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SCHOOLING THE MARKET:
VENTURE PHILANTHROPY, FIELD BUILDING AND THE
NEWSCHOOLS VENTURE FUND

By

GREGORY E. TEWKSBURY

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Urban Education in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The City University of New York

2016

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Urban Education in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

SCHOOLING THE MARKET: VENTURE PHILANTHROPY, FIELD BUILDING AND THE NEWSCHOOLS VENTURE FUND

By

GREGORY E. TEWKSBURY

Advisor: Nicholas Michelli

Since the 1980s and the Reagan administration's report "A Nation at Risk" and with the passage of No Child Left Behind during the George W. Bush Administration, the ground of public education has shifted. Reform efforts previously geared toward improving the system of public education have been superseded by the efforts of venture philanthropies and foundations like Gates, Walton and Broad to remake education into a private market. The power of these institutions politically, socially and economically to reshape the educational landscape in America raises fundamental questions about the role of wealthy elites and their influence on democracy and education.

How is this educational map being redrawn? What fields are being created and what processes are being repurposed? What are the purposes, values and ultimately its impact on the young people of the United States? To engage these questions within a qualitative case study approach and be able to trace the effects and reach of the movement of neoliberal social policy in education, this dissertation research will focus on the role of intermediaries, and the NewSchools Venture Fund in particular. My case study focuses on the NewSchools Venture Fund as one of the oldest and most influential intermediaries, interconnected with other powerful forces of venture philanthropy, venture capital, technology and leaders of government and policy. It offers a rich location from which to assess what Datnow and Park call "Large-Scale Reform in an Era of Complexity."

Employing a critical policy framework to keep the larger context in view as well as foregrounding concerns of social justice, my case study will explore the development, reach and policy practices of NSVF. The data sources for my research, I will interview some of key NSVF stakeholders, document and analyze its "artifacts," and do a Social Network Analysis (Scott) of the key players to map their connection to shapers of policy and practice. Further, this analysis will afford the opportunity to assess the potential development of a new social form of power relations called Shadow Elites, theorized by Wedel and elaborated by Picciano and Spring.

The theoretical framework for the dissertation will include, but not be limited to, critical work on neoliberalism (Harvey, Brown, Duggan, Ball, Apple) and given the emergence of intermediaries as a force in educational policy an critical theory approach to the study of organizations (Burch, Ozga, Bourdieu).

The findings of the study will help to map the shifting terrain of public education, see the effects of privatization in key aspects of charter schools, charter management organizations, data, leadership and policy and advocacy – all central investments in the NewSchools Venture Fund “portfolio.” This mapping and analysis will in turn raise questions about the direction of public education for policy makers, community members and educational activists.

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To my Lang College, New School for Social Research friends and colleagues who supported me while I searched and struggled to find the right location for my doctoral work. I am deeply grateful for all the conversations, lunches and counsel so crucial to me; they never lost faith in me or my abilities. Big hugs of appreciation to Nancy Barnes, Jane Lazarre, Maria ElanaTorre, Toni Oliverio and Jan Clausen (the people's poet). A deep sadness is that my friend and creative muse Sekou Sundiata is not here to share this moment and offer a verse like only he could --"I don't know much but I have seen a few and a few things have seen me too."

Like all the people above, special everyday friends who may have questioned but never stopped believing in me or my capacity to do this work, especially Eleanor J Bader, Sonia Bu, Ann Weiner, John Berman, and Janet and David Greene. A special recognition to my Tuesday night group, Sarai Batchelder, Marilyn Recht, Johanna Tiemann, Robert Friedrich, and Lisa Moskowitz/Slade. They have seen me in and through the most difficult times, their belief in my capacities and encouragement was strength I could turn to whenever needed.

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Chapter One: Introduction and Background

A. Statement of the Problem

“Founded in 1998, NewSchools has invested in more than 40 nonprofit and for-profit organizations and raised nearly \$180 million. NewSchools ventures run 230 schools across the country –equivalent to the 34th largest school district in the country (NewSchools Venture Fund Impact Statement).”¹

The role and influence of venture capital in the shaping the field of public education lacks transparency and its implications are not well understood (Burch, 2009; Ball, 2007; Ravitch, 2010 b; Saltman, 2012). Since the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB,2001) this “hidden market” (Burch) has seen the entrance of nontraditional educational reformers “with unprecedented public and private resources being expended to expand particular forms of school choice in the name of educational equity” (Scott, 2009, 132). Michael Edwards, a former staff member of the Ford Foundation’s Governance and Civil Society Program, author of *Small Change: Why Business Won’t Save the World* (2008), echoes the analysis of Cuban (2004) about the applicability of the business model, “The real question is *what kind* of impact business can make on social change, and whether it preserves the status quo or brings about social transformation” (16). Specifically, my research reveals that the NewSchools Venture Fund is as a major field builder or “institutional entrepreneur” (DiMaggio, 1988). Being remade here is not only educational policy and its social and political relations, but the scope and nature of schools.

My case study attempts to address these shifts in educational policy, practices and direction by mapping not only the programmatic scope of the NewSchools Venture Fund (NSVF), but also the wider social and political context within which institutions like NSVF

¹ <http://www.guidestar.org/organizations/94-3281780/new-schools-fund.aspx#> This statement comes from Guide star an organization that endeavors to bring transparency to the financial dealings of the nonprofit world. The question this raises as Burch (2009, 14) notes, “Beyond the shifting of resources and authority (public to private), market-based education policies can have a destabilizing effects on decision-making structures in education.” How did NewSchools Venture Fund become authorized to make these changes and to serve children?

operate. For indeed, “the emergence of venture philanthropy reminds educational policy researchers that they must examine policy making outside the formal governmental arenas and build theoretical and conceptual models that attend to this dynamic arena” (Scott,132). The shifting role of the state , the issue of “new governance” (Ball, 2012) is vital to understanding the magnitude of the changes in motion. My research project, then, will scrutinize and analyze the actual policy and political approaches taken by NSVF as a key intermediary, this research endeavors to provide clarity as to the origins, operations and motivation driving these private policy initiatives that are shifting the policy space and direction of education reform.

Since at least the 1980s when Ronald Reagan extolled the “magic in the market,” social and educational policy has shifted its center of gravity. The 1983 report “A Nation at Risk” became a touchstone for a narrative of failure and crisis. Education, once a centerpiece of liberal social policy, was understood as a primary location for the promotion of equality and as a vehicle for enabling public participation and democratic decision-making by all members of society. Over the past thirty years, education supporting this kind of “social citizenship” (Marshall and Bottomore, 1992, 18; Somers, 2008) has been displaced by the rule of the market and the predominance of consumer rights in the guise of choice. So, accelerated by the passage of the federal No Child Left Behind law in 2001, which encouraged charter schools, a rapid and massive expansion of private sector participation and influence in public sector education has taken place (Burch, 2009, Darling-Hammond 2007, Cuban 2004, Neil, 2004). Under the Obama administration and his Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, the Race to the Top initiative, offering states in need of operating money a chance to get a share of the \$4.35 billion. The policy solidified under Race to the Top included – expanding education markets, lifting the cap on charter school (often via Turnaround model e.g. Mass Insight) eroding the power of teacher

unions, encouraging mayoral control and top-down accountability with high stakes metrics for teacher, principal and school “report cards.”

This policy orientation articulates a different logic of reform – one based on neoliberal market principles such as competition, consumerism and “incentives” linking accountability metrics to performance. Concerns for social justice have been reframed in terms of “fairness”, consumer “choice” and accountability of outcomes through test scores. Those favoring the rewriting of education regulations and governance agreements to allow the private sector to run schools with public money claim that with greater competition across suppliers we will see higher quality educational outputs and reduced costs to taxpayers (Chubb and Moe, 1990; Finn, 2010). These arguments have increased appeal during a time of “austerity”, budget cutting and conservative politics in government.

This logic often couches the privatizing of public education as the “New Civil Rights Movement,”² and offers an ideological attack on government spending, unionized teachers and the public sphere as a social space for the collective good. In her research on the new privatization, Burch (2009) observes this shift; it is argued “that markets can succeed where government has failed and the role of policy is to cheerlead and stimulate demand” (83). We hear, in this argument, an historical resonance of the 1980 cry by Regan and Thatcher, “there is no alternative” to the politics of austerity – state and local governments do not have the resources, we are broke. Competition, outcome performance metrics on high stakes tests now reflect a new educational reform policy where equity and social justice once animated the role of government in providing for the general welfare of its citizens. Still, after disinvestment and

² See remarks by Allan Golston, president of the Bill Melinda Gates Foundation’s US Program. “Philanthropist: Education is the New Civil Rights Issue.” National Public Radio, July 28, 2010.

“circuits of dispossession” (Fine and Ruglis, 2009) the goal of serving the underserved is being reasserted as a rationale for market interventions. This claim will be carefully scrutinized empirically and ideologically.

Venture capital turned venture philanthropy –intermediaries like the NewSchools Venture Fund –promote entrepreneurial “market solutions” in public education. My case study will look at the logic and field building activities, institutional frame of this institutional entrepreneur to explain how privately owned public schools are shifting educational policy as well as the practices and nature of schooling. At issue are the implications of this shift for the public purposes of education. Such a dramatic shift requires that we ask who the players are in this new policy arrangement? What social forces sanction their involvement? And in whose interests do they operate? To whom are they accountable? And what is their impact?

As I will demonstrate, the core leadership of the NewSchools Venture Fund constitutes what Wedel (2009) calls, “flex group” “a new breed of players” (4) who draw on their “proliferation of roles and the ability of these players to construct a “coincidence of interest. The nodal actor of the NSVF is John Doerr, the prototype flexion.³ Doerr hold multiple positions including: partner at the Kliener Perkins Caulfield and Byer (KPCB) venture capital firm, He is a Board member of National Venture Capital Association as well as Google, Intel, Amazon, Aspen Institute and the President’s Economic Development Council. In addition, an often overlook aspect of Doerr’s profile is in the same year as he co-founded the NewSchools Venture Fund, he co-founded TechNet, one of the premier technology association in the US.

³ According to the Public Accountability Initiative website, Doerr has 729 interlocks (network connections; further, he comes in at # 135 of *Forbes* 400 (2015); # 48 riches in technology; #30 on their Midas List.

This readies the ground for a paradigm shift -- what Burch (2009) calls the “new privatization” where “education policy and the market have become more closely linked” (1). A central and strategic way that the boundaries between education policy and the market have become blurred is through complex field building by intermediaries like the NewSchools Venture Fund which support private nonprofit entities that work intensively with charter networks and that contract out educational services to public schools. With venture capital origins and now as a nonprofit venture philanthropy, the NSVF has prioritized the blurring of its “portfolio” with nonprofit and for-profit “ventures.” A prominent advocate for market based reform Thomas Vander Ark (formerly of the Gates Foundation and now with LearnCapital and “Revolution Learning” states in a Working Paper for the American Enterprise Institute, “A number of organization already blend philanthropic grants and profit-seeking investment to achieve strategic impact objectives. Example include Google.org, Omidyan Network and the John Doerr sponsored NewSchools Venture Fund” (22). Revealing the reach, influence, political shifts and policy interests of one of the most influential of intermediaries and assessing the sector’s impact and potential reshaping the democratic purposes of schooling is at the heart of my research.

Burch (2009) warns of the reach of the “hidden markets” a “quiet revolution” where intermediaries while “drawing on public money and on the authority of public policy, the work of the new privatization is relatively hidden from view” (1). In order to grasp these dynamics at work, my instrumental case study will explore how the educational field building activities of the NSVF operate in the current climate of market-driven school reform. Who are these intermediaries? How did they develop? What social, economic and political processes do they employ in shaping and directing education policy?

Here it is important to complicate the nature of our understanding of policy. A critical or anthropological lens emphasizes policy “not simply as constraining, instrumental-rational forces imposed from above but to see policy as both productive and performative, a complex creative process that produces new kinds of relationships, new spaces for exchange and new kinds of subjectivity” (Shore, 2012, 92).

Goodlad further clarifies what is at stake when the public purposes of education are dislodged with his distinction of “schooling for some” versus “total inclusion.” “Those in power can and do determine how much school is available for who and even who will learn what under what rules of inclusion and exclusion. Stratification in the regularities put in place often conforms to stratification in the cultural caste system . . . *total inclusion* is a moral imperative in democracy (Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley and Goodlad, 2004, 7). As has been documented, students who do not fit the charter school “brand” are returned to their local public school.⁴ The market works as a stratifying force privileging those who already have social advantages. So it is important to also ask, how is education as a public good altered in this marketing process? By analyzing this policy space, it is hoped that areas and arenas of social justice education become clear.

This shift from public to increasingly private management of public education is quite opaque – in its mechanism, processes and goals; its wider implication are not well understood. This highlights a central conflict I will investigate in my case study: the tension between “consumer rights versus citizen rights” (Whitty, 2002. 87). We need to get underneath the

⁴ See the brief filed by the National Education Policy Center at the University of Colorado entitled “Chartering Equity.” February 23, 2012. See also the reports of the “Got to Go” list at The Success Academy, NY Times October 29, 2015.

rhetoric of serving the most disadvantage urban poor, to see how this field has been build and how the values of venture philanthropy are baked into it.

B. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this instrumental case study will be to describe and discover the context, extent and implications of the educational policy work of intermediaries in shaping contemporary urban school reform. The unit of analysis for my research will be the NewSchools Venture Fund. To understand the “field effects” of intermediaries, I selected NewSchools as a site that is growing and expanding its influence and hence can serve as a window to larger political and educational transformations under way. How does the NewSchools Venture Fund decide who to invest in? How do its policy and “investment portfolios” reflect its strategy to shape the direction of urban school reform? At this stage in the research, intermediaries will be generally defined as organizations, research firms, investors and service providers that walk with a foot in the two worlds of policy and business and “act as carriers of the new privatization . . . blurring the boundaries between markets and educational policy” (Burch, 39).

Further, a central dimension of intermediaries in the new privatization as Ball (2010), Scott (2009) and Burch (2009) note is that “In countries like the US, where neoliberalism is pervasive but lacks a generally recognized name, ‘it goes undebated – its underlying assumptions unexamined’” (Wells, Slayton and Scott, 2002, 359). With its complexity and “field of power” (Bourdieu, 1998, 34) often under the radar of public scrutiny, I will endeavor to map the landscape of influences the Fields of power that the NewSchools Venture Fund is drawing. Against this background, I choose the NewSchools Venture Fund as my unit of analysis to bind my case utilizing its phases of investment. See the Case Review and the chart on funded

projects. Further I am interested in excavating the influences and effects it represents, and also as a player in larger policy dynamics.

Based on my mapping, document analysis, observations and interviews, I want to assess in what ways the NewSchools Venture Fund, as a policy/business intermediary – shaping, funding and directing research to support this new logic of school reform – represents a new complex and hybrid ideological and political form of “Flex Nets” (Wedel, 2009, 2011). “Flex Nets” are Wedel’s phrase for the emerging power of “shadow elites” that are “more amorphous and less transparent than conventional lobbies and interest groups, yet more coherent and less accountable” (2009, 20). This line of analysis leads us back to the democratic potential of public education. To investigate the “paradox” of intermediaries as potentially contemporary forms of educational Flex Nets puts their emergence into a wider sociological context often missing from policy analysis. This question of “flex nets” builds on the tradition of power structure research that explores institutional relations and ideological formulations of power (Domhoff, 2009). Drawing on Wedel’s (2009) research and Picciano and Spring (2015), I will unfold the problematic and complexity of the NSVF field building influence on policy and politics in order to “lay out the problem and identify patterns so that, at the very least, we can comprehend a new phenomenon” (205).

The contours of the current debate in education policy parallels in significant ways the larger social and economic tension around what sociologist Douglas Massey (2007) calls the “new ecology of inequality.” The growing economic disparities of “the new gilded age” reflect a profound shift in terms of growing income and wealth gap in the US. This sharpening tension between the super rich and the majority of the population plays itself out politically around the role of schooling and democratic decision-making. While this is a question of “fairness” it

reveals a deeper issue at the core of neo-liberal social policy: how austerity and budget cuts to social program like education are being deployed to both legitimate a politics that favors finance and large corporations –and the political forces of a small “shadow elite” while simultaneously creating the political rationale for privatization. “Privatization shifts power to those who can more readily exercise power in the market” (Wells, 2000, 101). Education is both the “last big government monopoly” and at the cutting edge of a deeper penetration of neoliberal social policy reshaping American society. How do tax-advantaged intermediaries like the NewSchools Venture Fund articulate the purpose of education and potentially reshape how the “public” is constituted?⁵

C. Research Questions

My instrumental case study seeks to make visible the “policy worlds”⁶ of educational intermediary the NewSchools Venture Fund. How does an intermediary like the NewSchools Venture Fund help create a new organizational field that merges public policy with private interests and shapes a new neoliberal rationality of “what counts” as educational policy. “I ask, what *should* count as educational policy? As in any attempt to resolve complex issues, workable solutions can only be generated by an understanding of the underlying causes” (Anyon, 2005, 66). The formulations of my research questions are guided by the critical tension Anyon names.

The NewSchools Venture Fund (NSVF), my case, will serve as a nodal point from which to create a larger map that connects the dots of neoliberal policy and practice both within education and wider social policy. This approach is underscored by Gusterson who “suggests

⁵ See: [Juan Gonzalez: “Big Banks Making a Bundle on New Construction as Schools Bear the Cost” NY Daily News, May 7, 2010.](#)

⁶ According to Shore and Wright (2011) in their discussion of anthropology and the analysis of contemporary power, “policies are windows onto political processes in which actors, agents, concepts and technologies interact in different sites, creating or consolidating new rationalities of governance, and regimes of knowledge and power (2).

‘tilting the field’ so as to study a system from the perspective of a particular site in great detail and, from that, to trace out connections to and implications for a wider field” (in Shore, Wright and Pero, 2011, 12). My research questions aim to hold and elaborate the tension embedded in the position of intermediaries as organizations that are blurring the boundaries between educational policy and markets –nonprofit and for-profit.

The following research questions orient the line of inquiry for my instrumental case study: wi

1. What are the NSVF’s models of school reform and schooling? How have they developed since its founding?
2. How is the NSVF wielding influence to reshape the field of “new education reform”? How does its embrace of venture philanthropy, and its form of nonprofit grant making and for-profit investing coordinate the interests of the new educational reformers?
3. How are the established and emerging networks supported by the NSVF – in government, educational bureaucracies, and corporate, technical and financial ventures – shaping school reform?

The following chart outlines my research questions, with the data sources and methods of analysis

Table 1.1 Research Questions and Methods Matrix

(Adapted from Maxwell, 2005)

Research Question	What Data Used	Data Source	Method of Analysis
What are the NSVF’s models of school reform and schooling? How have they developed since its founding?	990 Tax forms Published case studies NSVF Primary Documents, Reports	Foundation Center Library Harvard and Stanford Business NSVF in 2004: At a Crossroads Next-Generation Schools Stacey Childress, 9-806-051 “Investing in a Revolution”; "Creating Responsive Supply in	Coding and charting by type Detail description, Case review Interpretive Policy Analysis

	Magazines, Journals, Newspapers	Public Education" Kim Smith; <i>Education Week, NY Times, Forbes, Stanford Social Innovation Review</i>	
How is the NSVF wielding influence to reshape the field of “new education reform”? How does its embrace of venture philanthropy, and its form of nonprofit grant making and for-profit investing coordinate the interests of the new educational reformers?	Grant maker search Board members and Leadership Council NSVF Primary Documents, Reports Magazines, Journals, Newspapers Professional Reports Trade Journals	Foundation Center Library Newschools.org (website) ”Venture Philanthropy: The NewSchools Fund” Educator Sector Reports, “Scaling up the nation’s best charter schools”; <i>Nonprofit and Voluntary Quarterly</i> , “Building a Culture: Evolution of VP as a New Organizational Field”; Educational Researcher, “The Expanding Role of Philanthropy in Education Politics National Center for Responsive Philanthropy, “Axis of Ideology, Conservative Foundations and Public Policy” EdSurge; TechCrunch	Coding and charting by type Network Analysis, Sociogram Detail description, Case review Interpretive Policy Analysis – looking for patterns and metaphors.

<p>How are the established and emerging networks supported by the NSVF – in government, educational bureaucracies, and corporate, technical and financial ventures – shaping school reform?</p>	<p>Aspen NewSchools Educational Entrepreneurial Fellowships;</p> <p>NewSchools Venture Fund Board and Leadership Council Networks</p> <p>Annual Reports</p> <p>990 Tax Return</p> <p>For-profit investments</p> <p>NSVF Primary Documents, Reports</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Observation</p>	<p>NSVF and Aspen press releases</p> <p>Public Accountability Initiative; Muckety; Guide Star</p> <p>NSVF Web</p> <p>Foundation Center Library Listing of all grants given</p> <p>“Our Venture” NSVF web; EdSurge; TechCrunch; Education Week</p> <p>Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Education; “NewSchools Strategy at a Glance”; Redesigning Schools for Today’s Student and Beyond”; NewSchools Catapult Fund; Boston Carter School Replication Fund</p> <p>Ted Mitchell; Laurene Powell Jobs; Michael Edwards</p> <p>New York Times “Schools for Tomorrow” conference</p>	<p>Coding and charting by type</p> <p>Coding and charting by type</p> <p>Network Analysis, Sociogram</p> <p>Interpretive Policy Analysis – looking for patterns and metaphors</p>
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D. Theoretical Framework

Theories of Neoliberalism and Education

“In my view, such a radical reconstruction can be achieved only by privatizing a major segment of the educational system –i.e. by enabling a private, for-profit industry to develop that will provide a wide variety of learning opportunities and offer effective competition to public schools. Such a reconstruction cannot come about overnight. It inevitably must be gradual.” (“Public Schools: Make them Private,” Milton Friedman, 1995.)

“The education reform movement is not a table where we all sit around and talk. It’s a train that is leaving the station, gaining speed, momentum and direction. It is time for everyone –everywhere – to get on board” Arne Duncan, 2009, Governors Education Conference

In endeavoring to understand and map the NewSchools Venture Fund (NSVF) as an “institutional entrepreneur”, this dissertation will utilize three distinct yet complementary theories of neoliberalism (Harvey 2005, Brown 2015 and Wacquant 2012) in order to comprehend its shaping influence on public education. Further, the theoretical and methodological framework I will employ – Bourdieu’s “reflective and relational sociology”, Wedel and Shore’s “anthropology of policy and Burch and Ball’s “critical studies of educational markets –have all been developed (al be it in different context) to understand and investigate this “peculiar form of reason that configures all aspects of existence in economic terms . . .including vocabularies, principles of justice, political cultures, habits of citizenship, practices of rule, and above all democratic imaginaries” (Brown, 2015, 17). Together they can help us to understand the broader context of the current proliferation of private sector participation in public education and what the implications of this shift (to “restructure and deregulate”) have for the purpose and governance of our public educational system.

Now viewed as the “prudent and measured alternative,” neoliberalism is a powerful economic, social, cultural and political project that “attaches to expedient political concepts . . .

under the cover of concepts such as public-private partnerships, privatization and globalization,” as Burch argues (2009, 3). A central aspects of this dynamic is the link between institutional processes (and how they affect organizational fields) and the reproduction of structural inequalities on the school, community and city levels and how these inequalities effect the possibilities for participation of working class and communities of color. In *Bringing Equity Back*, Petrovich (2005) sharpens this tension, “The historical tension between the expectations of equality that are part of the democratic political system and the need for free markets and competition that is part of the capitalist economic system . . . Proponents of economic growth argue that it will do more for the poor that distributing existing resources more equally. Public school have been the battleground of these opposing perspectives” (5).

To get underneath this broader context of the educational policies at work, my case study will articulate and make explicit the theoretical framework of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is more than a “top-down ideological project” (Larner,) but also is a “complex, multi-layered, multi-vocal, social phenomenon” (2005, 10-12) with practices and discourses we can analyze to understand how it shapes and directs policy. Bourdieu (1998) in an insightful critique elaborates on the ‘multi-vocal, multi-layer aspects, “Thus we see how the neoliberal utopia tends to embody itself in the reality of a kind of internal machine whose necessity imposes itself even upon the rulers. For they sanctify the power of markets in he name of economic efficiency, which requires the elimination of administrative or political barriers capable of inconveniencing the owners of capital in their individual quest for the maximization of individual profit, which has been turned into a model of rationality” (4).

My analysis of the NewSchools Venture Fund (NSVF), as an important educational policy intermediary, will enable me to map the broader context of what (Wedel, 2009, 4) calls

the “coincidence of interests” –“players (working as consultants for states or special envoys or intermediaries between them) . . . [who] weave new institutional forms of power and influence, in which official and private power and influence are interdependent and even reinforce each other. . . . A new system has been ushered in . . .” (5). This “new breed of players” arose, Wedel contends, in part due to “The redesign of governing spawned by the rising tide of government outsourcing and deregulation under a “neoliberal” regime” (4).

But what is this “neoliberal regime?” How does it operate, wield influence and why is it important to educational policy? Neoliberal policy operations, reflected in the practices of intermediaries like NSVF are, it must be emphasized, “ushering in a new system” where the role of the government in making policy has changed. In one sense this is a dramatic shift marking the transition from the welfare state to neoliberal governance – in this light the move is from government “correcting for the market” to “connecting to the market.” Hardt (2010) states this shift concisely: “neoliberalism operates through plural and decentralized governmental mechanism defined by entrepreneurial logics and market rationality: a state supervised by the market, rather than a market controlled by the state” (154). Ball (2012) will argue that “the policy process and new methods of governing society [mark] a shift from ‘the government of a unitary state to governance in and by networks” (2).

Elaborated in the analysis that follows as well as providing a set of framing and interpretive lens for the data of my research, I am culling three complementary theories of neoliberalism. First and perhaps the best known is David Harvey, whose focus on political economy provides powerful insights, specifically *accumulation by dispossession*. Fabricant and Fine (2015) elaborate, “*accumulation by dispossession*, is a set of practices by which elites or

corporations repossess formerly public goods or series and convert them into individually held private goods” (5).

David Harvey (2005) further lays out the framework within which to grasp the complexity of neoliberalism and its dynamics:

Neoliberalism is in the first instance 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. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. . . . Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in area such as land, water, education, health care, social security or environmental pollution) then they must be created by state action if necessary. (2)

Second, Wendy Brown (2015) deepens our understanding of neoliberalism while using Foucault work on “governmentality.” She elaborates a neoliberalism similar to the articulation by Bourdieu above, yet goes in a provocative direction. She states, “Within neoliberal rationality, human capital is both or “is an our “ought” –what we are said to be, what se should be and what the rationality makes us into through its norms and construction of environments . . . This figure of the human [is] as an ensemble of entrepreneurial and investment capital . . . neoliberal rationality disseminates market values and metrics into new spheres” (36-37). This analysis is very suggestive of two aspects of my analysis of the NSVF: 1/ the neoliberal construction of the geographical local (NSVF “City Funds”) and 2/ a critical frame to situate, evaluate and critique a central agent in the neoliberal school reform narrative: educational entrepreneurs.

The final theory of neoliberalism I am drawing on comes from the work of Loic Wacquant (2012). His conceptualization of “Neoliberalism as market-conforming state crafting”

is illuminating when we see how the “flex-groups’ surrounding the NewSchools Venture Fund act to shape and bend policy to its agenda. He argues for anchoring “the anthropology of neoliberalism, understood not as an invasive economic doctrine or migrating techniques of rule but as a concrete political constellation . . .that specifies the institutional machinery involved in the establishment of market dominance and its operant impact on effective social membership” (71). This shift by Wacquant is central to orienting the critical notion of “field building” I will employ in my case review and analysis.

In the latter part of the twentieth century a “fundamental shift” took place where the “social-democratic models of provision of education associated with Keynesian demand management, based on universal and free entitlement in line with the ideas of the public good [was replaced] with the more competitive individualistic gearing of education as a marketable commodity operating in the arena of free competition” (Olssen, 2009, 433). The central education policy that marks this shift is the bipartisan legislation, No Child Left Behind signed by President Bush in 2002. This legislation wrote into law the “new privatization,” Burch (2009). It not only mandated testing, markers for Adequate Year Progress (AYP), privatization of support services and with school closings –choice—the options of charter schools but also, “exemplifies the transformation in the dominant discourse on education and society, as societal institutions are recast as markets rather than as deliberatively democratic systems” (Hursh, 2007, 494).

What needs to be emphasized about the transition ushered in by NCLB is that education in the guise of reform was more complexly transformed into business units. “The state works to develop appropriate meta-capacities and supports the development of ‘new policy narratives’

which in term mobilize support behind new accumulation strategies. The state acts as a ‘commodifying agent’” (Ball, 2007, 70).

The litany of benefits claimed by privatization –that by bringing competition into education we create a market that will simultaneously produce higher quality education, especially for poor communities and children of color; lower production costs (saving taxpayer’s money) and make government accountable by reducing bureaucracy –is often repeated in our election and news cycles that it has shaped our everyday common sense. It has a penetrating influence as Lipman (2011) reminds us: “Neoliberalism is not just “out there” as a set of policies and explicit ideologies. It has developed a new social imaginary, a common sense about how we think about society and our place in it” (6).

One of the central purposes of my dissertation research is to engage with the dominant “social imaginary” of neoliberalism in order to understand its implications to re-envision a democratic education for social justice. This framing is useful for my case study because I want to keep in sight the emergence of new organizational forms as well as their implication for what Gutmann and Thompson, (2004) call “deliberative democracy.”

The trajectory of neoliberal social and educational policy follows distinct phases Duggan (2003). First, is what she calls “the attack on the New Deal coalition” (XII) and how the “long school choice story” was used by conservative to fundamentally alter the content of citizenship and the character of government . . . chipping away at what T.H. Marshall at mid-century depicted as ‘social citizenship’” (4). The second aspect of neoliberal ideology, Duggan argues, is “pro-business activism” where during the 1970s “business groups organized to redistribute resources upward” (XII). Finally, neoliberal ideology as articulated by Duggan is what she calls

“emergent ‘multicultural’ neoliberal ‘equality’ politics –a stripped down, non-redistributive form of equality . . . compatible with continued upward redistribution of resources” (XII). A central aspect of this dynamic is the valorization of individualism and personal responsibility “these terms define the central intersections between the culture of neoliberalism and its economic vision” (12).

Inequality in education does not solely emerge on its own, but is a result of “circuits and consequences of dispossession” (Fine and Ruglis, 2009). Policy formulations that emanate from these “circuits” are highly charged; they reconfigure and stratify the social geography within poor, working class and communities of color as we will see in the cases of NSVF City Funds in Boston and Washington, D.C.

Neoliberal Educational Policy and Inequality: A Brief Overview and Implications

Widening inequality is a signature characteristic of “Capital in the 21st Century.” What does this “upward redistribution” of wealth and resources look like and what are some of its implications for schools and democratic educational policy?

It is clear that the underpinnings of public education are changing, still a central issue concerning the purpose of public education in a democracy remains – what political forces are entitled and empowered to direct this change. One component vital to understanding these changes in urban educational policies and practices is a critical analysis of the dynamics of inequality and the ways that education policy contends with, reproduces or resists it. The social relations of inequality operate in two interrelated ways in educational policy:

First, the extremes of wealth, outlined below, structure the political economy of federal and state policy. Our contemporary period is characterized as a time of austerity where there is

appears to be limited money for human needs and basic social provisions. McCarty et al (2006) in the book, *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches*, note how polarizations of wealth and income act to inhibit support for policies aimed at redistribution which in turn lead to more polarization and greater inequality.

As political leaders rewrote the rules of the American market to reduce the bargaining power of labor, lower the minimum wage, curtail social safety nets, limit transfer payments, constrict public employment, and make debt more expensive to acquire and difficult to escape, they also rewrote the rules of the economic game to make life easier for the affluent by reducing their financial obligations (reducing taxes) in support of the public good (180).

These policies reflect above a shift of tax burden away from corporations and onto individuals. They further mark “. . .the transformation of the administrative state, one previously responsible for human well-being, as well as for the economy, into a state that gives power to global corporations and installs apparatuses and knowledges through which people are reconfigured as productive economic entrepreneurs of their own lives" (Davies and Bansel, 2007, 248).

Second, the crisis of wealth inequality and its social relations calls into question the legitimacy of the democratic foundation of society and the ability of education to meaningfully address it. This growing wealth divide coupled with the "dance of unequal (policy and tax) riches" fueled with an influx of new technology money create both a crisis⁷ and an opportunity from the point of view of emerging "flexians who seek influence and to promote their views at least as much as money" (Wedel, 2009, 12).

⁷ See Eli Broad, "Never Let a Good Crisis Go to Waste." *EdWeek*, May 23, 2012.

Since the 1980s and the grounding of neoliberal policy under Reagan and the publication of the trendsetting report *A Nation at Risk* (1983) there has been an ongoing narrative of failure and an increased government support for privatization. Public schools historically have suffered from segregation by race, ethnicity and class. The response that emerged and has been dominant for almost four decades is that "schools operate on a business model in a network of relationships with decrease voters' control" (Picciano and Spring, 3).⁸

Specifically, also in the 1980s was the transfer onto educational policy and governance what is referred to a "new public management" (Thrupp and Hursh, 2006; Ball, 2007). As a center piece of market logic, the private sector became a model (with the tropes mentioned above) for the public sector and with this the soil was ripe for the "network of relations" that came to be known as venture philanthropy. Bourdieu underscores that "neoliberal discourse is *not* a discourse like others, . . .it is a 'strong discourse' which is so strong and so hard to fight because it has behind it all the power of a world of power relations which it helps make as it is, in particular by orienting the economic choices of those who dominate economic relations and so adding its own --specifically symbolic-- force to those power relations" (1998, 95). These interconnections, operating under the surface, once critically analyzed allow us to make visible the political forces and economic policies of neoliberalism. These developments, emerging over the last forty years, have readied the soil for introduction of "free market" plans to privatize public education as well as the emergence of the champions of venture philanthropy: the educational entrepreneur.

⁸ For an informative overview of this issue see Cuban (2004) *The Blackboard and the Bottom Line: Why Schools Can't Be Businesses*.

To sharpen the connection between the dramatic rise of economic inequality and the "coincidences of interest, they [flex nets] weave new institutional forms of power and influence in which official and private power and influence are interdependent and even reinforce each other" (Wedel, 2009, 5).

One mechanism of how power and influence is "reinforced" is offered through the analysis of Massey's (2007) frame of the "new ecology of inequality." His articulation of a "spatial separation" of the wealthy (realized in gated communities and off-shore tax havens), illustrates the great polarizations of wealth and poverty that is characteristic of neoliberal policy. He begins by reminding us that "the mechanisms of class stratification have combined with those grounded in race and ethnicity to produce rising levels of inequality and turn the United States into the most unequal society in the developed world. . . . As the US got richer after 1970, increases in wealth were no long translated into greater social well-being for most Americans." Social and racial stratification form "clusters" of inhabitants similar with one another. This, in turn, has a detrimental effect on the democratic public sphere: ". . .the economic elite has increasingly separated itself from the rest of American society in social, cultural and geographic terms, thereby insulating itself from the negative consequences of rising inequality (191)." This is sometime referred to as governing at a distance.

We might further observe that this clustering Massey analyzes represents a disengagement from the body politic and enables the formation of what Wedel (2009) calls the flexian. "I call this new breed of influencers "flexians." When such operators work together in long standing groups, thus multiplying their influence, they are flex nets" (5). This theoretical postulate both analyzes and describes the emergence of new philanthropy and new governance.

Let's look at these elite flex-groups. To appreciate the magnitude of the social distancing operating the December 5, 2015 edition of *Market Watch* is enlightening. *America's 20 richest people have more money than these 152 million people* In its attempt to be cute and somewhat ironic or mildly disapproving it goes on:

This statistic might even make the 1% feel humbled.

America's 20 wealthiest people — a group that could fit in one Gulfstream G650 jet — are now worth \$732 billion, which means they have more wealth than the 152 million What's more, the "Forbes 400" wealthiest individuals in the U.S. now have a net worth of \$2.34 trillion. "There is a growing concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer hands," says Josh Hoxie, who heads up the Project on Opportunity and Taxation at the Institute for Policy Studies.

This Gulfstream Jet starkly illuminates the power of wealth concentration available to remake social and educational policies. Stiglitz (May, 2011) continues, "It is no use pretending that what has obviously happened has not in fact happened. The upper 1% of Americans are now taking in nearly a quarter of the nation's income. In terms of wealth rather than income, the top 1% controls 40 percent. Twenty-five years ago, the corresponding figures were 12 percent and 33 percent. . . . growing inequality is the flip side of something else: shrinking opportunity." While these figures are sometimes known, their details and policy implications often are not. "Shrinking opportunity" poses urgent challenges for education.

In his incisive analysis Bauman (2013) in his short book *Does the Richness of the Few Benefit Us All?* highlights the magnitude of wealth by this elite: "In 2011 the number of billionaires in the US reached its historical record to date 1,210, while their combined wealth has grown from \$3,500 billion in 2007 to \$4,500 billion in 2010 . . . all in all the combined wealth of

the world's richest 1000 people is almost twice as much as the poorest 2.5 billion" (7). He goes onto to reveal the rationale (similar to the one professed by market advocates and venture philanthropists) "inequality has always been justified on the grounds that those at the top contributed more to the economy, performing the role of job creators" (12).

This line is similar to the assumption that successful venture capital and venture philanthropy are "so smart that they can fix the public schools"⁹ to paraphrase Al Gore comment to John Doerr co- founder of NewSchools Venture Fund. In short, the "corporate model of school organization persist even to the extent of opening school administrative ranks to those who have proven successful in the business world" (Picciano and Spring, 2013, 4).

This vast inequality poses a challenges to the deeply held notion of education as the "great equalizer" in the United States. We need to more clearly understanding "how educational public policies . . . [carve] a racialized geography of youth development and dispossession that appears to be so natural (Fine and Ruglis (2009), 20)." Situating these mechanisms -- economic, political, social and geographic – will situate educational policy and help to make visible the workings of the "circuits" and the flex nets operation of elites driving policy. In their insightful book, *Remembering Elites* Savage and Williams (2008) underscore this issue: "money itself should not be seen as a 'neutral veil' but as a key social device and technology. Those who control money are establishing themselves as central and political agents, who can also embed themselves in wider circuits of power" (9).

Saskia Sassen (2014) makes a profound summative statement, "a system with the capacity to concentrate wealth at this scale is distinctive" (14). This demarcation of the

⁹ This history and line of analysis will be fully developed in the case review below.

particular character of our period is importance as we collect, analyze and map the interconnection of the NewSchools Venture Fund and draw its connections to the emergence of *Shadow Elites*. Sassen draws out the implications of this ‘scale of distinctive wealth’, Rich individual . . . need what we might think of as systemic help: a complex interaction of these actors with systems regeared towards enabling extreme concentrations. . . . They include enormous capacities for intermediation that function as a kind of haze, impairing our ability to see what is happening. Today the structure through which concentration happens are complex assemblages of multiple elements” (13-14).

This is, then, more than an argument about resources, as important as they are, or about taxes and fairness. The social relations of inequality that I have begun to unpack have important implications for how we understand the purposes of public education and the cohesion of the public sphere. . Popkewitz and Lindblad (2004) sharpen the stakes of school reform for creating and sustaining a democratic public sphere. They contend, “Our concern is not only with the institutional actors and organizational processes, but with the historicizing the principals generated about who we are and should be. That is, embodied in the reforms of education are the rules and standards of ‘thought’ about the mode of life that one is to live and should live (230).” This theoretical frame ‘about the mode of life that one is to live and should live’ informs the explorations of my case study.

Bourdieu (1998) argues “adds its own symbolic force to the relations of forces. This “immense *political project*” [of neoliberalism] . . . [is] a “*programme of the methodical destruction of collectives*” (95-96). In this way, the framework of neoliberalism is a challenge to education and democracy and the possibilities of citizen participation required for social justice in the 21st century.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The Rise of Intermediaries: Setting the Policy Context

We are at a “crossroads,’ between education as “private assets or public good: Where does democracy and education reside today?” (McNeil, 2002, 243). Argued with greater urgency Picciano and Spring (2013) critically remind us, “our children, who should be enjoying wonder, experiencing excitement, and gaining an appreciation of lifelong learning are instead being subjected to the manipulation of the players in the American industrial-education complex” (179). A key “player” supporting market-oriented regulatory restructuring is an intermediaries such as the NewSchools Venture Fund.

Intermediaries are politically and economically situated policy actors which strategically “leverage” their political networks, capital investments and research and media resources in order to shift the grounding and governance of education from a public and participatory process to one of private “audit culture” style management. In Burch’s frame intermediaries are “hybrid organizations that stitch together neoliberal education policy with investment strategies of Silicon Valley social entrepreneurs” (2009, 13). Her definition describes the NewSchools Venture Fund and one of its cofounders, John Doerr, venture capitalist at Kleiner, Perkins, Caufield & Byers (KPCB) in Menlo Park, California.

In “Sociology of Education and Urban Education Policy” (Whitty, 2000) observes that “central to these initiatives have been moves to disband centralized educational bureaucracies and create in their place devolved systems of schooling entailing significant degrees of institutional autonomy and a variety of forms of school-base management and administration (80).” This new logic of school reform is characterized by privatization, “new public management” organizations –for-profit EMOs, nonprofit CMO -- accountability, competition

and choice. It is not just about making public schools privately run, as in charter schools, it embodies a “neoliberal rationality, while foregrounding the market, is not only or even primarily focused on the economy; rather it involves *extending and disseminating market values to all institutions and social action*, even as the market itself remains a distinctive player” (Brown, 2003, 3).

A growing body of work explores and makes visible the processes of privatization. As Brown indicates, this “extending and disseminating” of market values is ubiquitous. Apple (2009) remarks, “it is not an easy process to transform parts of our lives and institutions that were not totally integrated into market relations so that they are part of a market” (ix). One challenge in politics and in research is language. What do we call this change? How do we best characterize it? A recent studies describe these processes “hidden.” Ball, for example, argues that the “naturalness” of the discourses of school privatization “arise in good part from what has been excluded from them and by them and rendered unsayable” (2007, 2). In a larger multinational study, Ball and Youdell call these transnational processes the “Hidden Privatization in Education” (2008). In work pivotal to conceptualizing my research, Burch characterizes recent development as “Hidden Markets” (2009). This “new education privatization” she argues emerges most clearly in the 1990s with the “rise of educational management organizations from 1999 to 2003 the number of private companies managing public schools (charters) tripled” (2009, 4). This has been a vital arena for the NewSchools Venture Fund “a ‘re-agenting of education policy as private companies, voluntary and NGO groups, sponsors and philanthropists act as key players in public education” (Ball, 2007, 70). . What are the effects of this development on the public purposes of education?

The educational policy work and school reform practices of intermediaries like NSVF are “hidden” because they “point to the complexity of ideologies that lies under the surface of the new privatization” (Burch, 2009, 51). She argues they operate in ways not easily seen or understood by policy makers or the public. They include: “Establishment of investment criteria for educational ventures, the quiet authoring of pro-market regulatory guidance and report writing by market researchers that extols the industry’s promise” (13). We will see below how these policy/political dimensions of the work of intermediaries shape the concrete practice and portfolios of the NewSchools Venture Fund. In addition to connection to national conservative advocacy organization like ALEC (and their “Virtual Schools Act”) and the State Policy Networks, there are an increasing number of organization that spring up watered by the venture philanthropy dollars, ideology and networks—e.g. Families for Excellent Schools; 50 CAN; Student First and Democrats for Education Reform etc.

This literature, then, argues that the new logic of educational policy is linked (under the guise of providing innovation) to the financial markets and speculative capital. An intermediary like the NewSchools Venture Fund, the unit of analysis in my research, provides a useful case example to track how activities and roles are being transferred from the public to the private sector. This development situates my qualitative case study.

Intermediaries, like the NewSchools Venture Fund (NSVF) are “hybrid organizations” bringing together the approach of venture capital to the work of “venture philanthropy.” Kim Smith, CEO of NSVF, states it this way at a roundtable discussion entitled, “*High-Engagement Philanthropy: a Bridge to a More Effective Social Sector,*” “You look like a venture capital firm. You invest in an industry or a set of industries. You get expert at what it takes to be successful in those industries. You provide human capital, intellectual capital, and financial capital. That to

me is venture philanthropy” (2004, 70). An interesting comment and critique of venture philanthropy is found in Hess (2012) “Philanthropy Gets into the Ring.” While noting the “handful of philanthropist” that have orchestrated the “tectonic shift” in education policy, he goes onto to caution, “If education philanthropist want to influence policy, then they must open themselves to more public debate about their plan and goals” (17). This challenge from a sympathetic policy advocate, points out the way institutional entrepreneurs in education guard their brand and the direction of market and fields which make them viable.

The NewSchools Venture Fund

The NewSchools Venture Fund (NSVF), founded in 1998, is one of the best connected institutional entrepreneurs with “capital” (Bourdieu, 1998, 5) -- economic, social, cultural, political and symbolic -- coming from Kleiner, Perkins, Caulfield & Byers (KPCB), a firm of venture capitalists involved in technology companies including Compaq, Netscape, Amazon.com and Google. Kim Smith, a co-founder, brings with her a background as a founder of Teach For America and connection with Gregory Dees of Stanford Business School, one of the intellectual guides to the rise of venture philanthropy (with his adaptation of “ecosystem”).

At the end of the twentieth century with the neoliberal policies of Bill Clinton and the Democratic Leadership Council in place, a series of philanthrocapitalist developments occurred. The big three venture philanthropies, Gates, Walton and Broad, “came to exercise vast influence over American education because of their strategic investments in school reform” (Ravitch, 2010, 200). Founded in 1999, The Broad Foundation’s mission on its website is to “transform K-12 urban public education through better governance, management, labor relations and competition” (www.broadfoundation.org). “The Broad Foundation invested millions of dollars in charter schools and charter management organizations including KIPP, Green Dot,

NewSchools Venture Fund and Uncommon Schools” (Ravitch, 216). The Gates Foundation, established in 2000 with assets of \$30 billion, is the largest foundation in the world. After moving away from supporting small schools, the Gates Foundation, Ravitch notes, “increased its giving to advocacy groups from \$276,000 in 2002 to nearly \$57 million in 2005 . . . Beginning in 2000 Gates supplied nearly \$100 million to charter management organizations . The foundation’s largest grants overall went to the NewSchools Venture Fund for \$57 million” (210).

With this convergence of support and political connections, the NewSchools Venture Fund has “within nine years [since its founding in 1998] raised \$100 million underwriting sixteen EMOs with 102 charter schools serving 30,000 students . . . making it one of the largest charter school funders” (Klonsky and Klonsky, 2008, 145). (See charts in the chapter 4).

This profile helps us to see the power of Burch’s analysis that “market models of policy do not simply descend onto education; they enter the discourse and become lodged in policy through political work” (13). The study on the NewSchools Venture Fund by the Harvard Business School (case # 9-301-038) allows us to see the ways venture philanthropy “enters and becomes lodged in policy.” John Dorr, co-founder of NewSchools, teamed up with Jim Barksdale, CEO of Netscape, to co-found Technology Network (TechNet). “One of the first education-oriented initiatives with which TechNet became involved was to reform California’s charter school legislation” (2000, 3). Doerr explains the process of influence and the values inherent in venture philanthropy:

Influencing public policy can be a very high leverage way to create change. We spend \$4 million on the campaign to put our charter school initiative on the ballot before the legislature agreed to include it in a pending bill. If you think about that from a return standpoint, over a 10-year period we will have 1000 new charter schools in the state of California, which will each receive on average \$3 million in state funding per year. So

that's a \$3 billion per annum return on a \$4 million initiative campaign –an outstanding return, worth the time, worth the money. (Case # 9-301-038, 3)

This documented exchange reveal the mind-set of venture philanthropy in practice. What is valued is the “game”¹⁰ ; the deployment of power and influence to achieve ‘outstanding return’.

In their “Case Study of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation,” Picciano and Spring analyze what Wedel’s calls a “coincidence of influence.” They lay out how the “Gates Foundation has sought to influence federal education policy to conform to its own view and ideology by promoting the appointment of its former employees and other collaborators to key position in the U.S. Department of Education” (2013, 136-7). In this light they note the role of James Shelton II, program officer at Gates and partner in the NewSchools Venture Fund. At the Foundations Leaders Institute (co-convened by the Grantmakers for Education and the Council on Foundations) in the fall of 2007, Shelton comments on “Going to Scale”, “That’s why we need alignment of our efforts, supported by a common data infrastructure and knowledge-management platforms” (10). This vision was realized in 2011, when Joanne Weiss, a partner at the NewSchools Venture Fund became the manager of the Obama Administration’s \$4.3 Billion “Race to the Top” fund, and eventually she became Education Secretary Arne Duncan’s Chief of Staff.

These connections of money and power demonstrate that policy making has indeed shifted its center of gravity to outside the governmental arena. The mission of the NewSchools

¹⁰ Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) comment on how field building is like a game. “We have *stakes* which are for the most part the product of the competition between players. We have an *investment in the game* : players are taken in by the game , they oppose one another, sometimes with ferocity, only to the extent that they concur in their belief in the game and its stakes” (98).

Venture Fund highlighted in its on-line report, “Investing in a Revolution: NewSchools Venture Fund and America’s Education Entrepreneurs” and in the Harvard case study are “1) investing in entrepreneurial ventures targeting a vulnerability in the public education system, and 2) creating a network of education entrepreneurs and New Economy leaders to both help New School’s portfolio companies and to build the field of education entrepreneurs as a whole” (case # 9-301-038, 1); 3) using technology to “reinvent K-12 education.” 4) Build the field and create legitimacy in education reform for the for-profit ed-tech sector and the school model ventures.

These reports highlight the NewSchools Venture Fund areas of investing: Charter Schools, Charter Management Organizations, Leadership and Teacher Training, Data and Classroom Technology, and Research and Advocacy.

Intermediaries like the NSVF, shift responsibility “away from the state and on to the unsuccessful consumer and individual pupil . . . what markets do is to represent social inequality as a natural outcome of individual action in key policy decisions” (Ogza, 2000, 60-61). Former Ford Foundation program officer Michael Edwards, in his book, *Small Change: Why Business Won’t Save the World* (2008) cautions us to be aware of what he calls “irrational exuberance” (5). He goes on to put the issue of market based solutions to social problems and education in its fuller and more historically rich context: “And in the rush to embrace new approaches to philanthropy, some very important older questions were in danger of being buried under hype and adulation—questions of deep social change and social transformation, of democracy and plutocracy, and of people’s willingness to work together on common problems as full and equal citizens, not as clients or consumers” (viii). More is at stake than the mere “bottom line” of influence and resources and through mapping the complex terrain of intermediaries we can gain a fuller appreciation of the landscape.

Significance of the Study

Urban school reform is at a crossroads. Educational policy needs to respond to the real lives and lived possibilities of students, parents and their communities. While the ultimate direction of school reform remains unclear given political and economic uncertainty, the importance of evidence-based research will continue to be central to all future discussions of urban educational policy. In an era when the public sphere is under attack, I hope my study can provide some light as to the origins, operations and motivation driving privatization as the dominant policy initiatives. By showing how the interconnected policies and practices of institutional entrepreneurial field building work, I can help to problematize what is hidden, to give it a face not only allows citizens to hold those in power accountable but also to envision a form of democratic education that serves all members of our society in the development of the skills and capacities needed to live in a democratic society.

As consumer rights strive to dominate citizen rights in the new logic neoliberal social policy, I seek to map how the “new organizational arena” of venture philanthropy intermediaries like the NSVF operate and shape educational policy. Whitty (2000) suggests that “the practical implications of {sociological} work for . . . political and educational practice {are} as much concerned with the ways in which policy is made as with specific substantive policies” (88). The logic and the outcomes of the business model are clear: competition, efficiency, high stakes accountability tied to performance matrices. Yet, the way educational policy of privatization is made, the process of the hidden markets, is not well understood. Is education policy written by venture philanthropy, even if made with good intentions, writing out the public from meaningful participation? What will be the impact of this on how we think about the power of citizenship?

By understanding how the hidden markets of privatization operate to change the culture, purpose and direction of public education, we can begin to envision alternative that address the needs of all.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology, Data Collection and Analysis

This research project will be both exploratory and explanatory, in addressing my research questions about how intermediaries wield influence and construct their field building activities in shaping the new policy culture of urban school reform. I will use a qualitative research design, which is best suited for a study which seeks to gain new knowledge and not test hypotheses. In this way, the in-depth data collection process of an instrumental case study, which scrutinizes the context and activities of the NSVF, will help me to pursue an “understanding of something else” (Stake).

Sampling

As a way to bound and delimit the scope of my case study of intermediaries, I focus on the NewSchools Venture Fund (NSVF) as my unit of analysis. Further, within the three large “bins” of the Fund – investment sources, organizations and activities supported by the investments (scope and patterns) and Board of Directors (organizational and interpersonal networks) – I will purposefully sample (Miles and Huberman, 1994, 27) from each bin to respect the “logic and coherence” of the social relations at work in the formation and implementation of NewSchools Venture Fund’s policy orientation and practice.

- In investments, I will focus on the period from 2002 to the present. According to NSVF, it “concluded that education entrepreneurs indeed played a critical role in education reform and that the NSVF was needed to ensure the development of a continuing stream of high-quality entrepreneurial organizations (“Investment history, www.newschools.org/ventures).”

- In terms of 100 plus organizations and activities NSVF invests in and supports, my research, in alignment with the purpose of my study, will investigate in the five areas of 1/ Charter schools; 2/ charter management organizations; 3/ Data tracking and classroom technology; 4/ Leadership and teacher training and 5/ research and advocacy. These areas are most closely aligned with the purpose of my study.
- In terms of the Board of Directors of NSVF itself was a greater challenge. These Board members are highly influential and interact with many boards, projects, hedge-funds as well as government officials. See Appendix D for a sociogram of L. John Doerr, co-founder of NewSchools Venture Fund. In addition to interviews, of two board members, I will social network analysis to develop organizational and interpersonal networks for the NSVF Board. From these networks I construct two sociograms: 1/ an organizational network created by overlapping membership; 2/ interpersonal network created by common organizational affiliations. Additionally, I track the money flows: people to people; people to institutions; institutions to people; institutions to institutions.

Data Collection Procedures

In order to collect data that allowed me to map and analyze the context of intermediaries in the current era of educational reform, I frame my policy work in more than just the technical sense of “did the policy achieve its goal, why or why not.” Instead I employ the lens of critical anthropology and interpretive policy analysis “to deconstruct policy in order to reveal patterns and processes in organizations of power and governance in society” (Shore and Wright, 2011, 4).

This approach to data collection squares well with the four types of information collected in qualitative research outlined by Creswell (1998, 120-121): Document analysis, observations, interviews and audio-visual. I engaged in data collection through these multiple sources. Document analysis (public and private) played a central role in providing the initial coordinates for my mapping through annual reports, internal memoranda, website investigation and data provided through Guide Star. Unpublished and published reports were collected and analyzed. For example, two background policy briefs by Harvard Business School and Stanford University on the NewSchools Venture Fund offer texture on the context of NSVF's orientation and influence.

Observations, where possible, were conducted of meetings and presentations of NSVF affairs. I attended the "Schools for Tomorrow Conference on September 9, 2014 . There I did observation of the sessions and the lunch and interviewed two key NSVF Board members Laurene Powell Jobs and CEO Ted Mitchell.

A research question and methods matrix is on pages 10--13.

Data Analysis Procedures

My data analysis utilizes the "sense-making and co-construction" approach by Datnow and Park (2009) to elaborate "on the interconnections between actors and explaining just exactly how context has shaped policy implementation" (350). It is here that the "sense-making and co-construction" perspective of policy formation offers an interesting way forward, "by elaborating on the interconnections between actors and explaining just exactly how context has shaped policy implementation (350)." This challenge is central to my research on the role, scope and influence of intermediaries through my analysis of the NewSchools Venture Fund.

Network Ethnography

The whole landscape of the state and the public sector is undergoing a massive change and the state itself is no longer adequate focus for understanding policy.. . .Policy is being done in new locations, by new actors, through new discourses that have been imported from elsewhere. . . .Citizenship is now about responsibility for oneself rather than responsibility for others. In many way our traditional analytic tools are quite inadequate for making sense of all this. (Ball, 2014, 100).

Network ethnography (Ball, 2012, 12-17) a central method used in my research has its roots in different traditions of the social sciences. I will sketch four. A preliminary encounter suggestive of the development of network ethnography is found in Mill's *Power Elites* (1959, 20) when he points to the importance of "institutional mechanics of our times." Next, the work of G. William Domhoff who has developed extensive tools for doing Power Structure Analysis which draws on Social Network Analysis. Finally, is the field conceptualization of networks within Anthropology. The tradition worth noting is the work by Laura Nadir, in her now classic text, "Up the Anthropologist."

Network Ethnography (Ball, 2012) systematizes its "lens, as the name suggests, towards an anthropological version of network analysis. . . .This is, a mapping of the form and content of policy relations in a particular field" (13). He further clarifies this approach, which is central to my research, "Nonetheless, this is not simply the application of familiar methods to new data; the focus here is on a particular form of relationships and interactions and power that should not be made too familiar too quickly" (13).

My "network ethnographic" research involved three sets of activities: 1) extensive and comprehensive internet searches of the NewSchools Venture Fund, the foundations that support

it and the educational, data, research and advocacy organizations and individuals that are part of its “field”; 2) interviews with two key board members of the NSVF and an extensive interview with former Ford Foundation staff member Michael Edwards; I attended the “Schools for Tomorrow” event at the New York Times. I applied twice but was not given access to the invitation only annual summits; 3) I used these searches and interviews to construct and map a policy network. These research activities taken together constitute “network ethnography” which allows us to see “the changing, overlapping and multiple roles that actors within them may play. Analyzing networks enables an ethnographer to see different levels (state and private, local, regional and national) in one frame of study to and to observe how they are interwoven” (Wedel, 2005, 2).

To adequately map the complexity and “track the interactions between public policies and private interests that are increasingly prevalent” (Wedel, 2011, 164), I employ network analysis which utilizes “relational data . . . [where] relations are seen not as the property of agents but of systems of agents, as linkages . . .” (Scott, 2005, 3).

In her essay “Shadow Governing” (2011), Wedel suggests that “network analysis can illuminate patterns of influence and show how actors connect different levels (such as ‘state’ and ‘private’, ‘macro’ and ‘micro’, or ‘local’ or ‘national’ and ‘global’) as well as processes (such as ‘top down’ versus ‘bottom up’ or ‘centralized’ versus ‘decentralized’)” (2011, 164).

The organizational and interpersonal networks and sociograms were then analyzed by content analysis (Ginger, 2006). In terms of studying social power, interpretive content analysis allows us to understand the ideology and policy preferences of the NSVF. This is accomplished

through analyzing the written outputs of strategically located people within the NSVF and its network. Categories are then constructed to help determine key policy stances.

This is a useful tool to show the extensive reach of neoliberal policies and their intermediaries as well as assist advocates in their work for more participatory and social justice educational policies. I used KUMU¹¹ a software program that allows me to map, track and depict these connections in visually graphical format.

Alongside of network analysis, as outlined above, I utilize Yanow's interpretive policy framework, where collected artifacts (language, objects, acts) operate in a "recursive movement from the data to and emerging thematic plot" (Polkinghorne, 1995, 16). The process mirrors the central aspect of narrative analysis in its capacity to "configure" events/actions.

By focusing on discourses of power, symbolic language, and policy/ organizational artifacts, interpretive policy analysis (Yanow, 2000) orients my case-study. Utilizing "Interpretive Policy Analysis", I will "map the architecture" of intermediary NewSchools Venture Fund by: 1/ accessing the local knowledge of the "policy relevant actors" and thereby "identifying the communities of meaning" and, 2/ collecting "specific artifacts (language, acts and objects) through which these views are expressed (30)."

For each type of artifact (language, objects and acts) Yanow (2000) delineates specific kinds of data analysis that I take up. For "language artifacts" she suggests how organizational metaphors carry policy meanings. "Metaphor no longer only present new insights into the situations they describe: they also suggest possible actions in response to those situations. . . .

¹¹ See KUMU: <http://docs.kumu.io/guides/sna-network-mapping.html>

Uncovering the metaphoric roots of policy or agency language and acts is one way of discovering the architecture of the policy argument (43).”

This framework is aligned with Stake’s analytic tool of “categorical aggregation” (1995, 74). Reading and re-reading my observational notes, transcribed interviews and collected documents for the patterns that reveal organization metaphors ground my data analysis. I have read and re-read the NSVF documents and written memos on their patterns and meaning. All interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Memos were written after each interview. Some preliminary codes and themes include: accountability, choice, governance, market logic, fairness, and citizenship rights vs. consumer rights. Metaphors become like a “‘found object’: it was there in speech, showing up in the interviews and conversations and in printed material . . . Once we have identified a policy or organizational metaphor in the actors’ language or thinking we can begin the task of deciphering its meaning in their frame of reference (44).”

Another important tool for data analysis is to employ a critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2005, 2002 and Luke, 1996). Critical discourse analysis looks for discursive patterns/strategies that may both support and/or destabilize ‘authoritative discourses’ and foreground relations of inequality domination and subordination” (p. 12). Given the claims of charter schools that they are addressing equity concerns, this mode of analysis will be quite helpful.

One way of deepening critical discourse analysis is to look for what Bansel (2007) calls “conceptual couplings” – or “regularized discursive patterns” – in qualitative analysis. These “couplings” “regularly appear together and exchange meanings (287).” For example, based on my review of the literature, I found the following conceptual couplings regarding the conflict

around neoliberal reform: neoliberalism and democracy; choice and (in) equality; privatization and public sphere; consumer rights vs. citizen rights. Others emerged in the context of writing the case review and doing the critical analysis of venture philanthropy, particularly as the binaries between a venture philanthropy discourse and traditional foundation grant making e.g. venture vs. grant. See chart on page 93.

What is at stake here is more than language; although which language is used and which discourses are dominant are a crucial aspect of hegemonic social relations. Still, what is at issue is what Hirschhorn and Gilmore (2004) of the Foundation Center in their work on field building call "moral ideas engender moral conflicts" (13). The moral idea is quality education for all student regardless of their racial, ethnic or class background. This is the "moral idea that functions as a compass" (11). How we read the compass and what direction it points is informed by network ethnography.

Chapter Four: An Introduction to the NewSchools Venture Fund: A Case Review

Preface

In my research on the ways the New Schools Venture Fund (NSVF) influences and shapes contemporary education reform policy, I have, by necessity entered the world of finance, hedge funds and venture philanthropy. This is a world, with its particular language or discourses (deployments of power and practices that shape policy and identity) that I was only somewhat familiar with before starting the project. While I am not an economist, I have studied political economy and appreciate the ways that historical social formations both shape our world view and render some approaches and discourses of policy sayable/ acceptable and marginalize others. As an outsider to the venture philanthropy view of life and social policy, I have endeavored to treat the documents, individuals and videos with a fresh eye: how does an organization or "network" like the New Schools Venture Fund come to be and act as it does?

In grappling with this value central to qualitative research, I was struck by an article in the *New Yorker* (August 4, 2014), "Money Talks: Learning the Language of Finance" by John Lanchester. Three comments resonated for me as I engage with my research. First, Lanchester states, people "feel put off or defeated by anything having to do with money and economics. It's almost as if they didn't have permission to understand it." He makes an interesting observation that before the 2008 crash most of us had no idea what a CDS (credit default swap) even was or that it could bring down the economy. The need expressed here is more than "financial literacy" workshops now being offered in many schools today. This is about how we understand the deep or "thick" historical context that we are living in, how it shows itself and shapes us. Our understanding of these dynamics are an essential aspect of seeing what possibilities there are for us to be agents for ourselves and communities. If "money talks" but we do not understand its

language or the implications of its intimations, we can only react and hope (put our faith in) those elected officials that do. Corporate personhood and money as speech as promoted by the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* case speaks in ways that will either amplify this problem or provoke us to cross the language barrier into the realm of the commons.

Second, Lanchester reflects on his approach to writing his novel *Capital* about London, "One of the things that happens to you, . . . is that you become increasingly preoccupied with the question: What's the story behind the evident story?" (31) Now this distinction or contradiction or antinomy has a long history in philosophy going back at least to Kant's analytics of phenomena and noumenon. This tension between appearance and reality is the crux of dialectical thinking, which will surface below in our analysis of networks and "network governance."¹² This will be explored in much greater depth in the section on Venture Philanthropy. Suffice to say that Lanchester captures this vital thrust of research in his remarks when working on his novel about London, "because finance is so integral to the place that London has become, I started to grow more curious about the economic forces behind the surface realities of life." The role of finance and location become central elements in the NewSchools Venture Fund's (of Silicon Valley) theory of change.

This jumped off the page for me. Having observed, participated and studied the contours of school reform in New York City for over twenty-five years, I knew there was more to the dynamics than just the politics of mayoral control or charter school co-location or the use of accountability metrics in high stakes testing. All of these issues and many more (e.g. lack of community input into school closings) were pointing to something "behind the surface realities." Like Lanchester, I became very curious: How did the NSVF come into existence at the time it did? What are the social, political and economic forces that constitute it? How does it act? What

¹² See Marsh and Smith, (2000), "Understanding Policy Networks: towards a Dialectical Approach"

does it value? What policies and positions does it enable or constrain, center or marginalize? How do we see its influence on educational practice and policy? These concerns are at the center of my Case Review below.

Still, it is this curiosity that has sustained my work and interests. Paulo Freire's reflection in his *Pedagogy of the Heart* anchors this for me: "Thus, the important thing is to educate the curiosity through which knowledge is constituted as it grows and refines itself through the very exercise of knowing . . . Only an education of questions can trigger, motivate, and reinforce curiosity" (31).

Describing, conceptualizing and visualizing how networks like the New Schools Venture Fund and the venture philanthropists operating in this period of the "new gilded age" are reshaping education and governance focuses the chapters that follow.

This brings me to the third reflection from Lanchester's essay "Money Talks." In the literature and in the research on marketization or new policy networks, there tends to be an unhelpful binary at work either "everything about the world of business was great or by furious opponents from the left who thought that everything about it is so terrible that all that was needed was rageful denunciation." Both approaches he contends, miss the complexities, and therefore the interest, of the story. Pursuing this interest to describe, map and analyze the workings of the NSVF will offer a view of where the policy shaping forces in education are originating and help us to understand the implications for the work of building education for democracy ahead.

The power and position of venture philanthropy networks like the New Schools Venture Fund is complex. Yet NSVF and its philanthropic partners (Broad, Walton, Fischer, Silican Valley Community Foundation, Robertson and Gates) are undoubtedly shaping education and

social policy as well as the lives of teachers, students and their communities. We need to understand the story and the story behind the story.

Introduction to the Findings Chapters

My research into the operations, policy processes and networking of the New Schools Venture Fund (NSVF) is organized in two distinct yet interrelated chapters. Briefly, the first chapter is a Case Review of the NewSchools Venture Fund. This review will situate the founding and orientation of the NewSchools Venture Fund and chart its development, Board members and investment structures utilized by NSVF . It will offer an overview of the core principles and modes of operation of the NSVF.

The NewSchools Venture Fund has organized its polices, practices and projects through a series of Investment Funds. By looking at the development of these Funds overtime, we will be able to better see the "problematic" the operations of the NSVF in practice. Using 990 tax forms, research from the Foundation Center Library, Education Week, Lexus Nexus and documents and reports authored by the NSVF and its Board, I track the flow of Grants to the NSVF, and which ventures it funded.. I further highlight the discursive terms in its reports and presentations.

The second chapter, Reshaping Policy: Moving Bodies, Moving Money, Moving Ideas." begins with outlining the shift in philanthropy by examining the core belief and practices of venture philanthropy. I situate the rise of venture philanthropy in the context of what some call "philanthrocapitalism ." To appreciate the source, scope and pattern of the "Moving Bodies, Moving Money and Moving Ideas" I chart the reach, influence and networking of the NewSchools Venture Fund by tracing its activities in the areas of research, summits, fellowships, technology and its support for Charter Management Organizations. This network ethnographic

approach (Ball, 2012) allows us to see the individual projects as well as the larger synergistic picture of the inter-relationships pattern/trends and networks that are crystallized.

The purpose of this organization is to demonstrate the remarkable development, reach and influence that the NSVF has had on education policy and practice since its inception in 1998. In its 17 years, the NSVF has moved from an initial fund of \$20 million to an educational policy network that has sponsored enough charter schools to make it the equivalent to the 15th largest school district in the country. In January 2007, it passed the \$100 million dollars raised mark!

Given its roots in Silicon Valley, NSVF prides itself -- 2103 Annual Report -- of being involved with more than 25% of all educational technology ventures. It is at the heart of market generated changes in public education. In addition, the social and political reach of the NSVF is significant. Ted Mitchell, former CEO of NewSchools, is now Under Secretary of Education to Arne Duncan. Mitchell follows in the footsteps of other NSVF partners like Joanne Weiss, Operation Manager for the Race to the Top initiative and Jim Shelton, education advisor to the Gates Foundation and CEO of the first for-profit ventures funded by NSVF. Until the end of 2014, Shelton was the deputy secretary of education for innovation and improvement at the U.S. Department of Education. James Peyser, is Managing Partner for the City Fund at the NSVF, where he has led the "investment activity" in Boston, Newark and Washington, DC. Peyser served for eight years as executive director of the Pioneer Institute, a conservative think-tank that is a member of the State Policy Network, a free market policy organization in all 50 states. Peyser is now the Secretary for Education for the State of Massachusetts. Clearly, even with this small sample, the perspective and networks of the NSVF shape policy at the highest levels of the Federal Government as well as influencing the state level through to State Policy Networks and advocacy organization like Students First, 50 CAN, League of Education Voters, and the Policy

Innovators in Education Network where Deborah McGriff, a managing director at the NSVF is the treasurer of PIE.

Even since the inception of my project, a steady shift in the terrain of educational policy has been formalized by conservative foundations and the impact of venture philanthropy. Still, as Ball (2012, 5) notes, "there is not absolute change here, but rather, a shift in the balance or mix between the different elements of government -- bureaucracies, markets and networks." This shift towards markets and networks indicates that intermediaries like NSVF are using their financial resources and political networks to reorient -- to make natural -- their view of market-relations inspired educational policy.

An underlying goal of my research is make visible the power and reach of venture philanthropy and how its practices and values are remaking the policy spaces of education. As one of the first and most influential venture philanthropy organization in K-12 education, I undertook a case study of the NewSchools Venture Fund, to understand its workings, appeal and modes of influence. In addition, I wanted to see how its operation as a network impacts the governance of social policy overall. Once my analysis is fully explicated, I will explore what comparisons, if any, can be made to what Wedel (2009) calls "shadow elites."

A critical issue for education policy operating on market principles is a lack of transparency and evasion of public oversight. There are a small number of very rich individuals and their foundations, remapping the public sphere and its purpose. "While drawing on public money and on the authority of public policy, . . . the activities [of marketization] are largely invisible to taxpayers and general citizens (Burch, 2009, 1)." As I will discuss in greater detail below, the terms of market logic themselves (efficiency, productivity, "getting things done") are

social values yet treated as a neutral good, thus establishing a new normative approach to policy. The implications of the shift in power relations towards markets and networks draws us back to the question of how we envision the purpose of public education (Cuban, 2006).

The preeminent educational philosopher and critic Maxine Greene offered some vital perspectives on understanding the challenges of the current period. She offered two indispensable lenses: She asks when assessing policy and practices: What values are they preoccupied with? And What is their social imaginary? I will attempt to hold this larger view on the shifting contours of educational policy and politics as my case study develops a detailed architecture of meaning for the NSVF.

Opening Vignettes: Puzzles of My Research

Scene One:

On the Tuesday evening before its grand annual education Summit (2014), the NewSchools Venture Fund convened a dinner for the schools and companies that NewSchools has supported during its 15 year history. It was an emotional meeting, particularly because long-time NSVF head, Ted Mitchell, will be leaving the group to become deputy secretary of education in the United States Department of Education.

Yet another highlight of the evening was the awards ceremony.

NewSchools spotlighted a handful of companies and schools for "exemplify[ing] the leadership and values that NewSchools seeks in its portfolio," said Deborah Mintz, Chief Advancement Officer of NewSchools. "Each awardee is making a measurable difference for students in underserved communities all over the country and many of them are changing the way teaching and learning happen in public schools."

NewSchools surprised its portfolios by choosing an educator as its top "Entrepreneur of the Year," and a company (rather than a school) as its top "Organization of the Year."

- NewSchools picked Reid Saaris, executive director at the [Equal Opportunity Schools](#), as the "Entrepreneur of the Year Award", which recognizes talented leaders exhibiting creativity and flexibility in pursuing their goal of closing the achievement gap. "NewSchools has been an incredible support to us over the years," said Saaris.
- [EdSurge](#) was honored by NSVF as the "Organization of the Year" for its work in helping "educators discover the best products and how to use them, and inspires developers to build what educators and learners need." "EdSurge is the go-to, trusted source for education technology. They are uniquely positioned between edtech and educators – offering teachers the resources they need to introduce technology into classrooms with confidence and providing investors and developers with up to the minute information on the latest innovations" said Jennifer Carolan, NewSchools' Seed Fund managing director.¹³ "Note: NewSchools is an investor in EdSurge."
- The 2014 "City Funds Impact Award" went to Ryan Hill from [TEAM Charter Schools](#) as well as Kimberly Steadman and Jon Clark at the [Edward Brooke Charter Schools](#). TEAM Charter Schools is a high-performing charter school organization with four schools and 1,500 students in Newark, NJ. The Edward Brooke Charter Schools serves 475 Boston Public Schools students in grades K-8 in Roslindale, Mass.
- The "City Funds Entrepreneur to Watch Award" was present to Nicole Baker Fulgham at [The Expectations Project](#). Currently operating in Indianapolis and Washington, DC, The Expectations Project partners with faith-motivated individuals, leaders, congregations and organizations to develop local and national campaigns that help enact transformational change for low-income public schools.

Scene Two:

Field Notes from Coaching and Research Journal, October, 2013

Then the ground shift again. The conflicts around charter schools being co-located in public school buildings is heating up. At the same time, community battles were taking place at the PEP (Policy Education Panel) meetings over school closures (legally mandated). This policy

¹³ Jennifer Carolan is now the Partner in Reach Capital. "Reach Capital has [raised a \\$53 million fund](#) to back education-tech startups, Lora Kolodny reports for Dow Jones VentureWire. Reach was spun out from the nonprofit New Schools Venture Fund earlier this year. Reach will operate as a for-profit, impact investor. The firm will make seed investments of \$100,000 to \$500,000 and Series A or B investments of \$1 million or more, typically taking a 3% to 5% stake in seed rounds and a 8% to 10% stake in later rounds." *Wall Street Journal*, October 22, 2015.

which often seemed distant foreign was driven home when one of the schools I was working with as a coach was told it was being phased out against the recommendation of the Superintendent, the UFT District Rep and Network Leader. The school had a new principal, who had just begun her work. The community of parents and students(past and present) got up to speak – to testify that the school was not failing but needed time and support. The decision was made before the “public “ meeting; the school was phased out. Communities across the country were going through the same thing, and unless there are occupations and hunger strikes the outcomes are the same.

It was becoming clear to me that policy of using test scores to close "failing " schools reflected a complex political and educational agendas. Supported by federal law under NCLB, and supported by a local politics of mayoral control and a state policy of expanding charter schools, public education under the guise of improving outcomes was being challenged and transformed.

This highlighted that my research needed to be relevant to the concerns of democracy and education. I decided to redesigning the scope of my research to investigate some of the underlying issues. I want to better understand and map the power relations at work in the new shape of school reform. But how to proceed?

One of my advisors suggested that that Dorothy Smith’s work on institutional ethnography and “text-mediated social organizations” would be very helpful. It was a tremendous theoretical and methodological embrace. Smith’s guiding questions spoke to me: “How does this happen as it does?” and “How are these relations organized?” Further she offers a powerful and provocative concept: “relations of ruling and, occasionally ruling apparatus . . . ‘Relations of ruling’ is a

concept that grasps power, organization direction and regulation as more pervasively structured that can be expressed in traditional concepts provided by the discourses of power” (1987, 3).

When I reflected on twists and turns of my research journey, I kept coming back to who are the actors with the necessary resources and influence to make this kind of policy change? Further, what kind of policy space are they creating that facilitates and articulates a new policy rationale? And what methodology of policy studies would allow for a complex and critical understanding of the actors, discourses and policy spaces under construction? These are the issues I knew I wanted and needed to explore.¹⁴

(End of journal entry)

When I reflect of each of these scenes (puzzles), I understand the challenge that Smith is offering researchers: “Institutional ethnographers cannot step out of their bodies and histories to know ‘in general.’ They explore the everyday world” (Campbell and Gregor, 2004, 7).

Further, while each scene is quite different in tone, ambiance, location, actors and outcomes, the concept of “relations of ruling “ allows us to see some important commonalities. David Harvey in *Social Justice and the City* (1973) assists this exploration by reminding us that “acts of categorization are quite fundamental, it is vital to understand how categories are established and in particular how they take on meaning and are transformed thru use.”

Key to understanding the policy “web” of the new education “reformers” and the networks they have created and inhabit is to see these meanings (as in the scenes above – the congratulations of “winners”, transformation and the politics of school closure against community protest) as “contextually and relationally established – meanings, which are

¹⁴ Update: as of March, 2016 the school has phased out and charter will open in the fall of 2016.

regarded as moveable, not in some random or arbitrary way, but as part of the process through which society embraces certain lines of thought in order to rationalize certain lines of action in preference to others” (12).

Clearly in these scenes, different preferences are in operation and different lines of action. These meanings and the metaphors they evoke are the backbone of my case study into the NewSchools Venture Fund. A central concern – that I will return to – central to education and democracy was sharply put by Michael Edwards in a recent interview (11/24/15) I did with him, “Who has the power to decide how our children get educated?” I would add to this by probing (see Moving Ideas section) what will constitutes education as the NewSchools Venture Fund “re-imagines” it? As these meanings and practices are developed and contested the question of “Education for the Sake of What? Posed by Hector Calderon of El Puente is as pressing as ever.

Case Review of the NewSchools Venture Fund: A Venture Philanthropy Intermediary Builds the Education Policy Field

"The central square for this revolution -- the birthplace of its idea, the meeting place for its general --has been the NewSchools Venture Fund"

Walter Isaacson, Foreword, "Investing in a Revolution: New Schools Venture Fund and America's Education Entrepreneurs"

The NewSchools Venture Fund, a venture philanthropy intermediary and policy field builder, enables and advocates market-based education policy "reforms." As a network, it weaves together political and financial, policy and research resources (with an emphasis on technology, Common Core, and "blended learning") to redirect/refashion the purpose, processes and outcomes of education and the culture of education more broadly. As noted in the 2001 Harvard case study, NewSchools Venture Fund from the beginning had a "dual mission -- investing in scalable entrepreneurial ventures that would improve public K-12 education and creating a nationwide network that would connect education entrepreneurs to each other, leaders in the new economy, resources and intellectual capital . . . build the field of educational entrepreneurs as a whole" (7).

This case review will lay out the ground work and present some of the data and organizational discourses used by the NSVF to address the question as the center of my research: How does the NSVF define the problems and purposes of public education? What are sources, scope and patterns of the NSVF's policy logic of market-based reform? How has it developed since its founding in 1998? And how has their approach (use of venture philanthropy) influence the public space of educational policy?

This case review of the New Schools Venture Fund (NSVF) encompasses three aspects: (1) history and context of the NSVF, its origins - how it started, foundational principles, and established modes of operation and changes over time. Who are its organizational partners and Board members? Who are the main actors?

Presentation and analysis of the documents for the case review draws on reports, web searches, case studies by Harvard and Stanford Business Schools, blogs, speeches, proceedings from annual Summits, 990 tax forms and Foundation Center research. In addition I have done searches using Lexis-Nexus, Education Week, US Department of Education and the Public Accountability Initiative.

(2) After this initial overview, I present the policy decisions and practice of the NSVF's working and initiatives by offering a detail schema that charts the growth and development of the seven different NSVF "Funds." Here, as noted above, I chart the sources and amounts of the grants received, the categories and amounts of the ventures funded and the central discursive terms used in reports and Annual Summits during the particular period of each fund.

(3) The third area of the case review offers preliminary analysis of the NSVF's practices, ideology and resource allocation and its Implications for the culture and direction of education policy. Specifically, Allison Bernstein's critique that "strategic philanthropy shifts the focus from the grantee's goals to the foundation's agenda" (2011, 40). The implications of this for democratic educational policy will be explored.

These aspects of my case review of the New Schools Venture Fund surface questions this dissertation research attempts to address.

First, by locating the origin, source and power of the education policy change articulated by the NSVF, we can ask, How did educational policy become further removed from government and public input, accountability and scrutiny? What forces enabled this? What are the policies and practices at the heart of this change? The ground work for this is prepared in the case review and will set the stage for the next chapter, "Moving Money, Moving Bodies, Moving Ideas."

Second, as noted by Burch these policy changes are low profile, with low visibility (emanating from the Board room of the NSVF or inscribed in law like NCLB or Race to the Top) which means its influence on education policy, with exception of specific flashpoints (e. g. charter school co-locations) , has not been critically brought before the public for review and consideration. How do these processes operate and gain momentum? Whose interests and ideologies are at the center of these changes? Finally, a third set of questions centers around the development and entrance of a whole new set of actors--educational entrepreneurs -- in the educational policy arena. What are educational entrepreneurs? What are the effects on teachers and schools? By celebrating them and putting them at the core of their school reform project, what values are we upholding about the purpose of public education? What views and alternative are marginalized by the presence of this powerful discursive hub?

History and Origins of the NewSchools Venture Fund

To situate the origins of the NSVF, founded in 1998, we need to appreciate the social, economic and political context within which it arose. The NewSchools Venture Fund was one of the first venture capital funds to focus on "social entrepreneurs and 'venture philanthropy'" (Tempest, 2000, 1). Venture capital is a type of private equity investment made to enterprises

that are high risk, high-potential growth start ups that have a strong business plan. In exchange for their funds, venture capital organization require a percentage ownership in the company -- anywhere from 25 to 55 percent. The article credited with drawing the connection to venture philanthropy is 'Virtuous Capital: What Foundations Can Learn from Venture Capitalists' (Letts, Ryan and Grossman, 1997). Here they offer an overview of the "relevant venture-capital practices": Risk management; performance measures (return on investment, ROI); closeness of relationship; amount of funding; length of relationship and the exit (selling their stake to a takeout investor) (4-5). There are clear similarities with the "core of venture philanthropy (VP)." Frumkin (2003) sees this core as "three-legged stool each leg seen as a solution to the problem of traditional philanthropy that has impeded non-profit organizations. First, VP believe in large blocks of capital delivered over extended periods to build capacity; Second, management consulting (having a partner join the board of the non-profit) and Third, developing new metrics to measure organizational performance -'social return on investment'" (9-10).

Venture philanthropy emanates from the world of venture capital. Peter Frumkin (2006) lays out the connections between business and politics that fertilized the soil of the NewSchools Venture Fund and a new style of giving called venture philanthropy. "The 1990s saw the rise of Silicon Valley and the vast fortunes that were made by the creator of new Internet and computer hardware and software companies. The technological revolution that was ushered in by these upstart companies [enabled] the capital flow that fueled the high-tech boom from a relatively small group of firms" (281).

Before moving to the political landscape stemming from the "boom", it is important to note that the roots of what we now call the "new gilded age": dramatic inequality and social

dislocation has its roots in this period. During this period of the "New Economy" (1989 to 2001),

More than half (54%) of the growth in households wealth went to the richest 20% of the population, with half of that going to the richest 5%. (. . .with those gains mainly went to the top 1%). Inequality of family incomes in 2001, as measured by the GINI index, was at its highest ever since the Census Bureau started publishing annual figures in 1947 (Henwood, 2003, 88).

As we will see shortly when we describe the players of the venture capital firm Kleiner Perkins Caufield and Byers (KPCB), these individuals control and have access to vast sums of financial and cultural capital resources. Their sought after clout, considerable financial resources and reputations as well as impressive political and business connections make them a formidable force in any policy arena.

The politics connected to the business operations of and emerging venture philanthropy are also significant for the shift in framework they signal. As we may recall, the 1992 presidential campaign represented a shift to center-right. With the ascendancy of the Democratic Leadership Council, policy arguments changed course. "Rather than call for higher *taxes* and more *spending*, the rhetoric of the Democratic campaign was about the necessity of greater *contributions* to make possible higher level of *social investments*. . . . the change in language represented a repudiation of the idea of wasteful government, and the rise of a tougher, more savvy fiscal policy, one that would take a more rigorous, businesslike approach to public problems" (Frumkin, 2006, 282).

It is helpful to highlight a few key points from this period. First, is the power of the "investment metaphor" how the "powerful pull of the investment approach to achieving results

was impossible to confine to politics and soon entered the political arena" (Frumkin, 2003,8). This connection is reflected in the comments of Ted Mitchell in an early strategy session of the NSVF in the spring of 1998, "We wanted to be sure that NewSchools didn't become just another foundation, so it was extremely important to us that we stay linked to the intellectual discipline of the venture capital approach used in the new economy (in *Tempest*, 6)." The 'intellectual discipline' referred to will require some unpacking to understand the full meaning of investment, role of government, and the invigorated discourse of "Investing in a Revolution" the title of a 2010 report by the NSVF.

Key founders of the NSVF (John Doerr and Brooke Byers) embrace the rhetoric of the "New Democrats" and New Economy . This shift initiated by Clinton and Gore not only signals a move away from New Deal-style policies, politics and coalitions (many Silicon Valley venture capitalist contribute to the Democratic Party, and are anti-union) but also reveals a growing policy convergence around venture philanthropy and the networks that compose them. This is evidenced by the fact that in the 2012 presidential election the education advisors to both Mitt Romney (John Peyser) and Barack Obama (Jon Schnur) are board members of the NewSchools Venture Fund. I will explore this convergence and its implications in greater detail in the next chapter in the "Moving Bodies, Moving Money section."

The NewSchools Venture Fund represent the leading edge of a small group of venture capital funders who are transferring their expertise "across sectors" and who became what we now call venture philanthropists. "Investment" in this context represents this shift so that "sophisticated donors [who] have long sought to turn their gifts and grants into something more concrete and scientific . . .into hard-nosed investors by bringing the discipline of the investment world to the field" (Frumkin, 2003, 8).

We can track the ideology of the investment world in the NSVF's founding principles. According to the NSVF report, "Investing in a Revolution" (2010, 8), "NewSchools itself emerged from the outrage over the failures of education in low-income communities. . . . at a conference (in 1997) of technology and business leaders, they listened as then Vice President Al Gore implored the audience, "If you Silicon Valley types are so smart, why can't you do something to create new schools (2)." Doerr and Byers (partners at venture capital firm Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers) set out to meet Gore's challenge." These comments mark an important juncture. While personal motives for working in public education are not the focus, it is their organizational approach to the "challenge" that requires greater scrutiny and analysis.

One way to begin to appreciate the power and influence of the NSVF is to see it as a "policy community, which 'catalyses business in the delivery of education services and reconfigures and disseminates education policy discourses . . . these networks 'mobilize innovations " (Ball, 2008, 749). At the center of these networks are "several 'nodal actors' people who join things up, who are catalysts and synergizes" (Ball, 755).

One of the central nodal actors at the NSVF and in the field of venture philanthropy is John Doerr, partner with the venture capitalist fund Kleiner Perkins Caufield and Byers (KPCB). Known according to Forbes as "the 61 year-old billionaire venture capitalist who for years was the undisputed king of Silicon Valley" who is on his way back. (May 27, 2013). Other "nodal actors" at the founding of the NSVF include: KPCB partners Brook Byers and associate partner Dave Whorton (CEO of Good Technologies); Ted Mitchell, former president of Occidental College and former dean of UCLA's School of Education; Jim Barksdale at the time CEO of Netscape; Reed Hastings, CEO of Netflix [who had just sold Pure Software for \$750 million and

"announced he would begin a new career in school reform" (Tempest, 4)] and Kim Smith, founding member of the core team of Teach for America.

Evidence in its initial strategy session in the spring of 1998, as reported in the Harvard Business School case study, the role of educational entrepreneurs as central to the "founding principles of the NSVF: Mitchell comments on the guiding mission in 1998:

We believe that the spirit and energy of entrepreneurship was missing from public education and yet could have tremendous potential for changing schools. Second, we felt that the new economy approach of identifying areas for investing and then capitalizing on them in a rapid way through experimentation and redesign wasn't being done in education . . . We wanted to be sure that NewSchools didn't become just another foundation, so it was extremely important to us that we stayed linked to the intellectual discipline of the venture capital approach used in the new economy. (Tempest, 6).

NewSchools Venture Fund, Technology Network (TechNet) and Charter School Policy

An early example of the influence of Silicon Valley venture philanthropist's ability to shape education policy occurred the same year as the founding of the NSVF. In the same year as the founding of NSVF, 1998, Doerr, Barksdale and Hastings were "successful in passing a bill through the California legislature that raised the cap on charter schools from 100 to 250 in 1999 and an additional 100 per year thereafter" (Tempest, 3).

In 1998, the simultaneous founding of the NSVF and TechNet is often overlooked and not given sufficient weight. TechNet is known as the preeminent bipartisan political network of Chief Executive Officers and Senior Executive of leading US technology companies including Google, Microsoft, Cisco, Oracle, Facebook and Apple. This co-founding raises the connection, and possible conflict of interests between the approval and increase of charter schools and the

influence of Silicon Valley technology magnates and the needs of public education. A specific agenda item for TechNet is the lowering of the corporate tax rate. Reflecting on the legislative victory Doerr comments:

Influencing public policy can be a very high leverage way to create change. We spent \$4 million on the campaign to put our charter school initiative on the ballot before the legislature agreed to include it in a pending bill. If you think about it from a return standpoint, over a 10-year period we will have 100 new charter schools in California, which will each receive on average \$3 million in state funding per year. So that's a \$3 billion per annum return on a \$ 4 million initiative campaign --an outstanding return, worth the time, worth the money (Tempest, 3)

This is venture philanthropy thinking and practice in action. Creating and seizing on "emergent opportunities" "promising, scalable education ventures "in line with the organizations theory of change. they contend that the public education system is mired in bureaucracy, special interests (unions) and not results orientated. Their response, "to transform public education through passionate entrepreneurs and powerful ideas so that all children --especially those underserved -- have the opportunity to succeed in the 21st century" (Childress and King, 2007, 1).

New School's Mission and Venture Philanthropy Investment Philosophy

The NSVF mission as stated above to 'transform public education through passionate entrepreneurs and powerful ideas' is amazingly ambitious. For individuals with little to no background in public education it reflects a confident sense of one's power and network connections. Ted Mitchell captures this strategy, "There were a couple of founding principles behind NewSchools. First, we felt the new economy approach of identifying areas for investing and them capitalizing on them in a rapid way through experimentation and redesign wasn't being done in education, but could have enormous potential' (Tempest, 6). Further, it was through these networks of entrepreneurs and new economy leaders that the best opportunities for investment would be located as well as financial support for NSVF's portfolio companies.

In all these deliberations there is very little mention of what education needs (other than new energy and entrepreneurial spirit), who is to decide and to whom are these projects accountable. In addition, the issue of whether to support for-profit ventures was an issues fro its inception and continues to be an issue -- how to reconcile the demand of investors for a financial return and the educational needs of children? Byers comments, "whether it's for-profit or nonprofit is irrelevant. I don't think there's one right answer, so we weren't going to choose.." (Anderson, 2001, 3). I will return to this issue when I discuss how the NSVF handled one of its early for-profit ventures, LearnNow.

The NSVF mission stresses the idea of "disruption," that is to target entrepreneurial investment in what was perceived as a "vulnerability of the public education system (Tempest, 1)." How these are identified and named (concepts used) are key indicators of the problematic of market based reform. As Simon and Dippo note in their discussion of critical ethnography, "the particular structure of concepts make it possible to pose some kinds of questions while simultaneously suppressing the possibilities of others. (197)" The "vulnerability" of low student performance on standardized tests, opens up the response of high stakes accountability.

One place where a more schematic overview of the NSVF educational principles are outlined is in an article by Kim Smith and Julie Petersen, "What is Educational Entrepreneurship?" In the final section of their article, Smith and Petersen provide an overview of the "Six Principles of an Entrepreneurial School System" (in Hess, 2006, 43). They offer insight into how NSVF views schools and school reform policy:

1/ Responsive. In a dynamic, ever changing world, public schools should be responsive to the needs of students, families and communities. If schools are not permanent, but rather opened and closed based on how well they are serving market needs, the supply of the schools is aligned with demand.

2/ No monopolies or oligopolies. Monopolies and oligopolies are fundamentally closed, unresponsive system that aggregate power and maintain it --even if results are unsatisfactory. Such inflexibilities should not be tolerated in public education.

3/ Customer-oriented. Public education has many "customers," including parents, communities that provide funding, and business that employ the schools' graduates. In order to satisfy their mission, public school must focus on needs of *students* --not adults or institutions.

4/ Performance-driven. With improved results for students at the target, public school systems must manage toward not only effectiveness, but also efficiency (less time and money for the same results).

5/ Constant Learning. In a dynamic environment, the work of public education is never "finished." As soon as one level of performance is achieved, the next target becomes clear, with continuous improvement always a priority.

6/ Culture of meritocracy. When results are the priority, those who find a way to achieve those results are rewarded for their efforts. In other words, the "fastest learner wins" -- whether an individual or a team --and other use that success to inform their own practice.

These principles within the logic of dominant educational policy are all but common sense now. Yet, from the perspective of "Why do we educate in a democracy/" placing these principles in a larger social context allows us to see how neo-liberal policy and market-based values operate. "By tracking key changes in language, including the emergence of new discourses and semantic clusters" (2000, 58) Shore and Wright contend that we can see what has come to be called "audit culture." By looking at a few key phrases Smith uses -- "opened and closed based on the market needs"; "inflexible systems" ; "consumer-oriented"; "performance-driven"; "effectiveness but also efficiency"; "meritocracy" -- we can begin to tease out some of

the underlying social foundations at play. Shore (2006) contends that "the power of any political order often resides precisely in the unquestioned nature of the classificatory systems that govern our thought and action" (279). In this light, the audit culture, "refers to the contexts in which the techniques and values of accountancy have become the central organizing in the governance and management of human conduct" (Shore, 2006, 279).

These discourses and semantic cluster referred to by Shore and Wright are evident in the NSVF investment criteria.

Investment Processes, Criteria and Early Categories of Ventures

For the NSVF, a venture had to be both scalable (able to expand its market and reach more customers) and sustainable with a knowledgeable and quality management team in place. In addition to having a positive impact on the K-12 system of public education, an important criterion was "disruption" ". . .targeting a true weakness in the system with obtainable and measurable educational outcomes" (Anderson, 2001, 4).

As is common to venture philanthropy, there are five steps:

- opportunity identification --conducting site visits, talking to industry sources
- Due diligence, a period of six weeks to six months where nonprofit and for-profit entrepreneurs present their business plans. NSVF staff press applicants on financial models and projections, continually assess educational impact. Assess board and staff leadership.
- Presentation to the New School's investment partners committee.

- Identification of a NewSchools sponsor. Byers notes, "This is the signet of the venture capital model. To get the deal done in venture capital, several partners have to sponsor it and at least one has to offer to go on the board. " (Tempest, 12).
- Follow-up due diligence -- once decision to invest is made financial investment and management needs are negotiated.

The issue of educational needs is articulated by Byers, "is there a market for the product. For New Schools this means will it be accepted by the education community and can it scale?" (Tempest, 11).

At the beginning of 2001, the NSVF had reviewed approximately 300 business plans (160 for-profit, 140 non profit) of which they invested in eight ventures (five nonprofit, three for-profit). These venture fell into three broad categories, some example include :

School Choice: Aspire Public Schools, received the largest grant \$2 million. Aspire would be the NSVF model for Charter Management Organizations (CMOs).

LearnNow founded by Gene Wade and Jim Shelton a for-profit education management organization (EMO) with five schools. It planned to create and operate a network of charter schools across the nation.

Curricula: Success for All. scripted reading program. It planned to roll it out to 3,000 school within three years.

Human Infrastructure: New Leaders for New Schools founded in 2000f. NLNS became one of the founding successes of the NSVF as an alternative training program for principals.

Teach for America founded in 1989, received \$1 million in scale up funds.

As the NSVF continued to build the field for educational entrepreneurs over the period from 200 to 2014, we will see a dramatic proliferation in the categories and kinds of ventures supported.

Venture Philanthropy

In an interview in *Philanthropy Magazine* with Bruno Manno (then with Annie E. Casey Foundation and now with the Walton Family Foundation) Kim Smith develops the ideas at the heart of NSVF field building activities:

We want to take lessons learned by successful venture capital firms and apply them to transforming the education system in dramatic ways that will stimulate large-scale improvement in student learning. . . To acknowledge the power of entrepreneurs, who are a special kind of change agent. . . Entrepreneurs create disruptive technologies or ways of doing things that release new energy and insight. (May/June 2003).

These sentiments from the cofounder and CEO of NSVF from 1998-2005, reflect the fact that the NSVF was one of the early leaders in venture philanthropy. Hence its developments, challenges and solutions carry implication beyond the organization itself.

In 1997 (around the same time Doerr and Byers were deciding to start the NSVF) a *Harvard Business Review* article, "Virtuous Capital: What Foundations Can Learn from Venture Capitalists" by Letts, Ryan and Grossman catalyzed thinking about venture philanthropy. As reflected in the Investment Criteria above, the article concludes: "Because organizations were not in place, many innovative programs have not lived up to their initial promise. The venture capital model can act as starting point for foundations that want to help nonprofits develop the organizational capacity to sustain and expand successful programs" (reprint, 7).

The Stanford University School of Business case study, "The Roberts Enterprise Development Fund (an early advocate for the venture philanthropy model) defines venture philanthropy as follows: Venture philanthropy is the philanthropic application of venture capital principles and practice . . . In addition to grants, venture philanthropists provide networking, management advice and an array of other supports to organizations within a given portfolio of charitable investment" (Anderson, 5).

While understanding the organizational logic that structures venture philanthropy is vital to the critique of it as a cornerstone of the audit culture, the power of networking to move bodies, money and idea (as I will demonstrate in the next chapter) is central to its reshaping educational policy as well as the culture and parameters of policy making and the entrepreneurs within it.

In founding the NewSchools Venture Fund, Silicon Valley venture capitalists Doerr and Byers and their network played central roles as nodal actors and central resources agents to the expansion in the venture philanthropy model.

In a May 7, 2013 cover story in *Forbes* magazine, Doerr is touted as the "undisputed king of Silicon Valley." Bill Gates comments, "I've known John 30 years, and he is still the kinetic guy trying to figure out the next new thing." (Gates, *Forbes* discloses, is also a limited partner at Doerr's venture capital firm KCPB). "John always see the future first, says Google CEO Larry Page. And he's tenacious about pushing everyone to move faster and be one order of magnitude more ambitious." In addition to these accolades, toward the end of the *Forbes* article are details that secure his place as a nodal actor.

"Doerr arrived at KCPB in 1980 after a successful stint as a salesman at Intel. . . . Soon after joining the Kleiner partnership he cemented his reputation as the Valley's premier VC with a

string of spectacular calls in tech, backing the likes of Compaq Computer, Netscape, Sun Microsystems, Amazon, Intuit and Google. He was either No.1 or No 2 on the Midas List from 2005 to 2009 and first appeared as a billionaire on *The Forbes 400 List* in 1999."

Further, he served on the President's Economic Advisory Board and The President's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness. He is on the boards of Google, Zynga, CoursELA and flipboard. With over three decades in Silicon Valley, Doerr interlocks with 692 people and organizations according to the Public Accountability Initiative His current net worth is \$2.7 billion.

Doerr also has served as chairman of the NSVF since its inception in 1998 and is the man most identified with it. Clearly he represents the power and role of the NSVF in the shaping of venture philanthropy and its "symbolic power"¹⁵ (Bourdieu, 1991,26). In this light, we can see the capacity of John Doerr and the NSVF partners as powerful forces in philanthropic field building. In a report to the Foundation Center on field building, Hirschhorn and Gilmore (2004) state: "Ideas are often the currency of philanthropy. Ideas animate fields of philanthropic endeavor. Ideas can constitute "forces in field building that determine a field's direction (5)." The NewSchools Venture Fund is one of the most powerful field building forces reshaping education policy and governance and the culture of everyday life. Although its financial capital is not as large as say Gates (no one else is) or Walton or Broad, what is crucial is "the hierarchy of different species of capital (economic, social, cultural, symbolic) that varies across various fields.. . . a species of capital is what is efficacious in a given field, both as a weapon and as a

¹⁵ "For the political field is, among other things, the site *par excellence* in which agents seek to form and transform their vision of the world and thereby the world itself: it is the site *par excellence* in which words are actions and the symbolic power is at stake" (Bourdieu, 1991, 26).

stake of struggle, that which allows its possessors to wield power and influence, and thus to *exist* in the field under consideration” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, 98).

Doerr himself commented on the lineage between the venture capital and venture philanthropy frameworks:

I thought we ought to be able to take what venture capital has been able to do in the Internet or in biotechnology and apply it to education. I guess if you're a carpenter with a hammer, everything looks like a nail. So as a venture capitalist in awe of the power of entrepreneurs, their ideas, and their ability to create large-scale change, when you see a large unmet need like school improvement, you want to apply the same hammer to it. (in *Tempest*, 3).

The hammer of the NSVF has been steady and powerful in shaping the policy culture and priorities of education.

The Investment Funds and NSVF Expanded Focus

In its first 15 years the NewSchools Venture Fund raised about \$250 million from donors, then channeled that money into more than 100 nonprofit and for-profit organizations. Some of these were new schools: charter management organizations like Aspire, Alliance, Brooke, Match, North Star, Rocketship, Summit and others.

Over the course of its history, NSVF has broken out and articulated four specific funds, each with a particular aim:

- New Schools Fund I: (\$20 million, 1998-2002) designed to build a new type of capital market to support for-profit and non-profit entrepreneurial ventures in education.

- New Schools Fund II: (\$50 million, 2002-2006) goal to create dozens of new charter schools by developing scalable and sustainable Charter Management Organizations.
- New School Fund III: (\$75 million, 2006-2010) focus on specific cities e.g. New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington D.C. to build "influential portfolio of successful, scalable and sustainable entrepreneurial organizations to create momentum for broader reform."
- New School Fund IV: (2010- 2012) focus to build human capital needs for teacher, principals, system manager and develop performance tools. In addition, they have launched their "Innovation Fund" supporting technology and "blended learning". They have continued what they call their "City Fund" focusing on Oakland, CA; Boston, MA; Washington D.C. and Newark, N.J..
- Learning to Teach Fund (\$15 million, 2013-2016) supporting eight early stage entrepreneurial organizations that prepare early-career teachers. For example, Sposato Graduate School of Education, a freestanding training ground in Massachusetts that is not affiliated with a university.
- EDTech and the Seed Fund. Since its launch in December 2011, NSVF has been investing at a pace of about one new investment a month -- now at 28 investments. \$3.4 million invested by NSF; \$6.6 dollars leveraged from introductions to other funders --total \$22 million additional. The Seed Fund was spun off as a for-profit venture in January 2015. EdSurge, first seeded by NSVF in 2011 and now invested in by GSV Capital and the Washington Post, recently hosted a Tech for Schools Summit where Deputy Secretary for the US Department of Education, Jim Shelton,

was the keynote speakers. 900 educators signed up to learn about new tech tools and digital content.

- The shift to new technologies and the Common Core State Standards. Outgoing CEO Ted Mitchell told a conference at Stanford University in February 2012, "The market is ripe for disruptive innovation." The NewSchools Venture Fund has shifted its funding from charter schools to new technologies, "synergistic innovation that make school systems more effective" Mitchell notes. The Common Core has created a national market for technology developers, "This is a moment of real difference," Mitchell declares.
- The latest initiative of NSVF started in July 2015 with the launch of NewSchools Catapult, a program. Catapult will invest in and support education entrepreneurs launching new schools with innovative instructional models. What is different about the [NewSchools Catapult 2015](#) cohort ("14 trailblazing district and charter schools that are reimagining PREK-12 education by personalizing learning") is that districts are eligible to apply. Of the 14 schools, only one is a district public school.
- The NewSchools Venture Fund has a new reorganization into four investment areas: "Innovative Schools; Diverse Leaders; Tools; D.C. School Fund"
<http://www.newschoools.org/about-us/investment-areas/>

The NSVF has expanded its social investments beyond its initial focus on School Choice, Human Infrastructure and Curriculum to include:

- computer applications, or educational services.
- NSVF has built up 34 education-technology firms whose products have reached 15 million students.

- Online instructor Khan Academy,
- the school-reform advocacy group Families for Excellent Schools,
- D.C.'s authorizing board for charter schools,
- the GreatSchools Web rankings,
- principal-training organization New Leaders,
- the Relay Graduate School of Education, and many other reform groups have received money from the NewSchools Venture Fund. More than 7,500 teachers have been trained by recipients of its money.
- NSVF has special regional arms to support charter schools and other improvements in Boston, Oakland, and D.C.
- The latest roster of donors to the fund lists 39 individual givers, 45 foundations or donor-advised funds, and six companies or corporate foundations.

It is important to observe that when looking at the 'ventures' on the NSVF's website, for-profit and non-profit companies are listed side-by-side. A fuller sense of the network connections of the NSVF will be spelled out in the next chapter.

In closing out the case review, It is important to note that from its beginning the NSVF has a stated commitment to funding for-profit educational ventures.

The Failure of the For-Profit LearnNow

The example of LearnNow, a for-profit charter management organization started by Gene Wade and Jim Shelton in 1999 demonstrates its commitment. In a companion brief, Anderson, 2001a, (case number SI7B) unfolds the drama surrounding the support given by the NSVF to LearnNow. After giving LearnNow an initial grant of \$1.5 million, "NewSchools decided to

focus substantial resources to help LearnNow raise \$16 million necessary to fund growing operations" (1). Further the NSVF put together a working group that included CEO Kim Smith, Venture Associate Scott Miller and founders Wade and Shelton. NSVF also help to recruit a former Goldman Sachs analyst to assist with the strategy. But the for-profit company would not find its footing or a revenue stream. "They had made a commitment to their investees, and the team felt the NewSchools brand and reputation was on the line" (Anderson, 2001a, 2).

Further, investments did not appear. The final decision, with capital markets tight, was to sell LearnNow to Edison Schools. The NSVF through this activity "lent credibility to for-profits in their pursuit of education reform" argued the Stanford case study. The Fund manage to frame the fiasco as a success (Anderson, 11).

Jim Shelton's career was anything but ruined. He went on to work for Edison Schools. Then became the East Coast representative for the NSVF. After a couple of years, Shelton moved on to be lead program officer for education at the Gates Foundation. From there he became Undersecretary of Education in the Obama Administration. In addition, he heads up the President's "My Brother's Keeper Initiative."

What may have initially appeared as an odd and politically awkward position has turned out to be an important aspect of their reform strategy. "By focusing on scaling ventures, NewSchools seemed destined not to be the lead investor in a private deal. So what would be their role? How much should a venture's financial need play into the investment decision? How much capital would be enough to give them influence?" (Anderson, 9). These considerations surface more than just the tension between making a profit and helping kids.

As Shelton commented in an interview in EdSurge (seeded by the NSVF) that the Common Core is important because it "will allow education companies to produce products that 'can scale across many markets'" (Fang, 29 September, 2014, 3)

What will become clearer in the next chapter, particularly with the added case of Rocketship, a blended learning chain of charter schools, is that the NSVF is using its clout to further blur the lines between for-profit and nonprofit educational projects and organizations, thus smoothing the groves for marketizing educational policy and practices. Ball (2012) makes the connections and rationalities clear: "Symbolically, philanthropy provides an 'acceptable' alternative to the state in terms of its moral legitimacy. . . It has also provided a kind of rehabilitation for the form of capital that were subject to 'ill repute' in the public imagination. Strategically, philanthropy has provided a "Trojan horse" for the modernizing move that opened the 'policy door' to new actor and new ideas and sensibilities" (32).

In the next, chapter we will see more precisely who and what comes in this door opened by intermediaries like the NewSchools Venture Fund.

Summation to Case Review

Alison Bernstein, former vice president for Education, Creativity and Free Expression section at the Ford Foundation, poses a central question about the current direction of philanthropy which mirrors the concerns of venture philanthropists' interest in urban school reform: "Why are leaders and practices from the corporate sector preferable to those of the nonprofit sector? Why are phrases like "strategic grantmaking" dominating the discourse of the day?" (2011, 36).

The position of the NewSchools Venture Fund as a policy and resource intermediary requires a conceptual framework that "puts more emphasis on the range of levels spanned by 'policy', envisaging it as stretching from the uppermost levels of government to the lowest." Seeing this network in all its complexity will be the focus on the next chapter. McGee(2004, 8) calls "this approach a taking a 'vertical slice' through the policy process" This 'vertical slice' allows us to see the work of the NSVF as creating a new policy space. To understand this 'policy world' is constituted, Wedel et. al, suggest an anthropological approach will allow us to see "its enabling discourses, mobilizing metaphors and underlying ideologies and uses (2005 34)."

Given the resources and network connections the NSVF has and can deploy they have actively engaged in building the field of entrepreneurial market based education reform. With the field established and growing our task is to attend to the source, scope and pattern of its policy initiatives.

As my Case Review demonstrates, the NSVF is a venture capital turned venture philanthropy. As such it is an organized network of social relations. The policy "web" that this "slice" goes through is intended to reveal the operational problematic of the NSVF. The problematic that Bernstein signals, "practices of the corporate sector and phrases like strategic grantmaking dominating the discourse of the day," is more than just repetition or a current fad.

The problematic of urban school reform practice employed by the NSVF develops a "particular structure of concepts which make it possible to pose some kinds of questions while simultaneously surprising the possibility of posing others.. As such it defines the field of the visible as well as the boundary of the invisible, revealing the foundation on which relations and events are judged as important or unimportant" (Simon & Dippo, 197).

A more complete examination of the policy space created by the NSVF will be developed in the chapter "Moving Money, Moving Bodies, Moving Ideas." In that chapter, we can draw on the data presented in Case Review to us see how policy actors engage the political process of policy making. How do the power and connections of the NSVF enabled or constrained their goals?

Here I will utilize a network analysis or what Ball calls "network ethnography" which "leans towards the anthropological version of network analysis with an emphasis on the understanding of the contents, transactions and meanings (2012, 13)." This approach will makes it possible t break down the policy process into observable, influenceable elements. By charting "Moving Bodies, Moving Money, Moving Ideas" we can more completely understand what Mills (1956,20) calls the "institutional mechanisms" of elites: which actors gain access to which spaces, what they do there, what constrains or facilitates their actions, and what actions, policies and influences arises as result of these.

Chapter Five: Moving Money, Moving Bodies, Moving Ideas in the Refashioning of Educational Policy

"It is time for American Business -- which has demonstrated the greatest capacity in all history to produce and influence consumer decisions -- to apply their great talents vigorously to the preservation of the system itself." Lewis F. Powell, 1971.

"There's are revolution underway in America: A growing force of education entrepreneurs, unwilling to stand by while generations of low-income and minority children miss out on a chance to attend a great public school . . . In a dozen years since its founding, NewSchools has moved from a couple of desks in Silicon Valley to a national force, uniquely positioned to seek out and support he most promising innovation work in public education"

“Investing in a Revolution,” NSVF, 2010.

This chapter, and the three subsections its title indicates, develops key moments in the NewSchools Venture Fund’s effort to influence educational policy makings. Here I reveal, in greater detail and with specific findings from my research, the shift towards and mainstreaming of market and managerial solutions to issues in urban school reform. By grasping the interconnections between the policy activities ("scope, patterns and practices"), and ideologies at work, in my case example of the NewSchools Venture Fund (NSVF), we will be able to draw connections between the conservative thrust articulated by Powell and the "unique position" of a venture capital-turned-venture philanthropy organization like the NSVF. Further, this “unique position” allows us to situate these venture philanthropy developments as part of larger dynamics "from a perspective that is concerned about the consequences of new state formations and new accumulation regimes for citizenship and social justice" (Ozga, 2000, 6).

Before beginning with these sections, there is an important qualification that I want to note. My original intent in this dissertation was to map the political influences of the pro-charter,

market based school reform movement. My hope was to provide a comprehensive overview of this influential and dynamic sector of policy, practice and politics. This is indeed a project and map worth making; however, as my research proceeded and I began to uncover the multitude of relationships nested in, through and around the NSVF, I began to see that this effort would take me too far afield from the purpose of my case study: to understand in as great detail as possible who was involved in the inception and development of the NSVF, who they reached out to and networked with; and what the transitional practices (ideology, discourses and activities) from venture capital to venture philanthropy actually look like.

These larger questions take root in my analysis of the NSVF as a field-builder. With its inception in 1998, the NSVF not only provides a profile of one of key engines of the privatization and marketization aspects of the educational field over almost 20 years, it lifts up questions of democratic accountability. Its extensive "field building" serves as a dynamic window into: 1) the world of venture philanthropy that it helped invent, 2) its aggregative power to shape education policy and 3) its power to refashion the role of government (Ball and Junemann, 2012).

A key aspect of this field building is the mix of market and philanthropy. Since its inception, the NSVF has deliberately maintained its portfolio with both not-for-profit and for-profit investments, seeking to erase boundaries between those domains. As an intermediary with venture capital origins and orientation, the NSVF takes risks with short term investments that it thinks has potential to have an impact and is scalable. This will be explored below. The applicability and propriety of such norms need to be examined, especially in light of its 2015 notice of spinning off its "Seed Fund" for for-profit businesses to become its own for-profit organization. (Stacey Childress, NSVF blog February, 2015). This development highlights an

underlying principle of venture capital and venture philanthropy: that venture philanthropists and their entrepreneurial agents can "make money and do good at the same time" by employing the same logics that exist in the business world to nonprofits. This approach is what Bill Gates at Davos in 2008 called "creative capitalism." Gates states it is "an approach where governments, businesses, and nonprofits work together to stretch the reach of market forces so that more people can make a profit, or gain recognition, doing work that eases the world's inequalities" (in Olopade, 2010, 17).

This tension shines a light on the relationship between venture philanthropy and the deepening of neoliberal social policy -- what Edwards (1990) calls philanthrocapitalism. In this era, the role of government as established during the New Deal, to ensure equality of opportunity and provide for the general welfare has been repurposed starting in 1980 with Ronald Reagan's pronouncement that "government *is* the problem" to enabling the market to expand and extend its role --socially, economically and politically. NSVF reveals the shift from *government to governance* in the refashioning of educational policy, as we will see when we take a closer look at the way private players bypass government in influencing public education.

Educational policy and its publics are seen, in this way, as not only the opportunity to expand and embed market principles but also as a means to "encourage us all to imagine the world through an increasingly financialized lens, interpreting our economic, social and political lives as a portfolio of 'investments' and speculative gambles ... to imagine the world through money" (Haven, 2014, 105-6). With this shift to governance is the insertion of a new role of governmentality (Foucault, 1991; Rose, 1989; Rose et.al, 2006)¹⁶ --how the conduct of individual

¹⁶ "Governmentality is understood as the 'conduct of conduct': programmes, strategies, techniques for acting upon the action of other towards certain ends. From this perspective, the state appears as one element -- whose

and groups are refashioned by these new relations. The emergence of this tension in education policy is between what Whitty (2002) calls "citizen rights vs. consumer rights." This exploration of the NSVF will allow us to see the coordinates of a new set of relations -- points of over determination as well as points of resistance where the terrain of participation and fabric of democracy is being re-sown.

To understand the way the NSVF's for deploys its filed build power, look at the depth and range in its program areas in this map, and the legend on the following page:

functionality is historically specific and contextually variable -- in multiple circuits of power, connecting a diversity of authorities and forces, within a whole variety of complex assemblages" (Rose, 1989, xxi).

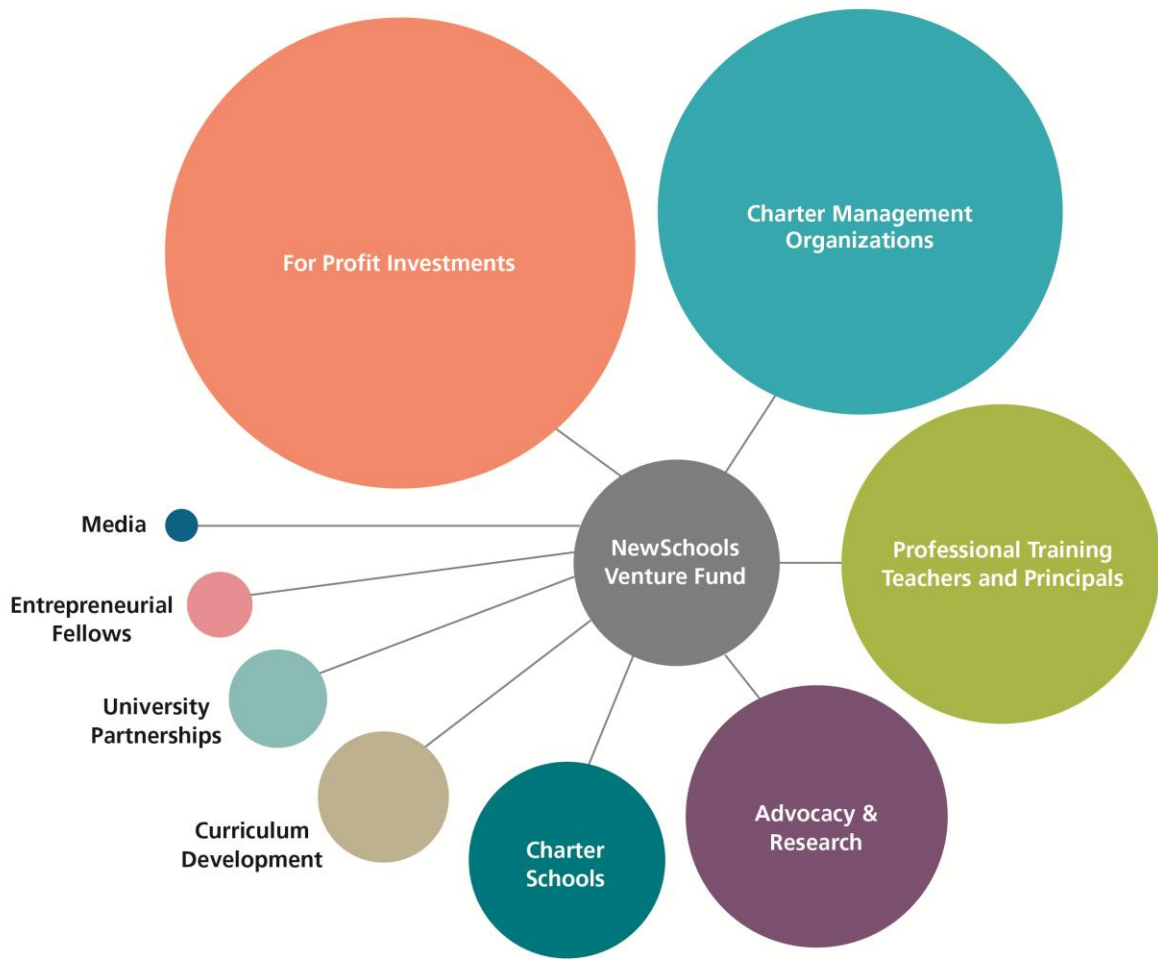


Figure 5.1
The NewSchools Venture Fund's Field-Building Activities, 2001-2014

For Profit Investments

\$11,786,450 (2011-2014 only)

- Wireless Generation (now Amplify)
- BetterLesson
- Teachscape

Charter Management Organizations

Grants: \$93,301,526

- Achievement First
- Uncommon Schools
- Aspire Public Schools
- New Schools for New Orleans
- Rocketship Education
- Success Charter Network

Professional Training - Teachers and Principals

Grants: \$20,397,169

- New Leaders for New Schools
- The New Teacher Project
- Teach Plus
- Relay Graduate School
- Urban Teachers Center

Advocacy & Research

Grants: \$7,605,367

- Massachusetts Charter Public School Association
- DC School Reform Now
- Bellwether Education Partners
- Families for Excellent Schools

Charter Schools

Grants: \$6,478,970

- Cesar Chavez Public Charter HS
- EL Haynes Public Charter School
- Thurgood Marshall Academy

Curriculum Development/Technology

Grants: \$3,736,115

- Khan Academy
- Learning Accelerator
- Code Now

University Partnerships

Grants: \$939,019

- University of Michigan
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Rutgers University
- Stanford University

Pahara/Aspen NewSchools Educational Entrepreneurial Fellows

(amount spent not available)

- John King, Acting US Secretary of Education
- Tim Ryan, VP Ohio Programs, Thomas Fordham Foundation
- Larry Berger - Wireless Generation (Amplify)
- Kaya Henderson, Chancellor, Washington DC Public Schools
- Jim Shelton-Gates Foundation, US Department of Education
- Joanne Weiss- US Department of Education, Race to the Top
- Joe Williams, Democrats for Education Reform
- DeShawn Wright, New York State Deputy Secretary of Education
- Norman Atkins, Relay Graduate School
- Don Shalvey, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Ben Austin, Students Matter
- Maggie Runyan-Shefa, New Schools for New Orleans
- Gerald Robinson, American Enterprise Institute

Media

- "Waiting for Superman"
- "We Won't Back Down"
- The Teaching Channel

Figure 5.2
The NewSchools Venture Fund's Field-Building Activities, 2001-2014 (with selected recipients)

Source: Assorted 990s and NSVF website.

This is a picture of its field building. I tracked 157 nonprofits that received grants from the NSVF from 2001 to 2014, yet we must note the growing importance of for-profit investments. From 2011 to 2014, the NewSchools Venture Fund made for-profit investments totaling \$11,786,450 while during the same period they made 42 grants to nonprofits totalling \$11,777,975. We will understand why Charter Management Organizations received so much attention from the NSVF – to the tune of \$93 million over 13 years. We will also see that though the NSVF may offer relatively small "investment grants" compared to the Gates, Broad or Walton Foundations, nonetheless NSVF is a vital actor in field building a venture capital approach to education policy reform through its astute mix of activities, blurring the lines between its nonprofit grants and its for-profit investment.

Field Building – Making and Marketing the Policy and the Culture of “Reform”

This section traces the impact of venture capital-venture philanthropy connection to the reshaping of priorities and values in foundation giving and its impact on educational reform policy. The NewSchools Venture Fund as one of the first and most influential venture philanthropies provides the case example of how this process operates. At the center of this analysis is the notion of field building, or the way an intermediary like the NSVF has contributed to establishing marketization as a "naturalized policy landscape" (Fabricant and Fine, 2013, 153-4).

In their Foundation Center white paper on "Field Building," Hirschhorn and Gilmore explored the strategic rationale behind foundation investing, "meanings cannot be discerned unless they are situated in some concept of the field of forces surrounding the problem. . . . the sociological understanding of organizations or issues exists in a context of influences or forces,

which together constitute a field" (2004, 27). These "field of forces" are constituted, develop and become embedded in policy and shape political considerations about the direction of and resource allocations for education.

One aspect of this approach is to map the unprecedented amount of money flowing from foundations and seeing the ways the underlying market rationality operates. Noted here is the role of financial sector and the emergence of a new kind of elite or what Bourdieu calls "the field of power." But venture philanthropy prides itself on leveraging smallish amounts of money into big influence. So along with tracking the funds of the NSVF to understand its field building, we can track how it (along with a network of like minded investors) won the imagination and leadership of the US Department of Education, shaping the deployment of government educational funds to achieve their goals.

To understand what is happening in a social phenomena, it is "necessary to examine the *social space* in which interactions, transactions and events occurred" (Thomson, 2012, 65).

To unpack this social space or "field" is not only to locate it in its relational contexts -- historical, social, political, local/national and international -- but it is also to look at the knowledge about the object we are examining. Bourdieu elaborates:

An analysis in terms of field involves three necessary and internally connected moments. First, one must analyze the position of the field vis-a-vis the field of power. . . . Second, one must map out the objective structure of the relations between the positions occupied by the agents or institutions who compete for the legitimate form of specific authority of which this field is a site. And, third, one must analyze the habitus of the agents, the different systems of dispositions they have acquired by internalizing a determinate type of social and economic condition, and which find in a definite trajectory within the field under consideration a more or less favorable opportunity to become actualized. (1992, 104-5).

We can connect this theoretical frame to the knowledge generation practices and/or production of educational policy of the NSVF by examining the following sectors through which it rebuilds the educational field:

1/ Taking hold of key urban markets through its "City Funds," promoting charters and "market solutions" by intensive targeting of Boston, Los Angeles, Oakland, Newark, Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia.

2/ A dislodging of educational expertise away from universities and schools of education toward alternative "real world" based instruction geared to producing "human capital" for newly minted charter schools or charter management organizations (CMOs -non-profit; or EMO -for-profit).

3/ Fostering a common discourse and strengthening the cultural capital of "educational entrepreneurs." Holding annual invitation only "Summits" that bring together "educational entrepreneurs" (over 900 at the last Summit in 2014). These Summits, attended by the key figures in the school privatization/marketization "reform" movement, announce the agenda for the coming year and serve as a gathering of notable (see Exhibit - for a list of some of the key speakers.)

4/ Presenting awards and fellowships to recognize and elevate leaders in philanthropy, government, business and academia as leaders in this reform movement. One regular award has been the Entrepreneurial Leadership in Public Education Award done in conjunction with the Aspen Institute. It is now known as the Pahara-Aspen Fellows, a two-year fellowship run by the Pahara Institute. In October, 2013 the NSVF invested in an "Accelerator to Elevate Leaders of Color" award.

5/Sponsoring research and advocacy (e.g. the "Great Act) that helps to shape and legitimize the field they are building. A particular aspect of this work is their sponsorship, financing or promotion (holding a screening) of the films, "Waiting for Superman" and "We Won't Back Down," championing charter schools and opposing teachers' unions.

This relational context and its "field of forces" mark a particular intersection of the current period: Venture philanthropy intermediaries like the NSVF, "aim to radically reshape public education, especially for poor children of color, but also to change the ways traditional foundations operate. Their vision involves philanthropy becoming aggressive in seeking out educational grantees and more engaged in advocacy; in this iteration, foundations lead educational policy change" (Scott, 2009, 108). Taken together these "field of forces" are refashioning not just education and public policy but as Wendy Brown skillfully articulates they are "*Undoing the Demos*" (2015).

Moving Money in the Context of Growing Financialization

The wider social context of financialization laid the foundation for how the NSVF acquired, developed and networked to secure the resources necessary for its "investments" and capturing the reform imagination. Since the late 1970s and with the rise of Reagan and Thatcher in the 1980s, we have seen an amazing and rapid financialization of the U.S. economy --"the system's center of gravity has shifted from production to finance . . . today's massive secular shift towards increased financial profits, lasting over decades, is historically unprecedented" (Foster and Holleman, 2010, 5-6).¹⁷ Capturing the significance of this trend in the widely acclaimed book *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, Piketty notes, "a dramatic shift in the process of US economic growth, one that started around 1980. Before then, families at all levels saw their income grow more or less in tandem with the growth of the economy as a whole. After 1980, however, the lion's share of gains went to the top end of the income distribution with the families

¹⁷ For the past 25 years or so, finance has boomed, becoming even more powerful . . .The invention of securitization, interest-rate swaps, and credit-default swaps greatly increased the volume of transactions that bankers could make money on . . .From 1973 to 1985, the financial sector never earned more than 16 % of domestic corporate profits. In the 1990s, it oscillated between 21 and 30 percent, higher than it had ever been in the postwar period. This decade it reached 41 percent" (Johnson, 2009, 49).

at the bottom half lagging far behind" Krugman (2014,3). He goes on to observe the role of government in this process due to tax policy favoring the rich.

Financialization is the structural context within which this new stream of privatizing school reform took shape. It provided not only the resources of the New School Venture Fund and charter school donors, it also provided (as noted above) the seductive intellectual configuration the reformers deployed, inviting schools to improve because of the power of the market:

Like venture capitalists, venture philanthropies expect aggressive returns on their investments. They measure such returns not necessarily by profit generated but by growth in student achievement, expansion of particular educational sectors, such as educational MOs or charter schools, and the growth of constituencies who will place political support on public officials to support particular reforms (Scott, 2009, 116).

To apprehend the complexity and implications of financialization for venture capital inspired school reform the practices and images of the "Quiet Coup" is instructive. Simon Johnson's (2009) notion of the "Quiet Coup" offers powerful parallels between financialization and the social relational processes of venture philanthropy critical to the underpinning current "reforms." It also affords us an incisive and provocative metaphor for the role venture philanthropy has played in marketizing school reform.

There are five aspects of financialization Johnson develops in the "Quiet Coup" that parallels key features of philanthropy driven school reform that I want to outline; this overview will set the stage for a deeper consideration of venture philanthropy, NSVF style.

1/ An unprecedented concentration of economic, political and policy power in "the most advanced oligarchy . . . a financial industry [that] gained political power by amassing a kind of

cultural capital - a belief system. . . .Over the past decade, the attitude took hold that what was good for Wall Street was good for the country' (49-50). Here we see that the power of a "financial power elite" (Foster and Holleman, 2010) has used its considerable resources to shape popular awareness and acceptance of its position.

2/ Personal networks and the revolving door of mutual influence -- the flow of individuals back and forth between Goldman Sachs and the Treasury Department, including two treasury secretaries, Robert Rubin and Hank Paulson. "It also help create an image of Goldman (inside the Beltway, at least) as an institution that was itself almost a form of public service." Further, Johnson notes, "I was struck by the easy access of leading financiers to the highest U.S. government officials and the interweaving of the two career tracks" (50). Here we have evidence of what Wedel (2009) calls the "coincidence of interests" With New Schools Venture Fund board members, we see a distinctly similar pattern. For example some "moving bodies" or what Kim Smith a co-founder of NSVF calls "(intra)repreneurs":

- Joann Weiss, former NSVF board member, joined the federal Department of Education, working with Arne Duncan. Starting in 2007, she directed the Obama administrations signature initiative, Race to the Top. Race to the Top increased funding for charter schools, tying teacher evaluation to test scores, Common Core and supporting 'alternative' training programs.
- Ted Mitchell, former CEO of NSVF, became undersecretary of the U.S. Department of Education in 2014.
- Board chairman John Doerr, partner in Kleiner, Perkins, Caulfield, & Byers, serves on President Obama's White House Council on Jobs and Competitiveness.

- After Jim Shelton's for-profit charter school, LearnNow, was an educational and economic failure, even though NSVF poured more than \$1.5 million into it, he became the East Coast representative for NSVF. He then moved to the Gates Foundation as education program officer and then on to the U.S. Department of Education before leaving for Gates again in 2013.
- Stacey Childress, who became the new CEO of the NSVF after Mitchell's departure to work with Duncan, had spent four years at the Gates Foundation.

You can also see the NSVF's wooing of government connections and influence in this map of its Aspen (and then Pajara) fellows. The blue indicates fellows from the US Department of Education, local superintendents, and other government officials. (The red indicates the many fellows with some tie to the NSVF itself: as staffer or grantee. It used the fellowships to enhance the networking and stature of key stakeholders in its immediate orbit).

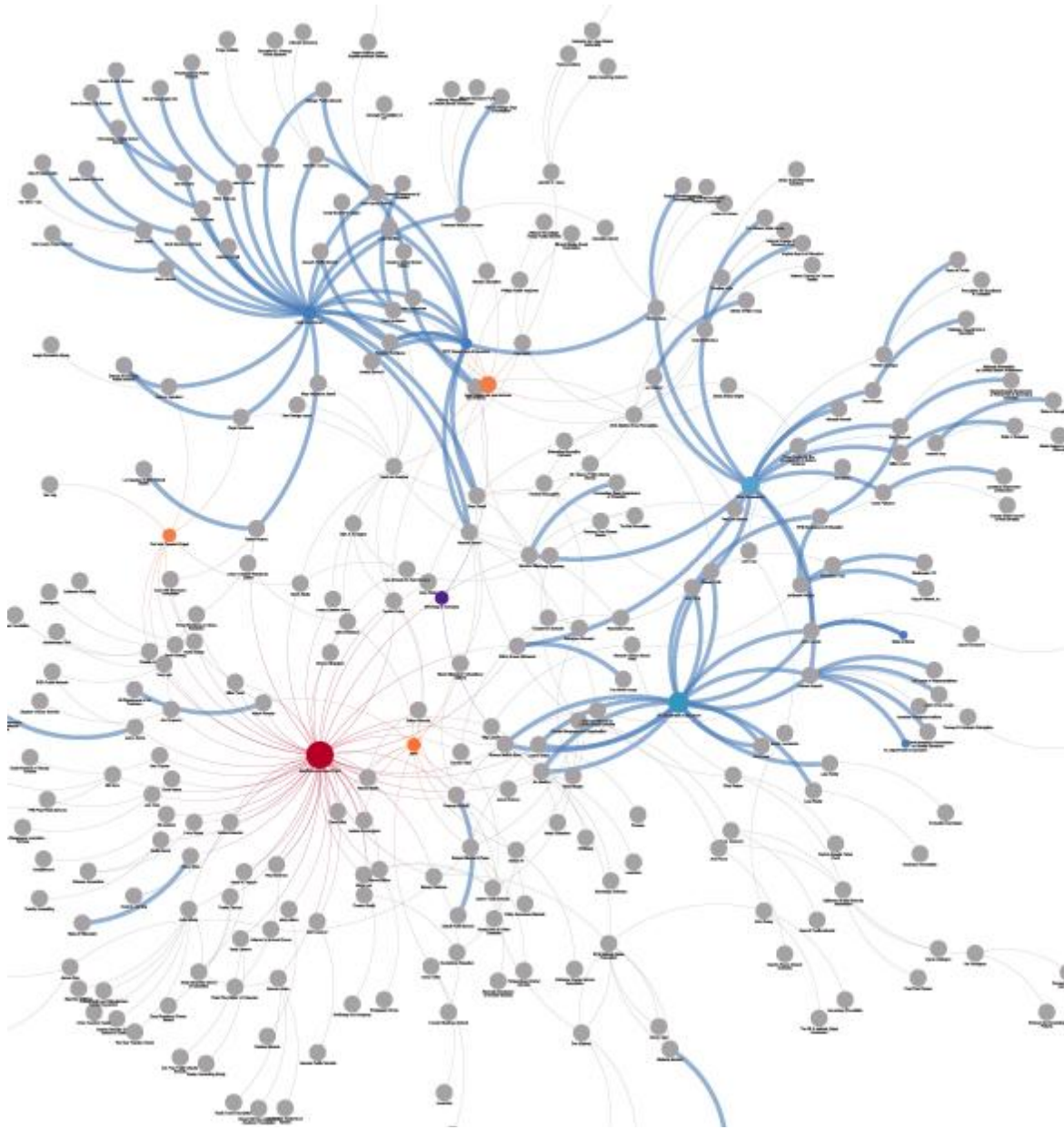


Figure 5.3 Network Diagram of NewSchool Venture Fund Fellows

Here's a close-up of how the fellowships networked the US Department of Education:

Also, **See Appendix C** for a list of the interlocks of NewSchools Venture Fund Board, Leadership Council and Staff with foundations, universities and market reform organizations and advocacy.

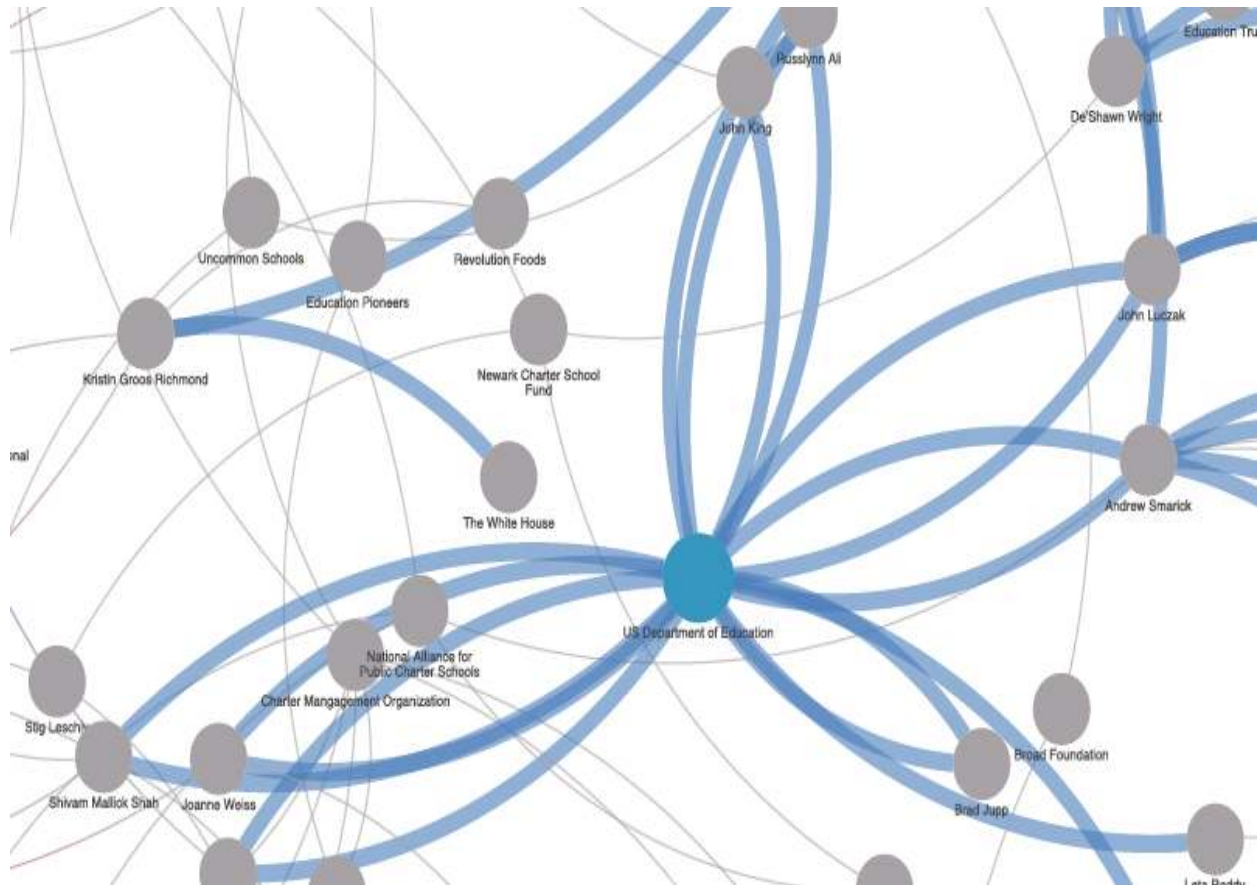


Figure 5.4 NSVF Fellowships Networked with U.S. Department of Education

The revolving door of NSVF with the Gates Foundation is a key field builder as well. Gates is a key funder of NSVF, giving more than \$60 million thus far.[See table 1 below.] This interweaving at the highest level of policy reflects a hegemonic coherence or a "de facto advocacy coalition" (Scott, 107).

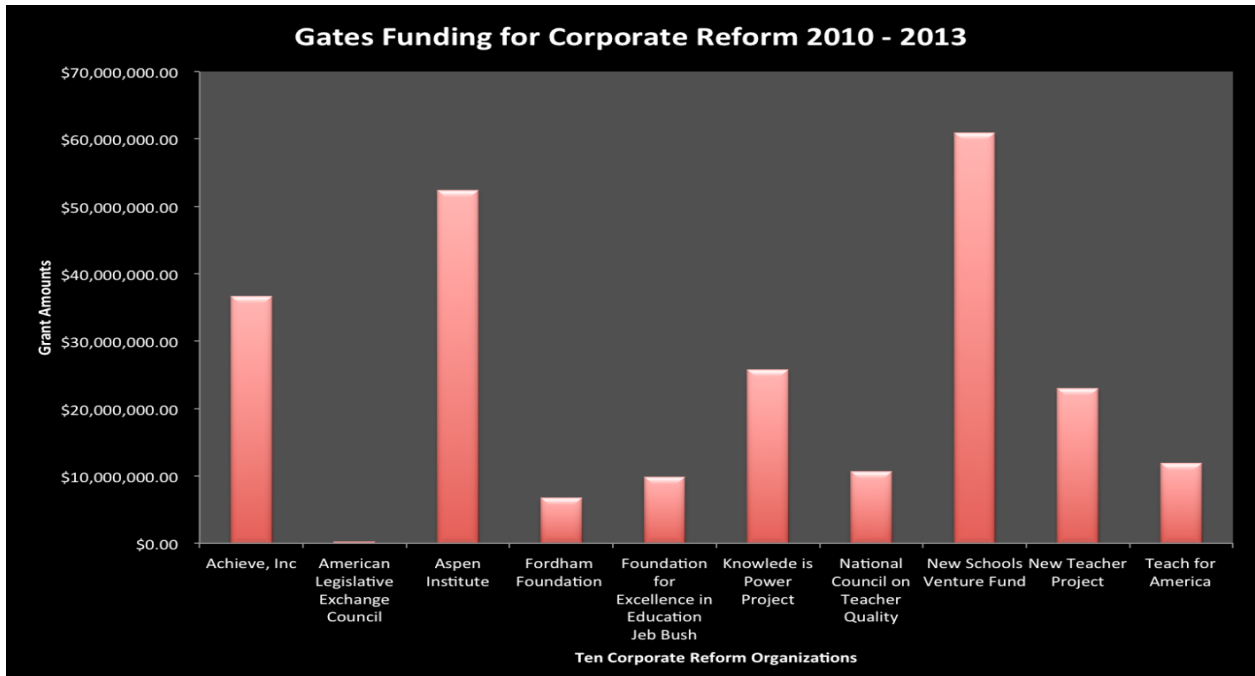
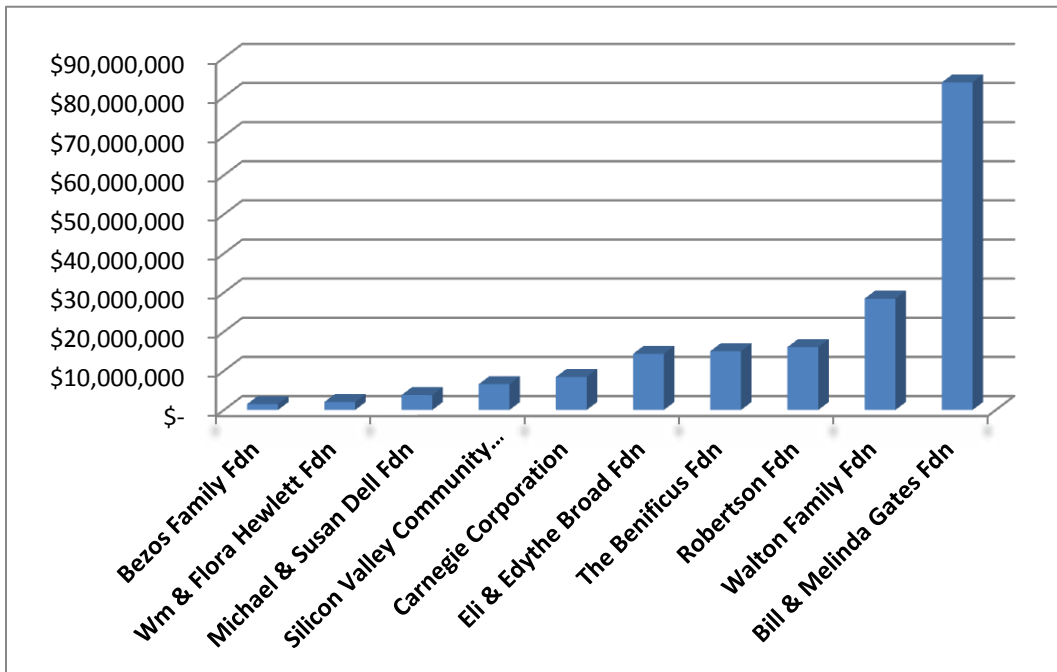


Figure 5.5 Gates Foundation Funding to Education Organizations 2010-2013

(Source National Education Policy Center)



Other foundations also work through the NSVF, though none so much as Gates:

Figure 5.6 Top Ten Foundation Grants to NSVF 2003-2013

Source: Assorted 990s of listed Foundations

They pitch in at targeted moments.

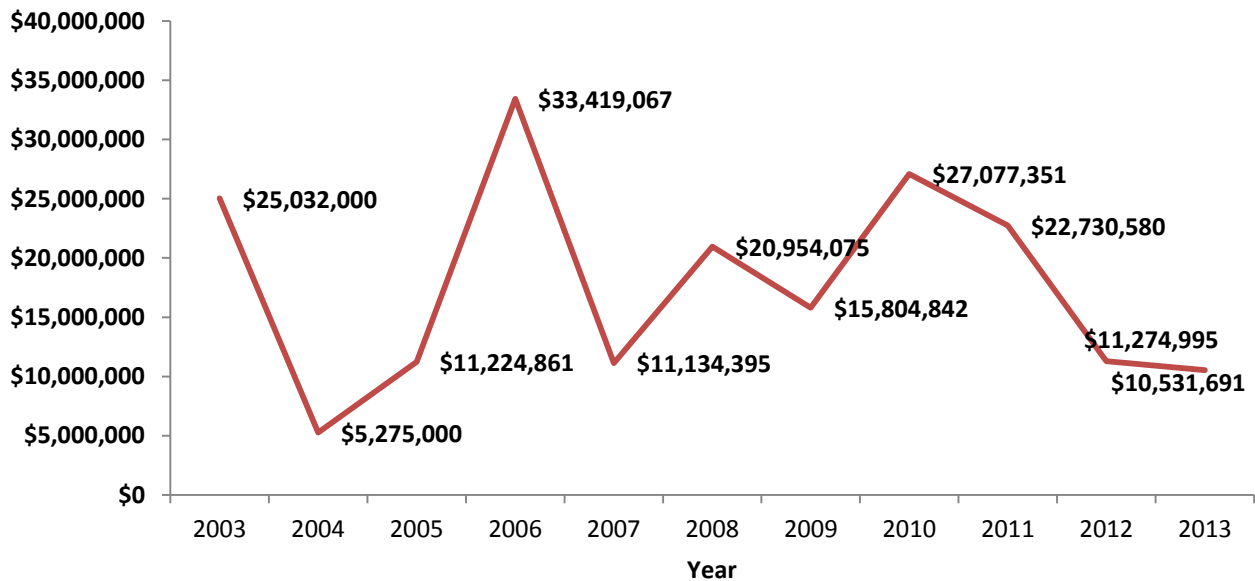


Figure 5.7 Foundation Funding of NSVF 2003-2013 by Dollar Amounts

Source: Assorted 990s of listed Foundations

""Reform-minded foundations (think Gates, Walton, Dell) have a clearly developed playbook that powerfully leverages their investments. . . Foundations [read NSVF's Joanne Weiss] played a critical role in the Race to the Top, Investing in Innovation Fund (I3) and promoting teacher evaluation systems" (Hess, 2012, 19). Given the prominence of Gates money going to the NSVF and the other projects (e.g. KIPP and The New Teacher Project ventures seeded and supported by NSVF) the role of NSVF as a primary field builder is undisputed.

3/ As further glue to this coherence, two complementary dynamics are in play. As Simon Johnson observes, "A whole generation of policy makers has been mesmerized by Wall Street and utterly convinced that whatever the banks said was true. . .[and] Wall Street's seductive power extended . . . as mathematical finance became more and more essential to practicing finance" (50). The power of the financial industry's cultural capital blends to a kind of "group think" that suspends critical inquiry. The predominance of using metrics as high-stakes evaluative measures to assess student learning and teacher growth plays a similar role.¹⁸

The saliency and potency of this technical wizardry is on display in an April 23, 2015 article in the *New York Times*, (B4) entitled "Where Education Technology and Investors Mix. The event is the annual ASU & GSV Summit (Arizona State University and GSV Capital 'Global Silicon Valley'); the description by the *Times* captures the effervescent of financial hubris -- "From coveted perches at cafe tables and couches in the plush hotel lobby, investors watched as Aaron Skonnard, chief executive of Pluralsight, an online skill training company, sat down with David Blake, chief executive of Degreed, a start-up. 'Degreed has the best content-scoring algorithm for online courses,' said Michael Staton, a partner in Learn Capital, a venture capital firm that finances education start ups." The article goes on to add an important piece of context: "The conference has become the central event for investors and companies scouting for the next big thing in education technology -- a melting pot for executives from McGraw Hill, Pearson, Google, Microsoft, Kapor Capital and the NewSchools Venture Fund . . . the conference also underscores the high political stakes involved in education and the big money business hope to reap in the sector." (B4)

¹⁸ See "Can Value Added Add Value to Teacher Evaluations" by Linda Darling-Hammond. *Educational Researcher*, March 2015 (Vol. 44, #2, p. 132-137).

At this juncture, it is critical to mark that an alternate discourse of marketized school reform emerges championing money-making outright and giving a backseat to the "this is the civil rights issue of our time" framing, Michael Moe, CEO of GSV Capital views nothing less than the entire \$788.7 billion spent annually in K-12 education nationwide as the target for profitmaking.

"Noting that this money is still controlled by public entities, or what referred to as the "old model" GSV call for reformers to join the "educational battlefield" . . ."we believe the opportunity to build numerous multi-billion dollar education enterprise is finally real" (Fang, 9/20/14). The NSVF was the originator of this trend and shares a number of investments with GSV.

Here are the top 14 (out of a total of 42) investments the NSVF made in **for-profit ventures** over a 3-year period. You will see, only one initiative, Wireless Generation, won more than \$1 million. The rest received enough to signal to other investors that these are worthwhile.

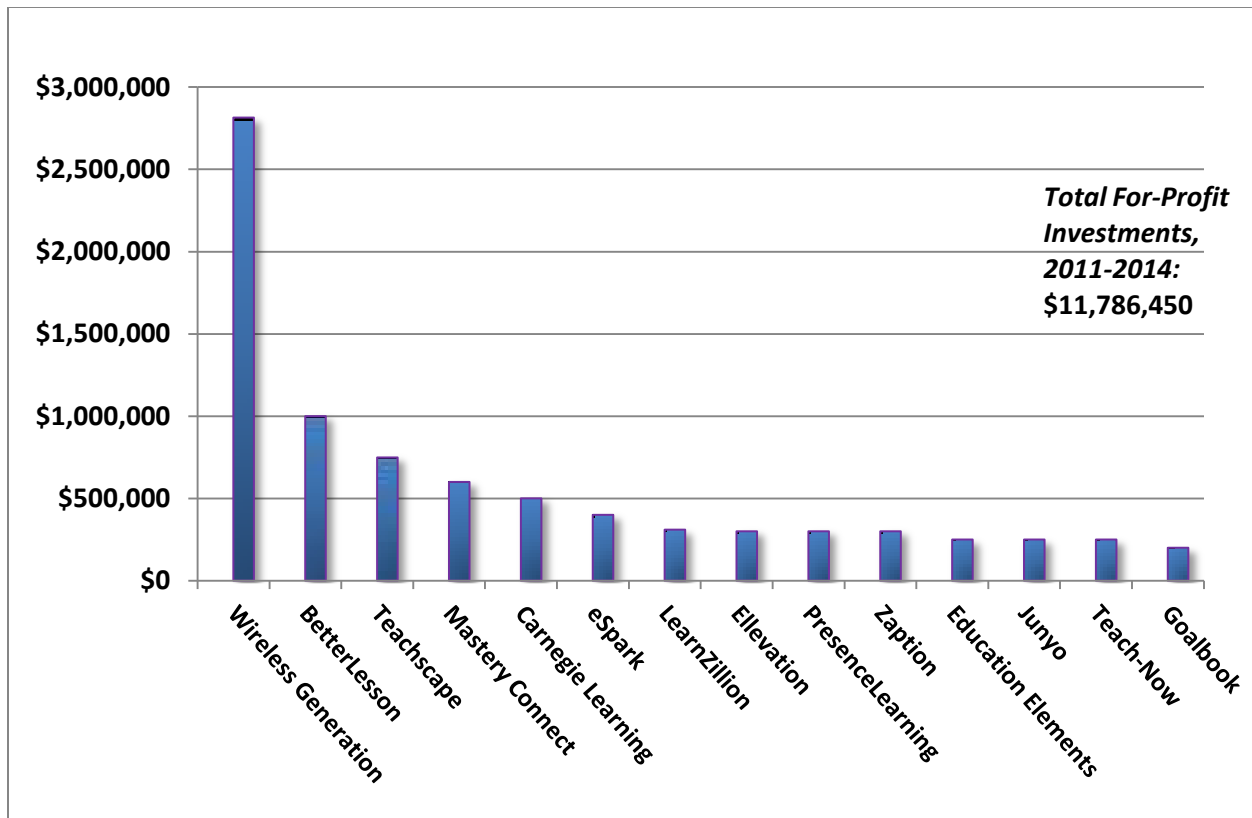


Figure 5.8 Top NSVF Investments in For-Profits, 2011-2014

Source: NSVF website and assorted annual reports.

The next chart Figure 5.9 depicts the 32 smallest of the 47 for-profit investments were \$200,000 or under. This provides a sense of the scope of their for-profit endeavors.

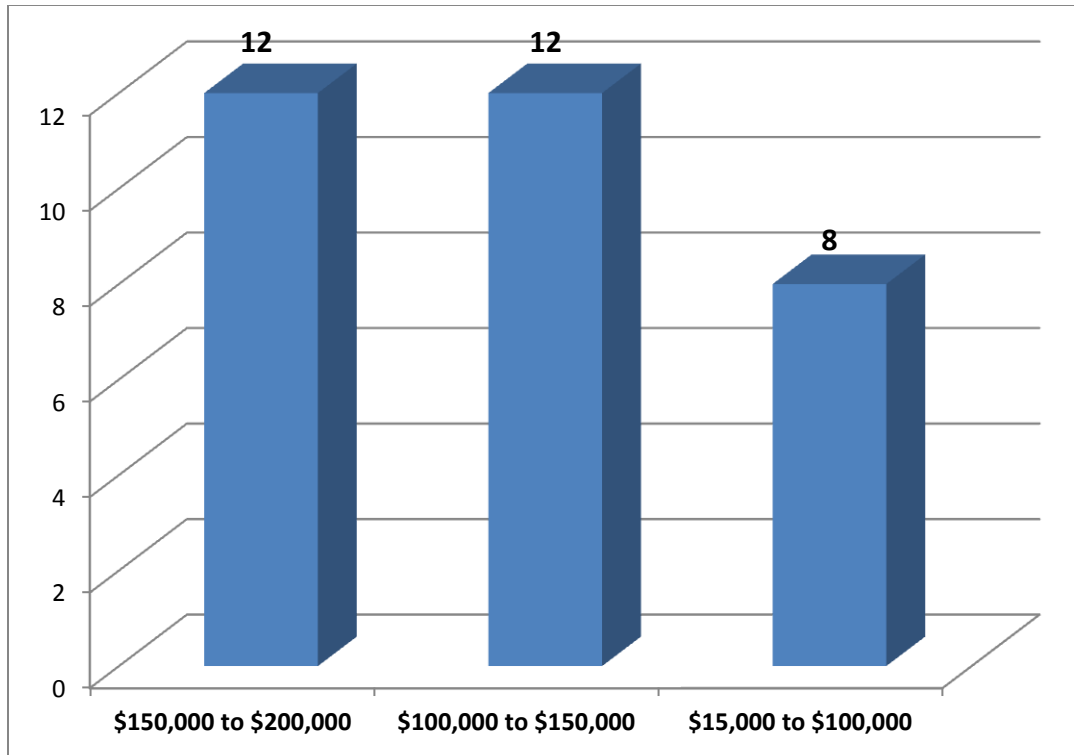


Figure 5.9 For-Profit Investments Under \$200,000, 2011-2014

Source: NSVF website and assorted annual reports.

This type of signaling generates excitement for the “big money business hopes to reap” from education. This was an early goal of the field building work of the NSVF. In the case study (SI7B) written by Anderson (2001) for the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University, we see the establishing coordinates of the NSVF direction of policy production. Under review here is the decision to be made about LearnNow, one of the early for-profit ventures NSVF supported. "In this case, capital market construction rather than quality issues was the driving force" (1). The case review ends with CEO Smith's reflection, "I still believe in building a hybrid [for-profit; non-profit] model, but I have a far greater appreciation for the vagaries of the capital markets and how difficult it is to balance a double bottom line of the profit capital market and the educational social return" (4).

This “balance” Smith addresses is still at play in the NSVF. Early in 2015 Childress announced that the "Seed Fund" for edtech start ups would be spun off to create a for-profit venture fund. Given the excitement about the “big money, business hopes to reach,” "one thing the new structure and access to additional investors can give us is the opportunity to participate in follow-on rounds for more of our seed stage companies going forward. It's a great signal for other investors who may only come in at later rounds" (NSVF *Newsletter*, Jan. 26, 2015). The “signal” that Childress refers to is the opportunity for investors to come in once a seeded venture is viable and profitable and then be on board when it goes to its IPO, initial public offering on the stock market. For profit investments, as we will see, are a growing and large part of the NSVF’s “portfolio.”

4/ Moving money, indeed, plows the field for its building. "In a society that celebrates the idea of making money, it was easy to infer that the interests of the financial sector were the same as the interests of the country -- and that the winners in the financial sector knew better what was good for America than did the career civil servants in Washington," writes Simon Johnson (50). There is an analogous line of reasoning with charter schools -- the money invested by the Gates, Broad, Walton and NSVF among others, must mean they know what is best for schools and the direction that education needs to take. "However, the data reveals (CREDO, 2009) that charters are less effective than public schools in delivering learning results. More specifically, 17 percent of charters produce outcomes on standardized test superior to public schools. However, nearly half of the charters nationwide have results that are no different than public schools, while over a third or 37 percent of charters deliver test results that are significantly worse than if the student

had remained in public school" (Fabricant and Fine, 2013, 65). Yet, public support seems to remain.¹⁹

5/ The political balance of power. The "power of the oligarchy" is signaled not only in the threat that financial institutions have become "too big to fail" but that "the financial sector [has] a veto over public policy, even as that sector loses popular support" (Johnson, 53). Of course the deep pockets of this sector allows it to deploy its money to influence the political balance of power not only at the federal level but at the state level where so much educational policy is controlled.

Mass Insight has done research for the NSVF and has been Massachusetts' home for this reform ideology, funded by the NSVF, allied with the conservative think tank Pioneer Fund. Now Pioneer's educational leader, James Peyser, is the state's Secretary of Education – after a stint as a managing director of the NSVF running its City Funds. In New York State, Governor Andrew Cuomo wants to draw on the turnaround school reform models done in Massachusetts and promoted by Mass Insight. His receptivity to market thinking in education is well documented. He served as "honorary chairman" of Camp Philos, "hosted by hedge-fund managers who support the Common Core, charter schools, mayoral control, testing and student-data collection." The gathering, May 4-6, 2014, brought together key players in the market-inspired education reform camp. (Bakeman, Apr. 15, 2014). The Governor's education proposals are deeply unpopular yet his new budget allows for the creation of more charter schools. He has proposed three years of low scores and the schools can be handed over to a charter management

¹⁹ CREDO has recently released a new study, "Urban Charter School Study" (2015) that states that students in charter schools in 41 urban areas fare better on test scores than peers in the "feeder traditional public schools. The methodology utilized in the comparison has been questioned by a review done by Andrew Maul of the National Education Policy Center. <http://nepc.colorado.edu/thintank/review-urban-charter-school>

organization. (see Appendix IV). New York has been a key target of NSVF funding, as we'll see when I discuss the City Funds below.

A concluding comment is needed before we transition to further investigation of the particular outline of the NSVF as "a cross between a philanthropy and an investment firm" (Burch, 2009, 48). The argument of the NSVF is presented with business logic -- due diligence, leverage, disruption, scalability and educational entrepreneurs -- to meet the needs of the underserved. The logic of the financial markets is the logic of their reform. You hear it from Childress, the new CEO of the NSVF, in her January 2015 announcement that the Seed Fund was being spun off as a for-profit venture: "We know that early stage seed capital is critical for a vibrant healthy marketplace to help entrepreneurs with good ideas and good instincts for how to meet the needs of teachers and kids and parents. . . .That's how we're going to get a variety of option and choice for students and parents" (Newsletter, Jan. 26, 2015, 5).

The role of public participation and public governance as a central institution of democratic life (Scott, 2009, Burch 2009, Ball, 2013, Giroux, 2012, Katz and Rose, 2013 and Fabricant and Fine, 2013) are absent from this process. Stone (2002) draws the implication of these marketized relations for the larger political field: "The central problem in democratic theory is that interests that are regarded as morally equal might be politically unequal. The good, legitimate, and virtuous interest are not necessarily the strong ones; in fact, they tend to be the weak ones. . . market theories share the assumption that some interests are stronger than others" (227).

One way to assess the strength of this movement to shift the consciousness both of what counts as reform and what constitutes democratic practice (consumer rights vs. citizen rights) is

to look at the impact of marketized discourse in venture philanthropy and in the "audit culture" (Strathern,2000; Shore, 2008). "Audit culture describes not so much a type of society, place or people so much as a *condition*. It refers to the contexts in which the techniques and values of accountancy have become the central organizing principle in the governance and management of human conduct" (Shore, 2009, 279). These internalized perception of how we come to see and understand ourselves "are often the things that are most opaque and imperceptible to us . . . the power of any political order often resides precisely in the unquestioned nature of the classificatory systems that govern out thought and action" (Shore, 270). This "naturalized landscape" underwrites the entrepreneurial culture at the heart of the marketization.

In the field of education coaching where I work with principals, I have experienced this transformation of language and the hegemonic coherence of a new discursive universe. "By seeking to move concepts and language from the world of business to the world of nonprofits, venture philanthropy must be viewed as a marketing triumph" Frumkin,15). As both Frumkin (2003, 15) and Scott (2009, 116) note this language speaks to a re-framing a desire to secure an "aggressive return on investment" and to measure results as the table below of venture philanthropy terminology reveals

Venture Philanthropy Term Translation

Non-profit Usage

Investment	Grant
Investor	Donor/Grantee
Theory of Change	Grant proposal
Social return on investment	Impact or deliverables
Venture	Program

Performance measure	Evaluation
Benchmarking	Standard setting
Due diligence	Grant review process
Consultative engagement assistance	Technical
Investment portfolio	Grant list
Scalable model	Community impact

Table 5.1 Shift to Venture Philanthropy Language in Nonprofit Grantmaking .

While this catchy rhetoric may seem innocuous enough, it signals a deeper trend. Concepts hard won through social movement like citizen, equality, democracy and justice are "hollowed out" and instead we get sanitized words like client, customer (valuable only in an exchange relation), stakeholder, excellence and performance. This "stripping out of meaning from what once were central concept in the organization of public life . . . [portends] managerialism a hollowed out concept [seen] as the antidote to public sector professionalism. . . [these concepts] establish the limits of the possible, and imaginable, and above all the sayable" (Ozga, 2000, 6). This is a crucial thread in the web of neoliberal education policy promoted by institutional entrepreneurs like the NewSchools Venture Fund.

Moving Bodies: Populating Reform, Deepening the Field, Strategy, Power and Sites of Occupation

"I believe our age demands what might be called "a relational politics". That is, not a politics of preconstituted identities (not an "identity politics" as in the USA) but a politics of exposing the maps of power though which identities are constructed." Doreen Massey, 1999

To move bodies and mobilize ‘human capital’ requires resources --economic, social, political, cultural and symbolic -- and a coordinated plan or as the venture philanthropist would say a "theory of change" and a "theory of going to scale." As Edelman (1972) reminds us, "Meanings are not in the symbols. they are in society and therefore in men (*sic*). Political symbols bring out in concentrated form those particular meanings and emotion which the members of a group create and reinforce in each other" (11). This operates in the realm of neoliberal policy, its production, processes and networks (discursive webs). "The use of the metaphor of a policy web helps to understand how the policy process is shaped by circulating discourses . . . policy is designed as an ensemble of multiple discourses that interact in a complex web of relationships that enable or constrain social relations" (Drinkwater, 2012, 6).

A helpful heuristic for clarifying the social relations of these policy webs is to employ Frumkin’s frameworks on "theory of change and "theory of scale" in *Strategic Giving: The Art and Science of Philanthropy* (2006, Chpt. 6). By interrogating their "logic model", we will be better able to understand the reach, scope and implications of the NSVF's inter-related approach to policy production.

Theory of Change

As Frumkin notes, "theories of change are at the heart of logic models and strategy development . . . they focus on the grand idea of how impact is created" (176). Within the realm of K-12 education there are five aspects of a theory of change: 1/ Training individuals for leadership; 2/ Building strong organizations; 3/ Creating new networks --organization with a common purpose or set of goals; 4/ Influencing politics -- shaping the legislative agenda at the

local, state or national level; 5/ Creation of new ideas or paradigms that reorient a field and reframing the conversation about goals and purpose.

The NSVF has utilized all five aspects of these aspects in advancing their market-based challenge to public education. The analogy comes to mind of President Clinton, "end welfare as we know it" to "end public education as we have known it."²⁰ Let's explore further.

The NSVF has mobilized individuals in a number of ways. First, of course, in its venture capital work seeking out individual entrepreneurs to develop investments. Next a central aspect of its theory of change rests on the development of educational entrepreneurs. This is at the heart of its mission. "Creating opportunities for individuals is appealing because it promises to create an army of agents, ready to both change practice in the field and to lead efforts to change policy" (Frumppkin,180). The Aspen Institute/ NewSchools Venture Fund "Entrepreneurial Leaders for Public Education Program has awarded close to 100 fellowships. These individuals are drawn from the charter world -- founders of KIPP, and Yes Prep; Teach for America, New Leaders for New Schools, The New Teacher Project; technology investors -- Wireless Generation; public officials -- Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Superintendent of Newark, former Commissioner of Education for New York State who now sits in the US Department of Education (John King). And of course, members of advocacy group such as the Center for Reinventing Public Education; and foundations; Broad Foundation, Thomas B Fordham Foundation, Joyce Foundation and Walton Family Foundation. They also recognize individuals within the NSVF. Through the two-year fellowships, now run by the Pahara Institute (led by a former NSVF staffer), these people are brought together for intensive, guided discussion to weave together a common agenda: "The program requires significant preparatory reading, 17

²⁰ See special issue of the *Journal of Curriculum Studies*: "The End of Schooling as We Know It?" (2013, Vol. 45,1)

days onsite for four seminars over two years, and a leadership project.” (Pahara Institute website). These fellowships and the networks they represent are a "powerful army" to carry the message of market-based "disruptive" reform forward. Our mapping of the fellows identified nodal people who seem to live to network, such as Jen Holloran, Mark Zuckerberg’s education advisor, and organizations like Teach for America, KIPP, the New Teachers Project and the foundations whose staff are continually tapped for a constant weaving of “field” into a community.

movement has been the proliferation of Charter Management Organizations (see Appendix II for the full list). These CMO's are often targeted through the NSVF City Funds into specific geographical areas. This approach was first developed by the Democrats for Education Reform in New York City, in a report called "Flooding the Zone" referring to the expansion under Mayor Bloomberg of the Success Academies in Harlem. This move is what Reckow and Snyder (2014) call "jurisdictional challengers" (186).

Third, closely connected in this policy web is the creating of new networks. "The idea of building networks of capacity with all different fields of activity because it appears to be a promising way to take small programs and local innovations to scale" (183). It is at this junction that the annual NSVF Summit plays a central role. During the last Summit attended by over 900 people entrepreneurs, policy makers, technology investors, researchers and educators network to "create networks of communication and collaboration." A colleague who used to work at the NYC Department of Education in the Office of Accountability, received an invitation to the 2015 NSVF Summit. It was described as, "The NewSchools Summit is for education innovation thought leaders who currently represent many of the most important voices and perspectives on K-12 education." The prestige and symbolic capital created at this event is a central component of how the NSVF conducts field building and extends its web of legitimacy.

Fourth, is the area of using the wealth, resources, symbolic capital and networks to create pressure on the political process. While holding the interconnections, Bourdieu offers us a way to see the tension between the elites of Silicon Valley in context of their wider social formation spanning multiple fields. "At stake in the field is the accumulation of *capitals*: they are both the process in, and the product of a field." Bourdieu nominated four forms of capital: economic (money and assets); cultural (forms of knowledge; language, narrative, voice); social (affiliation

and networks; family, cultural heritage) and symbolic (things which stand for all of the other forms of capital and can be 'exchanged' in other fields, e.g. credentials" (Thomson,67).

This is realm of comfort for the NSVF. Since its inception and its first political victory of raising the cap on charter schools in California, it has deepened its connections to politicians and the levers of power.

We see this political muscle most clearly in the NSVF's advocacy of the GREAT Act which would "create a system throughout the nation of charter teacher and principal preparation programs called academies" (Zeichner and Pena-Sandoval, 2015). See Appendix C for prototypes of these kinds of programs already operating and seeded with NSVF resources.

The fifth and final aspect of the theory of change is the production of new ideas and paradigms that reorient a field. Through the interweaving of the aspects above and in particular the sponsored research on "Turnaround Challenge" (Mass Insight, 2007) and the National Study of Charter School Management Effectiveness (Mathematica, 2010). Additional reports authored by the NSVF cover a wide range of topics. "By funding efforts aimed at shaping both public opinion and elite policy opinion, grant makers can achieve substantial influence" (187). The NewSchools Venture Fund has embedded its theory of change deeply into the culture of contemporary school reform.

Theory of Scale

A recurrent theme in all the work of the NSVF and its venture philanthropy in general is the desire to go to scale. Here the venture philanthropy world criticizes with some justification, the limited impact of traditional philanthropy in its approach to funding projects, short-term, and not general funds to build the organization. "Going to scale or taking a project to scale" is on the

one hand a desire to have a broad impact for the resources allocated, yet it also embeds a specific approach to growth that while, perhaps, appropriate for the business world may not be applicable to non-profit endeavors. Frumkin notes, "that beyond the idea of a greater impact, the idea of scale becomes more enigmatic" (204).

There are a series of overlapping meanings for scale that tie in and reflect the theory of change outline above. They are: "1/ financial strength; 2/program expansion; 3/ comprehensiveness; 4/ multisite replications and 5/ accepted doctrine" (204).

Bernstein, quoting Berresford from the Ford Foundation, highlights a key issue: "Most strategic philanthropy planning involves using benchmarks to measure progress [in moving towards scale] But sometimes data miniaturizes ambition because they focus on what can be measured in the near-term, not what might be most important for long-term goals" (2011, 40).

This balance or historical perspective is vital to educational policy if it is to serve all young people and not stratify communities further according to who is most able to attend a lottery or comply to the regime of a charter school. Brown (2015) captures this insight precisely, " Human capital is distinctly not concerned with acquiring the knowledge and experience needed for intelligent democratic citizenship" (177). The priority of venture philanthropy with "an inherently venture capital mind-set" [where] they actively seek place to put their money [and] also prioritize speed and rapid impact" (Bennett et.al. 2016 1) sidelines a "public pedagogy" (Giroux,2011,133) essential for deliberative democracy.

Moving Ideas: Refashioning School Reform

"Overall, to behave in an entrepreneurial manner is to urge some kind of endeavor directed towards financial gain." Max Weber

An underlying issue that has surfaced in reading the data for patterns in the documents by and about educational entrepreneurs is not just their central place within the culture of marketized school reform, but the enthusiasm for their role as “change agents.” At issue is the social creation of their disposition or *habitus*. Bourdieu reiterates in his discussion of *habitus*, “I wanted to insist on the *generative capacities* of dispositions, it being understood that these are acquired socially constituted dispositions” (1990, 13). The infusion of market sensibilities between and among nonprofits with their CEOs, for-profit ventures as well as the movement from the venture philanthropy to Limited Liability Companies (LLCs) all enable a “*habitus* [that] provides predispositions towards and capacities for practice for agents, which are transposable to different contexts” (Rawolle and Lingard, 2008, 731). This uncritical valorization of educational entrepreneurs offers a cohesion vital for neoliberal policy worlds.

How does this help us understand and account for the allure and centrality of educational entrepreneurs to the work of venture philanthropy and the “new educational reformers”? For Bourdieu (1991) *habitus* is part of a relational framework connected to his concepts of capital and social field which assists us to see the dynamic development of organizational relations, “each social field provides a way of accumulating and distributing field specific forms of capital (social, cultural, symbolic and national) and mechanism for the conversion of capital between fields. . .fields provide something like a magnetic attraction for agents who are disposed to engage in a given field” (2009, 732). This designation of a social field marks a social space within a field of power. This configuring force or “magnetic attraction” –the shine and pull of symbolic capital draws the energy, creativity and allegiance of reformers and innovators into the field.

I witnessed this first hand when I attended the “Schools for Tomorrow” conference (September, 2104) hosted by the *New York Times*. Between sessions and before and after lunch, entrepreneurs of both nonprofit organizations and for-profit start-ups were given time to pitch to the audience, called in the program “Three Minutes to Launch.” Positioned right before or right after presentations about the nature and purpose of schooling and the problems under discussion, we paused for a pitch to “entertain” a new technological tool to make education better.

This description from an early article authored by the NSVF (July 24, 2000) captures the decision making nexus of venture philanthropy:

Doerr says he looks for the same attributes in his philanthropic projects as he does in his tech investments. “I like to see a passionate founding entrepreneur, strategic focus on a large underserved need, scalability and the ability to become a freestanding venture,” he explains during a break between pitches. Doerr is a man whose ear thousands of start-up entrepreneurs vie for . . . Is this really where they want to put their millions? Or are other philanthropic start-ups more deserving, better prepared, addressing a more urgent need? Doerr and the others decide to study TeachScape further with a view eventually to providing some funding. They break for coffee. And wait for the next pitch.

The NewSchools Venture Fund acts as an “institutional entrepreneur.” (Battilana, Leca & Boxenbaum, 2009; DiMaggio, 1988) As Quinn et. al. (2013) argue in their article “Beyond Grantmaking: Philanthropic Foundation as Agents of Change and Institutional Entrepreneurs”, we need to pay attention to both the sheer amount of resources at a venture philanthropy’s disposal and how it strategically allocates them, to what projects and field building initiatives. How are they being built and for whom? My documentation of the different fields and types of ventures funded offers a depiction of an institutional entrepreneur pursuing its strategy with an “interest they highly value.”

The social mechanisms articulated by Quinn et. al. (2013) allows us to circle back to the issue of understanding the “intrinsic” motivation of educational entrepreneurs. Three dominant social mechanisms are outlined “by which foundations change established institutions and legitimate new institutions (Bartley, 2007).²¹ These practices are vital to understanding the “agency” of institutional entrepreneurs.

The research of DiMaggio defines the core approach: “new institutions arise when organized actors with sufficient resources (*institutional entrepreneurs*) see in them an opportunity to realize interest that they value highly” (1988, 14). There is an interesting tension here between the conceptualization (of NSVF) venture philanthropy activities and practices as “field building” and as “social mechanisms” The former has an inward looking reference as a foundation develops (ploughs) its field or scope of interest. As noted above, I have extended the domain of field in its narrower sense to the “social field” as theorized by Bourdieu to highlight the way a field draws out and develops the disposition of agents within it and how it simultaneously deploys capital (economic, political, social and symbolic).

Social mechanisms are a more outward looking. The focus on social mechanism allows us to push our understanding of the role and influence of intermediaries (foundations) like the NSVF beyond a definition of importance based solely on the size of their financial resources (as the agent of action) to the ways they are changing and remaking institutions. In this sense they are institutional entrepreneurs, fostering the new governing rationality of neoliberalism. Brenner and Theodore (2002, 349) address the fluidity of the neoliberal policy context, “we emphasize the contextual *embeddedness* of neoliberal restructuring project . . . An adequate understanding of

²¹ The authors use the formation of Charter Management Organizations as their point of reference for institutional change. Further, in a note, they acknowledge that the research was funded, in part, by a 2008 grant from the NewSchools Venture Fund.

actually existing neoliberalism must therefore explore the path-dependent, contextually specific interactions between inherited regulatory landscapes and the emergent neoliberal, market-oriented restructuring projects at a broad range of geographical scales.” This framing of “actually existing neoliberalism” will be very useful when analyzing the strategic development of ‘City Funds’ in Boston, Washington, D.C., New Orleans and Oakland below.

The social mechanism outlined by Quinn et.al (2013) are directly relevant to the practice and policies of the NSVF. As one of oldest and most influential venture philanthropies, these social mechanisms of institutional entrepreneurship have set a standard that others have followed (e.g. Charter School Growth Fund). Furthermore, my analysis of these social mechanisms will give us a concrete sense of how Moving Money and Moving Bodies (shapes) leads to Moving Ideas.

I have extended their argument on social mechanism (I add two additional propositions) in order to; a) elaborate how institutional entrepreneurs like the NSVF shape policy cultures and bring political decision making round to its agenda; and b) to recast this frame as an organizing portal to understanding specific mechanism of building the field of power.

The three social mechanism of institutional entrepreneurs (Quinn et.al, 2003, 956) are:

1. “Recombining cultural elements to establish new organizational forms” (e.g. EMOs to CMOs);
2. “Developing and enforcing evaluative frameworks to assess these forms” (e.g. audit culture, high stakes data based accountability metrics; like their venture AchieveNet);
3. “Sponsoring new professionals to populate these forms with desired expertise” (e.g. Educational Entrepreneurial Fellows and annual invitation only Summits);

I am adding two additional “social and political mechanism” to encompass my expanded notion of field building.

4. Developing and employing research, think tanks, universities and advocacy to create legitimacy for policies; as the founder of the Pioneer Institute (conservative think tanks in Massachusetts) Lovett “Pete” Peters (2003) said “to change the intellectual climate through communications.” (e.g. reports commissioned with Mass Insight, Turnaround Models, MIT *Attendance and Choice and Charter School Demand and Effectiveness: a Boston Update*; Families for Excellent School which received a million dollars each from Loeb and Robertson Foundations. Further, the *Daily News* October 21, 2015 states “One report from March estimated Families for Excellent Schools spent nearly \$10 million on broadcast ads alone from January 2014 to June 2015.”).
5. Shaping/ populating governing structures to normalize the pursuit of private interests as the standard for working in the public interest. This is a distinct level because while it includes “populating the form with desired expertise” it goes a step further to making policy and enacting laws favorable to field building. (e.g. California Board of Education over local objections allowed Rocketship Education to open a computer learning-centered charter elementary school in Mt. Diablo Unified School District. This despite objections from local and county school board members, administrators and principals, English language and special education teachers, parents and Latino community outreach workers. (Alternet, March 12, 2016).

McGoey (2015) in her insightful research on the Gates Foundation and philanthrocapitalism observes: “The new philanthropists are increasingly proud, triumphant even, about the private economic fortunes to be made through embracing philanthrocapitalism. Not only is it no longer

necessary to ‘disguise’ or minimize self-interest, self-interest is championed as the best rationale for helping others. It is seen not as coexisting in tension with altruism, but as a prerequisite *for* altruism” (20). .

With specific reference to the NSVF Kim Smith, a cofounding CEO of the NSVF stated that we, “purposefully recombined elements from the for-profit EMO form [Edison Schools] and the stand-alone [charter school] form to introduce a new charter form, the CMO. . . .like EMOs, CMOs, [Smith argues], pursued scale, coherence, efficiency and brand” (in Quinn, 2013,956). As noted in my case review and as Doerr states above, the principles of operations between venture capital and venture philanthropy, in his mind, are analogous. Smith clarifies, “We wanted to avoid confusing ideologues who were categorically anti-profit, but might not be anti-scale and brand’ (956). Note the language of “ideologues and the tactics of positionality and branding.”²²

As we have seen in the California Mt. Diablo case, financial support for new organizational forms is on display in the Field Building Map that opened this chapter. The total amount the NSVF invested in CMOs from 2001-2014 is **\$ 93,302,526**. It is by far their largest area of concentrated grant making. This “recombining cultural elements into a new organizational form” underscores a central point of Reckhow and Snyder (2014) : “these ‘jurisdictional challenges’ provide organizational replacements and alternate routes for teacher and principal training/credentialing, production of knowledge and research in education as well as schools and school systems Individually, these organizations offer alternative to the public

²² Fairclough (2005) highlights the importance of ‘branding’ to neoliberal discourse: “So ‘brand’ is more in tune with neo-liberalism than ‘image’ –anything and anyone can *have* and image, but anything and anyone can *be* a brand –can be reconstituted as an entity in a market. . . .and one can also investigate how such discourses and narratives compete for dominance in markets and become *hegemonic* in particular markets . . .” (37).

sector; but as a linked set of actors, they present a coordinated challenge to the jurisdictional control traditionally held by the public sector in education” (187).

The network analysis displayed in the field building map and in the Educational Entrepreneurial Fellows map show the “coincidences of interests” and extensive connections of the NSVF. They evoke an organizational strategy that aims to build a field of power and penetrate the following social, political and educational domains of government, geographical locales, teaching and technology. Before analyzing these domains as particular “field of power” let’s return to Bourdieu (1998) to understand precisely his articulation:

I introduced the notion of the field of power to account for structural effects which are not otherwise easily understood . . . The field of power (which should not be confused with the political field) is not a field like the others. It is a space of the relations of force between different kinds of capital or, more precisely, between the agents who possess a sufficient amount of one of the different kinds of capital to be in a position to dominate the corresponding field, whose struggles intensify whenever the relative value of the different kinds of capital is questioned (34).

This conceptualization of the ‘space of relation of forces between different kinds of capital’ is central to a critical understanding of field building. As I have argued and as the data collected illustrates, the NewSchools Venture Fund while not wielding the monetary resources of the Gates, Walton or Broad Foundations nevertheless, has amassed significant capital (symbolic, political and economic) to be a bellwether and sow the seeds (forge the path) at the forward edge of marketized reform. This process of understanding the dynamics of field building resembles what Wedel (2005) calls “studying through,” a framework for examining the policy process “of following the source of a policy, its discourses, prescriptions and programs through

to those affected by it (be they community company or social network). . .it can illuminate how different organizational and everyday worlds are interconnected across time and space” (2).

Domains Building the Fields of Power: Government, Geographical Locales, Teaching and Technology

A. Government –at the federal level, NSVF CEO and Board Chair Ted Mitchell becomes Under Secretary of Education following in the footsteps of other NSVF Board member. In my interview with Mitchell at the New York Times “Schools for Tomorrow conference (9/9/14), I asked him about the role of government to ensure equity for students, he responded, “As I see it the role of government is to loosen and redraft regulation so that the innovations of the market can benefit the most people.” This is what Ozga and Jones (2006) call “traveling policy within national elites . . .in which local policy elites have integrated travelling policy with national agendas” (2). In other words, the NSVF outside venture philanthropy perspective has been brought into the US DOE. In a similar way, Joanne Weiss, partner of the NSVF, headed up the US Department of Education’s \$4.35 billion Race to the Top Program. When Secretary Arne Duncan’s left the DOE, he was replaced by John King, [Commissioner of Education of the State of New York](#) who was a NSVF/Aspen Entrepreneurial Fellow. As the fellows map indicates, dozens of state education officials have been brought into the NSVF orbit. Kim Smith has called these actors a new breed “*intrapreneurs*” meaning people with the market entrepreneurial framework now inside government. This type of inter-locking directorate has been articulated at least since C Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (1959).

Wedel argues in *Shadow Elites* (2009) that these travelling policy elites are “flex-nets” not loyal to government but to themselves and their networks. “The proliferation of roles, and the

ability of players to construct coincidences of interest . . . they weave new institutional forms of power and influence, in which official and private power and influence are interdependent and even reinforce each other” (4-5). To appreciate the extent of elite “flexions” in the “ecosystem” of the NewSchools Venture Fund and its capacity for network governance (Ball, 2012), consider the following description from *The Prize: Who’s In Charge of Americas Schools* (Russakoff, 2015):

Gathered around a conference table to hear [Christopher] Cerf were representatives of more money than had ever been assembled in Newark or perhaps most cities of the world. Jen Holleran, was representing [Mark] Zuckerberg. The director of the William Ackman’s Pershing Square Foundation and Silicon Valley venture capitalist John Doerr’s NewSchools Venture Fund were at the table, as was the CEO of the Newark Charter School Fund whose donors include Gates, Fisher and Walton and Robertson; Laurene Powell Jobs . . . Newark, Cerf said, is the perfect test case. It’s a manageable in size, its led by an extraordinary mayor, and its managed by the state. We still control all the levers. (68)

What is revealing about this depiction is that not only is John Doerr, co-founder of the NewSchools Venture Fund at the table but so was NSVF Board member Laurene Powell Jobs. In addition, the other participants Holleran, Ackman and the Gates, Fisher, Walton and Robertson Foundations are all recipients of the Aspen/ NewSchools Education Entrepreneurial Fellowship created by the NewSchools Venture Fund.

Given this context, the role of the NSVF is not only as a significant instigator in market driven reform, but it also helps to draw the boundaries of the ecosystem. Its Aspen/NewSchools Entrepreneurial Fellowships awards valorizes and “celebritizes” the social capital of central actors by keeping them within the orbit of the NSVF. In line with this characterization,

Russakoff goes on to highlight the use of the word “transformational” in relationship to every initiative offered in Newark.

The March 9, 2016 *Education Week* in its lead article on Facebook and Personalized learning, affords us an opportunity to connect the dots on how “policy networks” operate as a “coincidence of interests” while also creating the “haze” that Sassen refers to. At issue is the blurring of the lines (through entrepreneurial enthusiasm fuelled by large “donations) between nonprofit and for-profit grants/investments. Ed week reports that Zuckerberg and his newly formed LLC are investing in personalized learning on the AltSchool model. Of interest to our case study is how given the prior context in the technology world and Russakoff’s documentation of John Doerr at the Newark meeting, here we again see “intermediation” and networking. Here are the dots: Zuckerberg announces in *Education Week* that his “Startup: Education” venture philanthropy, gave \$21 million out in 2014. One recipient of this grant was \$2 million to the NewSchools Venture Fund. Additionally, It is noted that the Summit Public School will be receiving \$3.5 million. The connection is that Summit was developed with support from the NSVF and has developed a “personalized Learning Platform” (PLP). This model is the basis of a report authored by Stacey Childress, CEO, NSVF (2015). This prototype is serving as the model for its “innovative schools” Catapult Invent round, the newest NSVF fund.

B. Geographical Locales: Boston and Washington D.C.

In educational policy studies, Pauline Lipman (2004, 2011, 2015) and Jean Anyon (1997, 2005a, 2005b) have been at the forefront of exploring and exposing the relationship between housing, gentrification and education policy. Lipman (2015) sets the context, “Urban

communities that have been demonized in the White racial imagination, and persistently disinvested in by the state over the past 25 years, are now the targets of organized state abandonment. Schools are at the center of this strategy through school closings, charter school expansion, and takeovers of public schools by private management organizations” (65).

The construction of a social imaginary is crucial to neoliberal policy that promises greater choice and freedom. Greenberg (in Lipman, 2011, 33) puts it sharply, “cities are produced not only materially and geographically but also in the social imagination . . .”

What we are able to see clearly in the administration of the NSVF City Funds is crystallized moment when the patterns in the policy web become recognizable. Peck (2010) comments, “by bringing neoliberalism to ground in various ways. This means approaching neoliberalization not as some automatic system, but as an earthly process, realized through political action and institutional reinvention” (33).

Boston School Fund

In 2008 the NewSchools Venture Fund launched one of its four “City-Funds” in Boston and invested \$12 million into the Boston charter sector. Other City Funds were developed in Newark, Washington D. C., Oakland, and New Orleans; in all these Funds the signature trademarks of the NSVF “ecosystem” in shaping policy is manifest.

James A. Peyser, director of the conservative think tank, The Pioneer Institute in the 1990s also served as chairman of the Board of Education for the State of Massachusetts from 1999 until 2005 (Levenson, *Globe*, 12/23/14).²³ From 2005 until his appointment by Governor

²³ Pioneer Institute is a member of the State Policy Network, a 50 state network of think tanks supported by Charles and David Koch)

Charlie Baker as Secretary of Education for the State of Massachusetts in 2015, Peyser served as a managing director at the NewSchools Venture Fund. His specific focus was the development of the City Funds.

The policies and practices of the Boston Fund include a set of field building dynamics that are representative of their activity and come to constitute what Reckow calls “Jurisdictional Challenges” to the organization of public schools. The “ecosystem” elements include:

- Increase in the state wide charter cap
- Creation of 7 new Charter Management Organization with an increase of 5,000 seats in 2010 and an estimated 11,000 additional seats in 2020
- Institutionalized high-stakes testing metrics in the MCAS
- Development of a permanent teacher pipeline for charter schools – Match Residency
- Develops research with Mass Insight on Turnaround
- Seeded the creation of Families for Excellent Schools

NSVF thereby “floods the zone” through its City Funds, (Recall the Democrats for Education Reform’s influential 2008 text. “Flooding the Zone: How an intense, focused ‘school choice’ campaign in Harlem increased support for reform.”)

City Funds represent and extend a political, economic and special form of “jurisdictional challenge” to the public sphere and its schools. Here the strategic plan of the NSVF is to focus efforts on one geographical area and overpower it with resources, creating showcase models of success. In Boston the Fund supported the Edward Brooke and Roxbury Prep Charter Schools with \$1,414,150 and \$1,975,00 respectively. It is important to remember that these monies are discretionary and are over and above the per pupil allocation by the state of Massachusetts.

Overall, the NewSchools Venture Fund supported seven charter schools, two teacher training program –Match Teacher Residency and The New Teacher Project (a prior recipient of

NSVF support; as well as, \$500,000 for advocacy organizing to Families for Excellent School. Finally, a \$180,000 research grant to MIT for its report “Charter Schools and the Road to College Readiness.” The chart below shows the funds allocated for these endeavors.

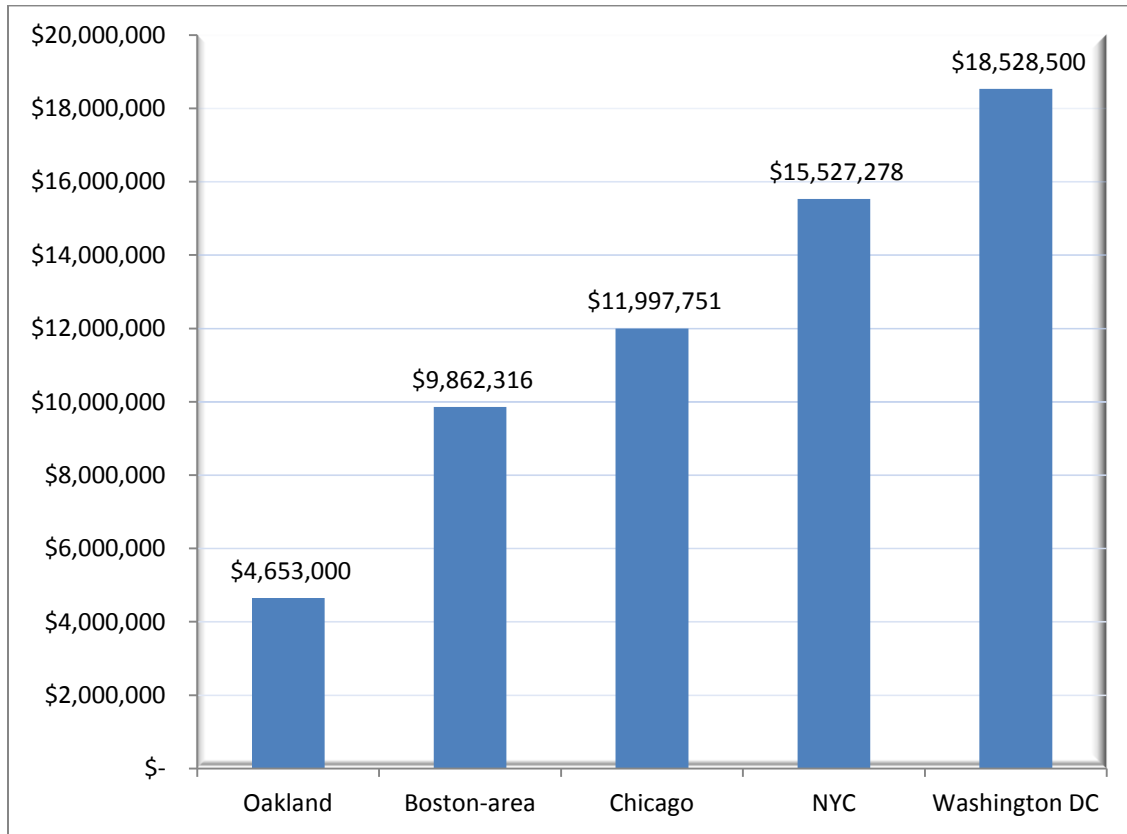


Figure 5.11 NewSchools Venture Fund Grants to Local Projects by City, 2001-2013

Source: NSVF IRS 990s, 2001-2014.

In Washington D.C. (the largest recipient of City funds, see City Funds Chart) the NSVF developed its own intermediary for the city known as City Bridge. It operates as an independent entity, raising funds, and offering its own fellowships. As an extended area of focus and given its proximity to federal government actors, the NSVF has in effect created a “mini-me” model of itself in Washington, D. C. (See appendix ???) True to the venture

philanthropy model, NSVF Board member Maura Marino is the Managing Director of the DC School Fund. Below is a list of investors and “thought-partners.”

CityBridge Foundation is fortunate to work closely with many thought leaders in the education reform space. A few of our partners include:

- 2Revolutions (*)
- Bellwether Education (*)
- CEE-Trust
- Chicago Public Education Fund (*)
- Clayton Christensen Institute for Disruptive Innovation
- DC Public Education Fund (*)
- Education Elements
- Flamboyant Foundation
- Thomas B. Fordham Institute
- The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Eugene & Agnes E. Meyer Foundation
- NewSchools Venture Fund
- Next Generation Learning Challenges (*)
- Philanthropy Roundtable
- Silicon Schools Fund
- Stand for Children (*)
- Tom Vander Ark
- Walton Family Foundation

Source: <http://www.citybridgefoundation.org/about-us/our-partners/>

Note that many of the organizations listed as partner (*) are prior recipients of support by NSVF.

Out of the 15 currently listed Educational Organizational Partners, 13 are venture seeded and supported by NSVF. They have built the field that their ecosystem grows in.

C. Teaching –the NSVF supports (\$ 1 million each) to the Relay and Sposato Graduate School - connected to the Match Teacher Residency in Boston. The NewSchools Venture Fund has given over 11 grants to alternative teacher education programs, including The New Teacher Project with over \$6 million; Urban Teacher Center netted \$2.5 million. In addition, they have

been leading a lobbying effort to pass the Great Act, to allow alternative teacher certification programs to be allowed to operate under less rigorous requirements than traditional schools of education.

Below we see the letter written by NSVF to support the Great Act. I provide the opening and list of signatory's most project developed and supported by the NSVF. I reproduce the list in full as it serves as a core list of their educational projects.



**Support for Growing Excellent Achievement
Training Academies for Teachers and
Principals Act,**

June 21, 2011

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Health, Education, Labor & Pensions
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Michael B. Enzi
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on
Labor & Pensions
379A Senate Russell Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Enzi:

We are writing to express our strong support for the Growing Excellent Achievement Training Academies for Teacher and Principals Act recently introduced by Senator Bennet, Senator Alexander, Senator Mikulski, Senator Landrieu, and Senator Kirk. We believe this innovative approach to training the next generation of teachers and principals is absolutely vital to meet the needs of today's accountability-driven schools and classrooms, where the ultimate measure of success is tied to student achievement.

Whether as part of reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act or as an independent legislation, we offer our unqualified support for the GREAT Teachers and Principals Act. We need to train the next generation of great teachers and leaders, and this bill will do that.²⁴

²⁴ The Every Student Will Succeed Act taking effect in 2017 in Title II – Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers, Principals, or other School Leaders (Sec. 2001 et seq.). There is authorization for \$2.295 billion

Sincerely,

50CAN: The 50-State Campaign for Achievement Now
Academy for Urban School Leadership
Achievement First
Aspire Public Schools
Black Alliance for Educational Options
Boston Plan for Excellence
Boston Teacher Residency
Jean-Claude Brizard, Chief Executive Officer, Chicago
Public Schools
Business Roundtable
Brook Byers, Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers
Capital Teaching Residency
Center for American Progress Action Fund
Charter School Growth Fund
Civic Builders
ConnCAN: Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now
DC Prep Public Charter School
Democrats for Education Reform
DonorsChoose.org
Charlene Drew Jarvis, Senior Advisor, Jarvis Co.
E.L. Haynes Public Charter School
Education Equality Project
Education Pioneers
The Education Trust
EnCorps
FirstLine Schools
Lance Fors, Chairman, New Teacher Center
Peter C. Gorman, former Superintendent, Charlotte-
Mecklenburg Schools
Green Dot Public Schools
Kenji Hakuta, Lee J. Jacks Professor of Education at Stanford University
Jane Hannaway, Director, Education Policy Center,
The Urban Institute
IDEA Public Schools
Jason Kamras, Chief, Office of Human Capital, District of Columbia Public Schools
Joel Klein, former Chancellor, New York City public schools; senior advisor,
News Corporation
Knowledge Is Power Program
Mastery Public Schools
MATCH Charter Public High School
Minn. CAN: The Minnesota Campaign for Achievement Now
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools

for grants to the States to among other provisions, for ” Establishing or expanding alternative routes to State certifications . Given the the list above of interested parties the fight will now go to the states for implementation.

National Center for Urban Education at the University of the District of Columbia
New Leaders for New Schools
New Schools for New Orleans
New Teacher Center
The New Teacher Project
NewSchools Venture Fund
Tom Payzant, Professor of Practice Harvard Graduate School of Education and former Superintendent of Boston Public Schools
Relay School of Education (formerly Teacher U)
RI-CAN: The Rhode Island Campaign for Achievement Now Rocketship Education
Kim Smith, Bellwether Education
Stand for Children
Students for Education Reform
Success Charter Network
Teach for America
Uncommon Schools
The Urban Education Institute at the University of Chicago
Urban Teacher Center
Residency United, USC Rossier School of Education
YES Prep

Figure 5.12 NewSchool Venture Fund and Affiliates Support Letter for GREAT Act

At the core of their insightful analysis, Zeichner and Pena-Sandoval remark on the “magnetic attraction” of how educational entrepreneurs are referenced. The educational entrepreneurs are referred to in the most glowing terms in the literature; For example, they are often refers to as “pioneers,” “visionary thinkers,” “the engines of progress, ” “imaginative, creative and talented, ” and philanthropists that aim to develop and run start-up teacher education programs are referred to in these terms. If these assertions are taken at face value and are allowed to shape policy (as in The Great Act) we will see a further erosion of professional teaching standard in service to deregulating and creating a market economy in U.S. teacher education” . Zeichner and Pena-Sandoval (2015) conclude on a note that requires careful consideration:

The future of the public system of teacher education in the U.S. is in doubt as the movement to deregulate and privatize the preparation of teachers gains resources, policy

support, and momentum. . . . There is no evidence in our view that the entrepreneurial teacher education programs that have been touted as the future of teacher education are the bold, innovative and pioneering entities that they are claimed to be. Merely requiring teachers to demonstrate their ability to raise standardized test scores to complete a program is not the kind of measure of teaching performance that we need to use to assess the readiness of teachers to be successful in the classroom (40).

This is a prime example of the second social mechanism of institutional entrepreneurs referred to above: Developing and enforcing evaluative frameworks to assess these forms.

D. Technology – this is a major area of investment of resources and energy for NSVF, especially given its tech roots in Silicon Valley. As the chart of for-profit investments demonstrates, this has been a major area of focus. In terms of field building the NSVF has been masterful. Given the symbolic capital and nodal position of John Doerr, a major force in the NSCF from the venture capital firm KPCB, they are on their home turf. They have set out to shape, influence and direct the field of educational technology. A couple of major moves should be noted. First it supported the education technology web site EdSurge, ”the place to go for tech info.” As the market grew and confidence was instilled by the NSVF activities – its investment became the gold standard of who is worth investing in.

Its “Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Education” Blog dated December 22, 2014 paints the picture: “Bolstered by a strong Q1 and Q3, venture investment in K12 education technology was up 32% in 2014 totaling \$642 million ([data provided by EdSurge](#)). . . . The NewSchools Seed Fund led and/or participated in twenty early-stage K12 edtech deals this year and reviewed over three hundred others.”

In a recent development, EdSurge was spun off as a for-profit ed tech news source; and, Jennifer Carolan, leader of the NSVF Seed Fund for EdTech startups, is now Co-founder and partner of Reach Capital. *Venturewire*, Dow Jones, announced on October 22, 2015 that “Reach Capital, a new venture capital fund has closed on \$53 million to back education technology startups according to General Partners Jennifer Carolan and Shauntel Paoulson.” (Laura Kolodny).

All of this means that educational technology is big business and the NSVF has positioned itself to take full advantage. The implications of this rush to create a technology based education (often referred to as personalized learning) while having merits (much untested by third party sources) is cast with a dominating burst of entrepreneurial enthusiasm that should give us pause. The core venture philanthropy value –doing good and making money –present at the inception of the NSVF is operating with full force and is becoming more out in the open. .

Further Blurring the Lines Between Nonprofit and For-profit

Here we have a context ripe for the blurring of the lines between nonprofit and for-profits. “Venture philanthropy emerged and spread because there were opinion leaders who worked deliberately and diligently to construct the culture and promote the field . . .to aggressively ‘build a culture’ . . .a cohesive and legitimate repertoire of terms, principles and practices” (Moody, 2008 341-2). John Doerr and the NSVF Board are clearly an “opinion leader” . According to Forbes, Doerr is the #30 on the Midas list in 2015 and the 48th richest person in tech.

In the NSVF’s refashioning of education reform, the impediment blocking public funds for for-profit education ventures is a “regulation” that needs to be changed. Yet, this move and

the privatization that has preceded it threaten the role of education as a foundational practice of our democracy. The blurring of the lines between nonprofit and for-profit also reflects a blurring of political lines with the ascendancy of the Democratic Leadership Council orientation. Marketized school reform policies -- anti-union, pro-charter and CMOs, accountability metrics for school closure, “turnarounds” and teacher evaluations tied to test scores, cyber learning – are all supported by Democrats for Education Reform (DFER). Unsurprisingly, Joe Williams, founder and CEO of DFER, was a recipient of the Aspen/NewSchools Educational Entrepreneurial Fellowship.

A concrete example of this blurring of the lines – what is for business and what for schools -- and its implications for the future of education comes when we examine John Doerr’s connection to Mark Zuckerberg. In the February 28, 2011 edition of the *Philanthropy News Digest*, which was reporting on the need for “Greater transparency around donations to Newark Public schools,” we learned Doerr joined Zuckerberg’s pledge to raise money for Newark school (Doerr contributed \$10 million). Then in the May 7, 2015 issue of *Philanthropy News Digest*, we read that Alt-School, a “micro-school” that delivers custom made lessons and is a “platform that functions as a central operating system for everything from admission, to student assessment, to classroom supply procurements” (1) has just raised \$100 million for its reform efforts. This for-profit school recently hired “top Execs from Google, Uber, Rocket Fuel and Zynga to help reinvent education from the ground up” (<http://altschool.com/anniversary>).

A March 7, 2016 *New Yorker* article “Learning Different: Silicon Valley Disrupts Education, heralds the use of “personalized learning” on the Rocketship model. Their claim is to “reinvent K-12 education. “This rapid growth has been funded by \$110 million in venture capital and \$20 million in venture debt, among the largest investment every made in education

technology. AltSchools capital comes from some of Silicon Valley's top investors, including the Founders Fund, Andreessen Horowitz and John Doerr.²⁵ Last year the Silicon Valley Community Foundation invested \$15 million in AltSchools through a fund [a Limited Liability Company] financed by Mark Zuckerberg” (39).

Clearly there is money and powerful networks pursuing the idea of “reinventing education from the ground up.” As noted, John Doerr and Tom Vander Ark of LearnCapital (formerly of the Gates Foundation) are both founding contributors. Their claim of collecting “feedback” from its “community of teachers, students and parents” on the quality of their custom-made lessons is more akin to a consumer focus group than democratic input on purposes of education. The technocratic view of schooling for job preparation ties in with what Mitchell said to me in my interview, “In the future perhaps we won’t need for people to go to college, we can come up with a system of badges that act as certification of a skill” (Interview, 9/9/21014).

Rocketship Education

“I am a Rocketship Rocketeer at home, at school and in my community” - chant of Rocketship charter school students after the Pledge of Allegiance.

Rocketship is a nonprofit charter management organization that is developing its own curriculum technology platform. It is one of the lead educational “innovators” that the NSVF has been backing, receiving over \$2.5 million between 2010-2013, according to tax records. In addition, Rocketship received over \$3 million from “Silicon Valley entrepreneurs and venture capitalists” to support its technology platform (Readwrite.com, 5/11/2011) This is a key example of the way NSVF seeks to totally transform schooling, blurring the boundaries between

²⁵ No mention is made of the role of the NewSchools Venture Fund even though Doerr and latter Jennifer Carolan of Reach Capital are referenced.

market, money making and a public interest like the education of children. Investors in Rocketship include: Reed Hastings, Netflix CEO (and early NSVF collaborator); Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook; Jonathan Chadwick, Survey Monkey; and Dave Goldberg, Board NewSchools Venture Fund.

Below is the diagram of Rocketship’s education framework.

Rocketship Hybrid School Model and Individualized Instruction



Figure 5.13 Rocketship Individualized Learning and School Reform Model

Source Rocketship website

[http://tntp.org/assets/tools/RSED Rocketship Backgrounder Q22011 v2 TTSLT 1211.pdf](http://tntp.org/assets/tools/RSED_Rocketship_Backgrounder_Q22011_v2_TTSLT_1211.pdf).

This model has garnered a lot of attention and support in the venture philanthropy community. Two points to consider from a critical policy analysis frame: why this school now and is this best for our students – and who decides?

Gordon Lafer, in the Economic Policy Institute Briefing paper of April, 24, 2014 comments: “The profit margins of “blended learning” schools—which split students’ days between in-person and online instruction—aren’t as high as those of entirely virtual schools, but they may be the next best thing. For this reason, investment banks, hedge funds, and venture capital firms have increasingly looked to “blended learning” as a preferred model for urban school districts” (7). This hydraulic model of reform –underfund, low performance, high stakes testing, accountability metrics to legitimize closure and turning schools over to charters or privately run-start-ups.

This model is being promoted by Mass Insight, a research institute and NSVF Collaborator . The NSVF funded a study promoting the model, “Conducting School Turn-arounds: Market Research and Analysis” (March 2007). A interesting move is there new designation of SMOs –School Management Organizations which would blur the lines between Charter Management Organizations (nonprofit) and EMOs (like Edison) that are for-profit.

On November 16, 2015 CREDO at Stanford issued results of a new study on cyber charters.

“More than two-thirds of online charters were found to have weaker overall academic growth than similar brick-and-mortar schools. As a group, the schools were characterized by high student-to-teacher ratios, low student engagement, and high student mobility. They also offered students limited opportunities for live contact with teachers. . . . The findings "leave little doubt attending an online charter school leads to lessened academic growth for the average student," wrote the researchers from CREDO (8).

With these kinds of results it is legitimate to wonder why there is such enthusiasm for this model – how “evidenced-based are the new reformers willing to be?

New Schools Venture Fund –Innovative Schools FUNDS 2015

This context helps us to locate the newest strategy of the NSVF: it has three components: 1/ School Models; 2/ Tools and Services; 3/ Thought Leadership.

Stacey Childress, the new CEO and architect of the Catapult writes on their web site, “We’re thrilled to announce **NewSchools Catapult**, the first endeavor of our new national strategy. Its goal over the next several years is to propel successive waves of education entrepreneurs to launch new schools – the kinds of *incredible, life-altering schools* that can truly prepare our students to pursue their most ambitious dreams.”

The applications for a school, *Launch*, are being reviewed at this time so it is crucial to see what comes of this new strategy. Nevertheless, given the investments in technology driven blended learning models and educational technology platforms it will be interesting to see what emerges.

To step outside the magnetic field built by venture philanthropists, we can observe, as I have been arguing, the displacement of the public by a market-inspired discourse like “ecosystem”; “autonomy”; “consumer rights”; “human capital”. These concepts, as Bansal argues “are understood as constituting a repertoire of discourses, and concepts through which neoliberal mentalities of government are fabricated and circulated in texts, government policy and practice, labor-market relations, education and training and managerialism’ ((2007, 287).

In the transcript below of a NSVF entrepreneur, we will see how the language of success transcends history and the lived social relations of race and inequality resides in obtaining the “the right tools.”

I have delved into the policy culture and logic of the NSVF, watched the video messages of various educational entrepreneurs, I have felt the pull of their orbit, the “magnetic attraction” of focusing on results –“scaling up what works.” Take for example, this statement below from Alexandra Bernodotte, the 2011 recipient of the “Entrepreneur of the Year” award at the annual NewSchools Venture Fund Summit.. Ms. Bernodotte is the founder and CEO of Beyond 12, a nonprofit college support organization. She received grants from the NSVF totaling \$1,355,000.

I think that the biggest thing that education entrepreneurs have provided to the field is this concept, this confirmation that all students can succeed; all students given the right circumstances, given the right tools –low income students, ethnic minority, traditionally underserved –all students can achieve at high levels, we just have to care about it and just have to provide them with the right tools. I am an educational entrepreneur because a child’s zip code should not determine his destiny.

At the end of her video message, there is a flash across the screen is the message --

“New School Entrepreneurs . . . *“target inequality”* . . . *“disrupt the status quo”* .

These constructions raise the question: how from the point of view of “policy culture” do we capture the dynamic and dialectical nature of these mechanisms beyond their mere functionality? To engage with policy as a socio-historical construction the orientation of critical policy analysis (sometimes called policy sociology) is indispensable. A critical policy analysis perspective “resists the tendency to abstract problems from their relational settings by

insisting that the problem can only be understood in the complexity of those relations” (Grace, in Ball, 264).

I will focus on two aspects pertinent to the normalizing effects and dynamism of a venture capital turned venture philanthropy educational landscape.

First, Ball (2007) looking a hidden privatization in a multi-nation comparison observes:

Privatization is a policy tool, not just giving up by the state of the capacity to manage social problems and respond to social needs, but part of an ensemble for innovations’, organizational changes, new relationships and social partnerships, all of which play their part in the re-working of the state itself. In this context, the re-working of education lends legitimacy to the concept of education as an object of profit, provided in a form which is contractible and saleable (12).

This raises a basic tension that resides at the heart of educational policy research between a commitment to the pursuit of efficiency [read market freedoms] and a commitment to the pursuit of social justice.

The lure of technology as a tool and the tool for increasing learning is becoming more pronounced. The deployment of the “tools” as the needed element to educational achievement is not accidently for it frames the work of entrepreneurs and legitimizes the thrust of venture philanthropy. Is it just for the lack of “tools” that the students in our urban school do not succeed? While some of these technologies might be of assistance to the teaching and learning process, the conclusion of this logic of blended learning is a “School of One “ model with students lessons planned by computer programs. This direction is championed by the American Legislative Exchange Council’s Agenda on Education model bill “The Virtual Public School

Act.”²⁶ that advocates for the same funding for cyber schools as for regular brick and mortar schools.

As venture philanthropy and its ethos become the normalizing process of grantmaking and reform this brings us back to the question what is educational policy? We need to understand policy as more than a functionally given entity, driven by accountability metrics and outcomes but rather as Ozga (2000) challenges us “a view of policy as something that encompasses all parts of the system, that it is not ‘fixed’ in a specific time, i.e. made and delivered, and that it is contested by all those with an interest in education” (38). The central issue of “who has the power to decide how our children will be educated?” continues to be at the heart of the animating issues of democracy and education.

²⁶ See the Center for Media and Democracy project ALEC Exposed: http://www.alecexposed.org/wiki/ALEC_Exposed

Chapter Six: Conclusion and Suggestions for Future Research

There is a danger that the concentrated interests of business men and their influential activity in public matters will segregate training for industry to the damage of both democracy and education. Educators must insist upon primacy of educational values, not in their own behalf, but because these represent the more fundamental interests of society, especially of a society organized on a democratic basis.

John and Evelyn Dewey, *Schools of To-Morrow*, (1915, 178)

As I began to investigate the history, funding cycles and organizational operations of the NewSchools Venture Fund, I realized that its reach, influence and impact were not well known by most policy makers, education advocates, parents and the general public. This desire and need to make visible the power and reach of venture philanthropy and how its practices and values (applying market principles to education policy) are remaking the policy spaces of education as well as the framework of governance led me to undertake a case study of the NewSchools Venture Fund. The charts and maps that I have presented attempt to illustrate the many ways and different aspects of the NSVF field building, policy engagement and political positioning.

As I have pursued this research, I have discovered that there are significant tributaries of resources and pools of influence flowing into and out of intermediaries like the NewSchools Venture Fund that are reconfiguring the shape that policy spaces take. Shore and Wright emphasize "policies as windows onto the political processes in which actors, agents, concepts and technologies interact in different sites, creating or consolidating new rationalities of governance and regimes of knowledge and power" (2011, 2). Given this problematic it was clear from the outset that a linear understanding of policy as "problem-solving" was not adequate to capture the policy levels and complex operations of an organization like the NewSchools Venture Fund.

Instead I have found the notion of a policy network (in the ethnographic sense) more closely in tuned with the pronouncements and practices of the NewSchools Venture Fund. “By focusing on a set of specific network relations, that is a ‘policy community’ which ‘catalyses’ business in the delivery of education services, [the network] reconfigures and disseminates education policy discourses” (Ball, 2008, 749).

What we have seen unfold from our data and analysis is:

1. The NSVF has drawn together foundation and venture capital funding that rewrites and re-envisions urban school reform along a business model of competition, accountability metrics and for-profit technology penetration into the practices and purposes of schooling.
2. It has initiated and generated a complex network of field-building activities that has challenged the jurisdictional legitimacy of public schools and public school structures like school boards.
3. It has bypassed and undercut traditional avenues of teacher education and leadership development by funding and developing alternative mechanisms for certification like the Relay Graduate School.
4. The NSVF has used targeted city funds to develop its own “ecosystem” of education in those localities including showcase charter schools, Charter Management Organizations and funding sources like the Boston Replication Fund.
5. The NSVF has sponsored and cosponsored research, public media events and fellowships to legitimize and enable a culture of educational and social relations that expands the reach of its marketized school reform model.

One aspect that I have developed and is still unfolding is the agenda to “reinvent education from the ground up.” This is an area where the emerging narrative of personalized learning needs to be critically evaluated in the light of this powerful thrust of this marketized policy culture priorities. Further research requires a careful review of the potential and limitations of

technology infused learning and the models that are being proposed. The fact the NSVF and other venture philanthropists and venture capitalists have captured the market and political influence should not be the final word on the purpose of public education. Its “ecosystem” is a socially constructed one that needs to be de-naturalized.

The NewSchools Venture Fund, its grantees and supporters frequently use the term ecosystem to refer to their field building activities in the policy arena of urban school reform. What does transposition of the term ecosystem mean in this arena? At first glance it seems harmless enough. As the vignette that follows from the NSVF City Fund report on the city of Boston demonstrates there is something more to the use of the term ‘ecosystem’. This term has an interesting intellectual linkage tied to the founding conceptual framework and co-founders of the NewSchools Venture Fund.

As noted by Kim Smith co-founder of the NSVF, venture capital and venture philanthropy employ the same strategies, valorize the same market logics and metrics. This posed specific problems for venture philanthropists.

How to address and finesse the penetration of private interests into the public realm? In other words, how to convince the public that private venture capital interests, are really the best way to "reform" "improve" public education? In short, to overcome the public skepticism that making profit off of schools and “students as customers” is not only acceptable policy and practice but is in fact the preferred way to "reform" an educational system in crisis in America's cities.

How to naturalize the interests of philanthrocapitalism as the most effective and efficient policy prescription for the country? Two things follow from this approach of re-contextualizing

public education: First, we have to shift the purpose of education and push it towards the end of the historical spectrum that favors schooling for technical skills for the job market. Here the rise of a politics of accountability become central to the attack of the market -- we have to shift the role of education into a sphere of the "audit culture" (Shore, 2000). Measurement of investment becomes the watch word. Test scores become the ultimate measure of educational progress and worth. As the act of measuring become the prime measure of education itself; furthermore, we couple test scores to teacher evaluations, principal evaluations, school's life and death --closure, co-location and privatization (charters, virtual charters and vouchers).

Talal Asad notes the implications: "The point is that the practice of assembling and classifying figures periodically on births, deaths, diseases, literacy, crimes occupations, natural resources and so on was from a governmental standpoint not merely a mode of understanding and representing populations but an instrument for regulating and transforming them. (1994, 76). This is in line with Jean Anyon's analysis in "What Counts as Education Policy?" this transformation is not only how we "count" school success but how what counts (in) forms schools. In short, as market reformers impose performance metrics on schools they come to be seen as "business units" and venture philanthropy positions them as market "ripe" for disruption. In their interventions, (a la Zuckerberg and NSVF) to remake the form of school in ways that allow for (reinforce) market measures of success -- standardized curriculum, Common Core and the technologizing of learning through virtual charter "Innovative" models like Rocketship that thus tutors, large class sizes and on-line instruction.

It is within this context that the surfacing of "ecosystem" as a descriptor must be appreciated. In our time of a global crisis around climate change brought on by (and actively suppressed) by the fossil fuel industry, the attention of the world is drawn to the action needed

to create an society and ecosystem based on sustainability. Hence, the notion of ecosystem connotes a system seeking balance and health, where parts work in complementary harmony to create maximum health and stability. It evokes an image and ideal of natural forces in harmony, a time prior to the disturbance of societal forces.

This imagery reinforces the neoliberal Hyackian notion that markets are more reasonable than the laws and practices of government which are influenced by the political interests of different social forces and participants. Invoking the ecosystem metaphor which we saw in the founding of the Chicago School of Sociology was a way to deny or circumvent how political economy and dominant social relations shape how we think about and see social and educational policy. If we are in crisis and seek reform progress and stability, the market becomes the preferred mechanism seemingly devoid of the conflicts of active public interests – this is the neoliberal imaginary. The conduct of individuals are refashioned to confirm the "choices" presented to them, not to direct and influence the direction of the social, political or educational projects. “The neoliberal imagination collapses the epistemological distinction between economy and society. No longer satisfied with conceiving the rationality of the market as a distinct and limited form of social action, it instead posits the rationality of the market as the organizational principle for the state and society as a whole.” (Shamir, 2008, 6).

This line of argument is not just about a critique of the dominant social imaginary, it is also the occasion and here case study is illuminating because it provides us with a narrative. And this story in all its complexity and criticality helps us to be aware: “I can only answer the question ‘What am I to do? If I can answer the prior question ‘Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?’” (MacIntyre, 1984, 216).

A second problem with ecosystem, the third rail of American politics: race. How to convince the US public that a few extremely wealthy white venture capitalist turned philanthropists really have the best interests of children of color in mind? Here the tale is complex and require critical acts of historical memory. In particular is the origin in the South after the civil rights movement of “choice” as a way to use the market to avoid racial integration and at the same time embed market values and ideology – freedom is the ability to choose.. The promotion by the NSVF of its ‘Diverse Leaders’ initiative may have positive effect if this is an avenue for dialogue not career advancement. Creating diverse leaders within the NSVF ecosystem (to help maintain its equilibrium) is not the same as a real democratic social movement aimed at ending all forms of social, economic, cultural and educational racism.

So the story behind the story has been to explore and situate, analyze and critique the extensive field building undertaken by the NSVF. To appreciate how its reach in policy terms is well beyond its financial resources – which highlights the power of other forms of capital, in Bourdieu’s broad sense of the term. How to understand the broader implication of the field building engaged in by the NSVF?

Taken individually these findings as discrete pieces of social and educational policy, pose challenges to the system of public education. Taken together they map points of a critical cartography allowing us to see the larger neoliberal thrust in public life. “Privatization tendencies are at the center of the shift from education being seen as a *public good* that serves the whole community, to education being seen as a *private good* that serves the interests of the educated individual . . . this renders education into the form of a ‘commodity’ . . . valued solely for its extrinsic worth in terms of qualifications and certificates” (Ball, 2007, 15-16). This

resonates with my interview with NSVF CEO, Assistant Secretary of Education Ted Mitchell, “In the future perhaps we won’t need for people to go to college, we can come up with a system of badges that act as certification of a skill” (.9/21014).

A major impediment to understanding the difficulty in public education is that too often its problems are viewed in a de-historical way as if technocratic solutions (the What Works manta) are all that is needed. The call that every child deserves a high quality teacher, all children need access to technology, a zip code is not destiny, children need to learn computer coding etc. etc. reflect this approach. All of these provisions can be of assistance in educating our young people, yet if we lose the big picture we miss not only what education is for but what social forces are setting the agenda.

As I have been puzzling with the NSVF narrative, I have used the lens of interpretive policy analysis Yanow (2000) to “consider a wide range of language, including not only the written language of policy itself but also the spoken and written languages of debates . . . [she suggests] looking at organizational metaphors . . .Uncovering the metaphoric roots of policy or agency language and acts is one way of discovering the architecture of policy argument” (41, 43).

In looking at the language we can discern some interesting patterns and metaphors at work:

1/ *“Influencing public policy can be a very high leverage way to create change”*;

2/ *“NSVF is a national force uniquely positioned to seek out most promising innovations”*;

3/ *“entrepreneurs create disruptive technology”*; 4/ *“NSVF not just another foundation”*;

5/ *“move faster to the next new thing”*; 6/ *“They measure such returns not necessarily by profit generated but by growth in student achievement, expansion of particular educational sectors”*

7/ *“Technology shrinks the class divide”*

To take these statements and organizational meanings/metaphors out of their sentences and read them as a narrated text of meaning, to see their “internal consistency and logical flow” (Yanow, 57), allows the creation of a story. The theme I will use to bind this story is: The NewSchools Venture Fund, an “ecosystem” of technology- based, profit taking education reform.

How do I arrive at this narrative thematic? By piecing together the significant events and accomplishments of their field building as an institutional entrepreneur, a possible story or flow from the texts (D. Smith, 1984) of the NSVF emerges.

Text 1/ Using their political clout, they lobby the California legislature to raise the cap on charter schools, “over a 10-year period we will have 1000 new charter schools in the state of California, which will each receive on average \$3 million in state funding per year. So that’s a \$3 billion per annum return on a \$4 million initiative campaign –an outstanding return, worth the time, worth the money.”

Text 2/ As an institutional entrepreneur, NSVF funds and popularizes Charter Management Organizations, many with NSVF board member on the boards of these organization e.g. McGriff on the board of City Bridge in Washington D.C.

Text 3/ Through their seed fund and connections via John Doerr “the titan of Silicon Valley” edtech companies are formed; to move faster with the next new thing.

Text 4/ NSVF is not just another foundation. As they seed the fields they are building in technology and with CMOs, they spin off their Seed Fund which has invested \$12 million in 42 startups; they now have a for-profit fund LLC called “Reach NewSchools Capital.

Text 5/ Through Educational Entrepreneurial Fellows that have populated the fields they have build with educators, politicians, and decision makers.

Text 6/ Returns! In expanding the technology and for-profit sectors and of course ROI –return on investment. One of their Sources EdSurge, is the place to go for edtech information.

Text 7/ They are asserting that technology will shrink the class divide,

Given these discursive segments of organizational narrative, we can envision the organizations they have funded, use public monies to purchase technology from companies that they have seeded, and then politicians that they have supported in their election bids, pass legislation and political action committee. Fairclough (2002) makes the case for the centrality of discourse in understanding language and power in field building, “discourses are dialectically materialized in the ‘hardware’ and ‘software’ of organizations, enacted as ways of acting and interacting inculcated (through a variety of processes) as ways of being and identities” (164).

This played out in the Latino community of Mt. Diablo where the California Board of Education allowed the opening of Rocketship after the Superintendent testified that petition were collected under false pretense. As with the new ESSA act, Rocketship received \$6.26 million to open six new “Tech Heavy, Teacher Light”²⁷ schools by September 2016. (Rosenfeld, Altnet,

²⁷ Erickson (2009) makes an interesting historical comparison with a previous mode of pedagogy: “Replacing teachers in schools with instructional technology overseen by low-paid classroom assistance who do no teaching but simply keep the kids doing exercises on the computers –a reversion tot the 19thcentury “Lancaster system “ of instruction by means of classroom monitors supervising large number of students’ (78).

March 12, 2016). Commenting on this new arrangement, Reckhow states that LLC's are "setting up a model where they can push multiple sides of an issue" (Ed Week, March 9, 2016, 11).

While this line of argument (about conflicts of interest) is not new it is still important and helps us appreciate "what counts" and what is not "counted" as educational policy. What my analysis contributes to this scenario is to take this detailed "slice" of educational policy through the angles of intervention fashioned by the NewSchools Venture Fund and to contextualize it in terms of the shifting dynamic that it is both a part of and is helping to bring about.

Eric Wolf in his Distinguished Lecture at the American Anthropological Association entitled "Facing Power -Old Insights, New Questions" offer a useful vantage point to understand both the workings, meaning and wider implication of the NSVF. In describing different modes of power he states, "power not only operates within settings or domains (tactical or organizational) but [this kind of] power also organizes and orchestrates the setting themselves, and that specifies the distribution and direction of energy flows. . . Structural power shapes the social field of action so as to render some kinds of behavior possible, while making other less possible or impossible" (1989, 586-7). We have seen this kind of power in operation with the NSVF in their building a language and practice of reform that has to include specific features. For example, the required recommendation that funding of New Leaders for New Schools was contingent on reorganizing its Board because it had too many educators!

Wolf urges us to move from seeing organizations as a product or outcome (latent positivism) to understanding organization as process encouraging us to track and map the "flow of action, to ask what is going on, why it is going on, who engages in it, with whom, when and how often --and indeed against whom? . . .Asking why something is going on and for whom

requires a conceptual guess about the forces and effects of the structural power that drives organization and which organization at all level must respond" (591).

My stakeholder analysis and network ethnographic²⁸ approach have afforded me the theoretical and empirical lens necessary to make some "conceptual guesses."

Neoliberalism as a political project requires a generated austerity and a political climate that allow and enables a "reengineering of the state." With reduced taxes there is a resultant shortfall in state revenues, which foster cycles of dispossession which leads as Wacquant has argued, to "the growth and glorification of the penal wing of the state [as] integral components of neoliberalism' (2012, 71, 74).

The shift referred to as "governing through governance" (in Ball, 2008, 748) is accomplished through the 'informal authority of diverse and flexible networks . . .this is the move towards a 'polycentric state' and a shift in the center of gravity around which policy moves" (747).

In order to face this shifting center of power, we must first understand the contours, shapes and persuasions it manifests. This project of face-painting is complex and challenging -- for it is hard to see the faces of power in the "shadow." Wedel's *Shadow Elite* with its analysis of how these elites undermine democracy provide important clue as to where to look. In the section of *Shadow Elite* "naming the animal," she reveals how the shadows provide cover. "Flexians are additionally hard to challenge because, while some of their activities are open and appear eminently respectable, other are murky or hidden, just below the surface" (2009, 12).

²⁸ See Ball on components of Network Ethnography

They have assumed the power and taken the prerogative to change the structure and pedagogy of public education; a change this is moving with the hectic force of entrepreneurial speed to get to the next new thing. The force of their field of power is to alter the “intellectual climate” to change the way innovation is understood and who it benefits, “a governing rationality that disseminates market values and metric to every sphere of life . . . In this conversion, government is not identified with the public, but only as an alternative market actor. Citizens, meanwhile, are rendered as investors or consumers, not as members of a democratic polity who share power and certain common goods, space and experiences” (Brown, 2015, 176).

This caution and disregard was expressed in Boston Consulting Group blog of February 10, 2016, “rapid cycles of testing, failing and iterating work better for software development that for social welfare, on which livelihood (and lives) depend. When there is little margin for error, failure can be catastrophic” (4). (www.bcgperspectives.com/content/articles/innovation).

We are at a crucial point when the possibility for public input into the shape and direction of education is still possible. As Nicholas Michelli reminds us of the “four enduring purposes of public education, none is more important than “Preparing students to be active, involved participants in democracy” (2005, xviii).

As Maxine Green has so eloquently stated, “Without equality, persons cannot understand one another or plan for a common future (Greene, 1982, 7).” We need research that will find ways to invite communities in not as consumers of an educational good but, as citizens with the right to be heard. This may be deliberative and not efficient in market terms but it is at the core of what education in a democracy needs to be

Appendixes

Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Sample Questions

Who to Interview:

NewSchools Venture Fund:

Ted Mitchell, CEO and president of NSVF; Kim Smith, co-founder and senior advisor;

Laurene Powell Jobs, Board member of the New America Foundation and the Council on Foreign Relations; and, Dave Whorton, has worked at Netscape, Hewlett Packard and Bain Capital. He is a founding non-profit board member of CharterCities, a new type of cross-national reform zone.

NSVF investors in the fund organizations.

I will investigate two organizations funded by NSVF in the three areas of charter management organizations; research and advocacy; and, turnaround schools. Each organization has a NewSchools Venture Funder on its board. I will interview the respective NSV funders (six interviews) and a minimum of six additional interviews with organization CEO or reps.

Questions:

1. How did you first become involved with NSVF? What were your prime motivations?
2. Tell me a little about your background and interest in education?
3. What are the successes and challenges of working on education through the NSVF?
4. What expertise do you bring to the Fund and how is it relevant to the work of education?
5. What is the mission of public education?

6. What role does school choice play in education reform?
7. What are the unique aspects –talents, resources, connections, etc.—that you bring to bear on public education in Brooklyn?
8. Describe the culture of your school (organization) you support, what are its main features? What distinguishes it from other schools?
9. What does a graduate of your school look like? What qualities and capacities do you value and hope to nurture?
10. How do you see the role of the public in charter schools?
11. Describe the relationship of your school to the surrounding community? Or your organization to the policy community?
12. What organizations or institutions do you relate to and connect with to support your school reform work? Which ones are most valuable and why?
13. How active are you and other NSV funders in the life of the school or organization? What expertise do you bring?
14. Do you see [local, national] politics playing out in education? If so how?
- 15.** What are the most pressing issues facing urban schools today?

Appendix C –

NewSchools Venture Fund Board and Leadership Council Interlocks

**Kleiner Perkins
Caufield & Byers** **L John Doerr, Brook Byers**

[Intel Corporation](#) [L John Doerr](#)

[Google Inc.](#) [L John Doerr](#)

[Amazon.com, Inc.](#) [L John Doerr](#)

[Sun Microsystems](#) [L John Doerr](#)

[Amyris, Inc.](#) [L John Doerr](#)

[TechNet](#) [L John Doerr](#)

[Amyris, Inc.](#) [L John Doerr](#)

[TechNet](#) [L John Doerr](#)

[Zynga, Inc.](#) [L John Doerr](#)

[Benificus
Foundation](#) [L John Doerr](#)

One **L John Doerr**

[FWD.us](#) [L John Doerr](#)

[Goldman Sachs](#) [Laurene Powell Jobs, Adam CiOTH](#)

<u>Stand for Children</u>	<u>Laurene Powell Jobs, Julie Mikuta</u>
<u>Teach for America</u>	<u>Laurene Powell Jobs, Matt Glickman</u>
New American Foudation	<u>Laurene Powell Jobs</u> , Lenny Mendonca
<u>College Track</u>	<u>Laurene Powell Jobs</u>
<u>Conservation International</u>	<u>Laurene Powell Jobs</u>
<u>Emerson Collective</u>	<u>Laurene Powell Jobs</u>
<u>Center for the Next Generation</u>	<u>Laurene Powell Jobs</u>
<u>Udacity</u>	<u>Laurene Powell Jobs</u>
White House Council for Community Solutions	Laurene Powell Jobs
<u>United States Department of Education</u>	<u>Ted Mitchell, Jonathan Schorr</u>
<u>New Leaders</u>	<u>Ted Mitchell</u>
<u>Green Dot Public Schools</u>	<u>Ted Mitchell</u>

Massachusetts, Dept of Education

James Peyser

Pioneer Institute

James Peyser

Uncommon Schools

James Peyser

Families for Excellent Schools

James Peyser

Bellwether Education Partners

Kim Smith

African Leadership Foundation

Kim Smith

Rocketship Education

Kim Smith, Deborah McGriff

McKinsey & Company

David Coleman, April Chou, Greg Bybee

McGraw Hill

David Coleman

University of Cambridge

David Coleman

Oxford University

David Coleman

Yale University

David Coleman

Public Agenda

David Coleman

The College Board	David Coleman
Grow Network	David Coleman
Branch	David Coleman
Council on Foreign Relations	Lenny Mendonca
Committee for Economic Development	Lenny Mendonca
Bay Area Council	Lenny Mendonca
Fix the Debt	Lenny Mendonca
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools	Deborah McGriff
Policy Innovators Network in Education	Deborah McGriff
Edison Learning	Deborah McGriff
Detroit Public School	Deborah McGriff
Students for Education Reform	April Chou, Jonathan Sackler, Brian T. Olson
KIPP Bay Area	April Chou

Kokino LLC	Brian T. Olson, Jonathan Sackler,
Viking Global Investors	Brian T. Olson
ConnCAN	Brian T. Olson
Civic Builders	Brian T. Olson
The Olson Foundaton	Brian T. Olson
The New Teacher Project	Julie Mikua, Jonathan Sackler
Novo ED	Jonathan Sackler, Greg Bybee
CourseERA	Greg Bybee
Leadership High School	Greg Bybee
Sound view Real Estate Partner	Jonathan Sackler
North Bay Associates	Jonathan Sackler
TRQ Management	Jonathan Sackler

50CAN

Jonathan Sackler

Cheyenne Petroleum Co.

Jonathan Sackler

The New Teacher Project

Julie Mikuta, Matt Glickman

Stand For Children Leadership Center

Julie Mikuta

Relay Graduate School of Education

Julie Mikuta

Education Writers Association

Jonathan Schorr

KIPP Founation

Jonathan Schorr

New Classrooms Innovation Partners

Joe Wolf

Rolling Hills Capital

Adam Cioth

Leadership Public Schools

Adam Cioth

Covey Capital Management

Sidney Hawkins Gargiulo

Education Reform Now!

Sidney Hawkins Gargiulo

Ziff Brothers Investment LLC

Sidney Hawkins Gargiulo

Bronx Success Academy Charter School

Sidney Hawkins Gargiulo

BlueStacks

John Gargiulo

LearnCapital

Michael Staton

WNYC

Cynthia King Vance

Citizens Budget Committee

Cynthia King Vance

Degreed

Michael Staton

Inigral

Michael Staton

LEAP Innovations

Shauntel Polson

Democratic Party (MA)

Christopher Gabrieli

Santa Clara University

Joanna Rees

Endavors Global Inc.

Joanna Rees

Appendix D – Reflective Memos on Data Analysis

August 22, 2015 Memo on Immersion into the NSVF Policy World

Yesterday I started a research memo to capture a qualitative shift in perspective that occurs after an extended foray into the policy world of marketized education reform. I was reading the new policy proposals

It is very powerful and convincing. I feel the pull that is talked about in the critical education literature: that discursive form and practice confers what is legitimate and marginalizes other perspectives. This is how hegemony works.

Marxism and Literature by Williams. This is such a central text to my theoretical grounding that I cannot imagine proceeding without it. His clarity on the articulation of hegemony, and structure of feeling as well as dominant, residual and emergent are foundational concepts to my theoretical approach. Williams captures this notion of hegemony clearly and succinctly; further his articulation assist in uncovering the subtle universalizing of a only one-option reality – the well worn TINA- there is no alternative. He writes:

Hegemony is then not only the articulate upper level of ‘ideology’, nor are its forms of control only those ordinarily seen as ‘manipulation’ or ‘indoctrination’. It is a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living: our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world. It is a lived system of meaning and values – constitutive and constituting – which as they are experience as practices appear as reciprocally confirming. It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in the society, a sense of absolute because experienced reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members of the society; to move, in most areas of their lives. It is, that is to say, in the strongest sense a ‘culture’, but a culture which has also to seen as lived dominance and subordination of particular classes. (p.110).

This is a complicated thread to pull. My immersion here is into the strong world of the marketized values, strong entrepreneurial individuals, looking for results (building on what works) striving to serve the failed and underserved communities. How can this be bad? After all it is their money, so we should be happy even grateful that they are investing it in public education. While I cannot speak to the personal motivations of venture capitalist/philanthropist investor, we can look at how they operate structurally, through how they operate politically (who and what they fund) and their practices the creation of what Reckhow calls “juridical challenges” to the existing public schools.

The move has been to remake the role of government and the practices of education from correcting *for* the excesses of the market to connecting *to and enabling* the market and its relations. In this way as Barkan notes: “One hundred years latter [after the rise of Rockefeller,

Carnegie Foundations] big philanthropy still wants to solve the worlds problems with foundation trustees deciding what is a problem and how to solve it. They may act with good intentions, but they define the “good.” (2013, 47-8).

Here is the conundrum: large corporations and big philanthropy use their influence to pay little or no taxes. Big philanthropy it must be noted due to its tax exempt status, diverts “35% or more from the public treasury, where voters would determine its use.” (48). All of this is not well known or talked about, only the headline of the good deed, the power of its money and investments celebrating the “culture” of big philanthropy and its achievements.

There is much discussion and deployment in the venture philanthropy world of creating the appropriate ecosystem of regulation for reform. The logic of ecosystem (see G. Dees) calls out the key factors of inter-relation to all the ventures of big philanthropy to flourish and take hold. Much of my research in this dissertation has been to show how the NSVF operates to as Quinn argues create new cultural mechanisms: Quinn notes three: recombine existing elements; developing metrics to assess the form; and, creating form and pathways to populate the forms. In other words to highlight Williams, “a whole body of practices and expectations . . . a lived system of meanings and values, constituted and constituting which as they are experience as practices appear as reciprocally confirming. “ The move is from juridical challenge to flipping the logic and practices of the public sphere to a hegemonic practice of market dominance. [add my plus two].

The ecosystem logic is more than mere convenience: it masks (while drawing on the rhetoric of the climate crisis) or rather obfuscates the structural relations involved. While we are looking for the right conditions for the regulator ecosystem to nurture the “good” of big philanthropy, we do not keep the origin of the structural inequality in sight and analysis. In her critique of the Chicago School sociologist at the time of the first gilded age, Janet Abu-lugard notes:

Of course the face of this inequality is the youth of the African American and Latino/a communities. It is there smiling faces with eager raised hands that populate all the websites of venture philanthropists.

Here the analysis of Adolph Reed is insightful. In a recent article, “The James Brown Theory of Black Liberation” he denotes the strategic deployment of black agency. His reference is to Brown’s endorsement of Richard Nixon, and then his song “I don’t need no help from anybody, . . .”

So this demonstrative contradiction (a key marker of a central figure in the discourse of the texts of the NSVF) is the struggle of how to mobilize black agency. For at the same time (Astro Turff demos like in Mass) we have the Black Lives Matter insurgency happening all over the country.

Memo on Grants September 9, 2015

An area of difficulty is the way we understand the project of this "reform movement" Its reach is quite vast and its penetration into all areas of education is nearly complete.

The rationale given by these reformers is "every child deserves a quality education" --we must break the monopoly of public education that is not properly educating our children. We must reach the low0income children of color [cite framing from the websites of grantees]

A deployment of failure without any acknowledgement t that the source of their wealth and position is relationally connected to the disempowerment of working class and communities of color.

The disavowal of any democratic process is an important line of critique. As consumers we are looking for the best product and charters at this moment with the infusion of cash and the power networks of finance behind them are seeding the field and calling the shots.

Too often when parents are consulted it is to mobilize their resentment at the system and advocate for more charters. The exposed underside of this unfolding "charter school dustup" as Carnoy calls it, is that the imagination and resources for any other kind of real democratic reform are exhausted. Indeed real community empowered schools in communities would hold more than just local officials accountable.

Whitty's insight about consumer rights vs. citizen rights points to more than a dichotomy a simple either or, it points towards a shifting balance of power.

The dominant narrative of "failure" of public school reveals a contempt and undermining of the public sphere of public goods. This privatization practice carries not only public dollars into for-profit and non-profit tech startups, but it also erodes the sense that the public is valuable and can provide.

New grantees are driven by the failure narrative to create turnaround models, marshalling advocacy and research to create a consciousness and practice of replacement for public goods.

Memo on Codes Sept 13, 2015

I am struggle with figuring out the codes, how many and should they be more inclusion or more restricted and detailed. I need to look into this – use my handbooks.

Abby's suggesting is a good one, have an inclusive category like professional training and have subcategories underneath it i.e. teacher training and leadership development. Or perhaps, as I am

now remembering, calling it “Alt. Cert.” for alternative certification. This would allow me to include Teach for America; NLNS; and the Relay Graduate School. I can not forget about Ken Zeithner’s work on teacher training and the lobbying effort before Congress on the Grant Act (?)

Now I need to look over the master sheet of grants and at least with no internet to mark the ones that need specific clarification. I also need to add the category of Turnaround.

Yanow -- policy relents groups become an ‘interpretive community’ sharing thoughts, speech practices and their meanings. (10). A central issue for IPA is how a policy issue is being framed . . . the frame with its metaphor origins sets up how policy related artifacts make sense. . . .different frames reflect groups values contending for public recognition and validation. These frames Yanow notes, “shape perceptions and understandings” (12).

This takes us to Provenzo’s comment that education reform “has been a means of conceiving and enacting visions of the collective good” What are some of the elements of this marketized logic of the collective good? First that the interests of the wealthy are good for everyone. The operating tenets of neoliberalism have become the pillars of educational policy across the country: consumer choice, entrepreneurial initiative, private enterprise (either profit seeking outright [Van der Ark’s Profit seeking the Next Revolution; or a modified bridge concept of “ARI” Academic Return on Investment {check this}]

Important to note: At the “Schools of Tomorrow” conference the statement on tape of “No public school people on panel” (applause) then rebuttal by Sternberg that he worked for NYC DOE; also no mention by either Laureen Powell Jobs or Ted Mitchell of their connection to the NSVF. Yanow “especially omission and absences” 75-77.

Sept 16, 2015

Slow day of work and finally getting into it and it has turned late. I am tired and yet have so much to do. I worry that I will run out of steam and run out of time. But I will keep plugging to do my best and keep my work front and center!

Now, after looking at the Code and Coding section of Miles and Huberman, I realize, I need to go the main CMO websites and copy their mission statements or statements of purpose. I will do this in order to see the similarity in language and discourse. This ties into Yanow and finding the common markers that demonstrate a hegemonic view and their unity of purpose. It will also allow me to surface the governing metaphors.

Memo on NSVF Field Building October 10, 2015

Reflections on the NSVF Field building -- October 10, 2015

“The question is not whether the status of women or those on the bottom is better or worse, but he the type of organization from which that status results” Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 210

They have build the field and now it is producing its harvest!! The well-know Sal Khan of the Khan Academy states in a video on the website promoting the Khan Academy, “ *I am an educational entrepreneur because I can’t imagine any better way to impact the world.*”

I have noticed in my research what I want to call a strategic adaption mode of educational response by the NSVF and its grantees. Drawing on the confidence of the Funds accomplishment and its symbolic capital –backing new projects that show and can demonstrate “great progress” – they have proceeded to address the challenges and critiques of their movement. These contradictions have emerged in the debate around charter schools and the politics of venture philanthropy. The issue that continually surfaces that constitutes an Achilles Heel of the movement is the underlying question: who is this movement really for and who is directing it? Given that John Doerr comes from the venture capital firm Kliener, Perkins, Caulfield & Byers (KPCB)the issues of race, class and gender have been at the center of what Ravitch calls the “billionaire boys club.”ⁱ His net worth according to Forbes as of 10/10/2015 is \$4.1 billion) Doerr’s reputation as the “king of Silicon Valley” (net worth while adding to the symbolic value of their endeavors highlights these issues. This secretive world was exposed recently with a law suit against KPCB and Doerr by Ellen Pao. “by portraying Doerr in unflattering light. He was caught on tape lauding “white male nerds” who dropped out of Harvard or Stanford as being the most successful entrepreneurs. . . .[further the case] gave a rare glimpse into how women are treated in the male-dominated world of venture capital. Reporters covered every last detail, exposing the inner workings of a secretive industry.” According to Bloomberg news.

This exposure has raised other issues that are germane to field building: the politics and interest of ‘white-male dominated venture capitalist’ who are shifting the perception of the public and communities of color towards supporting charter schools. It is a complex effort tat has many moving pieces that include supporting community organizing directly tied to supporting the marketizing agenda. Families for Excellent Schools are an example.

“Foucault terms apparatuses –produce specific space, configurations and circulations of power. . . there is a struggle over the spatial distribution of different articulation of capitalism itself. “ (Grossberg, Cultural studies and/in New Worlds)

“Further, new forms of governing the self have emerged –often in the form of the “entrepreneurial self” –which sets its sights on maximizing individual benefits, while often eschewing common good concerns (Rizvi, F and Ligard, B. Educational Theory, Fall 2000; 50 (4).

October 12 “We Need to Develop a Different Model of Learning”

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan at the Education Innovation Summit at Arizona State University and GSV –Global Silicon Valley April 6, 2015

I just spent some time reviewing Stacey Childress, the new CEO of the NSVF. It has been quite illuminating to see yet again all the different connections at work. I have endeavored to track them as best I can.

So an interesting emergence is the SLC—Shared Learning Collaborative -- The Shared Learning Collaborative is a partnership of states, districts, educators, foundations, and content and tool providers collaborating to create technology for education. The SLC developed all the inBloom software components and has worked with education technology companies and developers to encourage the development of inBloom-compatible applications

InBloom is funded with initial philanthropic support from the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#) and the [Carnegie Corporation of New York](#).

So a lot of interconnection here with in Bloom. There are a couple of issues that need to be tracked and further explored.

First, as Secretary Duncan announces, we need a different model of education. Under his direction and Richard Cullatta, Director of the Office of Educational Technology for the US Department of Education. There is a shift at work from Data informed decision making (George Foley) to Data directed or dictated. The elements in the Ted talk Personalized learning, real time feedback, A School of One model, (a GPS model for education) agency to choose, creates the creators.

There is a sensibility at work of channeling all learning through the same filter the same technology –this creates or may create a new sensibility to learning for technology rather than with it as a tool. The metric will tell you if you are correct, and when to proceed to the next arena of study. There is a sequential logic a play – a linear preference about all learning is like math. “The matrix cannot tell you who you are”

The political economy of it –Gates and Carnegie are putting millions into developing the platforms to make this digital transformation a reality. They are building the field of the ed Tech entrepreneurs.

As Freire would say where is the epistemological curiosity for the learning? Who sets the problematic? What will happen if students do not want to learn this way? When technology loses its glitter?

Also as has been the case with all the hedge fund policy and practice (technology is seen ipso facto as progress, where is the public input into education.

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