies to class as well. Ball's application of ethnography to neoliberal policy analysis is a novel and interesting approach, but what Ball never seems to address head on in a sufficient way is that the various actors that comprise these neoliberal governance networks differ in race, gender, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, nationality, yet the one sociological category that undoubtedly share is class. The various elected officials, NGO directors, and philanthrocapitalists may not all have equal wealth, but this is inconsequential. Neither do corporate CEOs. Marxian notions of class reach beyond Bourdieuan *habitus* to describe one's position with respect to capitalist relations of production and the reproduction of society. That is not to say that *habitus* or Ball's work on network ethnography are not useful as heuristics for understanding ideology and cultural reproduction of class position *within* respective classes, but when those analyses fail to account for class position within capitalism's relations of production and the reproduction of those political economic conditions, then they offer little beyond descriptive analyses of social and political power. Ball comes frustratingly close to discussions of capital accumulation, but inevitably veers off to Foucauldian concepts of performativity and market logics as rationalizing discourses, which to be clear, are only problematic when delinked from a concept of class accumulation of capital.

Two examples: Ball and Nikita discuss the global reach of school choice policies in relation to the emergence of a global middle class, yet their analysis is confined to middle class consumer behaviors and cosmopolitan mobility.[229] Only a scant paragraph touches on the economic dimensions of both of those sociological concepts. The authors admit, "this

[228] Apple, "Between Traditions: Stephen Ball and the Critical Sociology of Education," 214.
[229] Stephen J. Ball and Dimitra Pavlina Nikita, "The Global Middle Class and School Choice: A Cosmopolitan Sociology," *Zeitschrift Fuer Erziehungswissenshaft* 17, no. 3 (2014): 81–93.

orientation towards cosmopolitan values and identity also needs to be located back into economic capital, everyday experience and shared frames of reference and indeed the fundamental questions as to whether the [global middle class] is a 'well-formed class' in the structural, cultural and relational senses," only to conclude, "In other words there is much to do."[230] I agree, and that work will never be done by confining class analysis to performativity and consumptive habits.

Similarly, Ball's network ethnography explores the enormous influence of what he and Junemann call "new philanthropy," otherwise referred to as philanthrocapitalism or venture philanthropy. By default, this is a ruling class phenomenon, since while the underclasses give a greater percentage of their income to charity than the wealthy, their giving does not grant them access to the levers of political power.[231] Ball and Junemann describe the *new* in new philanthropy as "the direct relation of 'giving' to 'outcomes' and the direct involvement of givers in philanthropic action and policy communities."[232] Those outcomes surely take a number of forms, but they ultimately and quite literally cash out in capital accumulation. Ball and Junemann go on to describe the involvement of Goldman Sachs and other financial firms in crafting education policy, only to arrive at a discussion of philanthropic discourse the governance of the public sector according to market logics. Goldman Sachs, no doubt, has a diverse and complicated array of interests, but Ball and Junemann's analysis seems to put the cart before the horse in suggesting that the *raison d'etre* of those interests is the legitimation and diffusion of capitalist market logics. Goldman Sachs's (or any other node of global capitalism's governance

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[230] Ibid., 89.
[231] Katia Savchuk, "Wealthy Americans Are Giving Less of Their Incomes to Charity, While Poor Are Donating More," *Forbes*, October 6, 2014, http://www.forbes.com/sites/katiasavchuk/2014/10/06/wealthy-americans-are-giving-less-of-their-incomes-to-charity-while-poor-are-donating-more/#5d43fb735b6d.
[232] Ball and Junemann, *Networks, New Governance and Education*, 49.

networks) interest is first and foremost in capital accumulation. Whether that might reflect some sort of Nietzschean will to power or Foucauldian governmentality is a secondary concern. Neoliberal market logic functions *within* the processes of capital accumulation. Ball and Junemann describe the logic that underlies the diverse (except in class) assemblages of networked power as exhibiting "a certain regularity or unity between statements, objects, concepts, in a rule-governed set of material practices." Citing Foucault, they conclude, "The engine of knowledge here is not the individual actors but the discursive community that works to ensure that only some speakers are privileged and 'get heard' within the transformation of the public sector."[233] Here again, those who "get heard" are of a common class *because* they share a similar position in relation to the production processes and reproduction of late capitalism's social relations. That "rule-governed set of material practices" is capitalism, which by definition, means that those who control *capital* have an outsized ideological and political influence over the various rules that govern the social relations that exist within that political economy. It is no wonder that capitalists have used such control over social relations to increase their own capital and concomitant social and political power. While I agree that the "engine of knowledge here is not the individual actors," I disagree that the *discursive community* is sufficient explanation for what does drive new philanthropy and neoliberal governance. The notion that finance capital has captured the political process to spread and legitimate its governance logic—which accords to the logic of market competition—rather than as a function of its ruling class ideology that legitimates its own accumulation practices and primacy of place within global capitalism strikes me as absurd.

[233] Ibid., 74.

Such a conclusion is derived from critiques of Marx's insufficient theorizing of capitalism's internal dynamism. Those are valid critiques. Marx's model of base-superstructure and theorizing of historical materialism, as nuanced as they were, did not fully account for the historical movement of much of the proletarian class up into the bourgeoisie, especially into the swollen professional managerial class of the post-Fordist neoliberal era. The movement from traditional commodity production and consumption to the global knowledge economy has also demanded much updating within the Marxian tradition, but it is easy to forget—as Ball seems to—that such developments have come through technological innovation and the creation of new proletarian classes across the globe. In other words, capitalism has grown quite adept at moving both its wealth and its wreckage across time and space. Nevertheless, the fact that those who wield power within Ball's discursive communities *always* levy that power for capital accumulation (e.g. through speaking fees, consulting jobs, and the various examples of "failing upward") should be enough to illuminate an important and underdeveloped structural dynamic beneath Ball's analyses of neoliberal network governance.

I should not be mistaken as unjustly discounting Ball's valuable theoretical and methodological contributions to critical policy analysis. His work provides key sociological insights into the formations, behaviors, and logics that underlie neoliberalism's political (or *policy*) class. Ball also adroitly articulates the often clumsy and always complex processes, logics, and interests behind neoliberal statecraft. Policies are not just crafted *in situ* as rational responses to straightforward social and political issues. Rather they are borrowed and bought, hacked apart and sewn together, innovated and plagiarized, as they transform over time and are scaled and rescaled vertically and horizontally across space. Across these various contexts,

neoliberal governance shows a family resemblance of policies, yet like Freud's theory of *das Unheimliche* (the uncanny), they are at once familiar and foreign.

Ball himself points to recurrent spatio-temporal gaps in critical policy analysis. Providing an insider's meta-analysis of the state of CPA through 1997, Ball admits that "in practice, most education policy research lacks any sense of time," the result of which is "a rampant ahistoricism."[234] For Ball, this "dearth" of historical analysis within the field is a significant obstacle to theorizing any continuity or even dialectical rupture with policy (re)formation/circulation or political governance structures prior to the 1980s, as though neoliberal governance structures and power relations sprang from the head of Zeus. Ball goes on to describe how "Policy research lacks a sense of 'place'; either in not locating policies in any framework that extends beyond the national level, or in not accounting for or conveying a sense of the locality in analyses of policy realisation."[235] As with its ahistoricity, CPA's spatial lacuna inhibits richer analysis on policy differentiation and multivalent development under neoliberalism. Here too there is the problem of theorizing both continuity and rupture, a problem with understanding the family resemblances in relation to the geographically specific derivations. Much of this, Ball contends, is a problem of moving from the global to the national and vice versa. Neoliberalism is a nationally differentiated global phenomenon. Figures like Reagan and Thatcher are often appropriately linked, but no one would or should argue that neoliberalism has produced effects in the U.S. identical to those in Great Britain, Chile, China, or anywhere else it has dramatically altered the political economy and the daily life of those subjected to its rule. Moreover, differentiation occurs at the local level as well. Ball laments, "a great deal of

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[234] Stephen J. Ball, "Policy Sociology and Critical Social Research: A Personal Review of Recent Education Policy and Policy Research," *British Journal of Educational Studies* 43, no. 3 (June 1997): 266.
[235] Ibid., 267.

education research dislocates schools and classrooms from their physical and cultural environment. The second aspect of locality relates to this latter point: that is, the failure of policy research to convey a sense of region, or community or setting."[236] The local level provides the political topography for exercising neoliberal power. It, therefore, bears a different though no less important relation to power and neoliberal governance as the national or global levels. Capitalism, of course, works the same way. Local economies do not move in lock step with national and global policies or economic shifts. Regions and even cities can experience economic recession/growth during phases of national growth/recession, with the same applying at the national and global levels.

Ball's own work has not overcome these gaps in the two decades since he exposed them. His innovation with network ethnography reflects this very spatio-temporal problem. As useful as network ethnography is for capturing and describing the dense nests of interests and relationships that constitute policy networks, Ball and Junemann point to policy networks as perpetually evolving, disintegrating and reconstituting themselves over time. They admit that this constitutes "both an analytical and representational problem. The representational problem arises inasmuch that network diagrams are very inadequate and misleading devices for capturing and representing networks and network relations. They freeze movement and evolution and are always out of date."[237] Similarly, Ball has recently theorized neoliberal differentiation from the national to global level[238] as well as at the local level,[239] but these analyses are largely confined to the same register (itself a legitimating discourse) of Foucauldian governmentality. Ball moves

[236] Ibid.
[237] Ibid., 16.
[238] Ball, *Global Education, Inc.: Policy Networks and Edu-Business*. To his credit, Ball comes closest here in theorizing neoliberal governance networks as a global and local process of capital accumulation.
[239] Stephen J. Ball, Meg MacGuire, and Annette Braun, *How Schools Do Policy: Policy Enactments in Secondary Schools* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

up and down planes of neoliberal governance in analyzing the various effects of its rationality and the performativity of its actors and subjects, but he remains locked within the flattened discourse of governmentality. In other words, his approach to spatial differentiation focuses on the differentiation of the formation and effects of policy at different levels, but it fails to offer a three-dimensional spatial analysis of differentiation that is not just concerned with governance planes and policy boundaries (i.e. local, national, global) but with neoliberalism's larger geographic processes of uneven development and capital accumulation. He does not resolve his earlier issues with space and time because his theoretical framework treats them as distinct categories within policy studies. By this, I mean that he can analyze policy over time (though his network ethnography does not), and he can analyze spatial differentiation (though he reduces *space* largely to policy boundaries and hierarchies or planes of performativity), but he cannot do them both at once. In sum, Ball maintains a troubling gap between policy and political economy. His theoretical contributions to critical policy analysis and the heterogeneity of policy across time and space are crucial advances in the field. But in leaning so heavily on Foucauldian poststructuralism in general and governmentality in particular, Ball offers a coherent though incomplete account of neoliberalism's processes (i.e. the geography of their structural and spatial development) and purposes (i.e. capital accumulation *through* rather than *for* governance). Critical geography has synthesized both these concerns. The political and the physical structures and processes of capital accumulation and class power are manifest in space as is their transformations over time. These structures of class power depend on policy not just as a discourse for legitimating power and propagating ideology. Policy is also the process through which ruling class networks devalue and revalorize urban space. As I demonstrate in the remainder of this chapter and the entirety of the next, the policy ecology of urbanization

(including but not limited to desegregation and charter school policy) does not just legitimate power regimes and govern behavior. It is, rather, the means by which physical and social space is made and remade in the image and likeness of capitalist social relations.

St. Louis and the Spatio-Temporal Turn in Critical Policy Analysis

Few if any have had as great an influence on theorizing the spatial dimensions of accumulation that characterize the neoliberal era and previous epochs of capitalism as has David Harvey. I have already covered Harvey's central claims that neoliberalism is 1) a revanchist project to restore class power by dismantling the Keynesian welfare state and reconstituting it as a market-interventionist neoliberal state; and 2) a form of political economy that structures, destroys, and restructures spaces (e.g. political, social, geological, etc.) through its processes of circulation and accumulation of capital over time. I will, therefore, limit my discussion to the ways in which his Marxist theoretical framework of accumulation by dispossession provides a critique of neoliberalism superior to that of Ball's Foucauldian poststructuralism in that it overcomes the persistent spatio-temporal obstacles Ball himself acknowledges and only partially addresses. Ball's contributions to critical policy analysis are, however, too valuable to discard, and while I do not wish to synthesize his work with Harvey's, it will be useful to borrow some of Ball's analytical tactics that Harvey tends to ignore in his tectonic structural critiques.

First, as I previously discussed, grounding political power in the social relations of production and processes of capital accumulation places the Marxian tradition of critical analysis on much firmer ground than governmentality and theories of competing and seemingly *sui generis* regimes of knowledge production and veridiction. The role of the state, the nature of ideology, the persistence of nationalism and its supportive if contradictory relationship to global

capitalism all require that models Marx developed in the nineteenth century be updated through reformulation and heterodox approaches to analysis. These heterodox methodologies must address capitalism's perpetually mutating modes of production and culture's influences and quest to legitimate those social relations and political power dynamics. But in a sense, heterodoxy is Marxist orthodoxy, since Marx himself argues, "In every epoch the ideas of the ruling class are the ruling ideas, that is, the class that is the ruling *material* power of society is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* power."[240] Thus, the morphing intellectual regimes of neoliberal legitimation—the knowledge economy and corporatization of sites of knowledge productions like universities; the ubiquity of modes of class and self-discipline (Ball's and Foucault's *performativity*); the (re)structuring of political and social institutions (e.g. public-private partnerships, government contracting, charter schools); and so on—these are the intellectual and organizational expressions of the material structures and drives of neoliberal capitalism. Capitalism is a dynamic relational system, not a fixed entity. Modes of analysis must adapt but without losing sight of the *material* necessity of capitalism's social relations of production and reproduction.

Thus, if capital accumulation is the subterranean force of neoliberalism (understood as the most recent phase of capitalism), then we need to examine how such a force shapes the physical, political, and ideological terrain of urbanism. Here I follow Harvey and other critical geographers who view urbanism as a process of political economy. Although the focus of urbanism tends to be on cities, urbanism is the manifestation of the social relations and circulation of commodities and surpluses within entire political economy. Urbanism, therefore, also involves rural areas. For example, it is impossible to imagine building and sustaining a city

[240] Marx, "The German Ideology," 129.

wherein people and capital are concentrated without relying on the vast farmlands and sites of fossil fuel extraction and processing (wherein people and capital are not concentrated) that provide the food and energy that sustains and reproduces those cities. There have always been political, ideological, and cultural antagonisms between urban and rural societies, but as Harvey puts it, "it is only with industrialization and the penetration of market exchange into all sectors and areas that the antagonism between town and country is finally overcome. City, suburb and rural area are now incorporated within the urban process."[241] Although these various geographies are all fully incorporated into urbanism, the fissures and stresses among them have intensified under neoliberalization. Such intensification is evident in population mobility. Massive swathes of the population moved from the country to the city under early industrialization and from the city to the suburb under peak industrialization. Under deindustrialization and the intensified spatial competition of neoliberalization, suburbs compete with each other and with the city to attract people and capital, effectively turning space itself into both a site of production and a site of consumption.[242] Rural life, meanwhile, becomes more difficult to sustain as the raw materials of commodity production are sourced from global markets and their cheap labor and technological advances increasingly automate production according to the profit imperatives of agricultural and petrochemical corporations. Moreover, rural communities lack the capital and infrastructure to effectively compete in the production and consumption of space. Rural life tends to be a more difficult and less sexy commodity.

Having clarified urbanism as the reflection or manifestation of the totality of political economy, it is necessary to turn to the relationship of space and time to urbanism and capital

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[241] David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City*, Revised edition (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 307–8.
[242] Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, ed. Elizabeth Lebas, trans. Eleonore Kofman (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996); Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991).

accumulation. Harvey's entire corpus theorizes capitalism's spatio-temporal processes, but he distills his work into a few central components: market exchange, the coercive laws of spatial competition, geographical divisions of labor, monopolistic competition, speed-up and the annihilation of space through time, physical infrastructures for production and consumption, the production of regionality, the production of scale, territorial systems of political administration, and the geopolitics of capitalism.[243] While I maintain that neoliberal education reforms like charter schools cannot and should not be understood separately from the broader processes of political economy with which they are interwoven, neither do I want to dissolve them into abstracted theories of neoliberalism. I will, therefore, briefly discuss charter schools through the lens of each of these facets of capital accumulation in space and time, keeping in mind that these are not discrete but mutually reinforcing processes.

Market exchange is predicated on growth opportunities that arise in specific localities and shift over time. In Chapter One, I described at length how charter schools went from an idea proposed by union leader Albert Shanker, to an experiment in Minnesota, to the most significant urban education reform movement in recent history in less than three decades. I showed the correlation between charter school concentration and deindustrialized and hypersegregated urban space, arguing that such a correlation was the result of the charter movement's market logic and corporate isomorphism. Charters, particularly the corporate-funded CMO and for-profit EMO franchises, achieve growth in either market share or quite literally capital accumulation by exploiting real and perceived institutional and political weaknesses common to hypersegregated,

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[243] David Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development* (New York: Verso, 2006), 95–109.

low-income communities.[244] Both the geographical public school boundaries and the governmental policy boundaries are frequently drawn and redrawn so as to isolate middle class white children from low-income children of color within public school systems and to open up those racially segregated public school systems to the privatizing forces of the charter school movement. There is hardly a better example than in Missouri's restriction of charter schools to St. Louis and Kansas City, wherein the cross-boundary policies of urban-suburban desegregation busing were replaced by fixed boundaries of charter school operation only within majority-black and low-income urban districts. Even though St. Louis's desegregation transfer program carried on at a voluntary and drastically reduced scale, weakening suburban-urban transfer was necessary to get the charter market off the ground. It was not just school choice that was needed—desegregation had already provided choice—it was a particular kind of choice fostered by the creation and maintenance of a new form of education market, one that needed a less mobile population to thrive.

The coercive laws of spatial competition function as a sort of social and economic Darwinism. Capitalist entities survive through competition, which necessarily has a spatial component in access to resources and markets as well as geographies of power. The rise of charter schools is predicated on the rollback of equitable funding provisions for low-income schools and the rollout of charter legalization alongside regimes of public school accountability and the perpetual threat of "turnaround" or closure. Legal victories for public education equity addressed spatial inequality that resulted from disparate educational funding through property taxes as well as myriad educational inequities stemming from concentrated and racialized

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[244] See for example, Christopher Lubienski, Charisse Gulosino, and Peter Weitzel, "School Choice and Competitive Incentives: Mapping the Distribution of Educational Opportunities across Local Education Markets," *American Journal of Education* 115, no. 4 (August 2009): 601–47.

poverty.[245] Those victories set in motion or further intensified a revanchist response that reframed the causes and solutions for educational inequity within neoliberal market logics. As Harvey claims, "The coercive laws of competition…produce perpetual instability within the geographical landscape of capitalism."[246] The same is true for educational spaces embedded within their geographical and political landscapes. Public schools in wealthier areas—at least those that actually serve those communities rather than poorer children bused to those areas—have the financial and sociopolitical resources, the competitive advantages to resist vicious cycles of austerity and privatization. Schools serving more vulnerable populations and located in areas bereft of political and economic power are instead subjected to reconstitution and closure, which themselves produce more instability. Recall from Chapter One that even Moody's argues that charter concentration in economically unstable and depopulating cities like those in the Rust Belt is an illogical and potentially disastrous way to address public education's structural issues.[247] With over 30 percent of public school students in St. Louis, over 40 percent in Kansas City, and over 50 percent in Detroit and Flint, the only conclusion one can reach is market concentration is an intentional practice of creative destruction through intensifying privatization and regimes of competition.

By geographical divisions of labor, Harvey means the spatial concentration of capital and specific industries whether through endowments of natural resources (e.g. Houston's oil industry) or social construction (e.g. San Francisco and Silicon Valley). Recently, an important redevelopment trend for deindustrialized cities has been to rebrand as tech hubs in order to

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245 For example, *Serrano v. Priest* (1971), *Liddell v. St. Louis Board of Education* (settled 1983), *Abbot v. Burke* (1990).
246 Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development*, 98.
247 Michael D'Arcy and Naomi G. Richman, "Charter Schools Pose Greatest Credit Challenge to School Districts in Economically Weak Urban Areas" (Moody's Investers Service, October 15, 2013), https://www.moodys.com/research/Moodys-Charter-schools-pose-greatest-credit-challenge-to-school-districts--PR_284505.

attract young professionals, what Richard Florida describes as the creative class, in order to drive up local real estate values and stimulate consumer spending, especially when those young professionals have disposable income and/or no children in the public school system.[248] Billions of dollars of public funds diverted from public schools and other services and funneled toward subsidizing the construction of sports stadia, the redevelopment of abandoned factories and public schools as chic lofts, and the relocation and expansion of desired industries, often those in the healthcare and technology sectors.[249] This process is the production of space as a consumer commodity for individuals and for corporations. Already lucrative and heavily subsidized sectors like healthcare and technology enjoy even more public funding, and depending on the phase of gentrification, what used to be or still are low-income, nonwhite neighborhoods are well on their way to becoming middle or upper-income, majority white neighborhoods.

St. Louis's own Cortex Innovation District, formed in 2002 as a consortium of nearby universities, a healthcare provider, and the Missouri Botanical Gardens, was modeled on Kendell Square in Cambridge, Massachusetts.[250] Cortex's stated goal is to turn what was post-industrial blight into shimmering glass and steel of startup incubators and research and development hubs targeted to the intersection of technology and bioscience industries. Cortex's stated purpose is not just technological and medical innovations for the public good. Rather it blends tropes of technocracy, the breathless devotion to anything "innovative" or "disruptive," with a lifestyle

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[248] Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); Richard Florida, *Cities and the Creative Class* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

[249] David Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism," *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 71, no. 1 (1989): 3–17; For an historical emphasis on St. Louis and its racial dynamics, see Colin Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); George Lipsitz, *How Racism Takes Place* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2011).

[250] Dustin C. Read, "Case Studies in Innovation District Planning and Development" (Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Tech and NAIOP Research Foundation, July 2016), 13, http://www.naiop.org/en/Magazine/2016/Fall-2016/Business-Trends/~/link.aspx?_id=84AEC16F7079472CA8802A139235F756&_z=z.

appeal to youthful and hip innovators and disruptor. Cortex seeks to be the cyborg brain of the city, but also “an innovation community” that likes to market itself as “where our best and brightest live and work.”[251] The city is adjacent to the already heavily gentrified Central West End, but in St. Louis, one can stand on a street corner and see three phases of gentrification at once.[252] Cortex is a tax exempt 501(c)3 that has received hundreds of millions of dollars in public funds to purchase and redevelop the land in its jurisdiction, but even more importantly, the city cut out the middle man (itself) in 2006, when it granted Cortex “zoning authority, eminent domain power, the ability to offer tax abatements and permission to enter into binding development agreements governing the use of land.”[253] Cortex transcends Robert Goodman’s claims about city’s being the last entrepreneurs. The city of St. Louis gives Cortex tax incentives while also giving Cortex the ability to give itself tax incentives. Not only does this affect public school financing, but the similar tropes (Ball’s discourses of legitimation) are deployed within the charter world, for example a STEAM K-2 charter school called The Biome that opened in 2015 in the Central West End and a nearby K-12 system of STEM charters called the Gateway Science Academy. Ball’s work goes a long way toward theorizing the policy transfer and discourses of legitimation, but his theoretical framework and methodologies do not capture how institutional governance and policy landscapes *and* geographical landscapes are restructured under neoliberalization. Put differently, the built space of the city is in a sense also performing the ideology of neoliberalization. As Harvey reminds us, geographical divisions of labor intensify rather than mitigate spatial economic inequality, a lesson worth keeping in mind when

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[251] “An Innovation Community” (Cortex Innovation Community, 2017), http://cortexstl.com/who-we-are/.
[252] Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*; Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City*.
[253] Read, “Case Studies in Innovation District Planning and Development,” 14.

considering the application of its logic to public education under the banner of equalizing opportunity over and against its geographic limitations.

Monopolistic competition has clearly been the historic form of capitalism despite past and present idealizations of the small business entrepreneur and the innovative startup. The richest figures in history (Rockefeller, Gates, Carnegie) have all faced and quashed legitimate legal battles over their monopolistic accumulation. Harvey reminds us that these tendencies should always be analyzed with a view to their spatial components. Before modern transportation and communication technology, natural monopolies arose because of the difficulty of transporting goods across distances. Given the state of transportation and communication technologies today, capitalists have turned to intellectual property and their partnerships with the state to ensure their exclusivity or at least decrease their competition. Recall from Chapter One Baker's finding that several of the most heavily chartered urban districts in the Rust Belt were dominated by a few charter organizations.[254] Their dominance has certainly not always been due to their stellar reputation and performance record, but in many cases has arisen from close relationships with regulators, a lack of much or any meaningful regulatory oversight, and connections to capital flows from either private sector property developers (Imagine, Inc.) or philanthrocapitalist foundations and governmental policy apparatuses (KIPP's relationship to the Gates, Walton, Fisher, and other foundations as well as local, state, and national education bureaucracies). In 2013, KIPP and St. Louis Public Schools struck an exclusive agreement that allowed the charter organization exclusive access to vacant district properties in exchange for SLPS's use of KIPP's student data (test scores, graduation and attendance rates, etc.) within its

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[254] Bruce Baker, "Exploring the Consequences of Charter School Expansion in U.S. Cities" (Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, November 4, 2016), http://www.epi.org/publication/exploring-the-consequences-of-charter-school-expansion-in-u-s-cities/#_ref14.

own score reporting. The district stood to benefit from KIPP's tendency to "produce" high scores since it was struggling to boost its own scores and regain the accreditation it had lost in 2007.[255] The district also benefited from using KIPP's student data to stanch its declining enrollment figures that had been steadily plummeting due both to St. Louis's unrelenting decline and the concentration of charter schools in the city. Although St. Louis was just restored to full accreditation by the state board of education in January of 2017, during the decade of unaccredited and provisionally accredited status, it was not allowed under Missouri law to be a charter school authorizer.[256] As Baker argues, Missouri education funding law creates a relationship between charters and traditional public schools that is more adversarial than most.[257] As charters took ever greater market share of public education, SLPS lost more than pass-through funds—its own state funding declined significantly. For its part, KIPP got even more than free access to SLPS property; the district to date has kicked in more than a million dollars to renovate the two buildings KIPP uses, and while the charter organization exchanges its data as a bizarre form of currency for access to physical real estate, KIPP retains its total regulatory authority over its operations.[258] Thus, capital (and data) flows merge with state and local regulatory regimes to redevelop and reimagine public space under monopolistic educational neoliberalization.

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[255] Gary Miron, Jessica L. Urschel, and Nicholas Saxton, "What Makes KIPP Work? A Study of Student Characteristics, Attrition, and School Finance" (National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education, March 2011).

[256] Kristen Taketa, "St. Louis Public Schools Fully Accredited Once Again," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, January 11, 2017, http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/education/st-louis-public-schools-fully-accredited-once-again/article_adac0d40-d05b-55e6-9b3d-6d6680509128.html.

[257] Baker, "Exploring the Consequences of Charter School Expansion in U.S. Cities," 33.

[258] Elisa Crouch, "St. Louis Forges Unique Partnership with KIPP," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, July 18, 2013, http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/education/st-louis-forges-unique-partnership-with-kipp/article_65727970-07c2-560e-b2dc-b62097fd8aa5.html; Elisa Crouch, "As More KIPP Charter Schools Open, Partnership with St. Louis District Grows," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, July 22, 2015, http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/education/as-more-kipp-charter-schools-open-partnership-with-st-louis/article_e0f267b3-6c61-529e-9bfc-2b2235fe2369.html.

Harvey develops an idea Marx proposed in the *Grundrisse* about how the perpetual search for newer and faster ways to move commodities across geographic distance amounts to "the annihilation of space by time." Modes of transportation illustrate the principle. Distances that took years to cross by horse and wagon took days to cross by train and hours by plane. As non-physical commodities like intellectual property (e.g. a line of code) and finance capital (e.g. bond debt) take up an ever-greater share of economic activity within the "knowledge economy," space is nearly annihilated by time. Such commodities circle the globe in seconds. Knowledge economy workers, as I explained regarding the geographic division of labor, are less rooted in place than those involved in forms of commodity production that require massive amounts of fixed capital in the built environment (e.g. the now abandoned factories in Detroit and St. Louis). That built environment must be redesigned to attract and retain those workers and are thus oriented to consumption of a place as well as commodity production within a place, resulting in more intensive forms of city-capital courtship (e.g. Cortex). This relationship among space, time, and commodity circuits also exists within the dynamics of moving from school transfer to school choice as a model for educational equity. By eliminating student transfer desegregation programs (i.e. busing and magnet schools) like those in Indianapolis, Kansas City, and the largest and longest running of all, St. Louis,[259] and replacing them with charter schools restricted to or largely operating within the space of those sending districts, policymakers developed a new form of commodity choice that did not depend on traversing urban-suburban distances. St. Louis Public Schools was closing schools rapidly during the 2000s while charter schools were showing explosive growth. With a falling number of traditional schools and an increasing number of charter schools, students could be shuffled among old and emerging options in the city instead of

[259] Even if not fully eliminated.

transported to stable suburban districts. With Republicans gaining the governorship in Missouri, the state's Speaker of the House Todd Richardson has already "vowed to expand charter schools and virtual schools and to explore education savings accounts."[260] Virtual schools have come up in past bills vetoed by outgoing Democratic governor Jay Nixon, who as Missouri's Attorney General in the 1990s had fought for and oversaw the end of St. Louis's historic desegregation program that resulted from the 1983 Settlement of *Liddell v. Board of Education.* Virtual charter schools would further erode the importance of space within education policy by removing schooling from the built environment altogether. Virtual charter school operators would be able to enter St. Louis's and Kansas City's already saturated charter school markets without even needing to secure or renovate physical space. Such an advantage would likely result in further school closures and more vacant public education infrastructure available for redevelopment and accumulation according to the laws of creative destruction.

I have already explained Harvey's position regarding the role of physical infrastructure as fixed capital or the effects of capital on the land in relation to increasingly mobile capital, but it is important to note how, once that capital is fixed in space, it is prone to deterioration and requires continual reinvestment. This is particularly important for public space, which as *public space*, requires civic reinvestment from taxing surplus capital rather than *private* reinvestment that would be paid for out of its own surpluses. In other words, public institutions must use public funds to maintain physical infrastructure, while private entities should (but under neoliberal governance often do not) use only their own private funds to maintain their physical infrastructure. Such an arrangement is already beneficial to private capital even without neoliberalism's intensifying public subsidization of private profits because the public sector has

[260] Celeste Bott, Kurt Erickson, and Austin Hugulet, "Legislature Sets Pro-Business Course," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, January 5, 2017, sec. Front Page.

always subsidized private enterprise through the building of roads, the establishment of currency, the enforcement of laws, and the myriad bureaucratic necessities capitalism demands.[261]

Before moving on to the next of Harvey's categories of capital accumulation in space and time, I want to stay with this category of physical infrastructure. Understanding its importance is key as this concept is central to this entire dissertation. If the built environment of the city is a physical instantiation of the social relations of production under capitalism as Harvey, other critical geographers, and numerous theorists within critical or Marxist schools of thought have posited, then public educational space itself provides an indispensable site of analysis of social relations under neoliberalism *and* the literal concrete manifestation of those social relations and the ideology that governs them. This is a crucial point Ball is missing in his critical policy analyses of neoliberal governance. Ideology does not merely happen within physical space and time. It *structures* physical space and time. Ball is correct that ideology governs behavior, or to use his preferred term *performativity*, within either institutional spaces (e.g. schools) or jurisdictional spaces (e.g. the think tanks, legislatures, law offices responsible for policy creation), but it also shapes and is shaped by those spaces themselves. Harvey adapts Lefebvre's concepts of material space (concrete sensate space), representation of space (ideologically inflected conception and representation of space), and space of representation (everyday life within those spaces) by adding his own categories of absolute, relative, and relational space.[262] These additions he derives from Marx's theories of capital circulation through time and space.[263] Absolute space corresponds to the material and geographical setting. Relative space corresponds to the circulation of people and commodities in time and relational space to the social and

[261] Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1954).
[262] Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development*, 130; Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*.
[263] Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism*, 141–43.

political dynamics and their transformations over time. Each influences the other and cannot exist in isolation. Although Harvey's and Lefebvre's categories appear very arcane, they are immediately recognizable in familiar contexts. Religions throughout human history have constructed sacred spaces in such a way as to reflect their belief systems and the social relations of their doctrinal practices. The U.S. Capitol manifests America's civil religion in its neoclassical design and civic institutions in its bicameral structure. The Chrysler Building embodies the Art Deco aesthetic of its time as well as the early twentieth century hegemony of the automotive industry with its ornamentation designed to look like hub caps and hood ornaments. It is a small step to extend these concepts from individual buildings to the larger urban spaces themselves. The neoliberalization of urban space and the neoliberalization of education through policy should not, therefore, be analyzed in isolation from one another.

While KIPP's use of vacant SLPS property represents one form of neoliberalizing physical infrastructure, SLPS's many other vacant properties have taken another form. In 2015, SLPS formed a real estate entity called the Building Revitalization Collaborative, the purpose of which was to find either buyers or uses for its current inventory of around 35 closed schools. The BRC solicited both community input and potential buyers, though it filtered community input through its technical advisory committee (TAC). The TAC is comprised of nearly 50 members whose areas of expertise include architecture, finance, historic preservation, construction, law, economic and housing development, and education. Among them is Vincent Schoemehl, who was one of St. Louis's youngest serving mayors when he began the first of his three four-year terms in 1981. Schoemehl was and remains a major force for civic entrepreneurialism and urban neoliberalization. During his tenure as mayor, Schoemehl was known for his enthusiastic embrace of public-private partnerships and his focus on historic

preservation. He was, however, less enthusiastic about low-income housing, especially within the concentrated racialized poverty of St. Louis's northern neighborhoods. Schoemehl steered federal community development block grants (CDBGs)[264] away from the abject poverty of the north side and toward already gentrifying neighborhoods like the Central West End. Keeping development funds from poor, nearly exclusively black neighborhoods was necessary, Schoemehl argued, because new housing in the city's poorest neighborhoods would turn St. Louis into "the region's final repository of all the poor, underemployed and undereducated."[265] Schoemehl preferred the federal monies go toward developing market-rate rather than public housing in keeping with neoliberalism's tendency to preserve vestiges of Keynesian welfare programs by redistributing public funds upward as welfare for the middle and capitalist classes. By the late 1980s, his office had totally cut off the flow of CBDG funding to public housing.[266]

Among the seventeen sold properties the BRC describes as its "success stories," ten have already been or are scheduled to be converted into market-rate apartments and condos.[267] Of those ten, eight are the work of famed late nineteenth and early twentieth century architect William B. Ittner, who was St. Louis's Commissioner of School Buildings. Ittner designed over fifty schools for St. Louis's rapidly growing population. His designs were copied across the country for more than 400 schools and were often described as public education's civic temples. Several of his buildings, including some in St. Louis that are now chic lofts marketed to young professionals in gentrifying areas, are on the National Register of Historic Places for their

[264] Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) are the neoliberal era's rollout response to the rollback of direct federal involvement in public housing construction that characterized the Keynesian welfare state and early New Deal programs like the WPA and FHA. Instead of direct involvement, the federal government issues block grants that the authorities of city governments can disperse as they see fit. Such political devolution was perfect for fueling the civic entrepreneurialism of urban neoliberalization.
[265] Quoted in Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City*, 179.
[266] Ibid.
[267] "Building Revitalization Collaborative" (St. Louis Public Schools, 2017), http://www.slps.org/Domain/114.

innovative interior designs and the beauty of their exterior brickwork. Clark School (Figure 3) is one such Ittner school built in 1907. SLPS sold the building in November 2016 for $500,000 to a developer who plans to convert Clark into 44 market-rate apartments.[268]

As a city, St. Louis reached its population peak in the 1950s at over 850,000. Its public school population peaked in the 1960s at over 115,000. The city is under 320,000 now, with the school district below 23,000. The mobility and circulation of both people and capital out of the city—often fueled by racial discrimination—illustrates Harvey's concepts of how relative and relational space-time effect absolute space. The schools are fixed capital that was built with bricks and mortar (material/absolute), using taxed capital surplus (relative space-time), for the purpose of educating a public (relational space-time). But public schools—at least traditional public schools—are fixed capital for use-value rather than exchange-value. That is, they are built for use outside of market exchange. Yet SLPS, struggling to maintain use-value amidst declining revenues and students, endeavors to convert its fixed capital into liquid capital, and in doing so, it converts the buildings use-value into exchange-value. The developers—among them the powerhouse of neoliberal mixed-income development, the firm McCormack, Baron, and Salazar—utilize historic preservation tax credits, federal monies, and other tools of civic entrepreneurialism in tandem with market-rate rental income to generate profits that, due to the tax incentives do not flow back into the school system that built the properties in the first place. The BRC captures this ideology in advertising its schools with taglines like "Historic Buildings ready for New Life" and "Embrace the Past for the Present."[269] Harvey fittingly sums up the dynamics of physical infrastructure and capital accumulation in saying, "Clearly, there is abundant opportunity here for tensions between factions of capital as well as for crises of

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[268] "Clark School" (St. Louis Public Schools, 2017), http://www.slps.org/Page/27263.
[269] Ibid.

devaluation in the built environment."[270] Property redevelopers in St. Louis rely on capital's mobility to create the opportunity for property revalorization and the conversion of use-values to exchange-values. Yet capital mobility and the constitution and reconstitution of urban space has created an environment weighted toward exchange-values without the stabilizing effects of public spaces or use-value property upon which capital accumulation has depended.

Figure 3: Clark School

The production of regionality encompasses many of the components of capital accumulation I have already laid out such as civic entrepreneurialism and the production and marketing of urban space for consumption. However, territorial governance by local political and economic alliances is a messy affair, especially in St. Louis. When political and economic crises occur, both people and capital move resulting in new alliances as well as different

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[270] Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development*, 102.

boundaries and modes of governance. St. Louis has not been able to expand its territory like other cities that successfully reversed population declines during the last half of the twentieth century[271] because St. Louis City has been isolated from suburban St. Louis County since 1876. Missouri's birth as a state was quite literally a compromise between Northern and Southern political economies. During the decades following the Civil War, the industrializing St. Louis had a strained relationship with the rural political bloc that controlled state government. While St. Louis was not a bastion of cosmopolitanism and racial tolerance, its location on the banks of the Mississippi made it a convergence point for Northern industrialists, European immigrants, and the first waves of former slaves desiring to live and work in cities. These groups had little in common with the Southern ideologies of the rural leadership in state government. In an effort to wrest control over what was becoming an economic powerhouse, St. Louis political and business elites established home rule in 1876, which erected a political and geographic barrier between the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County that exists to this day.[272] Instead of consolidating its power, St. Louis's isolation from St. Louis County made the city vulnerable to its opposition. Although the law prohibited a town from incorporating within two miles of another in the same county, home rule had meant that the City of St. Louis was not in St. Louis County, which led to the proliferation of municipalities formed largely for the purpose of taking advantage of St. Louis's wealth and increasing industrial capacity while dodging the responsibility of providing services for a rapidly growing and diversifying population. Six incorporated municipalities had sprung up by 1900 and 18 by 1930. There were over 80 by the 1950s, and today there are 90.[273]

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[271] Jordan Rappaport, "U.S. Urban Decline and Growth, 1950 to 2000" (Kansas City: Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, 2003), 32, https://www.kansascityfed.org/publicat/econrev/pdf/3q03rapp.pdf.
[272] E. Terrence Jones, "Toward Regionalism: The St. Louis Approach," *Saint Louis University Public Law Review* 34 (January 2014): 107–8; Colin Gordon, "Patchwork Metropolis: Fragmented Government and Urban Decline in Greater St. Louis," *Saint Louis University Public Law Review* 34 (January 2014): 51–70; Thomas S. Barclay, *The St. Louis Home Rule Charter of 1876: Its Framing and Adoption* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1962).
[273] Colin Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City,* 41.

In St. Louis, wealth protection and local governance are often matters of racial exclusion or oppression or both. The explosive growth (in terms of population, wealth, and number) of St. Louis's suburbs from the mid twentieth century to the present has been fueled by zoning restrictions such as those prohibiting multi-family housing. Class oppression here is inseparable from racial oppression. Not only have the suburbs poached and protected much of the wealth of the city, but as St. Louis's black population also fled the deteriorating urban space, it was largely funneled into equally segregated northern suburbs following further white flight.[274] Within these majority-black suburbs, new forms of economic and legal oppression emerged to unite soft and hard forms of neoliberal discipline as Ferguson has made evident to the world.[275] The effect of this balkanization on regional public education are difficult to overstate. In short, St. Louis's regional class-based and racial alliances formed and reformed over time for the purpose of preserving and improving site-based and territorial benefits at the expense of overall regional development both within the city and in its suburbs. Neoliberal urbanism and the racialized balkanization of the Keynesian era differ in terms of policies and tactics, but they both show capitalism's tendency to engage in capital accumulation by racializing wealth and poverty.[276] In the next chapter, I will explore the consequences of St. Louis's unstable production of regionality for school and housing desegregation in greater detail. At this point, it is sufficient to show how St. Louis's regional antagonisms of class, race, and geography provide a long and troubling historical backdrop to suburban-urban desegregation and its replacement by urban-only charter schooling—another policy boundary between the city and its suburbs.

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[274] See Gordon, "Patchwork Metropolis: Fragmented Government and Urban Decline in Greater St. Louis."
[275] "Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department" (Washington, DC: United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, March 4, 2015), https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/opa/press-releases/attachments/2015/03/04/ferguson_police_department_report.pdf.
[276] See for example, Kimberle Crenshaw et al., eds., *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement* (New York: The New Press, 1996); Lipsitz, *How Racism Takes Place*.

The production of scale is closely associated with the production of regionality since regionality is one of multiple spatial dimensions, for example common geographic scalar terms like municipal, regional, state, national, and international. Most of Ball's work from the late 1990s to more recent is very insightful in elaborating the various scalar mutations as policies and the networks that form them spread horizontally and vertically. In fact, Ball's 1998 "Big Policies/Small World" cites Harvey throughout, and Ball seems poised to embark on a strong spatial and structural economics turn in his theorizing of critical policy analysis, but for the most part, Ball has stayed within discourse analysis and governmentality studies.[277] While Harvey's contributions to theorizing capitalism's uneven development,[278] neoliberalism's project to restore class power through capital accumulation and class discipline,[279] and elaborating the contradictions inherent to capitalism[280] are unparalleled, he is largely uninterested in policy analysis. He seems to presume policy networks like those Ball maps exist because they must exist. Capitalism demands a ruling class, and neoliberalism knits that ruling class together as a tapestry of NGOs, corporate actors, elected officials, state bureaucracies, and so on across multiple geographic scales. Mapping those relationships, for Harvey, is apparently unnecessary since we can simply see and to some extent predict their class interests realized in the built environment and in the modes of governance they create. These latter points of analysis offer not the policy snapshots of network analysis but a robust account of capitalism's scalar transformations in time and space.

[277] Ball, "Big Policies/Small World: An Introduction to International Perspectives in Education Policy."
[278] Harvey, *Social Justice and the City*.
[279] David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
[280] David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital* (New York: Verso, 2006); David Harvey, *Seventeen Contradictions and the End of Capitalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

Critical geographers other than Harvey have successfully incorporated spatial concerns with governmentality. Neil Brenner, Jamie Peck, and Nik Theodore paid much closer attention to the effects of neoliberal policymaking on uneven development. As I discussed in Chapter Two, their theory of variegated neoliberalization incorporates the scalar uneven development of neoliberal policies as well as the neoliberalization of the market-oriented regimes that drive uneven development through policy transfer.[281] The framework of variegated neoliberalization addresses the "blind-spots" within three different approaches to critical policy analysis: varieties of capitalism (e.g. akin to Ball's work on policy transfer[282]); historical materialist international political economy (related to Harvey' critique of global neoliberalism but overcome by his attention to local and regional differentiations[283]); and governmentality approaches (Ball's network ethnography[284]).[285] In paying close attention to policy's role within neoliberal statecraft, these theorists elaborate on the governance practices Harvey presupposes without losing sight of the structural political-economic and geographic concerns missing from Ball's work on governmentality. Peck and Theodore argue that local environments "are not inert backdrops to policymaking," nor are they only "an interconnected web of behavioral practices, or a zone of rational decision making."[286] Physical landscapes and policy landscapes are always related and in tension, or as Peck and Theodore put it, "'Mobile' policies…dynamically reconstitute the terrains across which they travel, at the same time as being embedded within, if not products of,

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[281] Neil Brenner, Jamie Peck, and Nik Theodore, "Variegated Neoliberalization: Geographies, Modalities, Pathways," *Global Networks* 10, no. 2 (2010): 207.
[282] Ball, "Big Policies/Small World: An Introduction to International Perspectives in Education Policy"; Ball, *Global Education, Inc.: Policy Networks and Edu-Business*.
[283] Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism"; David Harvey, *Rebel Cities* (New York, NY: Verso, 2013).
[284] Ball and Junemann, *Networks, New Governance and Education*.
[285] Brenner, Peck, and Theodore, "Variegated Neoliberalization: Geographies, Modalities, Pathways," 208.
[286] Jamie Peck and Nik Theodore, *Fast Policy: Experimental Statecraft at the Thresholds of Neoliberalism* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 26–27.

extralocal regimes and circuits."[287] Such a dialectical tension between local and supralocal policy regimes is evident in the diversity of state laws for charter schools,[288] in the global reach of "locally-oriented" education reform movements like TFA (now Teach for All),[289] and the local and regional dominance of national CMOs and EMOs like KIPP and Imagine, Inc.[290] Even though Missouri's state education board closed down St. Louis's Imagine schools after their disastrous experiment in rapid growth, KIPP is poised to open its first high school in the city in the fall of 2017. It will then operate two elementary schools (KIPP Victory and KIPP Wisdom Academies), two middle schools (KIPP Inspire and KIPP Triumph Academies), and one secondary school (KIPP St. Louis High School)—a self-contained and self-governing parallel school district that has free access to vacant district properties. Both KIPP and Inspire illustrate approaches national entities take to exploit local systems to maximize growth—even if Inspire clearly overplayed its hand.

KIPP has been masterful at leveraging its national brand, while continually marketing itself as a local, even grassroots movement. KIPP first entered the St. Louis market in 2009 after having rejected earlier attempts by a local 501(c)3 called SUTAK (St. Louisans United to Attract KIPP) to court the CMO. KIPP was wise to play hard to get. After holding out for 18 months, KIPP received pledges of over $500,000 from the Regional Business Council which in turn got to shape KIPP's governing board of directors.[291] From the start, KIPP planned to open five schools to create a fully integrated K-12 system serving around 1,500 students by 2017. With

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[287] Ibid., 29.
[288] "Charter School Laws Across the States: 2015 Rankings and Scorecard" (Center for Education Reform, 2015), https://www.edreform.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/CharterLaws2015.pdf.
[289] George Joseph, "Teach for America Has Gone Global, and Its Board Has Strange Ideas About What Poor Kids Need," *The Nation*, July 1, 2016, https://www.thenation.com/article/teach-for-america-has-gone-global-and-its-board-has-strange-ideas-about-what-poor-kids-need/.
[290] Baker, "Exploring the Consequences of Charter School Expansion in U.S. Cities."
[291] "Knowledge Is Power Public Schools to Launch in St. Louis," *St. Louis Business Journal*, January 30, 2008, http://www.bizjournals.com/stlouis/stories/2008/01/28/daily32.html.

around 1,300 currently and a high school set to open in the fall of 2017, they are right on track, and their free access to unused district property and district funds for renovation has simply greased the skids of KIPP's growth strategy. KIPP's national support for facilities and other operational costs from the likes of the Walton, Gates, Broad, and Fisher foundations as well as the federal Department of Education is well known. But in addition to such national contributions and the "assistance" of SUTAK and the Regional Business Council, KIPP received considerable financial assistance from Illinois-based Midwestern community development consultant IFF in tandem with the St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank. The St. Louis Fed hails the efforts of IFF CEO Joe Neri who partnered with KIPP to revitalize St. Louis's long-struggling Fox Park neighborhood. IFF's St. Louis branch secured a leasehold loan with KIPP that would allow KIPP to redevelop its first property, the DeSales facility, a shuttered Catholic school. Leasehold loans are similar to TIF financing in that developers do not have to assume full upfront construction costs but can pay both rent and debt service once the project starts generating income. Essentially, both offer immediate spatial restructuring that relies on temporal flexibility for capital/debt circulation. The St. Louis Fed and IFF highlight the transformation of Fox Park's social relations in the wake of KIPP's absolute and relative transformation of DeSales:

> Beyond the academic benefits to its students, neighbors say the KIPP charter school has become a catalyst for community revitalization. The success of KIPP Inspire has extended beyond the school grounds and engaged the entire community in a shared sense of purpose. Crime is observed by residents to be down, housing is being renovated and there is a renewed sense of pride in the air. As an anchor, the school is attracting more middle-class families and businesses to invest in the Fox Park neighborhood.[292]

[292] Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, "CDAC Spotlight: Charter School Anchors St. Louis Neighborhood Revitalization," accessed April 2, 2016, https://www.stlouisfed.org/publications/bridges/winter-20132014/charter-school-anchors-st-louis-neighborhood-revitalization.

Setting aside KIPP's nebulous and intangible benefits of *shared senses of purpose* and the verifiable but unverified *observations* regarding crime, the structural economic benefits—the tangibles—of KIPP's expansion are apparent. KIPP and other charters are deployed within deindustrialized and racially segregated urban spaces in order to revalorize property that local capital regimes, in coordination with regional and national capital regimes, can market to middle-class families or professionals as a form of tactical spatial "revitalization" within the larger capital accumulation strategy of urban neoliberalization.[293] IFF also partnered with, and stood to benefit from, its loans to other local development organizations and national grocery chains to "revitalize" Fox Park.

IFF is not just focused on neighborhood revitalization via charter school construction in St. Louis. The firm offers its construction, financing, and consultation services within the following states: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri and Kansas (St. Louis and metropolitan Kansas City), Ohio, Wisconsin, and Iowa—essentially the hypersegregated, deindustrialized, and charter saturated cities of the Rust Belt. IFF manages the "Indiana Charter Schools Facilities Fund, a statewide revolving loan to assist charter schools with facilities financing." About Missouri, IFF lists its following triumphs:

> IFF has made 150 loans to nonprofits and charter schools in Missouri and Kansas. In 2015, we celebrated reaching a $50 million lending milestone in the city of St. Louis. We offer real estate consulting in the Kansas City and St. Louis metropolitan areas, and have done research on schools in St. Louis and Kansas City, with a focus on growing the numbers of high-performing seats in the highest-need areas. Most recently, with grants from The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, we are supporting quality charter schools

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[293] For theoretical explication of strategy, tactics, and case studies, see Brenner and Theodore, "Cities and the Geographies of 'Actually Existing Neoliberalism'"; Rachel Weber, "Extracting Value from the City: Neoliberalism and Urban Redevelopment," in *Spaces of Neoliberalism: Urban Restructuring in North America and Western Europe*, ed. Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 172–93; Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell, "Neoliberalizing Space," in *Spaces of Neoliberalism: Urban Restructuring in North America and Western Europe*, ed. Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 33–57; Pauline Lipman, *The New Political Economy of Urban Education: Neoliberalism, Race, and the Right to the City* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2011); Kristen L. Buras, *Charter Schools, Race, and Urban Space: Where the Market Meets Grassroots Resistance* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

> in Kansas City through research, financing, and real estate consulting and development.[294]

Such ideological transposition of neoliberal market discourse onto educational spaces is staggering. However, "growing the numbers of high-performing seats in the highest-need areas" transcends discourse. It is a matter of restructuring urban educational space within and through the physical *and* ideological processes and mechanisms of urban neoliberalization. IFF and similar local, regional, and national entities in urban neoliberalization markets do not just focus on charter schools. Rather, they situate charter schools within the totality of urban neoliberalization, which involves a larger ecology of services and restructuring such as healthcare, food, housing, sustainability, historic preservation and other areas to which civic entrepreneurialism directs its attention and its tax incentives. This is precisely why critical policy analyses cannot rely on discourse, even with attention paid to the scalar mutation of discourse. Charter schools are not just about reforming urban education. They are about reforming urban life according to the logics, circuits, and relationships of urban neoliberalization. Franchising CMOs and EMOs like KIPP and Imagine, Inc.; local, regional, and national developers and redevelopment firms like IFF and McCormack, Baron, Salazar; elected officials and bureaucrats; and nonprofits and corporate foundations all benefit from urban neoliberalization, each from its respective scalar position.

The production of scale and the restructuring of urban space depends upon the reorganization territorial systems of political administration. Charter school growth has been fueled by such reorganization of educational governance at all scales. At the national scale, for example, the federal government restructured territorial educational administration at both the state and local levels by capitalizing on the disaster of the Great Recession. With the help of the

[294] "States We Serve" (IFF, 2017), http://www.iff.org/states.

Gates and Broad foundations, the Obama administration bribed or "incentivized" states to pass pro-charter legislation, adopt the Common Core State Standards, and implement approved regimes of student, teacher, and school accountability metrics *for a chance* to receive federal monies they desperately needed after their own budgets were gutted by austerity cuts and the economic downturn.[295] The federal government's strong-armed incentivizing would seem to be at odds with state sovereignty over education, especially for those on the political right, but the Obama administration's structural reforms in Race to the Top were merely the ideological continuation and tactical shift from the Bush administration's punitive compliance mandates established in No Child Left Behind. Thus, federal education policy perfectly mimics the rhythms of neoliberalism—the rollback/rollout phases, the alternating hard and soft exercising of neoliberal discipline. While the political right might have publicly decried federal overreach, it privately celebrated the federal support for the very privatization policies it had been developing and regionally deploying in places like the Rust Belt. As I have maintained throughout this dissertation, Midwestern urban education policy *is* federal education policy and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. Arne Duncan's restructuring of Chicago Public Schools (and Rahm Emmanuel's current influence over that system) preceded his restructuring of the nation's public schools. Mike Pence and Betsy DeVos are positioned to continue the scalar expansion of Rust Belt education restructuring as policies tested in Michigan's and Indiana's urban spaces mutate at the federal level and are redeployed down to individual states and cities. I will say more about the reorganization of educational governance in St. Louis in the next chapter, but for now it suffices to say that the concentration of charter schools in St. Louis

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[295] See Philip E. Kovacs, ed., *The Gates Foundation and the Future of U.S. "Public" Schools* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Pauline Lipman, "Urban Education Policy Under Obama," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 37, no. 1 (2015): 57–61.

depended upon the restructuring of governance for St. Louis Public Schools from a democratically elected school board to an appointed board of neoliberal managerial governance, a process that has proven highly effective while also being replete with contradiction.

Lastly, we arrive at the geopolitics of capitalism. Harvey draws attention to the dialectical tension between capitalist logics and territorial governance regimes. Territorial governance regimes utilize capitalist logics, but they are geographically bound. The capitalist, on the other hand, will make use of territorial advantages (e.g. those provided by civic entrepreneurs) before moving on to newer territories with greater advantages. Harvey refers to this movement across space in search of greener pastures as capitalism's "spatial fix." As he puts it, "The contradictions of capital accumulation build into a crisis of overaccumulation of both capital and labor threatening massive devaluations of capital and devastating levels of unemployment."[296] Such a crisis requires a spatial fix, that is, new spaces that relieve the pressures of overaccumulation and new labor relations. Charter concentration in the Rust Belt reflects an impending crisis of such overaccumulation, or to use Greene and his colleagues phrasing, a charter school bubble.[297] As I described in Chapter One, charter concentration in deindustrialized cities like those of the Rust Belt represents an existential threat to those cities' public financial infrastructure, which has been systemically weakened by the alternating blows of capital's exodus and the concomitant incentive packages that Neil Smith refers to as "geobribes."[298] So far, that threat has been managed (not necessarily successfully) by territorial regulators that *occasionally* curb excess (e.g. Imagine, Inc.'s expansion in St. Louis) and periodic

[296] Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development*, 108.
[297] Preston Green et al., "Are We Heading Toward a Charter School 'Bubble'?: Lessons from the Subprime Mortgage Crisis," *University of Richmond Law Review* 50, no. 3 (March 2016): 783–808.
[298] Neil Smith, "New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as Global Urban Strategy," in *Spaces of Neoliberalism: Urban Restructuring in North America and Western Europe*, ed. Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 80.

infusions of capital from local and global elites. Perpetual saving is necessary to stave off the collapse of the local charter industry not just for the students' sake—though discursively every facet of the charter movement is "for the children's sake"—but to preserve both the risk and repayment structures of (local) charter schools' (global) bond debt. In other words, charters are often argued as solutions to local issues, but those charter schools tend to be national franchises financed by global debt markets. Smith describes the contradictions of urban neoliberalization in stating, "The new concatenation of urban functions and activities vis-à-vis the national and the global changes not only the make-up of the city but the very definition of what constitutes—literally—the urban scale."[299] Thus, the charter school movements' muddling of spatial scales goes beyond shutting down neighborhood schools and replacing them with national charter franchises. It goes beyond firing local educators and replacing them with nationally and even internationally imported lower-wage workers. The financing of the whole endeavor links public education infrastructure debt—traditionally a largely local affair as school boards have the power to finance facilities costs through local taxation—with the global markets and investor appetites for high-risk, high-return bonds.

In this chapter, I have attempted to lay out a few major themes and tensions within critical policy analysis. The first is that of the insights and failures of poststructural approaches to policy analysis. While many poststructural analyses offer an important corrective to overly reductive or economistic critiques offered by some *soi-disant* orthodox Marxists, their potential for both cohesion of thought and emancipation are severely limited by their radical individuation. Neoliberalism's contextual differentiation, class hierarchies, and policy processes and effects are rarely clear and predictable, nor are strategies for opposition straightforward. Understanding

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[299] Ibid., 84.

neoliberal policy requires understanding the larger policy ecology that surrounds it.[300] Poststructural theorists find enormous potential with the multiple entry points for opposition to neoliberalization, yet as Marcus Weaver-Hightower concedes, "it is difficult to make wholesale, directed changes in an ecosystem without intervention at many points."[301] Poststructural theorists like Peters and Olssen argue that education provides a space for creating unity across and against diverse forms of Foucauldian governance, but they offer no serious explanation of the form and content of such education since poststructuralism is inherently suspicious of universal ethics and unitive metanarratives, whether ontological or sociological. Harvey's categories of capitalist accumulation within space and time incorporate ecological concerns while retaining a coherent and potentially unitive content. Like Marx, he lacks robust theories of ethics and ontology and, therefore, cannot ground critiques of capitalism's social injustices in fully formed theories of social ontology and the inherent dignity of human life. Harvey's structural critiques presuppose neoliberal policy circulation, but he largely ignores policy itself as a site of critique. Critical geographers and urban theorists like Peck, Brenner, Theodore, and others offer a vital bridge between structural critiques of urban neoliberalization and critical policy analysis. They retain the differentiation and multiplicity of neoliberal policy regimes articulated so well by theorists like Ball without losing sight of the spatial dimensions of capital accumulation and class discipline. I have also attempted to offer a theoretically robust account for how the regional concentration of charter schools in the Rust Belt and in St. Louis in particular is an effect of urban neoliberalization within hypersegregated and deindustrialized cities. I turn now to synthesizing these processes of urban neoliberalization with the reactionary

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[300] Marcus B. Weaver-Hightower, "An Ecology Metaphor for Education Policy Analysis: A Call to Complexity," *Educational Researcher* 37, no. 3 (April 2008): 153–67.
[301] Ibid., 162.

transition from the Keynesian welfare or liberal state to the revanchist neoliberal state elaborated in the second chapter. To do so, I offer Missouri Senate Bill 781 as a focal point of policy that illustrates this transition and foregrounds the racial, spatial, and temporal characteristics of what Harvey calls accumulation by dispossession.

CHAPTER FOUR

FROM DESEGREGATION TO DISPOSSESSION

I will put a very simple proposition to you: namely that today, all politics is about real estate.
-Frederic Jameson[302]

Liberalism, as I detailed in the second chapter, is a matter of different and competing notions of individual human freedom. Classical liberalism focused on maximizing decontextualized self-interest within markets free from state interference. Social liberalism, as manifested in Keynesian economics and the social democratic welfare state, re-contextualized the individual within the social sphere and sought to use the state to mitigate various oppressive market and social forces while also protecting capitalist markets and promoting economic growth. Neoliberalism seeks a revival of free market logics while also utilizing a strong interventionist state to promote market growth by creating new markets, expanding existing markets, and legitimating the logic of individualized self-interest maximization. Per Karl Polanyi, the free market is a fiction, and markets have always relied on states to maintain that fiction structurally and ideologically. For Polanyi, the state had to develop what he called a "double movement" in which it promoted marketization while also protecting society against the ravages of marketization.[303] Nancy Fraser points to the weaknesses she sees in Polanyi's binary, arguing the political struggles of the twentieth century reflect a "triple movement" involving marketization, social protections, and emancipation.[304] Social protections such as Keynesian protections of the family wage—remuneration that would allow working class men to support a family—did not take into consideration feminist struggles for emancipation occurring *within* the

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[302] Frederic Jameson, *An American Utopia: Dual Power and the Universal Army*, ed. Slavoj Zizek (New York: Verso, 2016), 13.
[303] Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1954), 138–39.
[304] Nancy Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care," *New Left Review* 100 (August 2016): 108.

nuclear family and the larger political economy. Fraser contends that the marketization and social protection movements of the state aligned against the emancipation movement. Under what she calls "progressive neoliberalism," the movements of marketization and emancipation align *against* social protections.[305] The neoliberal state encourages all subjects regardless of race, gender, sexuality, or religious creed to seek their freedom within new and intensified market spaces, provided that they do not seek any social protections from the state along the way.[306]

Fraser's tripartite state movements is a useful way of thinking of the mutations of state policies for education equity. With the *Brown* decision, and during the three or so decades that followed it, the state (to greater and often lesser degrees) implemented social protections against the economic and political ravages of public education apartheid. Such protections produced substantial resource gains[307] and significant improvements in measurable outcomes.[308] However, they largely failed to deliver at the level of emancipation as black teachers were *not* integrated into public education's post-*Brown* workforce[309]—those who did have jobs were often ignored regarding desegregation[310]—and the students themselves were assimilated into educational

[305] Ibid., 113.
[306] Fraser and many others have pointed to the potency of the alignment between marketization and emancipation in global development. The rollout of global development programs like microcredit/finance targeted to women in underdeveloped countries as emancipatory has often been accompanied by the rollback of the few state protections afforded to those classes. Moreover, the idea that bringing international finance markets to women in underdeveloped spaces is an act of emancipation relies on historical amnesia regarding colonization and just how poorly women of color have fared under globalized capitalism. See Gary Gutting and Nancy Fraser, "A Feminism Where 'Lean In' Means Leaning On Others," *New York Times*, sec. The Opinion Pages, accessed January 18, 2017, https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/10/15/a-feminism-where-leaning-in-means-leaning-on-others/?_r=0.
[307] Richard Rothstein, "Brown v. Board at 60: Why Have We Been so Disappointed? What Have We Learned?" (Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, 2014).
[308] Gary Orfield and Chungmei Lee, "Historical Reversals, Accelerating Resegregation, and the Need for New Integration Strategies" (Los Angeles, CA: Civil Rights Project, UCLA, 2007).
[309] Sonya Douglass Horsford, *Learning in a Burning House: Educational Inequality, Ideology, and (Dis)Integration* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2011).
[310] Jerome E. Morris, "Forgotten Voices of Black Educators: Critical Race Perspectives on the Implementation of a Desegregation Plan," *Educational Policy* 15, no. 4 (September 2001): 575–600.

spaces that were either culturally hostile, ignorant, or both.[311] The neoliberal turn epitomized by the charter school movement has, however, shifted marketization's alignment away from social protections toward emancipation. As Arne Duncan repeated *ad nauseam* while arguing for the expansion of the charter school industry and the closure of thousands of traditional public schools, "we can't afford to leave talent on the sidelines." Public education's failures, as contested as they are numerous, are here framed in the threadbare clichés of market emancipation—not emancipation *from* marketization, emancipation *through* marketization. The centrist neoliberal worldview constructs access to a safe, free, and appropriate public education as the ability to form oneself according to the workforce demands of the twenty-first century in spite of the fact that such demands are unknown and unknowable.[312] The right to an education for a more dignified life is permissible as long as human dignity corresponds to human capital development. For centrist neoliberals, the indignity of public education apartheid before *and* after *Brown*[313] is less about dehumanization and more about suboptimal performance that leaves "talent on the sidelines." The charter school movement appropriates the Civil Rights Movement in much the same way Fraser argues neoliberalism appropriates second wave feminism. It discards social protections and replaces non-market struggles for emancipation *through* education with the structural marketization of educational spaces *and* a discourse of emancipation that accords to market demands. Dehumanizing structural issues like poverty and

[311] Mwalimu J. Shujaa, *Beyond Desegregation: The Politics of Quality in African American Schooling* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1996); Lisa Stulberg, "African American School Choice and the Current Race Politics of Charter Schooling: Lessons from History," *Race & Social Problems* 7, no. 1 (March 2015): 31–42. I strongly reject Stulberg's conclusion that charter schools offer a viable space for truly emancipatory education, but Stulberg is correct that the historical failures of public education vis-à-vis cultural assimilation must be addressed.
[312] Carl Benedikt Frey and Michael A. Osborne, "The Future of Employment: How Susceptible Are Jobs to Computerisation," *Technological Forecasting & Social Change* 114, no. 1 (January 2017): 254–80. Frey and Osborne estimate that 47 percent of jobs are vulnerable to automation during the next two decades, including the white-collar professions that have historically shielded the middle class from precarious employment.
[313] For example those detailed in Jonathan Kozol, *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992).

racism are thus allowed to exist so long as there are sufficient *ladders of opportunity* within those spaces. Where such ladders are deemed insufficient in number or degree is where further marketization is necessary.

This chapter's focus on the transition from desegregation to neoliberalization in St. Louis performs its own sort of double movement. First, I argue that desegregation efforts in St. Louis—and, by extension, nationally—illustrate the failures of the Keynesian welfare state to protect black populations from the twinned structural forces of marketization and racism, both of which thwarted their historical struggles for emancipation from slavery through Jim Crow. During the second movement, I argue that the transition from Keynesian liberalism to neoliberalism is part of the ongoing and historic spatial processes of what David Harvey calls accumulation by dispossession. To do so, I bring a critical focus to the policy (and historical policy ecology) that put an end to state commitments to St. Louis's historic school desegregation busing program and made Missouri the 34th state to legalize charter schools. I offer a synthesis between the concentration of charter schools in the hypersegregated and deindustrialized cities of the Rust Belt described in the first chapter, the theories of neoliberalism as a project of class discipline and accumulation of capital elaborated in the second chapter, and the spatio-temporal dimensions of urban neoliberalization laid out in the third chapter. I do not claim that my conclusions regarding public education and urban neoliberalization in St. Louis apply *pari passu* with charter concentration in other regions or even within other Rust Belt cities. Such a claim would ignore the path dependency of variegated neoliberalization. I do, however, claim that St. Louis provides an important case study in what Brenner and Theodore call the "cities and geographies of actually existing neoliberalism,"[314] and critical analyses of other Rust Belt cities

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[314] Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, "Cities and the Geographies of 'Actually Existing Neoliberalism,'" in *Spaces of Neoliberalism: Urban Restructuring in North America and Western Europe* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 2–32.

might provide important insight into how charter schools are integral components of much larger efforts to restructure urban governance, redevelop urban space, and remake urban life according to the imperatives of capital accumulation and the restoration of class power.

The Deep Roots of Segregated Schooling in St. Louis

Since its beginning, Missouri has been a place of converging and often conflicting geographical and political identities. Depending on the historical era and specific territorial perspective, St. Louis, the Gateway City, has been both a western outpost of early U.S. colonial expansion and the easternmost city of a vast Western frontier. Missouri entered the union as a slave state north of the Mason-Dixon Line, and its position on the banks of the Mississippi made it attractive both to the slavery-based agricultural economy of the South and the industrialized manufacturing economy of the North. In other words, Missouri was the geographic convergence of the Northern U.S. political economy that structured space and social relations according to urban industrialization and the Southern political economy that structured space and social relations according to agrarian slavery. During the decades leading up to the Civil War, the city saw ideological (and physical) clashes between the Southern sympathizers and Northern urbanites whose politics were, if not anti-racist, certainly anti-slavery. St. Louis became a hotbed for abolitionist activity as anti-slavery German immigrants flooded the city to such a degree that, by 1860, fully a third of St. Louis's citizens had been born in Germany.[315] The contradictions of this time and place are embodied in Ulysses S. Grant, future commanding general of the Union Army and U.S. President, owning slaves on his St. Louis farm during the 1850s. Such contradictions have stayed with St. Louis over the years. Considering the Missouri

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[315] Amy Stuart Wells and Robert L. Crain, *Stepping Over the Color Line: African-American Students in White Suburban Schools* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 25.

Compromise and the *Scott v Sandford* decision in the nineteenth century, the landmark housing discrimination decision of *Shelley v. Kraemer* during the twentieth century, and the focus of national and international attention on issues of police brutality in Ferguson during the twenty-first century, St. Louis has been the epicenter of many of the country's most decisive and painful confrontations at the intersection of race and property. Alongside each of these junctures, St. Louis (and the rest of the country) was forging, expanding, and reforming its public school system in ways that reflected and in some instances responded directly to the region's and country's literal and symbolic battles over race and political economy.

Understanding St. Louis's post-*Brown* struggle to build a racially integrated public school system requires that I lay a foundation for why such a goal was and remains so elusive. Missouri built its first high school in 1854 in St. Louis to encourage the wealthy families who sent their children to Eastern private schools to invest in the state's emerging public school system – arguably quite an early iteration of a magnet school.[316] Two years later, Hiram Revels, who would become the nation's first black U.S. Senator, established a school for free and enslaved blacks in St. Louis in defiance of an 1846 law that prohibited black education. Blanche K. Bruce, who would become the first black U.S. Senator to serve out his full term also taught in a black school in nearby Hannibal, Missouri.[317] Missouri codified its segregated school system in its 1875 rewrite of its constitution, and like so many Southern states, its funding of its black schools was abysmal despite the fact that black student attendance was at least comparable or greater than white student attendance.[318]

[316] Gerald W. Heaney and Susan Uchitelle, *Unending Struggle: The Long Road to an Equal Education in St. Louis* (St. Louis: Reedy Press, 2004), 27.
[317] Ibid., 32. The Catholic Church had also defied the anti-education law by covertly and overtly operating black schools. Also during these years, Dred Scott's case was making its way through Missouri's and the U.S. Supreme Court.
[318] Ibid., 58.

For thousands of black children living outside St. Louis, attending school was increasingly difficult. The closer Missouri moved toward the end of Reconstruction, the more it strengthened its policies of school segregation. The result was that, while some suburban counties established black schools, many with a relatively sparse black population made little or no effort to fund black education. Because they were legally denied entrance into their county's white public schools, many students had to travel several miles to attend black schools. Few in number and surrounded by the hostility of rural Reconstruction Era Missouri racism, black families living outside the city lacked the political power to challenge a legal system that called on them to attend segregated schools while simultaneously making no provisions for such schools. Even though districts that had too few black residents to establish a separate school system were legally obligated to pay tuition for those students to attend another district, the law was unenforced. In a sense, this unmet obligation is an early instantiation of a student transfer law, albeit one aimed at maintaining rather than transcending segregated schooling. Being denied the right to participate in education and the broader political process meant that many families were simply unaware that the law existed. This would not be the first time the arcane and often undisclosed rights of black public schoolchildren would be ignored to keep them out of white public schools. For those who might have known, the instinct for self-preservation no doubt provided a potent incentive to either bear the burdens of tuition and travel or simply forgo education altogether.[319]

Education was by no means the only reason for rural black families to move to the city, but in many ways, it was a sort of barometer of the relative life chances of black families in Missouri and throughout the Deep South. The huge gains in political enfranchisement following

[319] Ibid., 59.

the Civil War led to a massive expansion of black education in places like Alabama's Black Belt, but as reactionary white racism erased the political gains for blacks in the rural South, it deprived rural black schools of both their political and economic support.[320] As political and economic conditions deteriorated in the rural South, the Great Migration accelerated, and border cities like St. Louis began their dramatic demographic shifts earlier than more Northern industrial cities like Detroit and Chicago. St. Louis was of a crucial hub of the Great Migration, and thousands of black families coming up from Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, and western Alabama either relocated to St. Louis or passed through on their journeys north. By 1900, St. Louis had a higher proportion of black citizens than any other U.S. city except Baltimore.[321]

The dearth of public education for black students in the rest of the South made Missouri's provisions seem generous. Missouri's total educational expenditures for both white and black students were (and are) subpar, but by 1919, the state's per black pupil education spending exceeded that of any other former slave state. Because rural Missouri provided so little for the education of its sparse black population, the scant funding of black education was concentrated in St. Louis, which in 1907 had built one of the country's top all-black secondary schools, Sumner High School.[322] Two decades later, Vashon, another black high school, was added. Paradoxically, segregation and systemic underfunding made these two schools among of the best public schools in the city since they could recruit the best black teachers and administrators from Missouri's and in fact the country's best historically black colleges and universities.[323] This was, however, both a blessing and a curse. St. Louis's white population showed strong growth during

[320] James D. Anderson, "A Long Shadow: The American Pursuit of Political Justice and Education Equality," *Educational Researcher* 44, no. 6 (August 2015): 319–35.
[321] Joseph Heathcott, "Black Archipelago: Politics and Civic Life in the Jim Crow City," *Journal of Social History* 38, no. 3 (Spring 2005): 708.
[322] Heaney and Uchitelle, *Unending Struggle: The Long Road to an Equal Education in St. Louis*, 59.
[323] Heathcott, "Black Archipelago: Politics and Civic Life in the Jim Crow City," 713.

the early decades of the twentieth century but began leveling off after the 1930s. The city's black population, on the other hand, went from around 35,000 in 1900 to nearly 154,500 by 1950.[324] The city had gone from a few state-of-the-art black schools during the early decades to drastically overcrowded and underfunded black schools at the mid-century point.

Housing Segregation in St. Louis

The racial dimensions of capital accumulation and urbanism during both the Keynesian liberal and neoliberal eras are by no means reducible to segregated housing. Housing, nevertheless, is so intimately bound up with race, class, and the de/resegregation of public education, that it provides an illustration of and something of a proxy for other dimensions racialized capital accumulation and urbanism. St. Louis was an early adopter and innovative practitioner of residential segregation. The same racist logic that had justified sending black children to underfunded and segregated schools because their learning could be tailored to their unique needs prevailed when it came to housing restrictions. Black residents, the argument went, would simply be better off living in neighborhoods that shared their cultural practices and racial and political attitudes.[325] By 1915, St. Louis officials began drafting urban zoning ordinances that would restrict black residents to a neighborhood called the Ville in the city's north tracts or scatter them among industrial and commercial zones along the river, but before this plan could be implemented, the U.S. Supreme Court's *Buchanan v. Warley* (1917) struck down a similar plan developed in another border state river town, Louisville, Kentucky, on the basis that it infringed upon the rights of white property owners to freely enter into property

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[324] Ibid., 707.
[325] Colin Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 70.

contracts[326]—yet another example of how U.S. law consecrates market freedoms over basic human rights like housing.

With official city ordinances aimed at overt racial segregation off the table, St. Louis's propertied class took a more decentralized approach to preserving segregation. As Heathcott points out, Jim Crow was not endemic to more northern cities like St. Louis like it was in the Deep South, and, therefore, it had to be "carefully constructed by white politicians, real estate groups, neighborhood organizations and merchant associations over the course of five decades."[327] City officials turned to more covert forms of racially restrictive zoning like targeting all or nearly all-black neighborhoods for overlapping or contiguous industrial development as well as commercial establishments deemed undesirable (e.g. liquor stores, taverns, brothels) without ever explicitly mentioning race.[328] The close proximity to industrial pollution and disreputable business establishments meant that whatever value those already deteriorating homes held for black owners prior to the new zoning ordinances was certainly slashed after their implementation. Regardless of its origins in policy, the deterioration of these neighborhoods served as confirmation for racist whites that black neighborhoods were sites of decaying morals as well as property values.

Parasitic real estate agents fueled these prejudices and turned them into substantial profits through a process known as blockbusting. Agents would buy a single property in a white neighborhood within a few blocks of a black neighborhood and sell or rent the property to a black family. They would then warn other homeowners of what would happen to their property

[326] Colin Gordon, "St. Louis Blues: The Urban Crisis in the Gateway City," *Saint Louis University Public Law Review* 33, no. 1 (2013): 85.
[327] Heathcott, "Black Archipelago: Politics and Civic Life in the Jim Crow City," 708.
[328] Richard Rothstein, "The Making of Ferguson: Public Policies at the Root of Its Troubles" (Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, October 15, 2014), 8–9.

value if they did not sell before the block transitioned into a black neighborhood. Only a few needed to be persuaded before the agent's duplicitous prognostications became fact. Working class families in St. Louis's north side neighborhoods feared losing the savings they had sunk into their homes, and those fears turned into reality as neighbor after neighbor sold out and prices began to fall. Once a certain momentum was achieved, the process quickly accelerated. The blockbusting real estate agents would buy up as much of the block as they could at fire sale prices and immediately sell or rent them at exorbitant rates to desperate black families in search of quality housing in a city with one of the country's most severe housing shortages. Of nearly 1,500 rental properties with listed vacancies in 1941, fewer than one hundred allowed black residents. Properties for sale were even rarer. Of roughly 1,600 available in 1940, ten were advertised as for sale to black buyers.[329] Racism was useful in manipulating the market, and the market reinforced racism with tangible economic consequences for black property ownership. Policy, ideology, property rights, racism, and the mobility and circulation of people and capital all formed a remarkably efficient system for redistributing working class wealth (by far most intensively and perniciously black wealth) to a class of property owners and developers. While many of the white homeowners were able to enter and prosper in stable housing markets elsewhere in the city or in the suburbs, the black residents were either gouged on their rents or had bought into a disastrous market without any realistic alternatives and were stuck with houses that would likely never return to their purchase price. The process rapidly engulfed whole neighborhoods and is illustrative of how racism and economic exploitation in St. Louis and certainly elsewhere are interwoven and mutually reinforcing. Even white homeowners who

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[329] Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City*, 86; Jeffrey D. Gonda, *Unjust Deeds: The Restrictive Covenant Cases and the Making of the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 17–22.

might not have objected to having black neighbors on purely racist grounds (no doubt there were few if any) seemingly had to choose among three socially destructive options: 1) they could sell their homes and relocate in an effort to retain as large a portion of their capital as possible—an act that provided a further incentive for others to do the same; 2) they could remain and almost certainly witness their property values collapse; or 3) they could form neighborhood coalitions that tried to prevent black families from purchasing or renting homes in the neighborhood.[330] These options would characterize countless neighborhoods all over the country during the post-war decades of suburbanization, but they had a much earlier start in St. Louis than most other cities.[331]

While local planning officials were forced to maintain the thinly-veiled pretense of race-neutral zoning, neighborhood associations were free to put their racism on full display. These associations had been strong proponents of *de jure* residential segregation and, like blockbusting real estate agents, had circulated materials warning white homeowners of the impending "negro invasion." One famous 1916 photograph shows an entire city block with an "X" over all but one of the houses to indicate those owned or occupied by black families. The pamphlet warns "An entire block ruined by negro invasion…SAVE YOUR HOME! VOTE FOR SEGREGATION!"[332] After *Buchanan* thwarted their attempts to openly ensconce residential segregation in city planning, the neighborhood organizations modified their tactics (but not the tone of their literature) to promote racially restrictive housing covenants that achieved the same

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[330] A fourth idealistic option in which homeowners band together in an effort to both protect neighborhood value and affirm racially and economically inclusive housing is to this day an elusive goal and during the first half of the twentieth century would likely have struck many St. Louisans as absurd.
[331] For canonical works examining U.S. suburbanization, see Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996).
[332] Rothstein, "The Making of Ferguson: Public Policies at the Root of Its Troubles," 8; Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City*, 70.

purpose as an official city ordinance. Because these covenants were drafted, signed, and enforced by private citizens and not city officials, they had the protection of the courts that refused to become the moral arbiters of private property contracts. Drawing up these covenants followed the patterns of the Great Migration of black families to Northern and border cities. A few of St. Louis's restrictive covenants dated to the years before World War I, but the practiced exploded during the decade that followed it. Restrictive covenants slowed as migration slowed during the Great Depression, but by the 1940s, St. Louis had well over 300 housing covenants in place, with 286 of those dating to the 1920s.[333] In terms of segregation, the housing covenants had achieved the exact same results as the original racial zoning had desired: black residents were confined to neighborhoods on the north side, especially the Ville, while the predominantly white neighborhoods in the working class south side and the affluent western reaches of the city remained for the time racially homogenous.

In terms of redevelopment, however, St. Louis's black population was doubly burdened. Not only were they confined to depreciated neighborhoods by overtly racist covenants, they were specifically targeted by covertly racist redevelopment projects. The construction of the Central Parkway thoroughfare in 1915 had bulldozed black residences and churches with no provisions for relocating displaced citizens. It was the black residents' efforts to relocate themselves that precipitated the racist zoning and restrictive covenants.[334] As city redevelopment projects intensified over the subsequent decades, black neighborhoods which had become synonymous with blighted neighborhoods followed the same predictable patterns of displacement and re-concentration with little to no acknowledgement of how it was policies and profiteering rather than the black families themselves that created blight.

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[333] Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City*, 75.
[334] Heathcott, "Black Archipelago: Politics and Civic Life in the Jim Crow City," 714–16.

By the time the U.S. Supreme Court put an end to racially restrictive housing covenants with the *Shelley v. Kraemer* (1948), decades of their existence had already entrenched housing segregation in the city. The very same realty practices that were court-supported before *Shelley* continued into the era of *de facto* discrimination. Those who wished to deny occupancy to black families found new ways of doing so, and those who profited from blockbusting were unencumbered by possible legal ramifications resulting from their violations of the covenants. The Shelleys' victory in securing the right to purchase their house on Labadie Avenue—just west of the Ville neighborhood—signaled that the overcrowded and underdeveloped segregated black neighborhoods on the city's north side were simply insufficient to meet the demands of a growing population. Some have argued that *Shelley* laid the groundwork for the NAACP's later equal rights victories like *Brown*,[335] while others have argued that the case coincides with a decisive split in the NAACP's tactics from a focus on grassroots, working class politics to an elite organization that carried out its political actions in courtrooms rather than neighborhoods.[336] In any case, *Brown*'s mandate to desegregate public schools arrived in St. Louis a mere eight years after *Shelley* when St. Louis was transitioning from one form of racist urban housing segregation (pre-war restrictive covenants) to the next (post-war public housing).

Post-war city planners in St. Louis knew they had both an image and a housing problem. The racially discriminatory housing policies and practices of the first half of the century were reflected in the fact that, when the city's population was at its height in 1950, 88,000 families lived in homes that were built before 1900 and 33,000 homes required shared toilet facilities.[337]

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[335] Gonda, *Unjust Deeds: The Restrictive Covenant Cases and the Making of the Civil Rights Movement*.
[336] Clarence Lang, *Grassroots at the Gateway: Class Politics & Black Freedom Struggle in St. Louis, 1936-75* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 78–79.
[337] J. Rosie Tighe and Joanna Ganning, "The Divergent City: Unequal and Uneven Development in St. Louis," *Urban Geography* 36, no. 5 (August 2015): 661.

Massive downtown redevelopment projects (including the iconic arch) coincided with slum clearance and new mixed-income housing developments supported through federal monies coming from the 1949 American Housing Act and appropriations for highway construction. The Federal Housing Authority (FHA) and the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) had been subsidizing suburbanization for white homeowners since before the war, a process which accelerated when the former GIs had newly constructed highways to take them into their city jobs in the morning and back to their single-family suburban homes in the evening. These federal programs saw racially mixed neighborhoods as inherently risky investments, and so the new municipalities that were springing up just outside the city did their best through realty associations and exclusively zoning for single-family homes to ensure that the city's low-income and black residents remained in the city and the federal funds and middle-income families continued to flow out to the suburbs.[338] City officials knew that they had to take drastic measures to compete. In addition to downtown beautification and industrial development projects, the city cleared the 465-acre Mill Creek Valley neighborhood, an almost exclusively low-income black community. Mill Creek Valley was the largest urban redevelopment project in U.S. history to date. The city displaced over 20,000 residents when it tore down 5,630 housing units to make way for highway construction, commercial development, and about new middle-income housing (about 2000 fewer units than had previously existed). Because the clearance was so massive and displaced so many people and because reconstruction money was slow to trickle in, the Mill Creek Valley redevelopment project earned the callous if disturbingly accurate nickname Hiroshima flats.[339] The goal was to create "a vast and modern suburb within the city," and like so many of the actual suburbs, St. Louis's working class black residents had to

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[338] Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City*, 89–98.
[339] Ibid., 168.

live elsewhere. [340] Many of those who were displaced were forced into the already overcrowded slums of the north side.

By far St. Louis's most notorious experiment with public housing was Pruitt-Igoe. Costing state and federal governments almost $22 million, the enormous 33-building complex sat on 57 acres of North St. Louis and was initially supposed to be segregated with twenty 11-floor high-rise apartment complexes for black residents of Pruitt and thirteen for white residents of Igoe. Construction was nearly complete when *Brown* struck down racially segregated public facilities. Located in the middle of several of St. Louis's most intensely segregated and overcrowded black neighborhoods, very few low-income white residents ever lived in Pruitt-Igoe. With the city continuing to demolish low-income black neighborhoods, Pruitt-Igoe quickly became another of St. Louis's racially segregated low-income communities. Moreover, the site was mostly disconnected from public transportation, grocery stores, and job opportunities, and the facilities themselves were never adequately funded or maintained. In less than ten years, Pruitt-Igoe became emblematic of the country's disastrous experiments with high-rise public housing that concentrated racialized poverty and crime in what became known as vertical ghettos.[341]

There is likely no better spatial representation of the transition from the Keynesian welfare state to the neoliberal state than the Pruitt-Igoe site. The symbolic potency of this site is well-known. Architecture theorist Charles Jencks had this to say about Pruitt-Igoe:

> Happily, we can date the death of modern architecture to a precise moment in time…Modern Architecture [*sic*] died in St. Louis, Missouri on July 15, 1972 at 3:32 p.m. (or thereabouts) when the infamous Pruitt-Igoe scheme, or rather several of its slab blocks, were given the final *coup de grâce* by dynamite…Without a doubt, the ruins

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[340] Joseph Heathcott and Maire Agnes Murphy, "Corridors of Flight, Zones of Renewal: Industry, Planning, and Policy in the Making of Metropolitan St. Louis, 1940-1980," *Journal of Urban History* 31, no. 2 (January 2005): 161.
[341] Wells and Crain, *Stepping Over the Color Line: African-American Students in White Suburban Schools*, 56–57.

should be kept, the remains should have a preservation order, so that we keep a live memory of this failure in planning and architecture.[342]

Jencks's wish that Pruitt-Igoe lie in state as a sort of battlefield memorial to its victims describes much of the time that has passed since the last of the rubble was cleared away in 1976. Trees and grass cover the space now, but the pebbly ground and the occasional sewer cover or street curb give the unsettling impression of an archaeological excavation site for some long-gone civilization even though many of its former residents are still alive and reside only a few blocks away. Several of those former residents recently participated in an event titled "Memorializing Displacement: A Local/Global Workshop" alongside artists, academics, museum curators, and activists from St. Louis, Chicago, Philadelphia, and South Africa. The workshop featured various archival and artistic ways to "preserve and amplify the stories of the 'displaced.'"[343] The group toured St. Louis's major sites of displacement, including Pruitt-Igoe and Mill Creek Valley, and heard stories of what it was like to witness (and be displaced by) restless and insatiable urban "revitalization."

Pruitt-Igoe has not been preserved in its emptiness out of a sense of reverence or warning as Jencks might have wished. Rather, the site's environmental contamination and the abject poverty and crime in its surrounding neighborhoods have thwarted numerous efforts by city officials over the years to redevelop the property, which the city's Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority (LCRA) owned. Freeman Bosely, Jr., St. Louis's first black mayor and vocal opponent of the city's school desegregation program, tried during the 1990s to turn the site into a golf course with surrounding middle class housing as part of his entrepreneurial efforts

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[342] Charles Jencks, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture*, 4th. (New York, NY: Rizzoli, 1984), 9.
[343] Mark Loehrer, ""Memorializing Displacement Brought the World to St. Louis," *The St. Louis American*, November 30, 2016, http://www.stlamerican.com/news/local_news/memorializing-displacement-brought-the-world-to-st-louis/article_f2022d90-b753-11e6-8d64-8360465b83d9.html.

to attract capital and residents back to the city. Indeed, it is for this reason that he opposed desegregation. While, as I will elaborate, the desegregation program was a tremendous financial benefit for SLPS, busing students to suburban districts did nothing for property values in the city itself. What was needed, on Bosely's and other neoliberal officials' view, was not public housing but public golf courses and mixed income housing, not (traditional) public schools but charter schools and other independent schools that could "anchor" neighborhood revitalization.

Not all proposals to revitalize Pruitt-Igoe have reflected urban neoliberalization. On the fortieth anniversary of that dynamite blast, local community organizations held a contest called Pruitt-Igoe Now and called for proposals to reimagine Pruitt-Igoe and reintegrate the space, which was secured by a chain-linked fence and barbed wire, into the surrounding community. A panel of academics—including Joseph Heathcott, whose work I have cited in this chapter—judged submissions from all over the world. The first and second-place proposals both addressed the surrounding neighborhoods' issues as a food desert and envisioned redeveloping the vacant space according to urban agriculture and communal practices of growing and sharing food. The third place proposal involved an un-fixed, multi-stage redevelopment process that allowed the surrounding neighborhoods to reshape the space over several years according to the community's emergent political and social demands and interests. This last proposal was a poignant and radical departure from Pruitt-Igoe's origins and material, relational, and symbolic or representational development. Instead of a top-down bureaucratic managerial approach to community needs—one which Jencks and countless others recognize as having been doomed from the start—the *community* would shape and be shaped by the space through its own political processes over time. Such a strategic and symbolic departure from the site's initial approach and

tragic history is reflected in the proposed name, "The Fantastic Pruitt-Igoe!" which exuberantly defies how the space was conceived and what it has come to symbolize.[344]

Unfortunately, Pruitt-Igoe Now's winning proposals ran into the dead end of urban neoliberalization. Paul McKee, a local property developer, had been quietly piecing together vast tracts of massively devalued and abandoned property for more than a decade in north St. Louis as part of his NorthSide Regeneration project. McKee had the help from the state to the tune of $40 million in tax credits and from the city in the form of $390 million in commitments to tax-increment financing. For several years, McKee had held on to an option to purchase Pruitt-Igoe for $1 million. In August of 2016, he finally exercised that option following the news that the federal government's National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (the NGA—a global surveillance agency specializing in the satellite imagery facets of espionage and military ground troop support) would spend over $1.75 billion to construct its new west-headquarters in north St. Louis. Formerly known as the National Imagery and Mapping Agency, the NGA took on a much greater role (and much greater funding) following the September 11, 2001 attacks and the acceleration and intensification of the perpetual "war on terror." The NGA is currently located at riverfront property on the city's southern industrial edge but was looking for a nearly $2 billion facilities upgrade. Such a high-ticket construction project ignited a fierce battle between St. Louis and Missouri officials and their politico-entrepreneurial counterparts in Illinois, who argued that the NGA should relocate its headquarters to rural farmland bordering Scott Air Force Base in southern Illinois. While I have mostly focused on urban neoliberalization that involves the courtship of corporations, the battle for the NGA's federal dollars shows just how little difference there is between corporate power and state power under neoliberalization. In other

[344] "Winners" (Pruitt Igoe Now, n.d.), http://www.pruittigoenow.org/projects/winners/.

words, territorial competition can exist at devolved scales of governance as state entities compete to sell their space for the favors of other state entities.

St. Louis won the spatial race to the bottom by offering a 99-acre tract of land on the north side for free. Originally, city officials had planned to sell the land to the federal government for $14 million, but after Illinois offered free farmland, the city mortgaged two of its own buildings in order to raise $13 million to buy the land and give it away—this, in addition to the state's $95 million Missouri offered in TIF money and the $36 million in Brownfield tax credits and the city's pledge of $1.5 million in tax money every year for 30 years.[345] City and state officials' largesse did not flow out of a sense of patriotism or commitment to rid the world of terrorist threats using satellite surveillance. Instead, the goal was to remake St. Louis's desolate and devalued north side neighborhoods for millennials. U.S. Representative William Lacy Clay put it this way: "The best and brightest want to live near other centers of talent and creative energy like Cortex, Washington Avenue and our great research universities…Because people who are working on the hardest problems of today and the biggest challenges that America will face in the future want to hang out together."[346] For now, I will set aside the reasonable argument that the hardest problems of today and the biggest challenges America will face in large part involve coming up with meaningful and lasting political-economic solutions for the *people* and not just the *places* devastated by capitalism's creative destruction both locally and globally. Instead, I will focus on Clay's pressing concern for where millennials want to live and "hang out." After all, the latter concern is intimately bound up with the former. In contrast with the community-development and community-driven proposals offered for the Pruitt-Igoe Now

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[345] Nicholas J.C. Pistor, "St. Louis Makes 'Millennial' Case with Offer of Free Land to Spy Agency," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, March 7, 2016, http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/st-louis-makes-millennial-case-with-offer-of-free-land/article_32aa48e2-1e90-5b5e-a9fa-4505804dabcc.html.
[346] Ibid.

contest and the Keynesian city's earlier massive (and ultimately disastrous) investment in public housing for north St. Louis, Pruitt-Igoe and its surrounding neighborhoods are the epitome of the neoliberal state. Neoliberal revitalization here involves massive public investments in spatial transformation, not for low-income and majority-minority communities living there but to displace those people through gentrification and redevelop that area for the consumer lifestyles of middle class (mostly white) millennials who work to maintain global U.S. hegemony through high-tech surveillance and data analysis. Neil Smith describes this local-global dialectic of neoliberal urbanism in saying, "The post-1990s generalization of gentrification as a global urban strategy plays a pivotal role in neoliberal urbanism in two ways. First, it fills the vacuum left by the abandonment of twentieth-century liberal urban policy. Second, it serves up the central- and inner-city real-estate markets as burgeoning sectors of *productive* capital investment." Smith would not likely have been shocked, but he nonetheless might have found it interesting how St. Louis upholds the rich tradition of gentrification through militarization. Much like Haussmann's decadent housing and wide Parisian boulevards were built upon the rubble of the Paris Commune, whose revolutionary tactics took advantage of the narrow and overcrowded streets of the working-class neighborhoods, St. Louis's new surveillance site combines local pacification through gentrification and global pacification through military hegemony.

It is a mistake to assume that the NGA's new $2 billion headquarters, Pruitt-Igoe, and other projects of urban neoliberalization and the spatial development of the knowledge economy are far afield of education policy. The massive tax incentives involved to court these millennials of course rob SLPS of much needed funds now and decades into the future, but this is only an issue for the populations likely to be displaced. Most of these much-coveted millennials either do not have children or do not have their children in the public schools. St. Louis alderman and

tax incentive enthusiast Joe Roddy summed up the logic of neoliberal urbanism and its courtship of a largely childless professional class nicely during a December 2016 presentation at which he argued for giving a proposed apartment building in the affluent and chic Central West End (part of his ward) a 95 percent tax abatement for 10 years and a fifty percent abatement for the following five years. On a slide explaining "How the City Makes & Spends Money," Roddy listed businesses first and foremost and secondly residents without children in the public schools (to use a familiar trope, the makers) as those necessary for urban growth. Below these groups, Roddy listed those that cost the city money (the takers) in order of severity. Those who were moderate drains were retirees on a fixed income. Clearly they lacked the disposable income to effectively consume urban space and all it has to offer. The worst category was "Criminals and Residents with children in Public School."[347] Roddy has echoed this sentiment elsewhere. Thirty-four St. Louis neighborhoods received less than $1 million in tax abatements from 2000-2014. The affluent Central West End, partly lying in Roddy's ward, received twice as much in abatements as the those thirty-four combined. When confronted by the fact that the city is subsidizing affluence at the expense of its public schools, Roddy claimed, "Residents in the central corridor often don't have kids, and if they do, their kids go to private schools…Basically, all the rest of society works to support families who have children in the school system. Children are very expensive."[348] When the purpose of civic governance is to assist in capital accumulation for the local global ruling class, then public provisions for the less wealthy public is drudgery, and those people themselves are parasites draining the city of its vitality.

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[347] Danny Wicentowski, "St. Louis Alderman Links Criminals and Public School Families in Slideshow Touting CWE Apartment Project," *Riverfront Times*, December 14, 2016, http://www.riverfronttimes.com/newsblog/2016/12/14/st-louis-alderman-links-criminals-and-public-school-families-in-slideshow-touting-cwe-apartment-project.

[348] Jeannette Cooperman, "How Owners of a $600,000 House Get Away with Paying $400 in Property Taxes," *St. Louis Magazine*, August 18, 2016, https://www.stlmag.com/news/spotblight/.

Revitalization is not about improving the city for all its residents. It is about making the city appeal to the interests of corporations and childless professionals while simultaneously making it unlivable for the poor, especially those with such unreasonable desires as having children and educating them in public schools.

As for the yet to be gentrified north side, the black families who already live in the area and might have children in SLPS also need not worry about threats to the SLPS's funding from St. Louis's civic entrepreneurs like Roddy. They can send their children to Pruitt school, now called KIPP Inspire Academy, which SLPS paid $200,000 to renovate after giving the charter franchise free access to the vacant property in 2015. SLPS built the Pruitt school in 1955 for the segregated (though officially desegregated) black children of the Pruitt-Igoe housing complex during Keynesian liberalism. The building sits adjacent to the still empty lot and now represents neoliberalism's version of segregated schooling and urban revitalization.

Like its Keynesian predecessor, neoliberal education in its unique and politically devolved ways is seeking to assimilate black public (charter) school students into its ideology of urban political-economy in the twenty-first century. NGA and Cortex partnered to create an annual sort of open house and mixer for STEM students and the public called the Geospatial Technology Exchange or GEOx. The global surveillance and military agency is very conscious about its role and brand in St. Louis. Although it has long been in the city, the NGA no longer wants to simply do the work of maintaining the U.S.'s global military hegemony, it wants to be a visible brand of the city, to "help catalyze urban renewal in a portion of the city that has suffered from neglect and disinvestment for decades." Cortex's president highlighted the benefits of rebranding the city by arguing, "As technology innovation becomes more deeply ingrained in our region's DNA, the addition of GEOx will bring an annually recurring event that will help make

metro St. Louis a hub for geospatial technologies."[349] Neoliberal urbanism's metonymy is relentless, but it reflects Harvey's central ideas about capitalism's spatio-temporal accumulation dynamics and categories of spatial representation. Cortex is not only the cyborg brain of urban redevelopment, it is actively engaged in reconstituting or restructuring the region's "DNA" in accord with geospatial surveillance and military hegemony and biotechnological innovations. Urban *revitalization* (etymologically a process for returning to life) ideologically fuses global and local power, the organic and the inorganic, and hard and soft forms of discipline in its efforts to remake urban life and space.

The Rise and Fall of Desegregation in St. Louis Public Schools

Brown was, without a doubt, a decisive victory against the country's false and racially stratified democracy, but it alone could not undo the damage wrought by decades of confining and exploiting black populations. Nor would it be a sufficient defense against the continuation and reconfiguration of such forms of exploitation. In the early 1950s, St. Louis was home to over half of Missouri's black schoolchildren with Kansas City accounting for all but about 12 percent of the remaining half.[350] During the years immediately following *Brown*, SLPS made a show of its efforts to desegregate and even won national acclaim in *Time* magazine for the relative quickness and lack of strife following the historic ruling.[351] However, Missouri was only quick or progressive in the number of previously all white schools that admitted at least some

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[349] Jacob Barker, "For First Time, NGA Holds Mapping Technology Conference in Cortex," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 21, 2016, http://www.stltoday.com/business/local/for-first-time-nga-holds-mapping-technology-conference-in-cortex/article_9177ba1f-17ac-5152-97d1-5ada52e9a369.html.
[350] Monroe Billington, "Public School Integration in Missouri, 1954-64," *The Journal of Negro Education* 35, no. 3 (Summer 1966): 254.
[351] Wells and Crain, *Stepping Over the Color Line: African-American Students in White Suburban Schools*, 85.

black students. The clear majority of schools that were either predominantly black or predominantly white remained so for close to two decades after *Brown*.

The fixed racial residential segregation in the city meant that the school district would have to rezone for the explicit purpose of desegregating, yet the few zoning changes made in the years following *Brown* suggest the district was more focused on mitigating desegregation mandates rather than segregation itself. A 1959 study by Missouri Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights found very little substantive change to St. Louis's highly segregated schools. Wells and Crain explain why:

> Behind the public praise of its 1954 plan, the St. Louis Board had made only minor adjustments to the attendance boundaries of sixteen of its eighty-four white elementary schools to include a small number of black students. No changes were made for forty-one white elementary schools, and in the remaining twelve, boundaries were redrawn to exclude black neighborhoods. The board also changed high school "feeder patterns" to ensure that students attending black elementary schools would enroll in either Sumner or Vashon. The boundaries of a white high school, Southwest, were redrawn to exclude blacks.[352]

Though it is reasonable to assume that white families had a sense of pride when it came to their neighborhood public schools before *Brown*, their loyalty developed a much sharper edge to it when confronted by the prospect of integration. As one black respondent to an Urban League survey saw it, "The closer Negroes got to any school, the more of a sanctuary it becomes."[353] White St. Louisan's newfound appreciation and protectionism for their beloved neighborhood schools was belied by the fact that they simultaneously fought for a system of open enrollment in which any student could attend a school of their choice as long as there were vacancies. That these two policies were contradictory did not seem to matter much to their white supporters. Open enrollment was a way for white families whose neighborhood schools were admitting

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[352] Ibid., 85–86.
[353] Lang, *Grassroots at the Gateway: Class Politics & Black Freedom Struggle in St. Louis, 1936-75*, 144.

black students to choose another school that had maintained their desired demographics. The practice was similar to the freedom of choice schools operating in the South.[354]

Neighborhood had a racial rather than exclusively geographic meaning. After the district had begun busing black students from overcrowded schools on the north side to slightly less overcrowded majority-black schools in other neighborhoods—often passing under-capacity white schools in the process—black parents complained of the district's efforts to maintain segregation. The SLPS board simply reaffirmed its commitment to "neighborhood schools" and argued "that school authorities were not obligated to change deliberately the character of a neighborhood or its school."[355] Such appeals to "neighborhood preservation" as a matter of racial and economic exclusion were not unique to the school board or even to St. Louis. The 1943 guide *Fundamentals of Real Estate Practice* instructed realtors (those who were not the profiteers of blockbusting) of their duties on the frontlines of protecting property values to deter unseemly prospective buyers who were looking to take advantage of respectable middle class neighborhoods. Threats the guide warned against include bootleggers, prostitutes, gangsters and "a colored man of means who was giving his children a college education and thought they were entitled to live among whites."[356] It is evident here that Roddy's recent association of black families who desire an education for their children with society's criminal elements is a well-entrenched trope.[357] Such overt racism began a process of transformation in the 1950s and 1960s into a sort of dog-whistle that retained the overall purpose of racial and class stratification but dropped the descriptive elements. In 1962, the American Institute for Real Estate Appraisers

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[354] Ibid.
[355] Billington, "Public School Integration in Missouri, 1954-64," 259.
[356] Quoted in Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City*, 83.
[357] Roddy never explicitly mentioned race in his slide linking criminals and families with public school children, but he likely is aware that SLPS is an 85 percent black school district, and, therefore, his word choice has racial implications.

affirmed the racial and economic connotations of *neighborhood* in defining the term as an "area exhibiting a fairly high degree of homogeneity as to housing, tenancy, income, and population characteristics."[358] The school board was simply (and nevertheless inexcusably) denying that it had the right to reconstitute neighborhoods by altering the income and population characteristics of neighborhood schools. In doing so, the board subtly upheld the prevailing view of the 1940s that, like criminal elements, black families wishing to educate their children presented a threat to the morals and more appropriately the property values of middle class neighborhoods.

St. Louis's black population had much less cause to glorify and preserve its neighborhoods and their schools. As the city's black population continued its rapid growth and the white population its decline, district gerrymandering and the contradictory calls for open enrollment and neighborhood school protectionism became logistically as well as morally untenable. The solution the board adopted during the early 1960s was to bus black students from the overcrowded schools on the north side to majority white schools, usually on the city's south side. The process known as intact busing solved two of the board's primary objectives: preserving segregation and easing the strain on segregated black facilities. Black children made up over 90 percent of those bused. They arrived at the majority-white schools after classes had already begun, attended classes as segregated units, used the cafeteria and other facilities at separate times than white students, and ended their school day after the rest of the school before being bused back to their segregated neighborhoods.[359] As with its plans immediately after *Brown*, St. Louis received national praise for its commitments to desegregation, and one University of Chicago study cited the board's actions as examples of good governance.[360] A

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[358] Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City*, 83.
[359] Billington, "Public School Integration in Missouri, 1954-64," 259; Wells and Crain, *Stepping Over the Color Line: African-American Students in White Suburban Schools*, 87.
[360] Heaney and Uchitelle, *Unending Struggle: The Long Road to an Equal Education in St. Louis*, 80.

coalition of black parents, activists from the NAACP and CORE, and St. Louis's black press were far less effusive about the busing, which they saw as closer to a Jim Crow form of schooling than the fulfillment of *Brown*. Protesters even blocked the path of buses, and after several demonstrations, began forming new advocacy groups that demanded real integration rather than the token use of the same facilities.[361]

The board's response to the failure of intact busing was an attempt to pacify the coalitions of black activists and solve the problem of overcapacity schools on the north side through new school construction. As with Sumner and Vashon during the first half of the twentieth century, the new school construction in all black neighborhoods was a Trojan horse for segregation. That the schools in St. Louis's heavily segregated black neighborhoods could no longer meet the needs of a rapidly growing black population was clear, but it was equally clear that the passage of a bond that secured funding to build nine new elementary schools in all black neighborhoods during the 1960s was an effort to contain black students within black neighborhoods and avoid *Brown*'s mandates.[362] The city, thus, rebuilt its public education infrastructure out of its desire to avoid desegregating its schools "with all deliberate speed." Thirty-five of the thirty-nine buildings the district constructed between 1954 and 1974 were attended primarily by black students either because they were built in hypersegregated black neighborhoods (as most were) or as a result of whites abandoning public schools in St. Louis's few racially mixed neighborhoods.[363] When it became clear that even new construction was insufficient to ease overcrowding, the board turned to portable classrooms and recommission older schools as a way of avoiding integration. The response from activists in the black

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[361] Lang, *Grassroots at the Gateway: Class Politics & Black Freedom Struggle in St. Louis, 1936-75*, 144–46.
[362] Wells and Crain, *Stepping Over the Color Line: African-American Students in White Suburban Schools*, 87.
[363] Heaney and Uchitelle, *Unending Struggle: The Long Road to an Equal Education in St. Louis*, 85.

community was to intensify their pressure on the school board and local leaders. By the time a coalition of parent activists filed their historic lawsuit *Liddell v. Board of Education of the City of St. Louis, Missouri* in 1972, the task of desegregating SLPS was far more difficult than it would have been had the board earnestly attempted to do so in 1954. White flight and the concentration of new school construction in segregated black neighborhoods had meant that intra-district desegregation was no longer a realistic solution since integrating all of SLPS's remaining white students would still leave several school almost exclusively black.

Minnie Liddell, the lead plaintiff in the lawsuit that would bring about the nation's largest inter-district desegregation program, was in many ways symbolic of black St. Louisans' struggles to build a life for themselves and their families despite racial and economic oppression. Like so many of her generation, Minnie moved to St. Louis from Mississippi as a very young child in the early 1940s. Her family moved into the highly segregated Mill Creek Valley a decade or so before it was razed in the name of renewal, and Minnie attended the city's overcrowded black schools until her mother's illness forced her to drop out of the ninth grade to help support the family. After marrying, Minnie and her husband Charles Liddell settled in another of the overcrowded black neighborhoods on the city's north side. The Liddells' children initially attended one of the new neighborhood schools that had been built to ease the overcrowding and avoid integration but were soon rezoned to one of the dilapidated schools that had been recommissioned to keep black students out of the predominantly white schools.[364]

Facing an enormous body of evidence that officials had been complicit and even zealous in their efforts to create and maintain a segregated public school system, the district signed a consent decree in 1974 that allowed it to deny any purposeful wrongdoing but obligated it to

[364] Ibid., 13–15.

implement a plan that would avoid racial isolation in its schools.[365] As the proposed plan worked its way through the courts, another major legal decision on school segregation, U.S. Supreme Court's *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974), determined that suburban school districts were required to participate in inter-district desegregation programs only if the courts could prove that they had acted with the intent to segregate urban schools. Otherwise, suburban involvement in desegregation was strictly voluntary. In 1979, district court judge James Meredith sided with the school district and argued that the intensified school segregation was the result of state and federal policies and the private choices of individual homeowners rather than district actions.[366] The plaintiffs appealed Meredith's ruling, and a year later the Eighth Circuit Court unanimously overturned the verdict. Gary Orfield, who had been the court appointed expert witness, had formulated a desegregation plan that involved the suburban school districts on a voluntary basis. Because St. Louis neighborhoods were so segregated, and because SLPS had lost so many of its white students to the suburbs and to private schools within the city since *Brown*, Orfield argued that intra-district segregation was no longer possible.[367] Even if it were possible to integrate some schools in the central and south side of the city, the north side, which had the worst educational and residential conditions would remain entirely segregated. Agreeing with Orfield, Meredith asked for the district to create more magnet schools, a facet of the solution that had been recommended initially by Minnie Liddell herself, and that it facilitate both an intra-district and inter-district transfer program if the transfers did not increase school segregation as they had during the years immediately after *Brown.* Meredith put together a desegregation framework that would be voluntary and mutually beneficial to the sending and receiving districts. The state

[365] Ibid., 86.
[366] Wells and Crain, *Stepping Over the Color Line: African-American Students in White Suburban Schools*, 92.
[367] Ibid., 93–94.

would be responsible for much of the costs of transportation and new school construction if necessary.[368] Because St. Louis's population was in freefall from 1970-1980—the school district's white student population dropped by almost half from 35,000 to 18,000—the court also asked that the district see to it that future school construction and closures not exacerbate segregation.[369] Then Missouri Attorney General John Ashcroft had vowed to fight all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court for a stay of the state's obligation to desegregate St. Louis's schools, but after that court rejected his petition, he was powerless to oppose the Eighth Circuit's ruling.[370]

In 1981, *Liddell*'s inter-district plan was turned over to Eighth Circuit Court Judge William Hungate. Hungate had a great deal of leverage for significant change. Not only had the court found state and federal policies responsible for St. Louis's housing segregation, but the successful appeal had also shown the district liable through its neighborhood school initiatives and racially motivated rezoning, and with the help of Orfield, Meredith's court had devised a model for how an inter-district program might function. What Hungate lacked was federal accountability for the government's role in facilitating housing and school segregation. The Eighth Circuit Court had the power to hold the state of Missouri accountable for its part, and although the court had similarly found the federal government liable, Reagan's Justice Department was not in the least interested in entertaining the prospect that the federal government would cover any of the costs or even admit its own culpability in issues of school segregation. In a sense, Reagan was correct when he famously said in his inaugural address that government was not the solution to our problem; government was the problem.

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[368] Heaney and Uchitelle, *Unending Struggle: The Long Road to an Equal Education in St. Louis*, 98.
[369] Ibid., 92.
[370] Ibid., 104.

The Reagan administration was not the only party hostile to Hungate's aggressive stance on desegregation. After becoming frustrated with the suburban counties' unwillingness to voluntarily involve themselves with the inter-district program, Hungate issued them an ultimatum: either they cooperate, or he would re-examine their culpability in creating St. Louis's segregated schools in the first place. If he found them guilty, which the evidence certainly suggested they were, he would personally consolidate the entire metropolitan area into one school district and force them to rezone for integration. His tactics earned him the reluctant cooperation of the suburban districts and the enmity of the region's angry white population. The local media referred to him as Attila the Hungate, and after numerous death threats, he had to be guarded by federal marshals.[371]

When the dust settled in 1983, however, St. Louis had established the largest inter-district school desegregation program in the nation's history with a goal of transferring 15,000 city students to county schools and 1,600 county students to magnet schools in the city. The final plan benefited both sending and receiving districts financially. The sending district continued to receive half of the state aid and all of the local money apportioned for every student transferred. The state paid the cost of tuition at the receiving district, which gave those districts added funds to improve the education of both the transfer and local students. The settlement also called for the state to assume half the costs of operating the magnet schools that existed at the time of the agreement and the full cost of any that might open after the agreement. Even with the transfers and the magnets achieving racial balance, several of the city's schools would remain heavily segregated. For those schools, the settlement established extra funding for updating facilities, capping teacher to student ratios at 20:1, providing remedial courses, and hiring added support

[371] Wells and Crain, *Stepping Over the Color Line: African-American Students in White Suburban Schools*, 98–100.

staff such as nurses and counselors. To avoid the displacement of black educators that had characterized past desegregation efforts, the settlement stipulated that the district take measures to guarantee that it maintained a racially balanced workforce. Hungate also halted a proposed property tax rollback that would have hampered the district's ability to pay for its share of the desegregation program. Ashcroft made opposition to the desegregation plan a centerpiece of his successful campaign for governor in 1984 and further petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court to end the state's obligation, but was denied again.[372]

SB 781 and the Neoliberalization of Education Policy

St. Louis's court-enforced desegregation program continued until 1999, when the state brokered an agreement that ended court supervision and put a ten-year cap on the state's continued obligation. Numerous factors contributed to the end of the desegregation program. Notably, many Missouri political careers were forged through fiery opposition to the intrusion of "big government" into the workings of Missouri's schools, particularly when that intrusion was the enforcement of an expensive desegregation program that was deemed unnecessary by some and was a source of resentment by others. The state's rural, white Republican power base had a visceral hatred of taxation, and that attitude certainly did not change when those funds went toward the significant expense of addressing historical racial discrimination in urban schools. Opposition to the desegregation settlement was, however, a bipartisan tradition. Jay Nixon (governor from 2009-2017) tried to get the Eighth Circuit to grant St. Louis unitary status and put an end to the desegregation program as early as 1993, when he was elected Missouri Attorney General, a post he held until being elected governor in 2009. Nixon had an ally in St.

[372] Heaney and Uchitelle, *Unending Struggle: The Long Road to an Equal Education in St. Louis*, 122–27.

Louis's first black mayor, Freeman Bosley Jr., who argued that the money spent on the transfer program was not doing anything to revitalize St. Louis's neighborhoods. Bosely argued that if the state were to redirect the transfer money toward neighborhood redevelopment, then white families would move back into the city, and the eventual result would be desegregation of the city's schools.[373] Bosley's rhetoric was clearly in keeping with the entrepreneurial ethos of St. Louis mayors who were always one big deal away from putting the city back on track, but the idea that the state would continue to disperse the funds after it had been released from its court enforced obligation to do so struck many as quixotic.[374]

In 1995, U.S. Supreme Court's *Missouri v. Jenkins* ruling found that the state's involvement in Kansas City's desegregation lacked sufficient proof that the suburban counties were liable. The decision also claimed that state involvement in desegregation should be limited in time and extent regardless of whether integration was achieved. This inspired Nixon to take another shot at ending St. Louis's plan in 1996. Again, he was unsuccessful, but a sense that an end to the program was inevitable became palpable in the late 1990s.[375] Even though the court had repeatedly refused to apply the *Jenkins* ruling to St. Louis, the fervor of bipartisan antipathy to St. Louis's desegregation program was enough to make many feel that a settlement was far better than the district reaching unitary status and the program simply ending.

The state laid the groundwork for its release from court-enforced desegregation with the passage of Senate Bill 781, which sought to end the era of educational equity through desegregation and usher in a new era of equity through accountability.[376] In other words, SB 781

[373] Ibid., 187.
[374] Wells and Crain, *Stepping Over the Color Line: African-American Students in White Suburban Schools*, 114.
[375] Ibid.; Heaney and Uchitelle, *Unending Struggle: The Long Road to an Equal Education in St. Louis*, 188.
[376] SB 781 was a massive reform bill, and since I discuss some of the provisions in the Cognate paper, I will limit my discussion here to those that most directly pertain to the desegregation settlements.

was the death knell of social protections and redistributions under Keynesian liberalism. Even though suburban participation in the 1983 Settlement was technically voluntary, their involvement was initially the result of Hungate's threats to redraw suburban-urban district boundaries. The program's financial benefits to the suburbs helped to ease that tension, but SB 781 removed federal oversight and, therefore, reduced the scale of the program and the incentives for voluntary participation since there was no one left with the motivation or power to redraw the district boundaries. SB 781 restructured the transfer program's coordinating committee as a nonprofit (the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation, VICC) and orchestrated a scale-down of the number of transfer students involved. Under the new voluntary program, the state provided $25 million per year for the first two years to cover transportation costs during the transitional phase with subsequent transportation costs calculated according to transportation aid within each student's residential district. By making the program totally voluntary, the state was able to affirm its long-held commitment to local control of school while also affirming the new guiding ethic of school reform: choice.

Far more substantial than the school choice program under the supervision of the VICC, SB 781 made Missouri the 34th state to legalize charter schools, while limiting their operation to cities with a population greater than 350,000.[377] This meant that charters could only operate in Kansas City and St. Louis, cities with the majority of the state's black population. The law requires that an accredited educational institution (a college or university, a local school district, or the Missouri Public Charter School Commission) sponsor the charters in an advisory capacity, but governance is left to each charter's board of directors. If a local school board denied a charter's application, the charter had the right to appeal. St. Louis Public Schools, which had

[377] At the time, this included St. Louis, but the statute has been revised down to account for the city's declining population as well as the desire of charter school advocates to expand beyond the state's two urban centers.

lost students to the suburbs and the city's private schools for decades, now had a new state-funded threat to its steadily declining enrollment within the city itself. According to the popular wisdom of charter advocates, competition would force the lax public schools to innovate and improve the quality of their services that had deteriorated due to monopoly power over public education, but St. Louis Public Schools had been struggling to remain viable for the previous half century. SLPS did not need a new source of competition to motivate it. Suburban schools, with their higher property values and explosive growth in population and industry underwritten by state and federal subsidies, had long since won that competition and was running up the score. As for innovation, the desegregation program itself, with its city magnet schools and mutually beneficial transfer financing, was an effort to innovate with curriculum and instruction and foster suburban-urban cooperation. The emergence of charters represented not so much external motivation but an effort to hollow out SLPS from within.

As with its charter school provisions, SB 781 outlined how to rebuild a school system, not just dismantle one. Loss of accreditation instituted the immediate disempowering of the elected school board and installed a three-person Special Advisory Board (SAB) with the members chosen by the city's mayor, the governor, and the local council of aldermen. The board had been a contentious battleground between zealous public school reformers, the politically ambitious, and anti-busing groups with ties to the racist Citizens' Council, whose logo shows the confederate flag and reads "States Rights; Racial Integrity."[378] While the latter's power had waned during the 1990s, their sentiment persists in pockets of the city and wide swaths of Missouri's suburban and rural electorate. The SAB represented the preference for the stability of neoliberal technocratic managerialism over raucous democratic governance.

[378] Wells and Crain, *Stepping Over the Color Line: African-American Students in White Suburban Schools*, 127–28.

With the legal groundwork laid for the end of desegregation, the final agreement was signed in early 1999. St. Louis was officially finished with court-enforced desegregation, but the *Liddell* case had continued to shape the neoliberal era of St. Louis Public Schools. The final agreement stipulated that the state pay into a transition fund over the next ten years that would eventually total $180 million. After the last payment was made to an escrow account in 2009, the state had fully ended its financial obligation to desegregating SLPS. SB 781 had also restructured Missouri's school financing, and one of the ways they made their sweeping reforms more palatable to the electorate was to tie $40 million in additional funding and a sales tax increase pending voter approval, which voters passed in February of 1999.[379] Even with the sales tax and additional state funds, the school district would be short $7-10 million per year.[380] Hanging SB 781 on the passage of a city sales tax was significant for several reasons. For one, it meant that St. Louis's tourists would pick up a sizable portion of the difference between what the state was paying under court-enforced desegregation and what it would pay to wind down the desegregation program—a further incentive for aligning urban revitalization with tourism.

SB 781 was engineered as long-term austerity via short-term generosity. The state favored the regressive sales tax because it prevented increases in other progressive forms of taxation like personal or corporate income tax and property taxes, which a state constitutional amendment caps at 10 cents for every $100 assessed value. Besides, increases in property taxes are of a limited value since the city is blanketed with tax abatements. At the same time, voters were unlikely to vote against the sales tax because many would see the act as withholding a much needed $23 million from the beleaguered district. Ballot rejection would have nullified SB

[379] Morris, "Forgotten Voices of Black Educators: Critical Race Perspectives on the Implementation of a Desegregation Plan," 594.
[380] Heaney and Uchitelle, *Unending Struggle: The Long Road to an Equal Education in St. Louis*, 199–200.

781, but instead it passed by a two-to-one margin.[381] Because the sales tax was essential to ending the desegregation program, the settlement stipulated that the funds it generated were to go to the "District schools" involved in desegregation. No charter schools fell into that category since charters had only been legalized in Missouri when SB 781 passed a few months earlier. When Missouri changed its school funding formula in 2006, it redirected sales tax funding to charter schools despite the fact that those funds were expressly for District schools involved in desegregation. To date, charters have received over $50 million in desegregation remediation funds generated through the misappropriated sales tax. In April of 2016, SLPS filed a lawsuit against the state after officials repeatedly ignored the district's requests to halt the misappropriation of funds. If the judge should rule that the charters must return the $50 million to the district, it is likely that many will close. The pending lawsuit exposes the tension at the different scales of territorial governance, a tension that is heightened by the devolved politics of neoliberalization. Ironically, the generally pro-charter appointed SAB has been the most effective opposition to the state's systemic efforts to divert funds from traditional public schools to charter schools.

Urban Neoliberalization and Accumulation by Dispossession

In the third chapter, I argued that the spatio-temporal processes of capital accumulation were consistent with the concentration of charter schools in St. Louis and the larger processes of urban neoliberalization. By devoting so much of this chapter to black St. Louisans' historic struggles for access to safe housing and access to quality education, I have attempted to deepen

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[381] Morris, "Forgotten Voices of Black Educators: Critical Race Perspectives on the Implementation of a Desegregation Plan," 594; Heaney and Uchitelle, *Unending Struggle: The Long Road to an Equal Education in St. Louis*, 199.

my analysis of St. Louis's transition from Keynesian liberalism to the neoliberalism. SB 781 marks a pivotal transition in educational policy and equity, but the proper metaphor is not the flipping of a switch—it is the turning of a corner. Neoliberalizing education policy did not come as a bolt from the blue; it was not even particularly innovative. In a sense, it was a new variation on an old theme. St. Louis had long sought to protect white wealth and educational space from the black poverty it had constructed through economic and urban policy. Before *Brown*, St. Louis showed its commitment to public education *and* racial segregation by building some of the country's most beautiful and innovative school buildings, two of which were segregated and overcrowded black schools. During the mid-twentieth century and immediately after *Brown*, St. Louis showed its commitment to segregated schooling through intact busing and massively overbuilding schools in the segregated and overcrowded black neighborhoods. The mid-century construction boom resulted in massive amounts of fixed capital stored in the built environment while the city's population had crested and was about to start losing hundreds of thousands of residents every decade. It was only in the *Liddell* Settlement (1983-1999) that the city and state ever earnestly and systematically pursued redistribution and desegregation. The Settlement was doomed from the start, but contrary to the bipartisan lamentations of the political elite who saw it as federal intrusion and wasted money, desegregation's shortcoming was that it did not go far enough. The program was in effect for less than sixteen years, and those sixteen years occurred when the city was so aggressively marketing itself to capital and residents that it had sacrificed its current and future tax base on the altar of revitalization. Redistribution and desegregation were aberrations. Neoliberalization, especially as was ensconced in the policy framework of SB 781, is a variation on the city's historic norms of racial segregation, capital accumulation, and the

creative destruction of urbanism. With this in mind, I turn to how SB 781 and the concentration of charter schools in St. Louis reflects accumulation by dispossession.

Harvey argues that accumulation by dispossession is a continuation of what Marx referred to as primitive accumulation and what Polanyi described as the state's role in creating and maintaining fictional commodities like land and labor power. Because the creation and expansion of the U.S. was predicated on the dispossession of indigenous peoples (many of whom had no concept that land could be *possessed* in the first place), the basic concept is painfully close to home in this country. Accumulation by dispossession in the neoliberal age has proceeded along similar lines, but it is more complicated than original accumulation since land is not just taken outright and developed but must be devalued and revalorized for capital accumulation to occur. Harvey breaks the process down into four elements: privatization, financialization, manipulation and management of crises, and state redistributions.[382] I will analyze SB 781 and the growth of charter schools in St. Louis according to these principles.

Privatization

One of the ways neoliberalization has sought to maintain the growth of primitive accumulation has been to commodify space that had set aside as commons. Common space has historically been created more often through struggle than through ruling class beneficence, and the struggle to maintain the *publicness* of spaces like public parks and public schools under neoliberalization has centered on maintaining their open (that is, inclusive) and nonmarket nature against efforts to either commercialize or commoditize the space. This struggle is difficult for reasons both structural and ideological. Common space and social protections expanded under

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[382] David Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development* (New York: Verso, 2006), 44–50.

Keynesian liberalism because they coincided with both domestic and global economic growth. When economic growth stagnated in the 1970s, the compromise was over and the state looked inward to extract profits. Public or common space in urban centers became an obvious target for two reasons: one, as Rachel Weber puts it, "neoliberal ideology dismisses most forms of public ownership and socially and privately unproductive,"[383] and two, as Neil Smith has argued, the inner city had become the "new urban frontier," where the "natives" and their "Hostile landscapes are regenerated, cleansed, reinfused with middle-class sensibility; real estate values soar; yuppies consume; elite gentility is democratized in mass-produced styles of distinction."[384] Put differently, the structural imperative to maximize profits and maintain growth levels reinforced a market ideology that had little inclination to protect or maintain nonmarket spaces like schools that it viewed either as opportunities for profit-generation or as parasites devouring surplus capital with little to show for it. If such spaces do not start generating profits, then like the "unused" land of the frontier, they should be (re)conquered, cleansed of their unproductive people and qualities, and recommodified. By massively expanding its education infrastructure to avoid desegregation (i.e. 35 of the 39 schools built from 1954 to 1974 being segregated black schools) SLPS created lots of new public space, especially in segregated neighborhoods that were already devalued and would be further devalued during the subsequent decades of population loss and intensified social unrest. The outflow of capital and residents to the suburbs and beyond segregated and devalued the urban core's property values and its schools, which were, after all dependent on the property values. Keynesian desegregation tried to redistribute both residents and capital from the well-fortified suburbs in the name of equity, but that only

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[383] Rachel Weber, "Extracting Value from the City: Neoliberalism and Urban Redevelopment," in *Spaces of Neoliberalism: Urban Restructuring in North America and Western Europe*, ed. Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 188.
[384] Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 13.

effectively lasted for less than two decades before the left and right hands of neoliberalism united to restore both class (and racial) discipline and profitability to the profligate and dysfunctional urban schools and neighborhoods. But while redistribution of students and funds from the state/suburbs to the city was just getting underway in 1983, urban entrepreneurialism with its full array of tax incentives was already in full effect.

St. Louis passed its first land redevelopment law in 1943. Like the charter school limitations, land clearance and redevelopment was initially restricted to St. Louis and Kansas City even though it was a state law. An amendment in 1945 (Chapter 353) allowed local and out-of-state developers access to tax abatement incentives for property deemed "blighted." This meant that local and out-of-state redevelopers could reshape St. Louis's built environment at the expense of the local tax base, but they relied on city official to declare the property blighted. The state aided urban redevelopment further when in 1951 it passed the Land Clearance and Redevelopment Act (Chapter 99), which allowed the city to assemble and clear land for redevelopment.[385] The two fit hand-in-glove. Chapter 99 allowed the city planners to assemble and clear property with the help of federal redevelopment grants, while Chapter 353 abated future taxes, often over 90 percent and for decades, on the property once capital had redeveloped it. Developers benefitted from the city clearing their land and slashing their future taxes, and the city government benefitted from new tax revenue streams other than the abated property taxes (e.g. earnings and sales taxes). Because public schools were and are funded by property taxes and not earnings or sales taxes, they were the sacrificial lambs of urban renewal. Two Washington University Economists were commissioned to study the effects of tax abatements on the school system during the early1980s, the very same time the *Liddell* desegregation settlement

[385] Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City*, 162–63.

was taking effect. The economists found "The developer (and possibly the landowner) thus is given one-sixth of the total value of his development in the form of abated property taxes by the 353 program, most of which is paid by the city school district."[386] With the school district so heavily subsidizing urban redevelopment, one would think the board would have some influence on where and which projects received tax abatements how much they would receive. It did not. Indeed, with the chaos of the balkanized region and the continual churn of redevelopment in the city, it was difficult for the board to even know how much money the schools were losing and how quickly they were losing it. As for authority over what was blighted and how much to abate, the board was similarly in the dark and kept out of the decision process. Before 1971, the city's Board of Aldermen reviewed each incentive request on a case-by-case basis, but in 1971, they declared the entire downtown blighted. That designation persisted even after the downtown had been redeveloped for business with its office buildings and for tourism with its iconic arch, hotels, and sports stadia. Older buildings, which were not blighted, had an incentive to declare themselves blighted so they could compete with newer abated properties.[387]

It was not just the downtown business and tourism district that was blanketed with abatements. A 1984 report found that "for the foreseeable future, property taxes would be abated for all new commercial and industrial and for 90% of residential construction."[388] Based on the 1984 city comptroller's report of abated property, the amount the school district would lose over the duration of those abatements—many of which spanned roughly the length of the city's desegregation program (1983-1999) and beyond—was $43.1 million with 1984 alone losing $5.7

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[386] Arthur T. Denzau and Charles Leven, "Report on Alternative Revenue Sources: Local Revenue Generation" (St. Louis: St. Louis Board of Education Advisory Committee, May 1985), V-5.
[387] Ibid., V-8–9.
[388] Ibid., ES-6.

million.[389] During the decade prior to SB 781's 1998 signing, the city abated over 4,500 parcels of residential, commercial, and industrial land, which amounted to 11 percent of taxable property. Taken together with nontaxed land owned by nonprofit entities, over half of property in the city of St. Louis paid little or nothing in property taxes.[390] In 1996—just two years before SB 781—the school board argued that SLPS was losing $17 million per year to abatements and called on Mayor Freeman Bosely, Jr. to stop all new commercial property tax abatements, halt abatement extensions being granted after the initial abatements' 25 year period had lapsed, and establish a civic task force to review the city's abatement procedures. Bosely did none of that and countered that it was not the city's entrepreneurial ethos that was the problem. After all, Bosely's own father was an alderman who had recently sponsored a bill to give a ten-year abatement to a pawn shop—not quite everyone's vision of urban renewal. The problem, according to Bosely, was the trope upon which all neoliberals rely: the wasteful public schools are not good stewards of the funds they have.[391] As I have already pointed out, Bosely was actively working to end the city's desegregation program and rather astonishingly hoped that its state funding would be diverted to his city's ongoing process of urban renewal and efforts to desegregate by attracting white families back into St. Louis's residential neighborhoods. Although 70 percent of the abatements were residential, those were largely within majority-white and gentrified neighborhoods, where the schools were either zoned to preserve white majority or the white majority simply was not sending their kids to public schools.

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[389] Ibid., ES-7.

[390] Linda Tucci, "City Addicted to Abatement," *St. Louis Business Journal*, January 11, 1998, http://www.bizjournals.com/stlouis/stories/1998/01/12/story1.html; Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City*, 216.

[391] Joan Little, "City Public Schools Find That Abatements Are Too Taxing; Breaks Deprive System of $17 Million a Year," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, June 3, 1996.

Despite the loss of the city's population, the loss of white buy-in to public education, and the loss of its property tax revenues in an effort to appeal to prospective businesses and white residents, St. Louis Public Schools made considerable improvements to infrastructure and services for both urban and suburban students under the *Liddell* desegregation settlement.[392] Such improvements were either doubted altogether or deemed unworthy of the state's increased expenses. When SB 781 came up for a vote in the Missouri State Senate, only eight senators voted against it. One was St. Louis Democrat J.D. Banks, who disagreed with the provision to turn SLPS governance over to a three-member appointed board upon losing accreditation, and the other seven were rural and suburban Republicans who thought the state was too generous to St. Louis and Kansas City in its desegregation severance package.[393] No one was apparently that concerned with the mountain of evidence that St. Louis had given away SLPS's past, present, and future funding to corporations, (mostly white) St. Louis residents, and property redevelopers in what is perhaps best described as a revitalization-industrial complex. Such a lack of concern is not surprising. The suburban and rural power blocs of state government certainly had no problem with such practices, and the politicians from St. Louis are the ones either directly or indirectly involved.

No one was, in fact, more intimately involved with SB 781's charter school provision than the property redevelopers themselves. The author of the bill's charter school language was William Kuehling, a lawyer who specializes in urban neoliberalization. Kuehling now works for

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[392] Heaney and Uchitelle, *Unending Struggle: The Long Road to an Equal Education in St. Louis*; Wells and Crain, *Stepping Over the Color Line: African-American Students in White Suburban Schools*.
[393] Virginia Young, "SENATE ADVANCES PROPOSAL TO SETTLE DESEGREGATION CASE SCHOOLS WOULD KEEP MOST OF THEIR MONEY TAX BOOST IN CITY WOULD BE NEEDED," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 2, 1998, B1.

one of St. Louis's most powerful law firms, Thompson Coburn, LLP. To get the full scope of Kuehling's area of expertise, it is worth quoting his company biography at length:

> Developers, nonprofit corporations, and public entities seek Bill's varied and extensive background in real estate transactions and infrastructure finance. Bill focuses his practice on real estate development, public/private partnerships, land use, and municipal law…This work includes the acquisition, sale, construction, development, financing and leasing of projects. He also has experience in governmental incentives for development, including tax increment financing, tax abatement, tax sharing agreements, community improvement districts, neighborhood improvement districts, and transportation development districts. *Clients with unique needs seek Bill's assistance with controversial land use and zoning issues, including obtaining zoning, demolition, and building permit approval over significant public opposition.* This includes work in historic districts.[394]

If legalizing charter schools in the state of Missouri and restricting their operation to the only two majority-black urban districts in the state were truly about the failures of desegregation to significantly improve urban education, it would be an odd choice to have a lawyer who specializes in securing the very tax incentives that systemically defunded SLPS create such a policy solution to educational inequity. If charter schools were really about, say, revalorizing urban space devastated by policy-induced and supported segregation and deindustrialization, perhaps even "over significant public opposition," then there could hardly be a better man for the job. Kuehling praised his work in saying that Missouri's charter school legislation was better than most states' because it placed no caps on the number of charter schools that could open—provided they were in either St. Louis or Kansas City, of course—and there was little local education boards could do to stop charters from opening since charters secured their authorization through Missouri universities or the state board of education itself.[395] In other words, significant public opposition was no obstacle.

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[394] Thompson Coburn LLP, "William J. Kuehling," accessed January 23, 2017, http://www.thompsoncoburn.com/people/find-a-professional/william-kuehling.aspx. My emphasis.
[395] Linda Tucci, "Strauss, Baron Heading Efforts for City's Alternative Schools," *St. Louis Business Journal*, February 16, 1997, http://www.bizjournals.com/stlouis/stories/1997/02/17/story4.html.

While Kuehling's legal and technical expertise in urban neoliberalization was useful in drafting SB 781's charter provisions, he had significant help from the developers themselves. The "pioneers" of urban revitalization saw charter schools as an important new tactic in their (re)conquest of the urban frontier. Like Kuehling, St. Louis's blight barons had well established relationships with city officials and knew the complexities of the full array of tax incentives. Three of the most vocal proponents of charters and school governance reform were Craig Heller of Pyramid Construction, Leon Strauss of Pantheon Group, and Richard Baron of McCormack Baron Salazar.[396] Heller's mantra in lobbying for the charter school legislation was "Build them and they will come."[397] He was referring to the potential for charter schools to attract families back into the city, specifically to the 75 properties he was developing in the struggling Eads Park neighborhood. Heller claimed that SLPS's image problem was a significant obstacle to neighborhood revitalization. Middle class families did not want to invest in neighborhoods with "underperforming" schools. Property values could rise, however, if Heller and other developers were able to market the new forms of school choice to prospective buyers. Heller's Pyramid Construction was most successful in rehabbing St. Louis's many shuttered brick buildings as chic lofts in the downtown corridor, but the *pièce de résistance* of gentrification via mixed-income community development is attracting middle class professionals with children back into the city. As Smith claimed, the neighborhoods had to be "cleansed" and made fit for middle class consumption. Moreover, charter schools' frequent branding tropes—the ubiquity of *Preparatory*, *Collegiate*, and *Academy*—confirms Smith's claim that "elite gentility is democratized in mass-produced styles of distinction."[398]

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[396] Ibid.
[397] Samuel Autman, "What About Here? Proponents, Opponents State Their Case About Plan," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, March 23, 1997, A 9.
[398] Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*, 13.

As is often the case with the boom and bust cycles of urban revitalization, Pyramid Construction had its good and bad years. In 2007, both Heller and Steffen were invited to the White House where First Lady Laura Bush presented them with the Preserve America Presidential Award. In 2010, John Steffen was indicted for fraud after allegedly putting up tax credits as collateral for a loan and then bundling and selling those same tax credits and dumping the proceeds into another development project.[399] Heller, who parted ways with Steffen to form his own company LoftWorks, has also seen his fortune turn. As a consultant who helped assemble riverfront property as part of the failed attempt in 2015 to keep the NFL Rams football franchise in St. Louis, Heller received $12,500 per month from public-private partnership Downtown STL, Inc. In September of 2015, a judge handed Heller $7 million judgement for defaulting on $12 million in loans, which in tandem with $290,000 in unpaid federal taxes, led to Heller's decision to file for bankruptcy in February of 2016.[400] The connection between Heller's early fight to bring charter schools to St. Louis and his involvement with the hallmark of neoliberal urban revitalization, stadium construction, runs deeper than his lucrative taxpayer funded consulting fee. His former partner in bringing charter schools to St. Louis, William Kuehling, sits on the governing board of Downtown STL, Inc.

In his efforts to lobby legislators and the general public to get behind SB 781, Heller worked closely with Leon Strauss, the retired head of one of St. Louis's most (in)famous urban renewal firms, Pantheon Corp. While Heller was trying to bring charter schools to the Eads Park neighborhood he was investing in, Strauss was trying to open a charter (possibly at a vacant

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[399] Chad Garrison, "John Steffen: Owner of Pyramid Construction Indicted for Fraud," *Riverfront Times*, August 13, 2010, http://www.riverfronttimes.com/newsblog/2010/08/13/john-steffen-owner-of-pyramid-construction-indicted-for-fraud.
[400] Staff Report, "Downtown St. Louis Developer Craig Heller Files for Bankruptcy," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, February 6, 2016, http://www.stltoday.com/business/local/downtown-st-louis-developer-craig-heller-files-for-bankruptcy/article_96536c35-0d5d-54e2-a921-4f2da5ccbba1.html.

SLPS property) to accompany new home construction in the Forest Park Southeast neighborhood he and a local healthcare group were trying to redevelop. According to Strauss, charters "could help stem the exodus of people out from the city."[401] To reach his target audience, Strauss had formed a 501(c)3 called the Charter Schools Information Center and placed suburban Clayton education reform activist Laura Friedman at its helm. While Strauss and Heller's discourse reflected the market-tested optimism of people who had spent their careers pitching property redevelopment to financiers and city officials, Friedman had the zeal of a crusading reformer. For Friedman, charters were obviously "the winning option," since they "allow businesses and foundations to see the clear results of their investment" unlike traditional public schools whose poor test performance was a clear indicator that "private dollars, as well as tax dollars, need to be better spent."[402] Friedman unsurprisingly offered no comment on the hundreds of millions tax dollars that abatements and other incentives had converted to "private dollars." Charters were the winning option not just because they promised businesses and foundations greater returns on investment; they also offered the institution discipline lacking in public schools. Friedman argued that "The charter school law also gives the local board both the big stick of accountability and the carrot of true site-based management. As sponsors, or in conversions of existing schools, school boards use the charter tool to demand, and receive, results."[403] While Strauss positioned himself as a sort of elder statesman who came out of retirement to help his city when needed, he was no stranger to accumulation through class discipline. Strauss was most famous for the iconic Fabulous Fox Theater, which was nearly in ruins when he began the public-private partnership of redeveloping the property in the 1970s. Strauss may have had great success with

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[401] Tucci, "Strauss, Baron Heading Efforts for City's Alternative Schools."
[402] Laura Friedman, "The Winning Option of Charter Schools," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, December 28, 1998, sec. Opinion.
[403] Ibid.

the city's cultural attractions, but his record with housing is much more contentious. In the 1970s, Pantheon used public subsidies and the city's loose definition of *blight* to clear out 500-800 families who were low-income rental tenants in order to make way for a condominium development. When those families brought a lawsuit seeking federal relocation monies, the courts denied their request on the grounds that Pantheon's project was one of private development rather than public purpose.[404] Such is the benefit of the public-private partnership. The public aids private development with tax incentives, while shielding private developers from the public.

Richard Baron has certainly eclipsed his St. Louis charter school compatriots in terms of national influence. Baron pushed for site-based management schools within neighborhoods his company was redeveloping.[405] These schools share the same autonomy as charters but would preserve the local board as affiliated albeit largely powerless governing institution. Baron's firm, McCormack Baron Salazar (MBS) is the darling of national neoliberal mixed-income housing development. MBS has built a fortune and its reputation on the transition from the era of large-scale government investments in public housing under Keynesian liberalism to depoliticized neoliberal community revitalization projects like Choice Neighborhoods and Hope VI. These programs seek to deconcentrate poverty through building mixed-income communities that include "revitalized" schools. One such example in MBS's portfolio is the Centennial Place and Centennial Academy charter school in Atlanta, which the company built after demolishing Techwood Homes, the country's first housing project built in 1936 by Roosevelt's Public Works Administration to address the need for adequate housing during the throes of the Great Depression. Critics of MBS's mixed-income redevelopments have argued that they are

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[404] Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City*, 211.
[405] Tucci, "Strauss, Baron Heading Efforts for City's Alternative Schools."

instrumental in privatizing public institutions like housing and schools and end up displacing far more low-income residents than they integrate into new development, essentially revitalization through gentrification.[406] Baron was interested in making his neoliberal neighborhood revitalization project in St. Louis's Carr Square neighborhood "a demonstration project for the welfare-to-work effort in Missouri," arguing that with the help of corporate philanthropies, Carr Square could be "a prototype for what a quality neighborhood school might look like in one of the city's poorest neighborhoods."[407] His company's subsequent profitability is a testament to his school reform experiments in St. Louis. MBS is also heavily involved in revitalizing vacant SLPS property through its close partnership with the district's Building Revitalization Collaborative, including several of the historic Ittner-designed buildings. The education reforms Baron helped to usher in put further pressures on an already strained public system, which has resulted in declining numbers and further neighborhood school closures. The robust vacant school property market continues to create opportunities for MBS's many ventures in mixed-income development.

Financialization

The privatization of public space depends upon deregulating whatever policies create and maintain that space and reregulating through new governing bureaucracies and partnerships. Finance takes new and more complex forms within these new bureaucracies and partnerships. Trading tax incentives as currency, borrowing from presumed future elevated tax increments to

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[406] For critiques of McCormack, Baron & Salazar's work in New Orleans, see Jay Arena, "A People's Reconstruction," *Jacobin*, August 28, 2015, https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/08/katrina-ten-year-anniversary-public-housing-charter-schools/; Jay Arena, "New Orleans, Public Housing and the Non-Profit Industrial Complex," *Counterpunch*, July 10, 2007, http://www.counterpunch.org/2007/07/10/new-orleans-public-housing-and-the-non-profit-industrial-complex/.
[407] Tucci, "Strauss, Baron Heading Efforts for City's Alternative Schools."

finance present development through TIF, classifying profitable property as *blighted* to receive new abatements for new development—these and countless other practices endemic to St. Louis illustrate the bizarre, illogical, and often only quasi-legal financial processes of urban neoliberalization. With charter legislation created and promoted by such pioneers and innovators, it is not surprising that Missouri's charter school financing is both arcane and vulnerable to corruption.

In Chapter One, I described the rapid expansion and the closure of Imagine, Inc. schools in St. Louis and Kansas City. I will, therefore, be very brief in illustrating how those forms of financialization support the process of accumulation by dispossession. Imagine, Inc.'s wealth extraction is most easily and clearly summarized by the graphic below, which the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* created following their investigation into the for-profit charter company's real estate transactions. The graphic shows how Imagine acquired properties through subsidiary companies and flipped them to other subsidiaries of property management companies like Entertainment Properties Trust. The subsidiaries generated massive profits with each sale, while rental prices skyrocketed to maintain profitability. To maintain profitability for all involved, Imagine dramatically increased the rents. Increased rent payments meant that the school spent less and less on its side project of educating St. Louis's racially and economically segregated school children.

Notice how often Samuel Glasser appears in the graphic. Glasser is a local property developer who had been convicted of conspiracy to import cocaine in the 1970s and who pleaded guilty to bank fraud in 2011.[408] Glasser first got into the charter school market when in 2003 he

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[408] Elisa Crouch, "Imagine Schools Executive Named in Contractor's Bank Payments," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 30, 2011, http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/education/imagine-schools-executive-named-in-contractor-s-bank-payments/article_c1c363e4-b7fb-5d19-8f12-a592e5f7d3d3.html.

leased one of his properties to a charter operator that Imagine would later acquire. When Imagine was expanding rapidly in St. Louis in 2006-2007, Glasser offered two vacant SLPS properties he had acquired by listing non-educational plans on his sales agreements with the district as a way of circumventing the board's policy against selling to charter school operators.[409] Glasser flipped the properties to SchoolHouse Finance, a subsidiary and property acquisition arm of Imagine, for $665,000 more than he paid the district a matter of months earlier. As the owner of the general contracting company Samuel & Co., Glasser then made nearly $1 million more in profits and fees for rehabbing Imagine's newly acquired properties. The neoliberal state chipped in its part when the Missouri Department of Economic Development awarded Glasser nearly $500,000 in historic tax credits, which he then charged Imagine an additional $150,000 to apply.[410]

Imagine had no cause for alarm at Glasser's profiteering; it was all part of the plan. Figure 4 traces the details of Imagine, Inc.'s real estate transactions.[411] The EMO was flush with cash from a real estate trust funded by Joseph E. Robert, Jr., an investor and "philanthropist" who made billions off distressed properties during the federal government's savings and loans crisis during the 1980s.[412] A Kansas City-based property management corporation called Entertainment Properties Trust owned Robert's trust (JERIT CS Fund I) along with 26 Imagine School, Inc. properties across the country. Acting through its subsidiary SchoolHouse Finance, Imagine sold its St. Louis schools to Entertainment Properties for ten times what it paid Glasser.

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[409] Elisa Crouch, "Imagine Schools' Real Estate Deals Fuel Company Growth," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 30, 2011, http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/education/imagine-schools-real-estate-deals-fuel-company-growth/article_dbf9b959-0c73-586c-97e7-6fca3a729b39.html.
[410] Ibid.
[411] Josh Renaud, "Graphic: Imagine Schools Real Estate Deals" (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 30, 2011), http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/education/graphic-imagine-schools-real-estate-deals/pdf_0a1956dc-0279-11e1-8458-001a4bcf6878.html.
[412] Diana B. Henriques, "Joseph E. Robert Jr., Investor in Real Estate, Dies at 59," *New York Times*, December 8, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/09/business/joseph-e-robert-jr-investor-in-real-estate-dies-at-59.html.

Entertainment Properties then leased the buildings back to SchoolHouse Finance in order to extract rental income, which is why Imagine's St. Louis schools spent approximately 15-21 percent of its state revenues on rent. For comparison, a locally run charter, City Garden Montessori, spent less than 4 percent of its revenues on rent during the same year.[413] On top of the rent, Imagine extracted 12 percent of each school's annual revenues as operating costs and imposes a series of additional administrative fees.[414] With so much money meeting the needs of rent-seeking capitalists, comparatively little was left over for actually educating St. Louis's most impoverished students. It should come as no surprise that Imagine's state-mandated performance scores were some of the lowest in the city. I do not wish to suggest that student performance data is at all a reliable indicator of quality public education. It is, nonetheless, significant that Imagine spent so little on educating the 3,800 students in its six St. Louis schools it could not even afford to play the "accountability" game. When the state closed Imagine's St. Louis schools in 2012, it cited their poor performance rather than their property profiteering as the reason, effectively sending the message that the extraction and upward redistribution of millions of public education dollars is fine as long as it produces the "results" demanded by neoliberal public school accountability regimes.

If Imagine seems like an egregious example of accumulation by dispossession, or if the fact that St. Louis (and Kansas City) eventually closed Imagine's schools after they had funneled millions of dollars to their financiers and property developers is a source of comfort or evidence of a working system, it is worth a reminder that Imagine is still one of the largest charter school operators in the country. While now officially a nonprofit, it is run by many of the same profiteers, and it maintains its significant footprint in the segregated cities of the Rust Belt. It is

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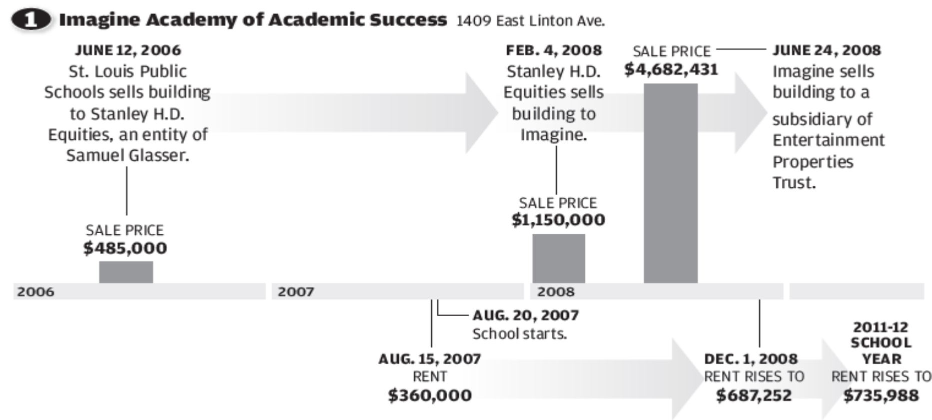
[413] Crouch, "Imagine Schools' Real Estate Deals Fuel Company Growth."
[414] Ibid.

also worth a reminder that, even when charter schools are independently operated with the best of intentions, their ties to global bond markets and local rental property intensify financialization.

IMAGINE SCHOOLS REAL ESTATE DEALS

As Imagine Schools Inc. has opened charter schools in St. Louis, it has engaged in a chain of real estate transactions that have resulted in escalating costs for school buildings. Most buildings are bought and sold at least twice. After each sale, the rent – paid with state education funds – rises. Imagine officials say the increases in sale prices reflect renovation costs.



TRANSACTIONS AT OTHER IMAGINE CHARTER SCHOOLS

2 Imagine Academy of Careers Middle School
1901 N. Kingshighway

April 5, 2007: Samuel Glasser represents Imagine in buying building from St. Louis Public Schools for $750,000.

Aug. 20, 2007: First day of school.

Sept. 1, 2007: Lease agreement calls for $556,000 in annual base rent.

June 24, 2008: Imagine sells building to JERIT CS Fund I, a subsidiary of Entertainment Properties Trust, for $3,545,877.

Dec. 1, 2008: Base rent rises to $687,252.

3 Imagine Academy of Environmental Science and Math
1008 South Spring Avenue

March 1, 2006: St. Louis University sells building to Imagine for $1.95 million.

Jan. 2008: Students begin using building.

Jan. 7, 2008: Lease agreement calls for annual base rent of $1,989,960.

June 24, 2008: Imagine sells building to JERIT CS Fund I for $22,763,039.

Dec. 1, 2008: Base rent rises to $2.28 million.

4 Imagine College Prep Academy
706 North Jefferson

April 12, 2005: Phillips Lucas Property, managed by Mark Phillips, an Imagine board member, sells building to Imagine for $1.5 million.

Oct. 1, 2007: Imagine sells building to JERIT CS Fund I for about $11.5 million.

July 1, 2008: School agrees to pay a base annual rent of $1,646,364.

Aug. 14, 2008: First day of school for Imagine College Prep.

5 Imagine Academy of Cultural Arts
1509 Washington Avenue

Building is co-managed by Samuel Glasser.

Aug. 2010: First day of school. Board agrees to pay Glasser annual rent of $720,000.

6 Imagine Academy of Careers Elementary
3740 Marine Avenue

June 9, 2006: Salvation Army sells building to 3740 Marine Associates LLC, an entity of Samuel Glasser, for $1.6 million.

June 9, 2006: 3740 Marine Associates sells building to Imagine for $1.95 million.

Aug. 20, 2007: First day of school.

Sept. 1, 2007: Base rent is $556,000.

June 24, 2008: Imagine as Marine Schoolhouse LLC sells building to JERIT CS FUND I for $4,394,798.

Dec. 1, 2008: Base rent rises to $687,252.

SOURCE: St. Louis records and leases and information provided by Imagine Schools | Post-Dispatch

Figure 4: Imagine, Inc.'s Real Estate Transactions

The Management and Manipulation of Crises

To a great extend this whole chapter—perhaps the entire dissertation—is a sustained study of the management and manipulation of crises. Structural critiques of political economy and racism naturally tend toward analyses of how inherently social issues are created and subsequent "solutions" created and recreated in such a way as to make perpetual intervention necessary. Capitalism demands uneven development and cycles of creative destruction to meet its insatiable demands for growth. Such imperatives are inherently contradictory and unstable. They exhaust the land and its resources and must search for new land and resources. They exhaust the lower classes through slavery and wage-labor and must, therefore, search for new lower classes and forms of slavery. State intervention must always be at the ready to rescue capitalism from its cycles of creation and destruction, but the state is vulnerable to the same contradictory impulses. It creates a commons, a public space, to shelter society from the market, only to enclose that space when market logic dictates such protections are no longer necessary, and as Karl Polanyi claims, enclosures are "a revolution of the rich against the poor."[415] It was the crisis of overcrowded, underfunded, and segregated public schools that drove Minnie Liddell to organize parents and file a class action suit against St. Louis Public Schools in 1972. These schools reflected the political economy of the city and the families' overcrowded, underfunded, and segregated neighborhoods. For a brief period, the state created a system for rebuilding and re-envisioning public education space in the full material, relative, and representational sense of the word. No policy is perfect, and the 1983 Liddell Settlement was no exception, but it did unite grassroots community activism with sustained academic study in an effort to force the state to respond to social injustices that it had created and maintained. Its most significant

[415] Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 37.

shortcoming was that it did not and could not address the political economy and social relations that led to economically and racially segregated neighborhoods and schools. It, therefore, became one more crisis to manage and manipulate, and those new spaces of desegregation became one more commons to enclose.

Like many public school boards, SLPS's board and district educators were suspicious of charter schools, especially in relation to the other "accountability" reforms contained within SB 781. If the district lost accreditation due to poor student test performance, the state board could close the school or convert it to a charter. Teacher and administrator contracts would be voided, and the educators would have to apply for other positions in the district or at their old place of employment now under new management. Missouri law prohibit public school teachers from striking, so there was little organized labor could do to oppose SB 781's disciplining of educators. As for the school board, loss of accreditation meant the elected board was dissolved and replaced by the appointed three-member Special Advisory Board (SAB). As early as 1999, Missouri Education Commissioner Robert Bartman tried to revoke the district's accreditation, but the 1999 settlement agreement stipulated a grace period until at least 2002.[416]

As I previously stated, SB 781's charter provisions and accountability reforms totally changed the policy landscape of public education in Missouri, but charters were initially slow to get off the ground in St. Louis. Even though board approval was not necessary for opening charters, the transition to full neoliberalization of public education policy and practice in St. Louis would run more smoothly with a friendly school board, at least until the state board could revoke accreditation. In 2002, St. Louis's mayor, Francis Slay, partnered with the Regional Business Council to jointly run four candidates for four open seats on the elected school board,

[416] Heaney and Uchitelle, *Unending Struggle: The Long Road to an Equal Education in St. Louis*, 198.

which SB 781 had reduced the size of from twelve to seven members elected at large. Mayor Slay lent the candidates $50,000 of his own campaign funds and put together a coalition of local corporations that raised a total of $235,000.[417] With the help of former board member and educational liason Robbyn Wahby—currently the Executive Director of the Missouri Charter Public School Commission, which oversees all Missouri charters—Slay selected candidates who shared his views of reform. Among them was former mayor and champion of public-private partnerships and urban revitalization, Vincent Schoemehl. When all four candidates won, the city entrepreneurs had an immediate majority, and their first act of business was to hire corporate school turnaround firm Alvarez & Marsal for a one-year, $5 million contract.[418] Alvarez & Marsal immediately installed one of its own partners, William Roberti, as acting superintendent of St. Louis public schools despite his total lack of experience in educational administration. As the district's "Chief Restructuring Officer," Roberti received $675 an hour to impose austerity on the financially struggling district. The former CEO of Brooks Brothers understood saw his new job in the exact same terms as his old one: "It is ordinary business as far as I'm concerned…We've got logistic problems, we've got distribution problems, we've got organizational problems, we've got systemic problems, we've got finance problems…Whether I was a CEO of a clothing company or a manufacturing company, or whatever, I've always been a problem solver."[419] Roberti's program of "problem solving" included closing sixteen schools (twelve of which were in the city's poorest neighborhoods on the north side); laying off 1,463 district employees; and upping the student to teacher ratios to 26:1 for elementary schools, 28:1

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[417] D.J. Wilson, "Demolition Man," *Riverfront Times*, July 9, 2003, http://www.riverfronttimes.com/stlouis/demolition-man/Content?oid=2465558. See also Rebecca Rogers, "In the Aftermath of a State Takeiver of a School District: A Case Study in Public Consultative Discourse Analysis," *Urban Education* 47, no. 5 (2012): 915.
[418] For discussion of Alvarez & Marsal's work in post-Katrina New Orleans, see Kenneth J. Saltman, *Capitalizing on Disaster: Taking and Breaking Public Schools* (Boulder: Paradigm, 2007), 40–44.
[419] Wilson, "Demolition Man."

for middle schools and 31:1 for high schools.[420] Roberti and the other partners at Alvarez and Marsal had little concern about blowback from their draconian cuts. The firm and Roberti were hired on contract and had no plans to remain in St. Louis after their "restructuring" was complete. The school board knew exactly how Roberti planned to save money when they hired Alvarez and Marsal. During his initial pitch to a selection committee, Tony Alvarez, the firm's co-founder, was asked about how to handle public opinion in the face of such drastic cuts. He responded with a private sector solution: hire a PR firm.[421] This is the hallmark of urban neoliberalization: create and reinforce structural crises of uneven development, cut aid and social safety nets, upwardly distribute resources, and manage political consequences by marketing the process as successful reform.

The public mounted a counter-reform effort, and by 2006, several of the mayor's four corporate reform candidates had lost re-elections and their majority. In 2007, the state stripped SLPS of its accreditation, which per SB 781 dissolved the elected board's authority and installed the three-member SAB appointed by Governor Matt Blunt, Mayor Slay, and the President of the St. Louis Board of Aldermen. Mayor Slay selected Melanie Adams, who had worked with one of his four reformer candidates at the Missouri Historical Society and who was also the former Executive Director for Teach for America in St. Louis. In 2016, Adams left the SAB to take a position in Minnesota. Slay replaced her with Darnetta Clinkscale, who was one of the four candidates he and the business community successfully ran back in 2002. If nothing else, Slay shows persistence in his defiance of the public's opposition to his preferences for who governs the city's schools.

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[420] Heaney and Uchitelle, *Unending Struggle: The Long Road to an Equal Education in St. Louis*, 208.
[421] Wilson, "Demolition Man."

For the position of Superintendent, the SAB selected Kelvin Adams in 2008, the former chief of staff for Paul Vallas's Recovery School District in New Orleans. Adams had no previous experience in running an urban school district, yet he had plenty of experience in restructuring one. Because an unaccredited board cannot authorize charter schools, Adams and the SAB have had a limited role in charter expansion in St. Louis despite what their property dealings with KIPP suggest. It is the state politics of accreditation—in tandem with local politics of spatial redevelopment—that has engineered the revanchist reversal of desegregation and the expansion of charter schools. The 1983 Liddell settlement made student transfer financially beneficial for both sending and receiving districts. Why such a provision is necessary should be obvious. If urban schools are structurally, administratively, or even pedagogically unsound, losing money from student transfers would certainly not improve their circumstances. Similarly, suburban schools, even under federal enforcement, would not have graciously participated as long as they did if they had had to assume the added costs without compensation. It is the state that bore most of the costs of student transfers and magnet school construction and operation. The administrative restructuring that accompanied loss of accreditation under SB 781 complimented an earlier reform. Missouri's Outstanding Schools Act of 1993 required unaccredited schools districts to cover the costs of transportation and tuition of any student wishing to attend an accredited district of their choice.[422] Thus, it was a sort of inversion of the desegregation program. After the state board revoked SLPS's accreditation in 2007, a group of parents (all of them white) who lived in the city but had previously paid tuition for their children to attend public schools in Clayton, the seat of St. Louis County and an affluent suburb known for its high quality public schools, demanded Clayton request reimbursement from SLPS

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[422] Missouri Revised Statutes, "Pupils and Special Services," § sec. 167.131 (2000), sec. 167.131, http://www.moga.mo.gov/mostatutes/stathtml/16700001311.HTML.

according to the 1993 statute. When Clayton refused on the grounds that SLPS under the governance of the "transitional" SAB was not a traditional district and, therefore, was an exception to the statute, the parents sued. The initial summary judgement of *Turner v. School District of Clayton* (2007) sided with the Clayton school district, but the Missouri Supreme Court reversed that judgement in 2010. Missouri's highest court argued that the relevant statute was unambiguous in demanding that an unaccredited district is responsible for transportation and tuition costs for any student wishing to attend school in a neighboring district, and *unaccredited* means the same thing whether the district is governed by the elected or the appointed board.[423] The costs associated with the accountability transfer program (as opposed to the desegregation transfer program) fell entirely on the district and presented an existential threat.

SB 781 began the process of ending the 1983 Liddell settlement, but the end of desegregation was not finalized until a year later with the 1999 Liddell settlement. The 1999 settlement determined that the state would continue making set payments for ten years to wean the district from the desegregation funding upon which it had come to depend considering its declining enrollments, dwindling tax revenues, and increased expenditures on maintaining its aging (and vacant) facilities and meeting the obligations of new state and federal mandates such as those coming from NCLB. Of the original $180 million the state agreed to pay over the subsequent decade, over $96 million had remained in an escrow account. The money was supposed to be used for new construction and infrastructure improvements, but the district's continued decline in enrollment from depopulation and charter competition meant that there was very little need for new construction, especially when the district was closing schools so rapidly. Since the district was not able to use the funds for general operating costs, it had borrowed

[423] William F. Tate et al., "Who Is My Neighbor? Turner v. Clayton: A Watershed Moment in Regional Education," *The Journal of Negro Education* 83, no. 3 (2014): 222.

against the settlement over the years to fill holes in its budget. A year after the Missouri Supreme Court ruled that unaccredited districts would have to pay the full cost of student transfers to accredited districts, the district struck a deal that freed up all that desegregation money sitting in the escrow account and marked for new construction. The 2011 agreement allowed Adams and the SAB to use the funds to clear $56 million in debt, with the remainder going toward technology upgrades, professional development, and various other districtwide improvements.[424] When the state board restored the district to provisional accreditation the following year—an act which meant the district no longer was responsible for the transfer costs stemming from the *Turner* case—it cited the sound financial management of the SAB and Adams as a principal reason.[425] The revanchist state, therefore, not only won a tremendous victory with SB 781 ending the 1983 Liddell desegregation settlement; it ultimately redirected most of its financial obligations from the 1999 settlement away from desegregating schools or improving infrastructure and toward, most significantly, debt payment.

State Redistributions

The creation and promotion of charter school legislation by property redevelopers and civic entrepreneurs; the public wealth extraction by charter profiteers like Imagine, Inc.; the disbursal of over $50 million in desegregation funds to pay down bond debt; the hiring of a corporate consulting turnaround firm to impose austerity cuts on a financially struggling district; the closure of public schools and their redevelopment as mixed-income and market-rate condos,

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[424] Elisa Crouch, "Settlement Wipes Out St. Louis Schools Debt," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, November 22, 2011, http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/education/settlement-wipes-out-st-louis-schools-debt/article_dd458882-3e84-5afa-a3e1-8249e51b73c4.html.

[425] Jessica Bock, "State Education Board Grants St. Louis Schools Provisional Accreditation," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 16, 2012, http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/education/state-education-board-grants-st-louis-schools-provisional-accreditation/article_259d84db-ab24-5f2a-8838-01be312b2a7e.html.

in many cases by the same people who worked to create the charter legislation and accountability reforms that ultimately placed those former schools on the market—all of this effectively reverses the redistribution of public funds from their downward direction under social democratic desegregation to their upward flow under neoliberalization. The rollback of forms of state welfare for the poor and marginalized finds its completion in the rollout of forms of state welfare for the capitalist class looking to gentrify a neighborhood or maximize their profits with charter school property or bond debt or both.

But as I have maintained throughout this dissertation, education reform policies cannot be understood separately from urban reform policies. Because urban neoliberalization manufactured crises that the charter school movement exploited, it is worth looking at whether those processes of urban neoliberalization have abated or intensified since SB 781 altered the public education landscape in the late 1990s. Doing so provides some indication of whether the structural instability of public education finance will lead to new crises and consequences of either increased charter school concentration or perhaps other forms of privatization. In 2016, financial analysts at the PFM Group produced a report of the city's tax incentive uses from 2000-2014, a close approximation of the time since SB 781. The PFM report found that over the fifteen-year period, the city had approved $402 million in TIF and $307 million in tax abatements. State incentives totaled $1.48 billion in real estate related tax credits and $249 million in state investments and bonds. More interesting than the shear amount of these "geobribes" is their location. Rather than encourage development in St. Louis's poorest and most racially segregated neighborhoods, tax incentives subsidized the development of already gentrified areas. The study found a correlation between incentive use and increased assessed

value, but “This is probably because incentive use follows overall investment patters.”[426] In other words, public money and private money are both investing in the same places (Figure 5).[427]

Figure 5: Tax Abatements and TIF 2000-2014

Even though tax abatements pepper the city, their spatial concentration and intensity in the gentrified central corridor (from downtown through Cortex and the Central West End) is obvious. TIF projects have clustered almost exclusively in the central corridor. Both forms of tax incentives have largely ignored the segregated neighborhoods of the north side. These are the same neighborhoods whose overcrowded and segregated schools led to the Liddell suit and settlement, the same neighborhoods where SLPS built so many schools from 1954 to 1974 to

[426] “City of St. Louis, Missouri: City Economic Development Incentives” (Philadelphia: The PFM Group, May 5, 2016), 5, https://nextstl.com/wp-content/uploads/St.-Louis-City-Economic-Incentives-Report_FINAL-May-2016-1.pdf.
[427] Ibid., 61.

avoid desegregating the district. Figure 6 shows the location of the vacant properties SLPS is trying to sell or has already sold to real estate developers or charter schools.[428]

Figure 6: SLPS Vacant Properties

While the city has sacrificed its public school's property tax revenues on the altar of urban revitalization that has concentrated in the city's wealthiest tracts and ignored the poorest, vacant public schools are concentrated in the poorest areas and offered as alternative incentives for revitalization. Put differently, the city offers prospective investors capital to locate in already

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[428] "Building Revitalization Collaborative" (St. Louis Public Schools, 2017), http://www.slps.org/Domain/114.

wealthy spaces. For its poor spaces, the city instead offers its abandoned public space for redevelopment.

I have shown in this dissertation that regional and local charter school growth and market concentration is driven by far more than neoliberal elites' claims of superior performance or consumer demands. As a vanguard of neoliberal education reform, charter schools categorically bear a greater resemblance to market entities than to traditional public schools. Like market entities, charter schools grow by exploiting market opportunities either through franchising or startups. Such opportunities are greatest in the concentrations of fixed capital and educational consumer populations offered by cities, which is one reason why charter schools have remained primarily an urban phenomenon. Not all urban space, however, presents the same political economic opportunities for growth. Charter concentration and market saturation appears to have regional proclivities for hypersegregated and depopulated urban space. The relationship between education policy and urban revitalization policy in St. Louis provides compelling evidence for why charter schools have thrived within the political economic instability of such racially segregated Rust Belt cities. Critical geography and urban theory provides a crucial lens for analyzing the path dependency of neoliberalization as well as for synthesizing structural economic imperatives such as creative destruction and capital accumulation with the role policy plays in legitimating neoliberal ideology and governance within and outside of public education. More work is necessary to compare and potentially synthesize the political economic histories of charter-concentrated cities within and outside of the Rust Belt to understand more fully the role of charter schools in urban revitalization. Similarly, more work on the political economic links between desegregation and charter schools is necessary to develop a more robust appreciation for the role education policy plays within the larger policy ecology of urbanization.

CHAPTER FIVE

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Having pointed to systemic injustice under urban neoliberalization, the critic is often charged with the task of illustrating systemic justice. To a point, this is fair. Criticism should have a positive project. A coherent and cohesive critique must be driven by a sense of what is neglected or what is stolen. It must also be able to point to some set of objective criteria, without which no concept of justice could survive. Poststructural criticism of governmentality has largely faltered on this point. It remains stuck within the liberal idiom of *freedom from* rather than *freedom to*. Free-market liberals desire freedom from state interference with their economic relations. Foucauldian poststructuralists desire freedom from interference with forming subjectivities, whether such interference comes from the state or any other system of rationalizing and legitimating social relations. Neither form of atomized individualism allows for much in the way of collective struggles for the common good. They either have a conception of the common good so thin as to allow only for maximizing self-interest in economic relations irrespective of value judgements, or the common good is rejected *in toto* as too absolutist, permitting only the contradiction that the common good is freedom from prescriptive understandings of the common good. That said, a fully developed vision of what the common good is, the role of education in reflecting and fostering such a vision, and how urbanism would have to change in St. Louis or any other deindustrialized and hypersegregated city order to redevelop around such a vision is outside the scope of this work. I will offer in this chapter instead only preliminary considerations and preconditions for such a project. My purpose in doing so is not to abandon the preceding chapters' themes of charter schools' relationship to urban neoliberalization but to argue for a radically new form of urban political economy that

transcends the failures of the Keynesian liberal and neoliberal eras. In other words, schools reflect the political economic form and content of the societies in which they exist. Educational equity and social justice cannot depend on public school reform. They must be the result of larger political economic reform.

Zombie Neoliberalism

If society in the U.S is to move beyond neoliberalism's hegemonic grip on political economy, urban life, and even the individual's sense of self and if emancipation and social protection are to align against marketization, then the problem of capitalism's perpetual mutations are of paramount importance. History does not repeat itself because it cannot. If forces of oppression and exploitation mutate over time, then so too must projects of liberation. Whether the topic is access to a safe, well-resourced, and equitable public education or adequate housing and a dignified source of income, it is quixotic to think that the exact same tactics or even modes of analysis that have historically failed to secure those common goods with any degree of longevity can be counted on to deliver them now. Busing will not deliver integrated schools. High-rise public housing will not solve urban housing crises, at least not within the constraints of the political economy of late capitalism. Much of the reason for this failure is that liberals—and even many who consider themselves further left of the average liberal—criticize neoliberalism as though Keynesian social liberalism was the proper form of a just political economy. Such a supposition ignores the fact that Keynesian liberalism has been the *exception* not the rule of capital accumulation. As Alasdair MacIntyre puts it:

> What misled economists and many others about the long-run tendencies of capitalism was the movement...toward economic and social democratization in the period from 1945 to 1980, a period in which the destruction of inherited capital in World War II and the political acceptability of progressive taxation combined to limit and in some respects to

> reverse tendencies toward gross inequality inherent in capitalism. What was in fact an atypical period was not identified as such…What we should have learned from Marx, we have recurrently had to learn all over again.[429]

If we set the end date of Keynesian liberalism as the paradigmatic form of political economy a few years earlier than MacIntyre to the mid-1970s where it is usually set, then neoliberalism has already achieved greater longevity than Keynesian liberalism, the basis of which was pragmatic class-compromise rather than liberation. If the ruling class has deemed such compromises no longer necessary for capital accumulation, then what are the chances it will return to them out of a sense of civic obligation or humanitarian goodwill? With this in mind, the title of this dissertation should not be mistaken as a desire to recover the symbolic ground the public lost to neoliberalism's symbolic and *literal* appropriation of public space. Certainly the ideals of Minnie Liddell's struggle and the commitments to state redistribution by liberals such as Gary Orfield and Judge William Hungate are more ethically grounded than the upward redistribution of public funds and space ensconced in William Kuehling's charter provisions of SB 781 or the dominant notions of equity within the broader charter school movement. Liberal attempts at social protections left the larger racialized and exploitative political economy in place, and, therefore, like most other social protections within the market society, they were lost to the rollback and replaced in the rollout phases of neoliberalism's metaregulation cycles. Moreover, what is lost is not just the public space but a robust conception of the purpose of such space. On this point, I rely on two meanings of *lost*: that which the public possessed and no longer possesses and that which the public has ostensibly been in search of but never has found. Public education space was literally or materially lost in the transition between Keynesian liberalism and neoliberalism, but the idea that such space was ever sufficiently oriented toward a robust

[429] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 105.

notion of the common good is one of historical fiction rather than fact. Again, fully theorizing the common good is not the goal of this dissertation. Nonetheless, because one needs a starting point from which to move against neoliberalization, space is as good a place as any since it is so crucial to capital accumulation and class discipline.

The mutations of capitalism from Keynesian liberalism to neoliberalism have intensified contradictions inherent to capitalism to the point of utter irrationality. I explored these contradictions thoroughly in the second chapter, but we need only to consider the strong state intervention necessary for "free" markets for evidence of neoliberalism's irrationality. How then can neoliberalism continue as the paradigmatic policy framework when it seems ready to collapse under the weight of its own contradictions? Neil Smith claims that Jürgen Habermas's assertion that modernism was "dominant but dead" applies equally to neoliberalism.[430] Neoliberalism is *dead* because it has no life coursing through its veins. It has no original insights into political life, and while its tactics and constituencies change, its effects of degrading poverty and rampant wealth inequality are hardly novel. Neoliberalism just recycles and reconfigures the old and disproven theories of the nature and benefits of free markets, albeit in forms increasingly estranged and nearly unrecognizable. The 2016 presidential election provides a useful example. The Republican candidate was an entertainment personality who has spent his life pretending to be a shrewd businessman and a man's man. Candidate Trump became President Trump after running an a largely xenophobic and racist campaign that appealed to a cliché-ridden patriotism, American exceptionalism, and entirely indefensible economic theories about how to create and maintain widespread prosperity. Much of the same is true of the modern hero of the Republican Party, Ronald Reagan. How did the Democrats counter such an uninspiring repetition of tropes?

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[430] Neil Smith, "Neoliberalism: Dominant but Dead," *Focaal* 51 (2008): 155–57.

They ran a Clinton in total defiance of the reality that the last President Clinton left office disgraced by scandal and having successfully implemented a full range of policies that decimated left-politics, criminalized poverty, deregulated the financial industry, and made millions of working class Americans unemployed through the automation and offshoring of jobs. Even Bernie Sanders's nearly successful nomination—as unfathomable as his platform sounded to neoliberal ears—was just the resurgence of New Deal social democracy. Sixty years ago, Sanders would not have had to refer to himself as a Democratic Socialist. Democrat would have sufficed. As Smith reminds us, neoliberalism under Reagan was not "the ferment of new ideas;" rather, it was "the recycled axia from the earlier liberal tradition."[431] Jamie Peck calls this lifeless but brutal and dominant political economy "zombie neoliberalism." It lumbers on through continual mutation. Rather than burying its core principles for having failed so often and so greatly, "the new neoliberalism learns (and evolves) by doing *wrong*, having become mired in the unending challenge of managing its own contradictions, together with the social *and economic* fallout from previous deregulations and malinterventions. It fails, but it tends to fail forwards…It is (re)animated as much by contradiction as by conviction."[432] With vivid horror, Peck concludes, "The living dead of the free-market revolution continue to walk the earth, though with each resurrection their decidedly uncoordinated gait becomes even more erratic."[433] It is too early to determine the extent to which Peck's description applies to the federal government's free-market commitments and policy agenda under a Trump administration, but it is safe to assume that capital accumulation will be a driving force and *erratic* will be an appropriate adjective.

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[431] Ibid., 155.
[432] Jamie Peck, "Zombie Neoliberalism and the Ambidextrous State," *Theoretical Criminology* 14, no. 1 (2010): 106–7.
[433] Ibid., 109.

Whatever happens at the federal policy level, it is certain that the deindustrialized and hypersegregated cities of this country do not have any dominant policy agendas that reflect a significant departure from the civic entrepreneurialism that has been their mode of urban governance in the neoliberal era. In fact, the political class of the "progressive" neoliberal enclaves of urban America seem poised to double down on their commitments to becoming *global* cities. That is, they are planting the flag of "enlightened" and "emancipatory" global neoliberalism in defiance of what they perceive to be the uncivilized protectionism of Trump's right-wing populism. Not only does the prominence of the fossil fuel and financial industries in the incoming administration categorically deny claims to *populism*, the cosmopolitanism of the urban political class itself is only concerned with making cities into places of consumption and profit generation over and against the demands of social justice. Brenner, Peck, and Theodore are correct in claiming that:

> Orthodox neoliberal ideology is now increasingly called into question, but the political machinery of state-imposed market discipline remains essentially intact; social and economic policy agendas continue to be subordinated to the priority of maintaining investor confidence and a good business climate; and policy agendas such as free trade, privatization, flexible labor markets, and urban territorial competitiveness continue to be taken for granted.[434]

Brenner, Peck, and Theodore theorize possible pathways for countering and replacing neoliberalism's hegemony. At one end, they have the continuation of zombie neoliberalization with its recycled policies and emergent but predictable forms of technocratic crisis management. Moving across scenarios of decreasing marketization and increasing socialization—what the authors describe as "disarticulated counter-liberalism" and "orchestrated counter-liberalism"—they arrive at zombie neoliberalization's antithesis of "deep socialization," (Figure 6)

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[434] Neil Brenner, Jamie Peck, and Nik Theodore, "After Neoliberalization?," *Globalizations* 7, no. 3 (September 2010): 340.

characterized by the "construction of alternative, market-constraining, redistributive, and socializing frameworks for macrospatial regulatory organization."[435] If variegated neoliberalization is the uneven development of neoliberal policy regimes alongside the neoliberalization of regulatory uneven development,[436] then its inverse is in deep socialization or the spreading of differentiated modes of political-economic socialization across time and space resulting in a new socialist rather than liberal hegemony. What Brenner, Peck, and Theodore have effectively theorized is the critical policy analyst's response to Fraser's call for the realignment of the state's social protection and emancipation impulses.

Brenner, Peck, and Theodore caution that their scenarios are not an inevitable progression. Society could remain stuck in unforeseen but increasingly erratic and contradictory forms of neoliberalization, or it could move to a disarticulated counter-liberalism before zombie neoliberalization reasserted the primacy of its fictionalized free markets and commodified social relations. The framework these authors offer is one that moves toward emancipatory and non-marketized social relations, but they acknowledge that an array of imaginable or unimagined new forms of totalitarianism or imperialism could also replace neoliberalism as a world-historical movement. These are important caveats, and the notion that history is on a sort of inevitable trajectory toward emancipation is as ignorant of the past and present as it is dangerous for the future.

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[435] Ibid.
[436] Neil Brenner, Jamie Peck, and Nik Theodore, "Variegated Neoliberalization: Geographies, Modalities, Pathways," *Global Networks* 10, no. 2 (2010): 182–222.

<table>
<tr><th></th><th colspan="3">DIMENSIONS OF REGULATORY RESTRUCTURING</th></tr>
<tr><th></th><th>CONTEXT-SPECIFIC FORMS OF REGULATORY EXPERIMENTATION</th><th>SYSTEMS OF INTER-JURISDICTIONAL POLICY TRANSFER</th><th>RULE REGIMES AND PARAMETERIZATION PROCESSES</th></tr>
<tr><td>Scenario 1: zombie neoliberalization</td><td colspan="3">Orthodox neoliberal ideology is severely undermined, but there is a continued neoliberalization of each of the three dimensions of regulatory restructuring, often through technocratic means

Crisis tendencies and failures of market-driven regulatory arrangements contribute to a further entrenchment of neoliberalization projects as putative 'solutions' to persistent regulatory dilemmas across scales, territories, and contexts</td></tr>
<tr><td>Scenario 2: disarticulated counter-liberalization</td><td>Tendential mobilization of market-constraining, redistributive, and/or 'push-back' regulatory experiments across dispersed, disarticulated contexts at local, regional and national scales</td><td colspan="2">Continued neoliberalization of transnational policy transfer systems and rule-regimes

Counter-liberalization projects remain relatively fragmented, disconnected and poorly coordinated—they have not significantly infiltrated multilateral, supranational, or global institutional arenas

Macrospatial rule-regimes continue to be dominated by market logics, despite persistent critiques from extra-institutional locations and 'from below' (e.g. the global justice movement)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Scenario 3: orchestrated counter-liberalization</td><td colspan="2">Intensified orchestration, mutual recursion, and tendential co-evolution of market-constraining, redistributive regulatory experiments across increasingly interlinked contexts

Thickening, intensification, and extension of networks of policy transfer based upon (progressive or regressive) alternatives to market rule</td><td>Continued neoliberalization of rule-regimes: counter-liberalization projects may now begin to infiltrate macrospatial rule-making institutions (e.g. the World Bank, the European Union) but do not succeed in reorienting their basic market-driven orientations</td></tr>
<tr><td>Scenario 4: deep socialization</td><td colspan="3">Continued intensification of (progressive or reactionary forms of) market-constraining, redistributive, re-embedding, and socializing regulatory experimentation

Continued elaboration and transnational consolidation of market-constraining, redistributive, and socializing forms of cross-jurisdictional policy transfer

Destabilization/dismantling of neoliberalized rule-regimes; construction of alternative, market-constraining, redistributive, and socializing frameworks for macrospatial regulatory organization</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 7: Scenarios for Counter-neoliberalization

Any pathways to deep socialization that might be unique to St. Louis or possible within other hypersegregated and deindustrialized cities must first wrestle with macroeconomic issues. Neoliberalization is path-dependent, and so it seems deep socialization must also be, but neoliberalism is a regional, national, and global phenomenon. It is important to avoid localizing the blame for deindustrialization. Political corruption and the disaster capitalists in St. Louis no doubt bear their portion of the burden of guilt, but it is the exodus of capital at the macro-level that created the opportunities to revalorize that space. When St. Louis first opened up tax incentives for out-of-state developers in 1945, Mayor Kauffman recognized the emergence of a new era and remarked that "The language of the law was practically written in offices of New York insurance companies."[437] With the likes of Boeing, Monsanto, and Anheuser-Busch Inbev having corporate or major division headquarters in the St. Louis area, the language of many city and state laws might very well have been written in Riyadh, Beijing, Sao Paulo, or any other city for that matter.

The struggle against local neoliberalization must simultaneously be a project of macroeconomic socialization. Considering that most trade unions are at historically low levels of density and have had a waning influence on policy for decades, it seems unlikely that they would play a leading role in deep socialization at any level. Two prominent pathways for socializing capitalism's markets are a universal basic income (UBI) or some sort of decentralized cooperative ownership of the means of production such as what Marxist economist Richard Wolff calls Worker Self-Directed Enterprises (WSDEs). These are by no means the only ways to think about deep socialization, but they each offer different strengths and weaknesses that, in

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[437] Quoted in Colin Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 162.

some sense, any project would have to address. I will take each in turn and consider what it would have to offer a city like St. Louis.

Universal Basic Income

A UBI attempts to create a system of state redistribution of the surpluses of market capitalism in such a way that every citizen is guaranteed an income characteristically at or above what passes for poverty in a given region or country. Such an idea is popular for a number of reasons. First, and perhaps most urgently, UBI addresses the problem of present and future job loss due to automation. If Frey and Osborne are correct that 47 percent of existing jobs are vulnerable to automation during the next two decades, then most Western countries are facing either a massive expansion in redistribution or a revolutionary response to income inequality.[438] Indeed, if Frey and Osborne are right by half, significant state redistributions will be necessary to maintain social stability and effective demand within a consumer economy. Frey and Osborne's work is urgent but hardly unique. It is practically consensus, not just among economists or sociologists but among the general public, that just as the twentieth century was witness to the decline of a single income family wage for working class (non-professional) people to near non-existence, the twenty-first century will witness the decline of most of the wage work done by the working poor. Indeed, for some time, the state has already subsidized poverty wages through redistribution. No doubt at least some of the reason welfare programs such as EBT have continued throughout neoliberalization is that they allow the nation's largest employers like WalMart and McDonalds to get away with paying their workers poverty wages. Automation, however, will replace those jobs regardless of where the state sets the minimum wage.

[438] Carl Benedikt Frey and Michael A. Osborne, "The Future of Employment: How Susceptible Are Jobs to Computerisation," *Technological Forecasting & Social Change* 114, no. 1 (January 2017): 254–80.

UBI would have profound implications for public education nationally and would demand the reorientation and even reconceptualization of the purpose of public education. As I showed in Chapter Three, the emergence and location of STEM and STEAM charter schools in St. Louis follows the city's efforts to reinvent itself as a hub of biotechnology hub. The emphasis on STEM fields within public education would likely continue regardless of changes to the political economy, but its status as a panacea for urban education and employment is untenable under a guaranteed income system.

Artists and so-called *creative types* embrace UBI because it free up tremendous amounts of time to pursue their craft. Instead of taking a job, often one with long hours and low wages, in order to cover the basic necessities of housing and food, artists can pour their energy and time into their passionate rather than mundane pursuits. They are also free from the need to sell their art on markets. Creative pursuits are thus unencumbered by the demands of temporary work and patronage. The same could be said of new and various social relations. With so much time devoted to what David Graeber provocatively refers to as "bullshit jobs,"[439] little is left for new non-market social relations. With UBI, people would have more time for recreation and leisure, but they would also have more opportunities to engage in politics, mutual aid, and any number of other activities that could form and strengthen community. Such freedom has the potential to transform deindustrialized spaces like St. Louis. Art, cooperative and communal forms of leisure and political engagement, freedom from degrading and dehumanizing wage-work could collectively produce a counter-neoliberal form of urbanism that would invariably alter not just the city's social relations but its built environment as well.

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[439] David Graeber, *The Utopia of Rules: On Technology, Stupidity, and the Secret Joys of Bureaucracy* (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2015), 42.

The primary and fundamental problem with UBI is that it leaves control over the means of production and the distribution and redistribution of its surpluses where they have historically been and failed—i.e. in the hands of the capitalists and the liberal state. The principal issue with UBI is not, as many free market capitalists incorrectly argue, that people receive money without having worked for it. This is, in fact, an odd problem for the capitalists to raise, since capitalism itself is predicated on the owner of capital receiving money without having to work for it. I am not referring only to some sort of caricature of a capitalist factory owner smoking a cigar with his feet propped up and sipping scotch while he counts the money he expropriated from his alienated workers, although the point certainly applies to such a figure. Rather every dividend payout, every bond disbursement, every rent collected, every sale of appreciated stock value, and so on is a transfer of value to those whose labor did not produce it. This applies to global one percent to a far greater degree than anyone else, most of all to the eight people who own as much wealth as the poorest half of humanity.[440] But it remains the case that middle and lower-middle class benefits like appreciated home value and pension investments involve the transfer of value in the absence of work.

No, the fundamental problem with UBI is that it is every bit as vulnerable the crisis resolution-followed-by-rollback cycles of Keynesian liberalism. UBI only has to stimulate effective consumer demand and then rollback benefits with the elites who run the economy and the state decide making sure people are less poor than they otherwise would be is no longer worth their time and money. Some preliminary experiments with UBI in Finland suggest that without the proper protections, center-right corporate interests can co-opt UBI as a justification

[440] Ben Hirschler, "World's Eight Richest As Wealthy as Half Humanity, Oxfam Tells Davos," *Reuters*, January 16, 2017, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-davos-meeting-inequality-idUSKBN150009.

and method for rolling back other welfare state provisions.[441] Moreover, centralizing power over the masses' livelihood is something both Foucauldian poststructuralists and post-Soviet Marxists agree is a bad thing. Neoliberalism's soft-power benefits (e.g. expanding "universal" healthcare through corporatized insurance markets or block granting housing and educational spending) have always come with the strong strings of governmentality attached. There is every reason to believe that one's basic income would require some significant ideological payment from the interpellated subject.

Worker Self-Directed Enterprises

The second significant option for moving toward deep socialization is a decentralized but confederated socialist economy built with cooperative models. One of the leading proponents of such a plan is the Marxist economist Richard Wolff. Wolff and his colleague Stephen Resnick argue that one of the fundamental failures of "actually existing socialism" such as that embodied by the Soviet Union was that it retained the structures of surplus appropriation and alienation. Instead of a handful of capitalists appropriating the value created by a mass of workers, the bureaucratic state appropriated the surpluses generated by similarly disempowered and alienated labor.[442] For this reason, Resnick and Wolff refer to actually existing communism as state capitalism. Wolff theorizes and actively promotes an alternative pathway to socialism in what he calls worker self-directed enterprises or WSDEs. Wolff argues that WSDEs transcend the problem of labor disempowerment and alienation found in capitalist and dominant socialist/communist governments because "no separate group of persons—no individual who

[441] Matt Bruenig, Antti Jauhiainen, and Joona-Hermanni Makinen, "The UBI Bait and Switch," *Jacobin*, January 17, 2017, https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/01/ubi-finland-centre-party-unemployment-jobs/.
[442] Stephen A. Resnick and Richard Wolff, *Class Theory and History: Capitalism and Communism in the U.S.S.R.* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

does not participate in the productive work of the enterprise—can be a member of the board of directors…Instead, all of the workers who produce the surplus generated inside the enterprise function collectively to appropriate and distribute it. They alone compose the board of directors."[443] Socialism is thus more fully democratized under sites of production cooperatively run by the workers themselves who produce the surplus value. Every worker is an owner and every owner a worker.

Such an arrangement of democratizing and socializing workplaces resolves a number of crises in late capitalism surrounding unemployment and worker redundancy. Most obviously, worker-owners are highly unlikely to lay themselves off or outsource production in order to increase profits, whereas the history of capitalism tells quite a different story about owners who are not workers. The reasons why outsourcing is not a threat are too obvious to merit discussion. Technology and mechanized productivity is more interesting though. Technological advances such as those described by Frey and Osborne are not much of a threat to WSDEs. Worker-owners could either use increased efficiency and productivity that comes with technological development to boost profits they control, or they could use greater productivity to collectively reduce their work hours, or both. Under capitalism, management's purpose is to maximize shareholder value over and against workers' interest. Therefore, technologizing production means fewer workers are necessary and must be laid off. The benefits not just of maintaining employment but of maximizing leisure time and profits present an obviously brighter technological future for worker-owners than for mere workers. Unlike UBIs, there is no threat of rolling back redistribution because there is no need for redistribution in the first place. Surplus capital is fairly distributed the first time.

[443] Richard Wolff, *Democracy At Work* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2012), 118.

There are also spatial and scalar benefits to decentralized socialism like WSDEs. Because ownership under corporate capitalism is either national or global rather than local, there is little natural incentive to care about consequences to local economies and ecologies. When decision making is in the hands of a board and majority shareholders who do not live anywhere near the site of production, they are far less inclined to care about toxicity and pollutants affecting local populations and ecosystems than they would be if the site were in their community. Similarly, the layoffs, plant closures, and relocations that have devastated company towns and major cities like St. Louis are far less likely to happen when the worker-owners are part of those communities. During the last two decades, corporate tax inversions (relocating corporate headquarters to low-tax havens like Ireland or many Caribbean nations) and investor strip mining have devastated local economies. Strip mining is when CEOs extract profits from a company in such a way sacrifices their long term viability for short term boosts in stock prices. Due to deregulating executive compensation under neoliberalization, most executives profit far more from stock options than from their already inflated salaries. They also tend to remain at a company for only a few years rather than a considerable chunk of their working life. They therefore have an incentive to impose austerity cuts or make various high-risk investments that drive up stock price before cashing in their chips and leaving the company (and its community) in a broken and devalued state. WSDEs, on the other hand, are far more likely to have deep connections to the surrounding community that would prevent ecological or economic devastation of the sort St. Louisans have experienced during the ebbs and flows of capital and urban redevelopment. St. Louis Aldermen prove that ties to the community do not inevitably lead to good governance, but WSDEs would not be only the local petty bourgeoisie of the St. Louis wards. They would be working people with kids in the school systems.

One drawback from WSDEs is that it requires complex forms of territorial governance. Even though decentralized socialism solves some of the problems presented by centralized bureaucracies, there are vital social tasks that require largescale bureaucracies. Traditional macro-economic and political concerns like defense and currency stability would still be necessary as decentralized and democratized socialism still relies on market exchange. Other large scale issues like healthcare and infrastructure (transportation and communication) would require some form of confederation. There is also the conundrum of climate change and global ecological degradation. Capitalist nation-states have driven global ecological devastation, so they would seem like the last place to invest hope in a solution for it. Nonetheless, global ecology presents such massive and potentially devastating issues that it is difficult to imagine anything but a well-coordinated response could stave off widespread disaster. Some form of non-marketized global confederacy would be necessary in order to combat issues such as climate change. If such scales of semi-autonomous confederated socialism seem impossibly complex, just consider the Rube Goldberg machine that is global capitalism, wherein local, regional, national, and global capitalisms must access global commodities markets dominated by a relative few corporations and commodity cartels and regulated by a cacophony of state, non-state, and supra-state bodies. Complexity hardly seems like a stumbling block.

The local level of segregated and deindustrialized cities like St. Louis hardly seems less complex or absurd under neoliberalization. On the contrary, they are sites with some of the greatest potential for radical politics and deep socialization. The massive property vacancy caused by deindustrialization and depopulation has forced the city to take ownership of large swaths of real estate under a city department called the Land Reutilization Authority or LRA. The city has an enormous backlog of property scheduled for clearance, but it cannot even keep

up with the demands of cutting grass. The city estimates that it spends $1 million a year cutting grass on vacant LRA properties. In 2016, the city passed a bill put forward by two aldermen that allows owners of property adjacent to LRA vacancies to assume ownership of the vacant property if they pay $125 in registration fees and agree to cut the grass for a trial period of two years and agree to pay future taxes on their new property. The program is called Mow to Own.[444] The LRA owns around 4,000 parcels of land. If acquiring property by cutting grass is not too absurd, then it is certainly reasonable to create a large-scale housing/land cooperative that is democratically run and managed by residents. In 2011, residents of a run-down trailer park in Fridley, Minnesota, refused to continue putting up with absentee landlords and neighborhood decline. They formed a cooperative and purchased the trailer park from its negligent owners. The residents now run the thriving cooperative, and several are both owners and employees.[445] A small fraction of the money St. Louis officials have devoted to tax incentives in a failed effort to attract mobile capital investment through interurban competition would be sufficient to create and sustain several cooperatively owned and managed neighborhoods. Such neighborhoods would not fall victim to the sort of elite neglect, disinvestment, and disinterest of Pruitt-Igoe. As importantly, there would be no reason to stop at housing cooperatives. As Cooperation Jackson in Jackson, Mississippi, demonstrates, a diverse network of cooperative enterprises can unite racial justice and socialist economics as a path of resistance against a hostile local, state, and national government. Cooperation Jackson describes its theory of political change and social justice as “centered on the position that organizing and empowering the structurally under and unemployed sectors of the working class, particularly from Black and Latino communities, to

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[444] “Tackling Vacancy: Mow to Own” (City of St. Louis, May 4, 2016), https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/sldc/news/tackling-vacancy-mow-to-own.cfm.
[445] “Park Plaza Cooperative - A Resident-Owned Community” (Park Plaza Cooperative, n.d.), http://www.parkplaza.coop/.

build worker organized and owned cooperatives will be a catalyst for the democratization of our economy and society overall."[446] The protests in Ferguson and throughout metropolitan St. Louis unleashed political energy that has the potential to situate criminal justice reforms within a much larger project of structural anti-racism and deep socialization of the local economy.

All of this sounds utopian. In a sense, it must be. Utopian thinking is necessary to move beyond recycling liberalism in perpetuity. The cyclical devaluation and revalorization of urban space will continue to devour urban life and drain already degraded and dehumanized neighborhoods of their vitality in the name of revitalization unless and until a new imaginary emerges at the level of policy. What is necessary is not nebulous poststructuralist calls of "governed of the world unite against governmentality" or the totalitarian bureaucracy of state capitalism, but a real political strategy driven by utopian possibility. Paulo Freire puts it this way:

> It is necessary to go beyond rebellious attitudes to a more radically critical and revolutionary position, which is in fact a position not simply of denouncing injustice but of announcing a new utopia. Transformation of the world implies a dialectic between the two actions: denouncing the process of dehumanization and announcing the dream of a new society.[447]

The new utopian dream must be approached with caution. The utopian vision cannot be assumed to be free of conflict or political struggle. Paradoxically, it should not even be thought of as ideal or perfected. Such a claim may seem antithetical to common conceptions of *utopia*, but it has been there from the start. Thomas More's utopia was not the realization (even in fiction) of a perfected society. It was a work of profound political criticism of his own society's compromised ethics. The imagined world was not a replacement or even a perfection of the real.

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[446] "Who We Are" (Cooperation Jackson, 2017), http://www.cooperationjackson.org/intro/.
[447] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage* (Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 74.

It was a way of thinking about the real in relation to necessary change. In other words, utopian thinking is not about the real becoming the ideal. It is rather the extraordinary guiding the ordinary. This claim should not be confused with mere optimism. It might in fact come closer to a pessimism—though of the sort infused with tragic hope and marked by persistent struggle. As Jameson remarks, "Utopian thinking demands a revision of Gramsci's famous slogan, which might now run: cynicism of the intellect, utopianism of the will."[448] Elsewhere, Jameson criticizes the notion that utopian thinking amounts to "establish[ing] positive criteria of the desirable society" as the project of liberalism not radical politics. Instead, proper utopians "aim at the alleviation and elimination of the sources of exploitation and suffering, rather than at the composition of blueprints for bourgeois comfort."[449] Such is the political project of the twenty-first century. The twentieth century demanded socialism or barbarism. It saw more barbarism than socialism. The twenty-first century demands utopianism or barbarism. Time will tell what it gets.

[448] Frederic Jameson, *An American Utopia: Dual Power and the Universal Army*, ed. Slavoj Zizek (New York: Verso, 2016), 22.
[449] Frederic Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (New York: Verso, 2005), 12.

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