

Rootedness Research: Local Possibility Amid a Cosmopolitan Network

Christopher R. Ongaro and Kelly C. Johnston
Teachers College, Columbia University

Abstract

For this paper the authors combined Howley, Howley, and Pendarvis's (2003) concerns about cosmopolitanism with Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) rhizomatic theory to conduct a threefold historical analysis and, ultimately, describe a tentative research framework, namely rootedness research. Concerns about cosmopolitanism were contextualized through exemplar worldviews. The worldviews served as a backdrop for an analysis of U.S. federal education policy, research on teaching and teacher preparation, and education's presence in court cases. The analysis supported concerns about cosmopolitanism's consequences and demonstrated how a network of factors contributed to a centralizing trend in education. The authors' theory of rootedness research emerged as a response to the cosmopolitan context and as an intended protection of the varied and unexpected production that is integral in rhizomatic theory. A straightforward research framework was presented as an option to protect local possibility without demanding isolation.

Keywords: cosmopolitan, local, network, rhizome, rootedness

The greatest shortcoming of the cosmopolitan values of globalization, universal objectivity, and neoliberalism is the implication that the individual person or pursuit is not connected to the contextual place. Such an implication aligns with the historical attempt by "[q]uantifiers" and "[p]ositivist philosophers" to liken the "compatibility of positivism with the pursuit of control over nature" (Porter, 1995, p. 19). In other

words, a cosmopolitan worldview and push for globalization is not just an assault on local cultures, but is also a form of extreme anthropocentrism, wherein human norms trump environmental complexities, wherein perceived objectivity is believed to mute human subjectivity and ecological factors. Rather than acknowledge humans as part of the environment, it isolates humans and assumes their separate location is a sterile, con-

trollable, predictable one. However, if human variability and ecological factors are actually immutable, then they conflict with the very worldview that assumes their silence. If the conflict is, essentially, between small scale local variability and a network of multiple large scale factors, then the best hope for local variability may be to re-envision and respond to the conditions in a purposefully varied way.

This essay begins with the premise that “schooling has actively contributed to the demise of rural communities” (Howley, Howley, & Pendarvis, 2003, p. 80) but also builds on that premise. We argue that, although the clarion call for education has been to better serve all students, schooling’s place within and its role as a perpetuator of cosmopolitanism has, instead, yielded conditions that may constitute a disservice to all students, regardless of locale. With an intention to alter schooling’s future relationship with ruralness and, ultimately, local context, an attempt to respond to present conditions will unfold in three steps. First, we will introduce some specific views of cosmopolitanism and its relationship with local context. Second, we will attempt to understand the historical context surrounding claims of cosmopolitanism’s proliferation and effects.

Ultimately, we will argue that, because of the way cosmopolitan values took root across multiple factors and encouraged centralization, next steps in education should embrace *rootedness* and pursue research with a purposefully multifaceted approach. With what we term *rootedness research* (RR), education efforts and reforms would be analyzed according to local consequences instead of, or in conjunction with, universal norms, and a purposefully multifaceted approach to research would aim to protect local possibilities.

Worldview and Local Context

Within this essay several philosophies are considered ways of thinking about the world and as constituting worldviews. Adding to Porter’s (1995) account of universal thinking and objectivity, cosmopolitanism, neoliberalism, globalization, and centralization are all considered worldview factors. Neoliberalism, for instance, may be a mighty force but not necessarily a deterministic one. Neoliberalism’s characterization differs between a homogenizing force (see, e.g., Torres & Van Heertum, 2009) and a more nuanced force that can be resisted on a small scale (see, e.g., Lingard, 2000). A key distinction is that, while local resistance could exist in Torres and Van Heertum’s (2009) depiction, they maintain that local elements are lost amid global

views, unlike Lingard, who maintains faith in local possibility. If conflict between local and global issues seems like a mere choice between centralization and decentralization, the key distinction is also a reminder that global forces may influence the local choice set.

Shifting to a network view, Ball (2012) attempted to depict the “*how* of neoliberalism” (p. 2). Having insisted that the state and context are not simplified into unified wholes, Ball revealed that “policy networks blur the boundaries between state and society but...also expose the policy-making process to particularistic power games” (p. 8). Further, Ball echoed a warning that “neo-liberalism is economic...and cultural...and political” and permeates “at least in potential through every arena of social life” (as cited in Ball, 2012, p. 144). The attempt to understand a worldview across a network leaves open the possibility for varied manifestations but also speaks to a potentially smothering presence. If neoliberalism actually does influence “every arena of social life,” then prime questions emerge: in what ways do local differences experience and interact with globalized values, policies, and other factors? In what ways can researchers respond?

Howley et al. (2003) provided one answer to questions about the

ways in which local contexts interact with cosmopolitan worldviews. Howley et al. first identify the massive consolidation of schools from 1929–1989, which involved a decrease of school districts from 127,000 to 15,400 nationally (Howley, 1996). To Howley et al. (2003), the figure represented a departure from a tradition in which “[r]ural schools...served as a focus of community identity” (p. 81). Ample disagreement exists about issues of (de)centralization (see, e.g., Elmore, 1993; Manna, 2013; Snow & Williamson, 2015), meaning that the departure from tradition would be viewed as progress by some. A sphere beyond the disagreement exists, though. Rather than narrowing the debate about centralization and focusing on isolated issues or operational details, Howley et al. (2003) present the main issue and concern as a worldview that opposes the very core of rural schools and communities.

Howley et al. (2003) presented rural schools as “an early target for educational reform” (p. 81) amid particular conditions. Key conditions include the misinterpretation of academic talent as “a national resource” (p. 86), “[v]iewing rural residence as a disadvantage and economic competitiveness as a goal” (p. 87), and a “cultural terrain that locates intellect only within the purview of urban

residents (or, more narrowly, only within the purview of an urban elite sanctified by cosmopolitan universities)” (p. 92). Ultimately, Howley et al. argued that “modernism has repudiated any rural grounding” (p. 96). Even though some students in rural areas “are resentful and defensively proud” (p. 82), the overarching worldview limits and, perhaps, actively counters their capability to live a locally rooted life. They are Lingard’s (2000) faith crushed by Torres and Van Heertum’s (2009) combined view of a smothering neoliberalism and call for new cosmopolitan networks.

What Howley et al. (2003) viewed as antirural conditions constitute systemic opposition to rootedness. When declaring that “[c]urriculum alignment, Goals 2000, School-to-Work, Comprehensive School Reform, proficiency testing, accountability, [and] school consolidation...all come inscribed with antirural intentions” (p. 88), Howley et al. (2003) explained how a worldview infiltrates and includes many factors. Likewise, when suggesting that the systemic presence actually alters opportunities for personal choice, they would surely find Lingard’s (2000) argument about local resistance insufficient. Rootedness and RR’s importance emerge from this systemic view of antirural conditions.

Although Howley et al.’s (2003) “rural” excludes urban conditions, we argue that, because such a dramatic shift toward urbanization has already occurred, next steps may require a more comprehensive approach than simply re-ruralizing schools. Rootedness could exist as a concept that emphasizes ties to both the human and nonhuman surroundings without creating hierarchies ranging from genuinely rural to urban. If “thwart[ing]...efforts to educate...children in ways consonant with the rural life-world” constitutes “the state...intruding unfairly” (p. 102), such forms of intrusion are as unfair in an Appalachian town as in a Manhattan neighborhood. If the intrusion on rural communities is actually symptomatic of a worldview that is as systemic as Howley et al. suggest, then resistance to that intrusion must aspire to a similar network approach, such that rootedness is meaningful for schools regardless of locale.

Rootedness

Rootedness is conceptually informed by Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) notion of the rhizome. A rhizome is an underground plant that grows horizontally, extending roots in every direction. As roots connect the plant uniquely changes, grows, and extends. To further emphasize this point, Deleuze and Guattari

described specific rhizome principles, including the connectivity previously mentioned. Additionally, not only do rhizomal roots function through connectivity, but they also connect without discrimination, meaning they link to any other point, even if distinctly different from itself, exhibiting heterogeneity in nature and thus multiplying in non-standard form. As rhizomal roots thrive through connectivity, heterogeneity, and multiplicity, they also take off in unexpected and new directions, leading to the fourth principle of asignifying rupture. These qualities of rhizomal roots usher in the final principles, those of mapping and tracing. Mapping, in the Deleuzoguattarian sense, entails reality in the making. Rhizomal growth cannot be predicted and, therefore, must be mapped as the roots are produced. These types of roots are distinct from the common tree-root in which roots ground the centered trunk, serving as a fixed, unwavering source, seeking to reproduce a tracing, or carbon copy, of an ideal, assumed way of being. The distinction between these types of roots, those of a rhizome and those of a tree, are necessary and illustrate the philosophical stances attached to the worldviews earlier described.

Much of our current cosmopolitan society heralds centralized values and norms as a level of

transcendence to be reached, and the perceived globalization effect is not limited to the United States, as Sidhu and Dall'Alba (2012) describe the "disembodied learner...of western epistemology" and the consequence of "making it easier to disseminate and impose 'one-size-fits-all' educational prescriptions" (p. 415). This type of thinking is similar to the tree-root in that there is a centralized way *to be*. Kamberelis (2004) further elaborated on these types of arborescent structures as:

linear, hierarchical, sedentary, striated, vertical, stiff, and with deep and permanent roots. They are structures with branches that continue to subdivide into smaller and lesser structures. In their various social and cultural instantiations, arborescent models of thinking, acting, and being amount to restrictive economies of dominance and oppression. (pp. 163–164)

Such imposition of control emerges when a centralized, top-down approach is assumed or expected, often diminishing, or even dismissing, the experiences of the everyday realities of local context.

Rootedness, however, operates through emergence, shifting the globalized focus from *being* and

existing in one particular, assumed way to *becoming* according to localized context. Rather than expect top-down replicas for local context and cultures, as though there is a globalized transcendence to be reached, rootedness embraces the map in-the-making, privileging local roots of growth and flow. The apogee of rootedness conceptualized by this rhizomatic perspective is the potential for productive change and understanding when local mapping is examined through the tracing. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) made clear that rhizomatic functioning does not simply replace tree functioning; rather, these must work together. It is not a matter of replacing the hierarchical, structural logic upon which many systems and institutions (e.g., schools) are built but of recognizing the functioning of both tree and rhizome logic to create change. Thus, the ultimate purpose in conceptualizing rootedness through the rhizome is looking to what becomes possible, namely the local possibilities that emerge and have the potential to be actualized rather than dismissed amid top-down policies and agendas. With a tentative concept of rootedness in mind, an historical analysis follows.

Federal Role in Education: Where Are We Now, and What Came Before This?

A call for rootedness re-

sponds to the core belief that cosmopolitan values and conditions of centralization, neoliberalism, and globalization dismiss and, consequently, erode local variability. To evaluate the extent to which Howley et al.'s (2003) depiction of antirural forces actually represents a worldview opposed to local variability, the following historical analysis targets multiple issues across recent decades. Because a network investigation as extensive as Ball's (2012) work on neoliberalism exceeds the scope of this paper, an analysis narrowed to federal education policy, research on teaching and teacher preparation, and education's presence in court cases will be used to investigate potentially overlapping historical conditions. Throughout, the presence or treatment of elements like centralization, globalization, curriculum standards, and neoliberal market-based ideals will inform an understanding of conditions across the late 20th and early 21st century in the United States.

Education Policy

Post-Sputnik. Rather than a neat shift from the Colonial Era of schooling to today, another historical account could explain that the notion of progress was used by and for many different interest groups (Kliebard, 2004) and could then stress that issues of centralization/decentralization are similarly complex. If

significantly fewer school districts is evidence of at least one form of centralization, then the task is not to ask if centralization and standardization are forces in schooling but, instead, to investigate in what forms and under what conditions these forces operated or were experienced. For education policy, a comparison of policy and federal input in the immediate post-Sputnik years to the post-*A Nation at Risk* years is particularly illustrative of the ways in which what Howley, et al. (2003) would consider antirural efforts unfolded.

The federal role in post-Sputnik schooling increased dramatically and is not hidden by the U.S. Department of Education (2014a):

The Cold War stimulated the first example of comprehensive Federal education legislation, when in 1958 Congress passed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in response to the Soviet launch of Sputnik. To help ensure that highly trained individuals would be available to help America compete with the Soviet Union in scientific and technical fields, the NDEA included support for loans to college students, the improvement of science, mathematics, and foreign language instruction in elementary

and secondary schools, graduate fellowships, foreign language and area studies, and vocational-technical training. (para. 7)

The government's account of immediate post-Sputnik education efforts reveals that the "first example of comprehensive Federal education legislation" coincides with a connection to global competition and centralized values and exists as a precursor to curriculum standards. Although the post-Sputnik policies placed schooling's connection to the military and economics on the federal stage, the policies were ultimately ones of the Space Race and had a very specific goal: land on the moon first. This very specific goal distinguishes the post-Sputnik and post-*A Nation at Risk* years.

Despite immediate post-Sputnik action, the federal government's role in education was not sustained. By 1966, J. Galen Saylor and William Alexander's *Curriculum Planning for Modern Schools* emphasized "individualizing the curriculum" (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2008, p. 176), which constitutes a distinction from a purposeful, collective emphasis on math, technology, and science. In the same year that the Space Race's moon landing goal was achieved, "a decade of attacks on the curriculum field" (p. 176) began to unfold. By the 1970s,

involvement in curriculum courses and teacher preparation programs fluctuated and so, too, did federal funding (Pinar et al.). The federal government's increased role during the post-Sputnik years clearly began with a specific goal but did not occur with a comprehensive invasion of policy into practice.

Post-*A Nation at Risk*. The federal government's role in education may have waned across the 1970s, but 1983's *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* was a game changer. Rather than a local community or even the national setting, the setting became "one global village." Based on that global setting, the report was driven by "competitors throughout the world" and referred to a "competitive edge" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 1) that must be maintained through effective schooling. Elements that would fall under the terms neoliberalism and neoconservatism permeate the report as it emphasizes the authority of "[b]usiness and military leaders" (p. 2), the need to "foste[r] a common culture" (p. 1), and a necessary reliance on "the best economists" (p. 5). As the report declared that "[h]istory is not kind to idlers" (p. 1), the call for change appeared as a dramatically urgent one. An urgent need for uniformity amid global competition

fuels a context unkind to local variability.

Compared to the Space Race language, *A Nation at Risk*'s call to action was both broader and less specific. While acknowledging the "promise" to serve "all children" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 1), the report presents schooling's goal for those children as helping them "attain the mature and informed judgment needed to secure gainful employment" in order to "serve" both themselves and "the progress of society" (p. 2). There was no solid moon on which to land, no concrete goal; instead, the report presented a comparatively amorphous goal for schooling: develop citizens whose productivity can ensure the nation's economic and military dominance.

Two primary messages exist in this broad, vague, and future-based goal. First, the report surpasses Space Race policies. In *A Nation at Risk*, the Space Race's technology and military focus are expanded and paired with social concerns and academic factors to encompass education at large and plant seeds for an "ever-accelerating" form of a "Learning Society" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 3). The second primary message is that the government must direct schooling's expansive

role. Did Americans not learn before 1983? Arguing for the government's role in education, the report explains that "the public understands" that education is "the foundation for a satisfying life, an enlightened and civil society, a strong economy, and a secure Nation" (p. 4), declares that public support for school reform is simply "patriotism," and concludes that "[i]t is...essential...for government at all levels to affirm its responsibility for nurturing the Nation's intellectual capital" (p. 5). *A Nation at Risk* made school the hinge on which national success relies and made government the commander of schooling's purpose.

A framework soon unfolded from that hinge and involved what may be a familiar history for many educators. The 1989 Education Summit brought together governors, business leaders, and federal representatives to begin national education goals and instigate content standards. The federal presence continued across the 1990s as funding was tied to standards, a movement that morphed into policies like *No Child Left Behind* and the *Common Core State Standards* (CCSS) ("Preparing America's students for success," 2017). As "American discussions of education...turned sharply toward career preparation for economic success" (Collins & Halverson, 2009, p. 135),

the federal government's role in and support of such policies underscored the emphasis on preparing students for success in college and careers (CCSS, 2010). Such emphasis encouraged global competition, and a growing national presence declared schooling's de facto priority one of preparing individuals to serve the future nation. Amid the rapid rise in standards, the Department of Education's (2014b) *Strategic Plan, FY 2014-2018* reaffirmed the focus on college and career readiness and confirmed that Race to the Top and other federal policies offer further competition and threat. Indeed, such policies are considered factors that divide communities, support narrowed learning (Tanner, 2013), and bind teachers to test preparation (Goodwin, Roegman, & Reagan, 2016). In comparing the race to the moon vs. Race to the Top, the key point is not that the Space Race provided a better education through schooling; rather, the key point is that the race's goal changed from a very clear mission (i.e., moon landing) to the amorphous goal of college and career readiness. Vague goals with no end in sight yield conditions that encourage specificity in other areas, namely a narrowing curriculum.

Research on Teaching and Teacher Preparation

Maintaining a hope for local resistance, Lingard (2000) may point out that an imposed curriculum is always funneled through “micronarratives” (p. 103), but Howley et al. (2003) may respond with a reminder: even when the micronarratives involve “reread[ing] and rearticulat[ing]” educational policies, the centralized policy remains a factor. Shifting views of teaching and teacher preparation may inform conditions for those micronarratives.

The link between decontextualized, centralized approaches to education and the changing focus on teaching and teacher preparation is not an obvious one, but it becomes clearer when prominent research intersects with the policy context. Attempting to trace the history of teacher education from the 1950s to the 21st century, Cochran-Smith and Fries (2004) identified three main phases: (a) 1950s-80s: teaching as a training problem; (b) 1980s-2000s: teaching as a learning problem; and (c) 1990s-2000s: teaching as a policy problem. Good and Grouws’s (1977) behaviorist, process-product approach may be representative of the first phase, but as in the shift from Cochran-Smith and Fries’ (2004) phase one, Berliner (1986) broadened clear-cut training issues into learning

concerns about behaviors, tasks, and professional pride. Shulman (1987), however, claimed that, while teaching is too complex to be rigidly reproducible, an “elaborate knowledge base for teaching” does exist (p. 7) and that the responsibility for “teacher education” goes beyond education schools or departments (p. 20). With such a claim, Shulman introduced a double-edged item, such that context and human elements suddenly mattered, but, simultaneously, the policy support shifted the focus away from teacher-centric research.

A changing focus on teaching and teacher preparation takes on new meaning when placed within the policy context. As Shulman (1987) made connections between effective teaching and the medicine field, his language is reminiscent of federal policy language from *A Nation at Risk* onward, and as he assumed that higher policy-driven teacher expectations will yield improved performance, the policy focus can be viewed as propelling the increasingly centralized core of standards and competition. When broadening a gaze to the history of practitioner research, an implicit valuing of individual, contextualized knowledge is evident, but it was found to be coupled with a fear that policy-driven standards would smother local knowledge (McLaughlin, Black-Hawkins, & McIntyre,

2004). Such pieces of history are reminders that acknowledging teacher context does not necessarily make space for teacher voice.

Education and Court Cases

The changing federal role in education policy and research coincides with changes in court cases, through which the standards movement is woven. School desegregation efforts fueled the earliest federal school finance cases looking to equalize spending among districts, but plaintiffs faced the burden of defining equal funding and proving that increased funding improves learning (McUsic, 1999). By 1973, the *San Antonio v. Rodriguez* decision ruled that the federal government would not intervene in education issues because education is absent from the federal Constitution (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003). Later, though, the *Campaign for Fiscal Equity Inc. v. The State of New York* (1995) case shifted from an equity to an adequacy argument. Of great importance, the adequacy movement latched onto the standards movement. As evidenced in the “Brief for Plaintiffs-Respondents” from CFE v. State of New York (2005), the Court of Appeals’ instructions in the *Campaign for Fiscal Equity II* had three main parts: a cost assessment, a financing and management method, and an accountability system. Issues of assessment, re-

source management, and accountability also led judges to call for established standards to which they could refer in decisions (McUsic, 1999). Consequently, defining adequate education focused on overarching standards, but as evidenced in the *Campaign for Fiscal Equity* case, both plaintiffs and defendants also referred to test scores (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003).

Used both in defining adequacy and in monitoring the reaction to rulings through test outputs, the standards and testing demands embodied a shift away from teacher autonomy and were propelled by court cases. Together, the adequacy and standards movements formed a double helix of centralization. Each time standards were called upon as the measure of and means of realizing adequacy, schooling moved towards centralization. As adequacy partnered with increasingly centralized standards to oppose inequality, local variability became the collateral damage.

The Consequences of Policy, Research, and Court Cases

Such an analysis of historical context is a necessary departure from merely considering rural vs. urban distinctions because the interaction of local variability and worldviews, the case for rootedness, and, certainly, Howley et al.’s (2003) claims about

a “cosmopolitan agenda” (p. 83) necessitate an increasingly complex, systemic look at the influences on local policy (Ball, 2012). The investigation reveals conditions favorable to a spread of the *cosmopolitan agenda*. Overall, amid a generally rising federal role, evident in policy and funding, some court cases embraced the standards movement, propelled the federal role, and encouraged the high-stakes testing movement (Cross, 2004), which still plagues the 21st century (Taubman, 2009). As a research focus shifted towards policy and accountability, so, too, did shifts occur in processes for defining and/or promoting teaching and teacher preparation and for defining student achievement. Regardless of intent, such shifts combined to sustain and increase anti-local conditions.

Next Steps and Alternatives

Rootedness opposes the increasingly suffocating context and builds on the realization that an isolated stance can blind one to alternatives. Reducing decisions to either centralization or decentralization, local or global, or urban or rural is insufficient. For example, while Hill (2000) pointed to centralized education’s categorical system helping specific groups at the cost of others, Elmore explained that decentralized practices are “at least as exclusionary in their policies and practices”

(p. 45). Such may be a cosmopolitan view of the rural, or it may be a nod to inevitable gaps in every stance. That inevitability is reason for pause, but it does not counter rootedness’s importance as a bulwark against systemic opposition to local variability.

If cosmopolitanism, neo-liberalism, and globalization exist in networks, resistance requires a network mindset, much like rhizomal functioning. Admittedly, if embracing local context counters, at least in part, orderly centralization and standardization, the thinking that will undergird next steps may be messy. The problems with imposed tidiness, though, must preclude an aversion to messiness. In attempt to consider immediate next steps, we offer thoughts on a research process that may support local possibility without prescribing community isolation.

Rootedness Research

We present *rootedness research* (RR) as an approach that actively incorporates multiplicity of input with the ultimate aim of examining locally produced mappings. As a desired result, diverse stakeholders would produce locally contextualized research while remaining aware of globalized policies and mandates that emphasize centralization and standardization, which are, in rhizomatic terms, the tracing. Rhizomatically speaking, this approach seeks to

map the local reality-in-the-making and then put the tracing back on the map (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) to work within and also against current homogenizing forces. RR's components are not unprecedented and can be found in post-positivist research methods and program evaluation approaches, but the current context makes their combination all the more important.

Borland (2003) offers one relevant program evaluation example on which RR builds. Having indicated his prior shortcomings in narrowing program evaluation to program goals, Borland called for a broader focus that considers the system and individuals, including oft-ignored stakeholders. Though varied program evaluation forms exist, Borland's reminder of Guba and Lincoln's (1989) emphasis on a co-creation of results through human interaction is critical to Borland's desired broadening. In practice, it means merging "various stakeholders...to confront their own and others' constructed knowledge about the program" (p. 297). With both the summative and formative functions of evaluation in mind, the decision to value varied stakeholders and the emphasis on co-creation through human interaction are also major factors in RR. Such a distinction acknowledges that these factors produce a particular construction of

localized reality, a rootedness essential for analyzing local context in light of globalized imposition.

Rootedness Research Framework

How could RR unfold? Just as a disconnect in values can drive disengagement (see, e.g., Hendrickson, 2012; Ishimaru et al., 2016), the following initial approach is designed to purposefully include school professionals (e.g., teachers or administrators), professional researchers (e.g., university professors), parents, and any other interested and willing stakeholders.

For RR's first step, establish key issues. This step hinges on a foundational effort to gather varied stakeholders, including both external researchers and interested local participants, and solicit their input on school performance and values. An outcome of this should be the co-creation of a manageable number of research questions. Dissenting voices should be acknowledged and recorded, yielding a log of varied positions.

For RR's second step, create multiple research squads. With a nod to varied researcher subjectivities, multiple squads are used in order to purposefully and deeply incorporate a breadth of input. Ideally, each squad includes a professional researcher and one or more local

representatives, all of whom share a common perspective on key school issues.

For RR's third step, research squads should collect and tentatively analyze data in parallel, just as rhizome roots may run. This is important in that it allows the common research questions to be approached from multiple positions and, at this point, diminishes the tyranny of a majority. To exemplify this distinction from traditional research, rather than conduct Marxist research by a team of like-minded individuals and see the entire process rooted in a central position, RR reduces that isolated research approach to a portion of the process.

As RR's fourth step, research squads that previously acted in parallel should come together (i.e., connect) to discuss findings; consider how findings incorporate, resist, or change globalized infiltration (i.e., put the tracing back on the map); arrive at an actionable conclusion (i.e., compromise); and develop a plan for ongoing evaluation. Throughout, RR mimics rhizomal connectivity, heterogeneity, and multiplicity. In this way, the process yields an immediate plan for the school program and also establishes a system that discourages a dismissal of minority positions.

Conclusion

Because rootedness research views schools as rooted within the community, varied input is valued. The initial, straightforward conception of RR is intended to encourage participation across the local community and facilitate effective collaboration between external and local participants. RR builds on Elmore's (1993) suggestion that the issue is not *either* centralization or decentralization but, rather, *what* to centralize and decentralize. Although accepting that education issues may be addressed across systems, RR goes beyond Elmore in insisting that the network conditions that emerged over the recent decades necessitate a second decision focused on *how* to protect local possibility. RR's purposefully multifaceted process responds to Howley et al.'s (2003) concerns of cosmopolitanism by encouraging investigation of varied views, networks, and consequences. Rather than insist on one worldview over another, RR intends a protection of the varied and unexpected production that is integral in rhizomatic theory. RR favors possibility over prediction and embraces organic messiness rather than a façade of sterile efficiency. We hope that effective education research affects policy at many levels and that conducting RR declares that local and individual

input should play a major role. If the cosmopolitan value in diversity is to truly be pursued, then the possibility for local variability must be assumed, accepted, and supported.

References

- Ball, S. J. (2012). *Global education inc.: New policy networks and the neo-liberal imaginary*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Berliner, D. C. (1986). In pursuit of the expert pedagogue. *Educational Researcher*, 15(7), 5–13.
- Borland, J. H. (2003). Evaluating gifted programs: A broader perspective. In N. Colangelo & G.A. Davis (Eds.), *Handbook of gifted education* (3rd ed., pp. 24–40). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Campaign for Fiscal Equity Inc. v. The State of New York (N.Y.3d 1995)
- CFE v. State of New York, CFE Brief for Plaintiffs-Respondents. (2005). Retrieved from <http://finance.tc-library.org/ContentTypes.asp?cgi=5>
- Cochran-Smith, M., & Fries, K. (2004). Researching teacher education in changing times: Politics and paradigms. In M. Cochran-Smith & K. Zeichner (Eds.), *Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA panel on research and teacher education*. Washington, D.C.: American Educational Research Association.
- Collins, A., & Halverson, R. (2009). *Rethinking education in the age of technology: The digital revolution and schooling in America*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Cross, C. T. (2004). *Political education: National policy comes of age*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Elmore, R. (1993). School decentralization: Who gains? Who loses? In J. Hannaway, & M. Carnoy (Eds.), *Decentralization and school improvement: Can we fulfill the promise?* (pp. 33–54) San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Good, T. L., & Grouws, D. A. (1977). Teaching effects: A process-product study in fourth-grade mathematics classrooms. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 28(3), 49–54.
- Goodwin, A. L., Roegman, R., & Reagan, E. M. (2016). Is experience the best teacher? Extensive clinical practice and mentor teachers' perspectives on effective teaching. *Urban Education*, 51(10), 1198–1225.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1989). *Fourth generation evaluation*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Hendrickson, K. A. (2012). Student resistance to schooling: Disconnections with education in rural appalachia. *The High School Journal*, 95(4), 37–49.
- Hochschild, J., & Scovronick, N. (2003). *The American dream and the public schools*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Howley, A., Howley, C. B., & Pendarvis, E. D. (2003). Talent development for rural communities. In J. Borland (Ed.), *Rethinking gifted education* (pp. 80–104). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Ishimaru, A. M., Torres, K. E., Salvador, J. E., Lott, J., Williams, D. M. C., & Tran, C. (2016). Reinforcing deficit, journeying toward equity: Cultural brokering in family engagement initiatives. *American Educational Research Journal*, 53(4), 850–882.
- Kamberelis, G. (2004). The rhizome and the pack: Liminal literacy formations with political teeth. In K. Leander & M. Sheehy (Eds.), *Spatializing literacy research and practice* (pp. 161–197). New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Kliebard, H. M. (2004). *The struggle for the American curriculum, 1893–1958* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Lingard, B. (2000). It is and it isn't: Vernac-

- ular globalization, educational policy, and restructuring. In N. Burbules & C. A. Torres (Eds.), *Globalization and education: Critical perspectives* (pp. 79–108). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Manna, P. (2013). Centralized governance and student outcomes: Excellence, equity, and academic achievement in the U.S. states. *Policy Studies Journal*, 41(4), 683–706.
- McLaughlin, C., Black-Hawkins, K., & McIntyre, D. (2004). *Researching teachers, researching schools, researching networks: A review of the literature*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University.
- McUsic, M. (1999). The law's role in the distribution of education: The promises and pitfalls of school-finance litigation. In J. Heubert (Ed.), *Law and school reform: Six strategies for promoting educational equity*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform: A report to the nation and the secretary of education*. United States Department of Education.
- Pinar, W. F., Reynolds, W. M., Slattery, P., & Taubman, P. M. (2008). *Understanding curriculum* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Porter, T. M. (1995). *Trust in numbers: The pursuit of objectivity in science and public life*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Preparing America's students for success. (2017). In Common Core State Standards initiative. Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices. Retrieved from www.core-standards.org
- Shulman, L. S. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reforms. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57(1), 1–22.
- Sidhu, R. K., & Dall'Alba, G. (2012). International education and (dis)embodied cosmopolitanisms. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 44(4), 413–431.
- Snow, D., & Williamson, A. (2015). Accountability and micromanagement: Decentralized budgeting in Massachusetts school districts. *Public Administration Quarterly*, 39(2), 220.
- Tanner, D. (2013). Race to the top and leave the children behind. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 45(1), 4–15.
- Taubman, P. (2009). *Teaching by numbers: Deconstructing the discourse of standards and accountability in education*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Torres, C. A., & Van Heertum, R. (2009). Globalization and neoliberalism: The challenges and opportunities of radical pedagogy. In Simons, M., Olssen, M., & Peters, M. A. (Eds.), *Re-reading education policies: A handbook studying the policy agenda of the 21st century* (pp. 143–162). Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense.
- United States Department of Education (2014a). The federal role in education. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/fed/role.html?src=ln>
- United States Department of Education (2014b). Strategic Plan, FY 2014-2018. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/about/reports/strat/plan2014-18/strategic-plan.pdf>

About the Authors

Christopher R. Ongaro (B.S., The College of New Jersey; M.A., Teachers College, Columbia University) is a doctoral student at Teachers College in the department of Curriculum and Teaching, and he is Associate Head of School at a therapeutic independent school in New York City. Some of his research and professional interests include gifted education, special education, blended learning, and local learning.

Kelly C. Johnston (B.S., Baylor University; M.Ed., Texas State University) is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Curriculum and Teaching at Teachers College, Columbia University. Her research and professional interests include literacy teaching and learning, qualitative research, and the intersections between school-based literacy practices, physical fitness and health, and academic achievement for children and youth.