Globalization and Cultural Flows: A Three-Article Dissertation Exploring Implications for Education and Culture in India

Dwight Edward Boucher
boucher.edd@gmail.com

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GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURAL FLOWS: A THREE-ARTICLE DISSERTATION
EXPLORING IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN INDIA

By

Dwight Edward Boucher

Bachelor of Arts – History
University of Missouri, Kansas City
1996

Master of Arts – History
University of Missouri, Kansas City
2001

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the

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College of Education
The Graduate College

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Dwight Edward Boucher

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Doctor of Philosophy – Curriculum & Instruction
Department of Teaching & Learning

Christine Clark, Ed.D.
Examination Committee Chair

Kathryn Hausbeck Korgan, Ph.D.
Graduate College Interim Dean

Norma Marrun, Ph.D.
Examination Committee Member

Randall Boone, Ph.D.
Examination Committee Member

Patrick Peebles, Ph.D.
Examination Committee Member

Robert Parker, Ph.D.
Graduate College Faculty Representative
Abstract

This dissertation follows a three-article format to examine ways in which distinct manifestations of globalization have engaged and manipulated education in India as colonizing initiatives. The articles are interrelated and examine historical, societal, and individual stories related to colonial and global impositions of Western epistemological, economic, and educational forms in India. The introductory chapter outlines the broad implications of globalization and globalizing narratives, and it is intended to demonstrate that while globalization has the capacity to improve the quality and equitability of lives around the world, it also has the potential to serve as a hegemonic conduit for the continuation of predatory colonization. The first of the three articles is a historical paper that explores the impact of colonial liberalism and global neoliberalism on education in India. The second article engages cultural studies methods to analyze media promotion and discourse on the topic of education initiatives and policies in India in the current era, and the third article is a qualitative ethnography that investigates both craft pedagogy and student motivations to pursue higher educational studies in traditional craft and design in Jaipur, India. The broad purpose of this dissertation, taken as a whole, is to explore the intersections of globalization, education, and culture in India and to provide information on how these complex intersections impact the lives of real people.
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This Ph.D. has been a long time coming. I want to thank my many mentors who have guided and influenced me along the way. I want to individually acknowledge two mentors in particular who are very different scholars in very different fields, but who have both had profound impacts on my development as a teacher and as an emerging scholar. Dr. Patrick Peebles was my undergraduate advisor who first pointed me on the path to South Asian Studies. He served as the chair of my Master of Arts in History at the University of Missouri, Kansas City, and even in his busy years as a professor emeritus, he generously agreed to serve on my doctoral committee as an outside member. I thank him for all of his continued encouragement and support. I would also like to thank Dr. Christine Clark for her mentorship as a professor and as my committee chair in the Cultural Studies, International Education, and Multicultural Education program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She asked during our first meeting the following question, “What kind of scholar do you want to be?” This question shaped the years I have spent at UNLV, my conception for this three-article dissertation format, and the theoretical and methodological approaches I engaged in the research and writing of this dissertation. To answer her compelling question with the vantage point of time and experience, I am an emerging interdisciplinary scholar whose work is concerned with and confronts pressing social issues and problems around (in)equitability in our world. I plan to use my platforms as a teacher and a scholar to make a difference for the better in the lives of real people.

I would also like to thank these other important mentors in the order of their mentorship: Prof. Fred Krebs, Dr. Carla Klausner, Dr. Michelle Boisseau, Dr. Gary Ebersole, Prof. Usha Jain, Dr. Douglas Cowan, Dr. Norma Marrun, Dr. Randall Boone, Dr. Robert Parker, Dr. Stephanie Relles, Dr. Kim Nehls, and Dr. Federick Ngo. I also thank my countless students at Johnson County Community College and UNLV who have made me a better teacher and human.
Dedication

This dissertation project, that has unfolded over the last several years, was only possible with the constant love and support of my favorite person and partner in life, Kayla Boucher. I also dedicate this to my parents and my children who have all supported me (and tolerated me) as I pursued this milestone. Finally, I dedicate this project to the many research participants in India who so generously gave me access to their lives and their stories—I thank you all!
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Chapter One: Introduction

The three articles that constitute this dissertation are connected under the themes of globalization and education. Shared among the three research studies is the contention that globalization frequently serves as a conduit for powerful and dominant groups to spread ideological, political, economic, and cultural influence over less powerful and less dominant groups (Hall, 1997; Stromquist & Monkman, 2014; Wallerstein, 2011). Troublingly, this hegemonic process is often cloaked in a seemingly more benign articulation or interpretation of globalization as a project of shared and voluntary cooperation of countries and cultures to act in unison to address the concerns of the world (Boli & Thomas, 1999; Meyer, Boli, Thomas, & Ramirez, 1997). However, this articulation masks the more insidious, clandestine, and colonizing impact of particular manifestations or forms of globalization (Samoff, 2013; Spring, 2015a); and while the individual articles in this dissertation state particular research problems relevant to each respective study, the colonizing impact of globalization is manifest as a broad and common research problem across the three articles.

Another commonality among the three articles is a focus on education and culture in India as it intersects with certain aspects or phases of globalization. India is a very old and continuous civilization that stretches back at least five thousand years, and as such, it has deep and established cultural roots (Thapar, 1990; Wolpert, 2008). Additionally, India has an established cultural commitment to education that long precedes colonial and globalized forms of educational impositions on the subcontinent (Cheney, Ruzzi, & Muralidharan, 2006; Cohn, 1996; Langohr, 2005; Probe report, 1999). Thus, while people in India have long valued and embraced education as a means for socio-economic and socio-cultural advancement and agency, they have also been steadfast in retaining their culture (Appadurai, 1990). The articles in this
dissertation reflect these two, sometimes contentious and sometimes compatible, aspects of Indian society and help to explain why India is an ideal place to investigate the intersections of globalization, education, and culture.

In the sections that follow I present: (a) my rationale for a three-article dissertation format; (b) the topics and aims of the three articles; (c) my personal connection to the study; (d) a theoretical/conceptual literature review on the topic of globalization and globalizing narratives; (e) connections of the conceptual literature review to the three articles; (f) research questions of the three articles; and (g) proposed journals where I will submit my completed articles for potential publication.

**Rationale for a Three-Article Format**

The three studies in this dissertation engage differing aspects of globalization and education. While the individual articles ask different research questions, employ different methodologies, and can stand alone as separate studies, they can be best understood as inter-derivative studies that investigate the impact of globalization on education and culture in India from unique and complementary perspectives. The first of the three articles was recently published in an international, refereed journal on global studies (Boucher, 2017), and the second two studies emerged directly and organically from issues raised in that paper. Article one concluded with questions and recommendations for further study that could be substantively investigated in discrete studies with differing methodological approaches, and the three-article dissertation format presented the opportunity to design related stand-alone studies with differing methods—while still being conceptually connected under the umbrella research phenomenon of the impact of globalization on education and culture in India.
An additional rationale for the three-article format follows suggestions by educational researchers who have argued that the majority of the scholarship that future faculty members will produce will be publishable studies as journal articles (Duke & Beck, 1999; Knowles, 2015). My intention is to enter the academy as a future faculty member, and this three-article format will help prepare me to design, conduct, and write publishable theoretical, qualitative, and empirical scholarship. Following others who have pursued this format in the field of education (Knowles, 2015), the three-article dissertation format that I follow here was adapted from the University of Texas-Austin model (University of Texas-Austin, 2015). This model stipulates that the articles must be conceptually and thematically connected, and “the introduction should function as the cord that weaves the various manuscripts together” (p. 2). In that effort, this introduction, inclusive of a unifying conceptual literature review, serves to logically, theoretically, and thematically connect the three articles.

**Introduction and Aims of the Three Articles**

The first article is a theoretical and historical study that investigates colonial liberalism, global neoliberalism, and the ways these ideological, economic models have impacted education in India. The importance of this article to the broader study is the historical context it provides on the following: (a) British colonial agendas, policies, and impacts on Indian education, (b) post-colonial education policies following Indian independence in 1947, and (c) the implementation of global economic liberalization initiatives across Indian social services in the 1990s that continue to impact education in the country to this day (Dreze & Sen, 2013).

The second article is a qualitative media study that analyzes recent promotion and discourse of global, market-based education trends through various media outlets in India (Stokes, 2013); and fittingly, the study was designed to provide a formal test and analysis of the
literature presented in the first article on the prevalence and impact of global neoliberalism on education in India. Utilizing a cultural studies lens, the primary data sources in this study were print media, television and film, and street advertising on the topic of education. As a bounded case study, I strategically collected media data around the annual announcement of the national school board standard achievement tests that occurs each year in late May and early June (Yin, 2014). This announcement garners anticipatory and reactionary media coverage that provides an ideal sample of India’s education policies and concerns. The aim of this study was to capture a realistic glimpse of the current societal discourse on education and to provide information on the impact of the globalization of education in India as well as the implications for educational, societal, and cultural equitability in the country.

In the third article I investigated the real-world impact on, and reactions by, societal stakeholders to the historical legacies of colonial education and the current media promotion of neoliberal education presented in articles one and two. In this effort, the third study was designed to capture stories of individual students in Indian society who proactively pursue higher educational studies, and presumably future careers, in the cultural field of traditional craft and design. By designing and conducting a qualitative ethnography, I hope to have authentically captured the voices and motivations of college students who seemingly go against the trends in neoliberal, global education and who choose, instead, to invest their time and resources in preserving traditional culture (Creswell, 2016; Jena, 2010).

**Personal Connection to the Study**

As an undergraduate student I was drawn to the discipline of history, and as a graduate student I became interested in the history and cultures of religions. These combined interests drew me to the copious religious traditions that have their beginnings in the Indian subcontinent.
With this orientation, I became familiar with, and interested in, the literature on colonial forms of knowledge and their intersections with Indian religious and philosophical epistemologies (e.g., Cohn, 1996; Inden, 1990; Metcalf, 1995; Prakash, 1992; Said, 1978). This was more than an academic exercise for me. The worldviews I was studying from South Asia began to resonate with me and to challenge and replace, in substantive ways, the worldview in which I was raised, and this has only grown in me over time.

More recently, as a doctoral student I have investigated the ideological connections of colonialism and globalization. In this process I became interested in the global mandates and impositions of neoliberal policies—especially education policies—by the World Bank and the IMF on countries such as India (Tierney & Sabharwal, 2017). These interests converged and provided the impetus for the first article presented in this dissertation on the topic of colonial liberalism, global neoliberalism, and education in India.

My academic interests in India presented opportunities to travel to the country numerous times beginning in the late 1990s. Over the past decades I have personally witnessed the introduction of global capitalism and consumer culture in India that aligns with a global neoliberal ideology (Klees, 2008). My many friends in India regularly lament the impact that global consumer culture is presenting—especially my friends who are watching their children internalize this culture as normative. As a teacher and an academic, I have a platform (via the classroom and publications) to provide information on the adverse impacts of neoliberal globalization, and the articles in this study represent this effort.

Additionally, I come from a family of craftsmen whose craft is primarily woodworking. In my travels to India, I have sought out Indian woodcrafters to appreciate their craft techniques and products. This craft reflects an important segment of Indian culture (Jena, 2010). I have had
opportunities to work directly with woodcrafters in India and to learn, interact, and exchange woodworking techniques, and this organic connection with fellow woodcrafters helped to inform the third article in this study where I investigate both craft pedagogy and student motivations to formally study traditional craft and design in our age of globalization.

It is the topic, existence, and process of globalization that is of concern in this study. How will Indian culture fare in the presence of global forces? Will India simply acquiesce to global hegemony, or will people embrace, resist, or even transform global hegemony to their advantage (Anderson-Levitt, 2003; Hall, 1997)? The conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of these questions connect the three articles in this study and are explored in the conceptual literature review that follows.

**Conceptual Literature Review: Globalization and Globalizing Narratives**

In Thomas Friedman’s (2007) best-selling book, *The World is Flat 3.0*, he argued that a globalized world is our new normal human condition in the twenty-first century. I would add that not only do we live in a globalized world, we have also been conditioned into a global worldview. This worldview is not necessarily an ontological reality; rather, it has been conceptually and ideologically constructed (Banerjee & Linstead, 2001; Berger & Luckman, 1967; Hall, 1997). Proponents and stakeholders for a globalized world, and worldview, argue the merits of this increasing interconnectedness (Meyer et al., 1997), and it is difficult to deny that technological advances in transportation and communications, among other areas, have generally made the world flatter and smaller and information more accessible for most people (Friedman & Mandelbaum, 2011). Even very vocal critics of globalization (primarily as it has impacted education) have conceded that aspects of globalization have the potential to be beneficial (e.g., Altbach, 2015; Ball, 2012). However, critics also argue that the same technologies and
infrastructures that connect the world can serve as means for powerful actors to exert control over all the world’s resources, including human resources (Tan, 2014). Viewed in this way, instead of moving beyond the colonial era where powerful Western countries directly controlled the majority of the world (Truman, 1949), forms of globalization in our current context manifest as a continuation of colonialism where the powerful and the influential profit at the expense of the less powerful and less fortunate (Banerjee, Chio, & Mir, 2009; Banerjee & Linstead, 2001).

This conceptual literature review investigates the discourse surrounding the topic of globalization, and in doing so it attempts to address the following questions: Who are the actors and scholars that are studying globalization, and why are they concerned with it? What does globalization look like to them structurally, politically, economically, and culturally? To what extent does their discourse on globalization serve to theoretically construct a global worldview? How are they making sense of the cultural flows within this interconnectedness, and what do they see as the principal implications and potential impacts of globalization on the world as a whole, on local communities, and on individuals? To address these questions, this review is organized around the following thematic sections: (a) Knowledge, (b) Continuity, (c) Homogenization, (d) Hegemony, (e) Contestation, and (f) Transformation.

These themes or concepts are not mutually exclusive, and there is a large degree of crossover among them. Even though they are presented linearly, this is not intended to imply or suggest that they are necessarily linear, historically chronological, progressive, or bounded. If anything, the concepts might be best understood as circular and potentially multidirectional, similar to Berger and Luckmann’s (1967) conceptual flow of the social construction of reality (Figure 1.1, Figure 1.2, Appendix A). Additionally, I am not attempting to establish an original conceptual framework, but rather, I am conveying the pattern and story that emerged from the
vast literature on globalization and aligning it thematically to Berger and Luckmann’s conceptual model. The six emergent themes from the literature do topically align with the three articles in this dissertation, and I will demonstrate that in more detail following this literature review and again in the introductions to the individual articles.

In the first section I discuss the parallel emergence and coalescence of modern nation states, imperial pursuits and colonialism, and new ways of knowing in the West (Banerjee et al., 2009; Takayama, Prakash, & Connell, 2017). In this context I discuss Immanuel Wallerstein’s (1974) seminal and influential conception of world-systems analysis, and I draw connections to ways that Wallerstein’s model impacted contemporary and subsequent conceptions of globalization. In section two I discuss the continuity of colonialism in forms of globalization (Banerjee, 2007; Banerjee & Linstead, 2001; Hall, 1997; Sklair, 1995; Takayama et al., 2017), and in section three I investigate global homogenization and the conceptual paradigm of world-culture theory (Boli & Thomas, 1999; Lechner & Boli, 2005; Hannerz, 1990; Meyer et al., 1997; Robertson, 1997; Wallerstein, 1997). I address the broad concept of hegemony in section four and discuss how global neoliberalism, from its beginnings in economic theories (Becker, 1962; Schultz, 1961) to its application in nearly all facets of our global world, is a primary example of hegemony in practice (Giroux, 2012, 2014; Klees, 2008). Contestation is the theme of section five where I discuss post-colonial theoretical contestations of epistemological and ontological colonialisms (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2002; Bhambra, 2007, 2014; Connell, 2007; Hall, 1997; Said, 1978, 1986). Finally, in section six I take up the theme of transformation that is at the heart of culturalist theories (largely from cultural anthropologists and sociologists) where globalization is understood not as a homogenizing superstructure, but rather, as just one of many influences that local communities and particular cultures have the agency to accept, reject, or

Knowledge: Ways of Knowing and World-Systems Analysis

In the broadest sense, knowledge and ways of knowing, or epistemologies, can be utilized to make sense of the world, to justify an agenda, or to construct and propagate a worldview (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). In a Foucauldian sense, knowledge is never simply about knowing for the sake of knowing; rather, knowledge is always associated and intertwined with forms of power (Foucault, 1984). Clear examples of this coalescence of knowledge and power can be found in Western colonialism and in our current era of globalization, and to illustrate the ways in which knowledge has been appropriated and constructed in the service of colonial and global power and profit, it is necessary to discuss the impetus for displacing earlier epistemologies in favor of modern social science.

Modern Social Science. “She blinded me with science” was a pop song from the early 1980s by English musician Thomas Dolby (1982). In many ways this song title is apropos in an understanding of a major shift in epistemology that occurred following the Enlightenment and further in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Europe and America. Displacing existing and rival epistemological paradigms, Western social science became the dominant and normative way of knowing in the Eurocentric West and increasingly in expanding Western spheres of influence (Bhambra, 2007; Connell, 2007; Takayama et al., 2017). This epistemological turn was not an isolated event. Rather, this new modern thought emerged in connection with the heightened nationalism and colonial expansion of Western nations in the nineteenth century, and it helped the West make conceptual sense of their expanding territories as well as to justify their imperial pursuits (Bhambra, 2007, 2014; Connell, 2007; Said, 1978; Takayama et al., 2017).
Establishing the idea that societies and cultures could be investigated and explained in scientific terms, and utilizing scientific methodologies, was the first step in claiming the possibility of empirical, objective knowledge in the emerging social sciences (Edles & Appelrouth, 2015). Religious and cultural knowledge as well as indigenous epistemologies, systems Peter Berger (1990) referred to as the sacred canopy, were largely eschewed by Western powers and the Western academy in favor of these new modern social sciences. Conceptual models such as Marx’s description of historical materialism, Durkheim’s social facts, or Weber’s progressivism and economic rationalism were utilized to describe the structural mechanisms and trajectories of societies (Bhambra, 2014).

While many of these colonial master narratives, sociological paradigms, and claims of objectivity have been contested and challenged in postcolonial scholarship (e.g., Bhabha, 1994; Bhambra, 2007, 2014; Connell, 2007; Guha, 1983; Hall, 1997; Said, 1978; Spivak, 1988), a form of residual hegemony remains and can be discerned through subsequent theoretical models and analytical descriptions of global processes. Somewhat ironically, newer conceptual models of the world, such as world-systems analysis, have drawn from and function as both structural social-science models and as postcolonial critiques of structural inequality (Babones, 2015; Chirot & Hall, 1982).

there is an identifiable global system driven by a capitalist economy, and in this sense he is very Marxian (Babones, 2015; Banerjee & Linstead, 2001). Second, he located this modern world system in the sixteenth century, an era in which European powers began to politically operate as distinct nation-states (Wallerstein, 2011). These nation-states legitimated and strengthened their own identities and power through the existence and recognition of other nation-states (Robertson, 1997).

As the economies of European states expanded, they sought out new markets for the consumption of commodities as well as new resources for inexpensive raw materials. This process initiated the colonial expansion of European powers on a global scale (Antonio, 2003; Wallerstein, 2011). The rivalries for markets and resources, in the quest for more capital and profit, served to further legitimate the political structure and to coalesce capitalism and colonialism into a world-system (Babones, 2015; Banerjee & Linstead, 2001; Banerjee et al., 1999; Chirot & Hall, 1982; Wallerstein, 2011).

Wallerstein’s model presented the world as interrelated nations divided into core, semi-peripheral, and peripheral spheres. In the modern world-system the core nation/nations have exerted near hegemonic power and influence over the political and economic systems of the world, but because the “economic factors operate within an area larger than that which any political entity can totally control,” it is necessary to act through semi-peripheral nations (Wallerstein, 1974, p. 348), who, in turn, interact with and through the periphery (Figure 1.3, Appendix A). The nation or nations that operate at the core of the modern world-system, that is, for the past five hundred years, have only occupied that space relatively recently (Chirot & Hall, 1982; Wallerstein, 2011). In the more distant past, other spheres of power, such as empires like China or Rome, operated as the core, and at times it has been possible for multiple world-
systems to operate concurrently—thus, the model is referred to as a plurality of world-systems (Babones, 2015; Hier, 2001). However, there is always the potential for one nation, or political entity, to emerge as a single hegemonic power in control of a truly global and unitary world-system, and many have identified the United States as holding that role in the current modern world-system (Babones, 2015; Hall, 1997).

While Wallerstein was primarily concerned with the role of nation-states (1974) and the capitalist world-economy (1984) as drivers of the world-system, after considerable criticism (Boyne, 1990) he devoted increasing attention to cultural processes (1997). His view was that culture manifested in various forms of homogenization, resistance, and conformity. He explained that nation-states work to eliminate cultural diversity and differences for the sake of the world-economy and “the ceaseless accumulation of capital” (Wallerstein, 1997, p. 98), but ironically, they reinforce a national cultural identity to keep the state strong and to stave off cultural resistance from within. The elite in the world-system engage in and internalize a capitalist, global worldview, but non-elites and minorities (a) try to assimilate to the national culture but are largely denied, or (b) resist assimilation and through their resistance they ironically legitimate the system (Wallerstein, 1997). Ultimately, even though Wallerstein attempts to expand his focus beyond the political and economic aspects of the world-system to include substantive consideration of culture, he summarily reduces both global forms and local or particular forms of culture to the metaphor of a crutch:

I am skeptical we can find our way via a search for a purified world culture. But I am also skeptical that holding on to national or to ethnic or to any other form of particularistic culture can be anything more than a crutch. Crutches are not foolish. We
often need them to restore our wholeness, but crutches are by definition transitional and transitory phenomena (1997, p. 104)

While this view of the marginalization/homogenization/eradication of culture and cultural differences is bleak, it has and continues to create a space for further discourse on the topic where culture is considered with greater seriousness, nuance, and depth.

The influence of Wallerstein’s world-systems theory on others interested in the issues and processes of globalization is significant, and while there is not agreement or consensus on all aspects of the model, it has served to stimulate important discourse (Babones, 2015; Chirot & Hall, 1982). Wallerstein’s Marxian point of entry to global economic processes is regularly paralleled in the writings of critics of global neoliberalism (e.g., Apple, 2005; Giroux, 2014; Klees, 2008; Spring, 2015a, 2015b; Tan, 2014; Wolff, 1997), and his critique of a global profit motive resulting in core-periphery hegemony and colonialism is echoed in a range of postcolonial literature spanning decades (e.g., Ashcroft et al., 2002; Bhabha, 1994; Bhambra, 2007, 2014; Connell, 2007; Guha, 1983; Hall, 1997; Nandy, 2004; Said, 1978; Spivak, 1988). Others who are more concerned with the cultural components of the world-system regularly draw from or expand on Wallerstein’s early conceptions of a world-culture (e.g., Boli & Thomas; Hannerz, 1990, 1997; Lechner & Boli, 2005; Meyer et al., 1997), and culturalists who acknowledge the existence and potential power of a globalized world can engage in, and contest, Wallerstein’s views on culture in the world-system (e.g., Anderson-Levitt, 2003; Appadurai, 1990; Hall, 1997; Hannerz, 1990, 1997; Robertson, 1997; Spring, 1994, 2015a).

Wallerstein (2012) has clearly asserted that world-systems analysis is not a theory; rather, he views it as a model or a framework by which the world can be analyzed, and it has been described as “the widest possible lens through which to view the exercise of power in society”
(Babones, 2015, p. 5). Whether the world-systems model is a theory or an analytical lens, it is clearly a grand or master sociological model in the tradition of modern social science (Figure 1.3, Appendix A; Said, 1978). Likewise, Wallerstein is not regularly referred to as a postcolonial theorist, but his model, while primarily descriptive of colonialism, can be utilized or interpreted to reveal the colonial ambitions, injustices, and hegemony of the modern world system (Babones, 2015; Spring, 2015a). This presents the following paradox: While world-systems analysis functions to speak truth to power (i.e., to expose structural inequality), its form as an all-encompassing theory/model/framework can potentially be viewed as a manifestation of the power it was established to expose. If modern social science emerged, at least in part, to justify colonial domination of the world (Bhambra, 2014; Said, 1978), then is it plausible to suggest that certain models of globalization, including structural models such as world-systems analysis, contribute to the proliferation, and perhaps justification, of globalization as a continuation of colonialism only on a larger scale (Banerjee & Linstead, 2001; Said, 1978)?

**Continuity: Globalization as a Continuation of Colonality**

In his inaugural address on January 20, 1949, US president Harry Truman outlined his Point-Four program that, for a brief time, would become the new order in world policy, foreign relations, and globalization. In that speech Truman asserted, “We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas.” The sentiment is clear for some critics. In the years following WWII and with the ostensible withdrawal of Western colonial powers from many parts of the world, Truman’s plan was a call to extend development and technological modernization to the so-called undeveloped and underdeveloped world under the guidance of the United States (Bannerjee & Linstead, 2001). There remains a question as to whether the Point-
Four program was intended as an economic policy or if it was in fact a political policy to curb the influence of the Soviet Union and the potential spread of communism to developing countries (Truman, 1956; Mazower, 2012). One could all too easily ignore the historical context leading to Truman’s Point-Four program and conflate a political plan with an economic agenda (P. Peebles, personal communication, November 13, 2017).

Banerjee and Linstead (2001) clearly viewed Truman’s Point-Four program as a new form of economic imperialism, and they referred to the program (particularly the delineation of developed and undeveloped nations) as a watershed moment with the following impact:

A new perception of the West and the rest of the world was created on that day, marking the transition to a new imperialism. The Third World was created at that moment—on that day, over two billion people became underdeveloped (p. 689).

From this perspective, this new imperialism was a near seamless transition from the older colonial model. Different words were used to describe the power of the core nation over the semi-peripheral and peripheral nations (Wallerstein, 2011). Deviating from the colonial empire scheme, new independent and constitutionally democratic states were deliberately constructed (Wolpert, 2008). The rhetoric was that these new states needed guidance as well as financial and technological assistance in development, and the strongest of the former colonial powers, with the United States at the helm, were there to invest in their futures and guide them in their development (Bannerjee & Linstead, 2001). Again, a variant perspective might be that Truman used the development scheme to forestall global communism and to promote democracy and capitalism (Truman, 1956).

As potential evidence against the ‘seamless’ continuity thesis presented here, Truman’s Point-Four program was challenged by many neoclassical economists and fiscally conservative
politicians who viewed the program as a waste of money, and when Eisenhower came to office, the project was ended (P. Peebles, personal communication, March 18, 2018; Hendriks, 2016). However, even though the development program ceased to be directly supported and funded by the United States, it continued to be implemented through the United Nations. Further, the development investments into third world countries (intertwined with conditional investments, loan restructuring, and profit motives) are regularly and rhetorically utilized in more current models of globalization and global aid initiatives promoted primarily by powerful IGOs such as the World Bank (Keating, Preston, Burke, Heertum, & Arnove, 2013; Samoff, 2013; Schwartz, 2010; Stromquist & Sanyal, 2013). These developmental ‘investments’ have penetrated nearly all social, political, and economic spheres of society, particularly education systems (Baltodano, 2017; Harvey, 2005; Klees, 2008), and the ongoing effect has been a clear continuation of colonialism in the era of globalization (Banerjee, 2007; Banerjee & Linstead, 2001; Takayama et al., 2017).

Underpinning the American development model articulated in Truman’s (1949) speech were notions of ideological democracy and capitalism. In the decade following his speech, studies and theories in economics and comparative political science were published, and the theoretical claims supported national development as a condition for democracy (Lipset 1959, 1960), a rational economic choice approach to development (Friedman, 1955), the economization of social services (Schultz, 1961), and human capital theory for economic development (Becker, 1962; Bowman, 1966). Taken together, these studies and theories functioned as the formative justification of the development model (Spring, 2015b) where the United States would act as the world’s leader to guide developing nations in the world system (i.e., the semi-peripheral and the peripheral) toward economic development and democracy.
(Babones, 2015). This agenda virtually mirrored agendas of the older colonial regimes where
utilitarian development in service of economic prosperity, it was argued, would lead non-
Western colonial subjects toward civilization and eventually toward prosperity (Cohn, 1996;
Inden, 1990; Metcalf, 1995).

Nearly seventy years after Truman’s speech, development and democracy remain the
fundamental justifications for globalization as well as for the promotion of a free global economy
(Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Today, powerful nation-states, transnational corporations (TNCs),
inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), and international non-governmental organizations
(INGOs) regularly echo Truman’s sentiment in promotion of a globalized democratization and
development of polities, economies, and cultures around the world (Arnove, Torres, & Franz,
2013; Boli & Thomas, 1999; Spring 2015a, 2015b). While these current global agents may
operate differently than the older colonial regimes, they are certainly in the development game
for more than mere goodwill (Samoff, 2013; Schwartz, 2010; Miller, 2014).

In both colonial theory/praxis and global development theory/praxis, ideological
narratives were created to drive the agendas of the most powerful, core nations (Said, 1978,
1986). In the colonial empire model, the mission to civilize was primary, and in our current era
of globalization it is development and democracy—and an understanding of democracy in
service of private rights before public rights (Labaree, 1997). On the surface and without critical
scrutiny, both ideologies might seem plausibly benevolent, but the underbellies of these
ideologies reveal power and profit as the prime goal (Bhambra, 2014; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010).
This, then, leads to the following consideration: Is the modern world-system primarily driven by
powerful core nations and their promotion of and quest for the ceaseless amassing of capital as
Wallerstein suggested (2011, 1984), or is there an emergent and potentially transcendent global world-culture?

**Homogenization: The Emergence of a Single World-Culture?**

Those who recognize a broad and global world-system generally take seriously the possibility of an emergent, and potentially, homogenized world-culture (Spring, 2015a), and any discussion of a world-culture must consider the most prevalent approaches to the topic. The first approach is one where a world-culture is mentioned, but it is essentially reduced to and equated with the materiality of the world-system itself (Babones, 2015; Wallerstein, 1990). A second approach is one that is skeptical that world-cultural homogenization exists, but there is recognition that the world is interconnected and that, largely for economic prospects, peoples’ movements have resulted in greater inter-cultural interaction and in culture becoming “increasingly deterritorialized” (King, 1997, p. 6; Hannerz, 1990; Robertson, 1997). A third approach is the recognition of a clear and distinct world-culture that is homogenizing the diverse cultures of the world into a sort of mono-culture with standardized rules, values, and enforcement (Boli & Thomas, 1999; Lechner & Boli, 2005; Menashy, 2017; Meyer et al., 1997). Of course, there are other approaches to culture that view cultural differences as fundamental spaces to resist homogenization and hegemony and to exert power and agency in an increasingly interconnected world (Anderson-Levitt, 2003; Appadurai, 1990; Banks, 2004; Hall, 1997; May, 2009), and I will take up that discussion in the final section of this review.

**Approach 1: World-System as Culture.** The first approach to world-culture is one where culture is not discussed with any seriousness or depth. In Wallerstein’s (1974) world-systems model he recognized that culture was an important tenet of world-systems analysis, but he understood global economic forces as the primary directors of global cultural forces (Banerjee
& Linstead, 2001; Wallerstein, 1974, 1984, 1990). If there was any question in this matter, one gets more clarity when he explained that the world system *is* culture; one world-culture/world-system characterized the structural pursuit of capitalism (Wallerstein, 1990). This model presents a clear homogenization over particular cultures in the world-system, but in this view, the homogenization is coming from the world-system (as a world-culture) and not from distinct identity groups or from a distinct global culture (Boyne, 1990). Wallerstein did address the topic of culture with more seriousness in a later article (1997), but his conclusions were the same as in his earlier view: (a) there is no clear homogenized world-culture, (b) particular cultural identity groups exist but have no real agency and are temporary, and (c) both forms of culture are “crutches” (p. 104). Essentially, he simply dismisses culture from his model (Boyne, 1990; Chirot & Hall, 1982).

**Approach 2: Interconnected Cultures as the World-System.** Contrasting models assert that there is an emergent world-culture within the world-system; however in these views, a homogenized global reach is not yet realized, or even possible, because complex cultural processes and interconnections are always at work. Unlike Wallerstein’s more materialist model, this view posits an understanding of particular cultural identities, in relation to a global identity, as vital to an understanding of the world-system (Hall, 1997; Hannerz, 1990, 1997; Jameson, 1999; Robertson, 1997). Hannerz (1990) concisely summarized this approach to world-culture:

> There is now a world culture, but we had better make sure that we understand what this means. It is marked by an organization of diversity rather than by a replication of uniformity. No total homogenization of systems of meaning and expression has occurred (p. 237).
Scholars of globalization who fall into this camp are generally critical of a global economic homogenization narrative. They view cultural flows as more interconnected, and the two following examples will serve to illustrate this point of view.

First, Hannerz (1997) articulated four primary frameworks for understanding the world-system. The first two, (a) the market and (b) the state, he shared in common with Wallerstein, but he added two more that specifically addressed culture: (c) forms of life and (d) movements. For Hannerz, *forms of life* are the particularisms of diverse cultural groups across the world. *Movements* represented the mobility of these groups where, in any society in our globalized world, there exists this diversity of cultural groups that are increasingly non-attached to specific territories (Featherstone, 1990; Hannerz, 1990, 1997; King, 1997). The result is a complex heterogeneity of particular cultures that work in tandem with, or even constitute, the global as a whole. Thus, for Hannerz (1990), “the world culture is created through the increasing interconnectedness of varied local cultures, as well as through the development of cultures without a clear anchorage in any one territory” (p. 237).

A second example of this approach to world-culture is drawn from Robertson’s (1997) concept of cultural flows as the “particularization of universalism” on the one hand and the “universalization of particularism” on the other (pp. 77-78). Robertson argued that in the past the global cultural context was characterized by the particularization of universalism—for example, the diffusion and imposition of universalized cultural (or colonial) narratives such as Confucianism or Christianity onto local or particular cultures. More recently this process has reversed according to Robertson, and it should now be understood as the universalization of particularism, where the global whole, or the world-culture, is made up of a collective of distinct particular cultures. This mosaic of differences is organized around a process of “othering” (1997,
p. 89) where distinct groups construct and understand their own identities in relation to others, and the result on the global scale becomes the universalization of particularism. In this model a homogenized mono-culture is not possible, but a normalization of diversity as an expression of a global culture is presented. This paradigm has enabled the powerful actors in the globalized world to claim (and promote) a sort of harmonious acceptance of difference while maintaining near hegemonic control of the world-system (Hall, 1997).

**Approach 3: Word-Culture Theory.** Instead of viewing world culture as a global-local/global-local nexus, world-cultural theorists clearly differentiate the world-culture and the world-system. They refer to the world-systems theoretical model as a “neorealist perspective” that can be characterized as “reductionist rationalism” (Boli & Thomas, 1999, p. 15; Meyer et al., 1997). By neorealism, they suggest that world-systems theory is overly concerned with materiality and power, and, they believe that proponents of this model too easily “dismiss culture as irrelevant” (p. 15). In contrast to this neorealism, where rational actors (states and individuals) identify and pursue their own interests and usually as related to state power or economic pursuits, world-culturalists claim to take culture seriously as a homogenizing worldview that they argue is becoming an ontological reality (Boli & Thomas, 1999; Lechner & Boli, 2005; Meyer et al.).

World culturalists see states, TNCs, IGOs, and INGOs as the principle actors and enforcers of a unitary world culture. And of the four, Boli and Thomas (1999) suggested that the rampant proliferation of INGOs, with their concerns in education, healthcare, economic development, human rights, among other concerns, manifest as the empirical evidence of an emergent world culture. They explain that, “INGOs’ principal concern is enacting, codifying, modifying, and propagating world-cultural structures and principles” (1999, p. 19), and, thus, they externalize and condition the other principal actors to a common world polity/culture. Of
course, resistance to the world cultural values is acknowledged as possible, and even probable, but world-culture theorists view these values as:

Durkheimian social facts, whether revered or reviled. Thus, even though many of the world-cultural principles we discuss are contested and generate considerable conflict, their reification is enhanced by the very contestation that challenges them (Boli & Thomas, 1999, p. 18-19).

This idea of continuity through conflict, a process where conflict serves to legitimate the world-cultural model, is similar to remarks made by others with regard to the world-system (Hall, 1997; Wallerstein, 1997). Some see the integration of the world as the inevitable cause of struggle and resistance to universal values in a world polity, but again, the struggles themselves are taken as proof that a homogenized world-culture exists (Boli & Thomas, 1999; Lechner & Boli, 2005).

Having established that world-cultural theorists differentiate their view of the world from other models, just what are the fundamental tenets of world-culture theory? These theorists posit that the world-culture consists of: (a) universal applicability of values, (b) individualism, (c) rational volunteristic authority (where INGOs guide other world actors), (d) rationalizing progress (a sort of development theory), and lastly, (e) world citizenship (Boli & Thomas, 1999, p. 17). With these five principal tenets, world-cultural theorists argue that the world is progressing in a rational homogenization of one world order that transcends particular cultures and state boundaries. Ironically, even though they criticize global economic neoliberalism as rational reductionism driven by nation-states in contrast to their more universal rational progressive model (Boli & Thomas, 1999), the similarities between the broad tenets of world-cultural theory and global neoliberal economic theory are readily apparent and can be viewed as equally hegemonic from both theoretical and ontological perspectives.
Hegemony: Neoliberalism and the Economization of Everything?

Neoliberalism is a term that is used so frequently that it is difficult to know with any certainly what one means when they use it, and thus, it is important to define the term (Ball, 2012). Broadly, neoliberalism has been referred to as a theory positing a so-called rational, democratized (free and often unregulated), and marketized (or economically deterministic) approach to all political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of life on a global scale (Baltodano, 2017; Giroux, 2014; Keating et al., 2013; Klees, 2017; Samoff, 2013). Elsewhere and similarly, neoliberalism has been defined as “the universalization of market-based social relations, with the corresponding penetration in almost every aspect of our lives of the discourse and/or practice of commodification, capital accumulation and profit-making” (Shamir, 2008, p. 3). What seems most important when considering the influence of neoliberalism is that both economic/material and social elements of life are impacted (Ball, 2012; Ong, 2007), and the theory and practice of neoliberalism is so pervasive that it has become the hegemonic policy in our age of globalization (Baltodano, 2017; Giroux, 2014; Kless, 2017, 2008).

The roots of neoliberalism can be found in utilitarian and liberal economic theories from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Europe (Ong, 2007). In works by Adam Smith (1776/2003), David Ricardo (1817/2010) and, John Stuart Mill (1861/2017), a free and open market was argued to be the best possible economic approach to ensure the greatest amount of good for the greatest amount of people, as well as to ‘civilize’ colonial lands (Antonio, 2003). These theories became normative and functionally drove the majority of colonial regimes, in particular the British colonial empire, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Cohn, 1996; Dirks, 1992; Metcalf, 1995). This liberal form of colonial economic determinism, driven by a non-stop accumulation of capital, infiltrated into all aspects of society, and this is the same

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hegemonic pursuit of capital that is recognizable in our current era of global neoliberalism (Ball, 2002; Baltodano, 2017; Klees, 2008).

While the emergence of neoliberalism is generally said to have occurred as a result of the political agendas and policies enacted in the Reagan and Thatcher administrations in the 1980s (Baltodano, 2017; Klees, 2008; Samoff, 2013), it is clear that this form of market-driven economic determinism was in existence earlier (Klees, 2016). Truman (1949) outlined America’s policy on global-scale development theory, and this was justified in the subsequent decades with economic studies that were in support of the economization of social systems (Bowman, 1966; Friedman, 1955; Lipset, 1959; Schultz, 1961). By the 1980s (and into our current era), social systems such as education systems were beginning to be run less as a fundamental social services and more as marketized enterprises in service of a global knowledge economy and global capitalism (Apple, 2005; Baltodano, 2017; Giroux, 2014; Spring, 2015a).

Karl Marx’s (1867/1990) seminal work, Capital, described the pervasiveness and potentially adverse sociological and economic impacts of capitalism—especially as a global phenomenon. His writing was in reaction to liberal and utilitarian economic theories that were used to justify and support capitalism (Edles & Appelrouth, 2015). Similarly, Wallerstein’s (1997) world-systems model explained the ways in which the “ceaseless accumulation of capital” (p. 98) has enabled powerful and core nations in the modern world-system to exploit the resources of weaker nations and to exert power, sometimes hegemonic power, over them. Wallerstein, a clear Marxian thinker, developed his world-systems model in the neoliberal era, and his writings have helped other scholars working with a global perspective to discern the continuity of the Western colonial and libertarian mindset in the neoliberal practices of
globalization today (Balbones, 2015). This is particularly true for post-colonial theorists who fundamentally view colonialism as residually pervasive in a so-called post-colonial world.

**Contestation: Post-Colonialism and the Global Cultural Postmodern**

Edward Said (1986) wrote, “There have been no full-scale critical studies of the relationship between modern Western imperialism and its culture, the occlusion of that deeply symbiotic relationship being a result of it” (p. 59). This was a call to scholars to contest the hegemony of colonialism in all its forms, including the sometimes forgotten or the hidden-in-front-of-your-face forms. He continued, “More particularly, the extraordinary dependence—formal and ideological—of the great French and English novel on the facts of empire has never been studied from a theoretical point of view” (p. 59). In their seminal book on the topic of post-colonial literature titled *The Empire Writes Back*, Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tifflin (2002) answered Said’s call and posed the following important rhetorical questions:

- Why should post-colonial societies continue to engage with the imperial experience?
- Since all the post-colonial societies we discuss have achieved political independence, why is the issue of coloniality still relevant at all? (p. 6).

Their answer is that coloniality doesn’t just go away if it has been structurally pervasive to the point of being residually hegemonic. In their study they demonstrated how the colonial experience was conveyed as fundamentally normative in culture and literature. Colonial literature, that continued to be used after the official colonial rule, served as the basis of educational curriculum (Ashcroft et al., 2002), and thus, a colonial worldview continues to condition the so-called post-colonial world (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). It is for this reason that critical post-colonial scholars have to perpetually be on the lookout for residual as well as new forms of colonial oppression and hegemony and to actively contest its presence (Said, 1986).
The master narratives of colonial domination and structural hegemony become imbedded in structures and culture (Takayama et al., 2017). These epistemological forms of knowledge, and their institutional conduits, support and justify coloniality—and primarily from a Western perspective (Assié-Lumumba, 2017; Bhambra, 2014; Connell, 2007). The post-colonial contestations of residual and emergent forms of coloniality have come from minoritized and expatriate intellectuals working in the global North (e.g., Banks, 2009; Collins, 1991; Said, 1978; Spivak, 1998)—voices Collins (1991) referred to as outsiders-within—as well as from scholars working in the global South (e.g., Freire, 2014; Nandy, 2004). These intellectuals have challenged epistemological and colonial hegemony in the social sciences, in education, in literature, and in other pervasive cultural sources (Connell, 2007), and these contestations are vital in our era of globalization where coloniality is always present in some form or another (Takayama et al., 2017).

A movement that began, in part, as a reaction to structural hegemonic master narratives was the turn toward post-modernism—conceived of as beyond the modern narrative of development, progress, and so-called objectivity (Said, 1986). While many post-colonial intellectuals have drawn inspiration from and contributed to postmodern thought, postmodernism has also been criticized as limited for not considering the colonial experience in any substantive way (Said, 1986). Somewhat ironically, then, the forces of globalization (i.e., the world-system, the world-culture, the neoliberal hegemons) have appropriated and colonized the postmodern relativism and particularism, the multicultural pluralism, and the postmodern inward turn and used it for their gain (Bannerjee & Linstead, 2001; Hall, 1997; Kymlicka, 2012). The result of this has been what Hall (1997) referred to as the “global cultural postmodern” (p. 19). It is characterized as a “peculiar form of homogenization” where the economic and political elite (i.e.,
the drivers of the current global world-system that emanates from the US) seek to “operate through” the governments and economically elite of less powerful nations and cultures (p. 28).

The goal of the new global system is to find inroads into the lives and lifestyles of ordinary individuals as well and to indoctrinate them into the have-to-have-it-now consumerism that characterizes the global world system/culture today (Hall, 1997; Klees, 2017). They promote a narrative, much like the ones described by Hannerz (1990) and Robertson (1997), that embraces cultural diversity and pluralism; only the underlying motivation is to appropriate every form of capital, including human capital in all its diverse cultural forms, in the ongoing quest for increased power and economic accumulation (Hall, 1997; Klees, 2016; Tan, 2014). Through this process, the diverse cultures and agency of real people are at stake; however, this ‘end of history’ narrative is not the only possibility or point of view (Fukuyama, 1992). The neoliberal global mass culture that characterizes the current world system is a different kind of colonialism. Its own transformation that now operates through difference and diversity has, perhaps, left itself vulnerable to a deeper and more structural transformation emanating from the diverse margins (Bhambra, 2014; Connell, 2007; Goh, 2008; Hall, 1997; Takayama et al., 2017).

**Transformation: Agency of Particular Cultures within Globalization**

The global world system is real, and there are powerful entities that are attempting to exert hegemony over the system; however, particular cultures are on to it (Anderson-Levitt, 2003). Many people have argued that in various ways the colonial center has been in the consciousness of the periphery for a much longer time than the periphery has had the attention of the center (Bhambra, 2014; Connell, 2007; Featherstone, 1990; Hall, 1997; Hannerz, 1997; King, 1997; Takayama et al., 2017). This suggests that what Wallerstein (2011) has referred to as the peripheries are not helplessly subject to the whims of the center; rather, people in the margins
and the periphery have always had forms of agency even if they did not have the sheer power to resist the more hegemonic power of the center (Appadurai, 1990; Goh, 2008; Marginson & Rhoades, 2002; May, 2009). And maybe more significantly, the core nations are late in an understanding of the complexities of the global system—even if they were the ones to create/impose it. King’s (1997) description helps to make this point more clear:

The culture, society and space of early twentieth century Calcutta or Singapore pre-figured the future in a much more accurate way than did that of London or New York.

“Modernity” was not born in Paris but rather in Rio. (p. 8).

If we consider the interconnections of the global world today and take seriously this idea that so-called peripheral nations have been anticipating our global era to exert their studied role in the world system, then “what is now the Third World would historically more accurately be labeled the First World, and the First World would become the Third” (King, 1997, p. 8).

The salient point here is that in the colonial system of the past, people had a measure of agency, and in our current global world system, people continue to have agency—certainly greater agency. Local cultures have the ability to accept, reject, or transform the ideas and flows emanating from the broader global system (Anderson-Levitt, 2003). According to Appadurai (1990), our global system is one in which cultural flows are constantly flowing back and forth from the global to the local and from the local to the global, and these cultural flows are a regular tug-of-war match of imposition, appropriation, and resistance. Appadurai (1990) identified five dimensions of cultural flows as follows: (a) ethnoscapes, (b) technoscapes, (c) finanscapes, (d) mediascapes, and (e) ideoscapes. It is the resistance and agency within these cultural flows, then, that has the potential to lead to the most equitable transformation in our current era (Appadurai, 1990; Bhambra, 2014; Hall, 1997).
Culture is not static or a manifestation of some kind of eternal yesterday (Banks, 2004; May, 2009). Culture is fluid at all times (Tierney & Landford, 2015), and the diverse and particular cultures of the world are, right now, exerting their agency in our era of globalization through the very infrastructures that have been constructed to control them (Hall, 1997; Takayama et al., 2017). In a paper contemplating the complexities and the future of world-systems, world-culture, and neoliberalism within a broader globalized world, Hall (1997) articulated an optimistic view and ascribed real power, agency, and the potential for structural change through movements of resistance by culturally and economically marginalized groups; in his words:

The most profound cultural revolution has come about as a consequence of the margins coming into representation—in art, in painting, in film, in music, in literature, in the modern arts everywhere, in politics, and in social life generally. Our lives have been transformed [emphasis added] by the struggle of the margins to come into representation. Not just to be placed by the regime of some other or imperializing eye but to reclaim some form of representation for themselves (p. 34).

Our current global system is inherently, and in many ways overtly, an inequitable system (Spring, 2015a), but Hall was hopeful that within the era of globalization power would come from the margins. He viewed it as “a space of weak power but it is a space of power, nonetheless” (Hall, 1997, p. 34; Goh, 2008). It has been twenty years since Hall expressed this optimism, and it would be interesting to know his reaction to our global world as it exists today. Encouragingly, postcolonial and global studies intellectuals and activists—as well as people just living their lives—continue to work to contest, to contribute to, and to transform a global system that has the potential to foster authentic inclusiveness and cooperation rather than to perpetuate
inequity in perpetuity (e.g., Assié-Lumumba, 2017; Bhambra, 2014; Connell, 2007; Khan, 2010; May, 2009; Takayama et al., 2017).

Connections of the Literature Review to the Three Articles

The purpose of the preceding literature review was to provide a broad theoretical, conceptual, and contextual portrayal of globalization and global discourse, and the aim in this section is to connect the literature review to the three articles of this study. The ubiquity and coercion of global forces is the common thread that weaves the articles together, and it is the overriding research problem the three articles share. However, the conceptual model that emerged from the literature on globalization (Figure 1.2, Appendix A) reveals that resistance to, and transformation of, global hegemony is certainly possible (Hall, 1997). Thus, the design of this study seeks an understanding of these opposing forces. As the three articles/studies in this dissertation consecutively emerged, a discernable pattern (one closely aligned to the conceptual literature review) presented itself (Table 1.1). Article one investigates the historical development of education in colonial and global eras and serves as the necessary background to articles two and three. Elaborating on conclusions from article one, article two investigates the reach of global education initiatives and is a deliberately designed inquiry into the societal level of educational discourse. Article three is a study designed to investigate the responses of individuals (i.e., societal stakeholders) who seemingly reject much of the normative neoliberal discourse as it applies to career choices by enrolling in a college where the curriculum is traditional Indian craft and design. The rationale and goal of this third study was to understand student motivations to resist more socially prescribed degree programs.

Conceptual Pattern in Article One: Knowledge and Continuity
Article one was designed to investigate two distinct phases of globalization as it related to educational impositions in India, and the objective was to identify global hegemony and coercion. These phases included (a) the British colonial use of education to variously indoctrinate the Indian population in the service of the British colonial empire and (b) the globalization of education and its proliferation in India along neoliberal, market-model lines in service of global capitalism. These objectives correspond with the themes of knowledge and continuity in the conceptual literature review that, in turn, correspond with Berger and Luckmann’s (1967) concepts of externalization and acceptance in their model of the social construction theory (SCT) (Table 1.1; Figure 1.1, Figure 1.2, Appendix A).

Knowledge. The first article explores the ways in which the British colonial empire appropriated Indian forms of knowledge as a tool to both understand India and to exert political and economic power over the Indian subcontinent. The idea was that if British scholars (i.e., orientalists) applied modern social science techniques to Indian forms of knowledge, they could master and control Indian epistemologies, as well as exert Western epistemologies as superior and normative (Inden, 1990; Prakash, 1992). Following the initial appropriation phase, the British made concerted efforts to implement the education of the Indian population, and this too was a calculated initiative to expand their political and economic empire (Metcalf, 1995).

An assertion made by the British during their occupation of India was that British society had attained a high level of civilization and that India lagged behind (Metcalf, 1995). Thus, with the help of the British, and largely through the implementation of educational initiatives, it was asserted that India might eventually have the potential to rise to the level of the British at some point in the future (Macaulay, 1835/1995). In other words, education was externalized as a means to help India modernize through the training of students as human capital, and this human
capital would expand the power and profits of the British colonial empire. Through this process, the benefits of modernization would trickle down to India generally as well as to individual Indians. If people in India accepted or internalized that the British colonial education was in their best interest, then the British, as a core nation in the world-system, would possess a greater degree of political and economic power over India as a resource (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Wallerstein, 2011).

**Continuity.** The second section of the article investigates the implementation of global neoliberalism on education in India. India gained her independence from the British in 1947, and following independence there was a constitutional commitment to educate all children in the country (Probe report, 1999). However, the more socialist beginnings of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru’s tenure gave way to subsequent policies that discouraged large investments in government education (Dreze & Sen, 2013). By the 1990s India’s public education system was
underfunded and generally failing (Kingdon, 2005), and this provided an opening for neoliberal reforms in education (Oza, 2012).

In this context, the article discusses educational policies in India, such as school privatization and fee-based schooling, that fall in line with global educational initiatives that generally treat education as a market commodity (Baltodano, 2017; Giroux, 2014; Klees, 2008; Spring, 2015a). One of the conclusions in the article is that India has experienced distinct forms of global imperialism (i.e., colonial liberalism and global neoliberalism) that have utilized education as means to exert political and economic hegemony (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977), and through these processes one can discern the continuity of imperialism from the colonial era to the era of globalization.

**Conceptual Pattern in Article Two: Homogenization and Hegemony**

Article one provided the theoretical and historical context on the development of education in India, and article two, as a qualitative media study, investigates and analyzes the extent to which globalized market-model education has penetrated Indian education. The study utilizes a qualitative research method known as ethnographic content analysis (ECA) to identify and analyze media promotion of, and discourse on, globalized market-model (i.e., neoliberal) education initiatives (Altheide & Schneider, 2013; Ball, 2012). This study most clearly connects to the general conceptual model in the areas of homogenization and hegemony (Table 1.1).

**Homogenization.** The second article contributes to the field of global, international, and comparative education by investigating the presence of globalized education forms in India. If the objective of world-culture/world-society theorists and proponents (e.g., INGOs) is to implement (or identify) standardized education forms across the globe (Shofer & Meyer, 2005), then it is useful to investigate the extent to which this standardization or homogenization is
actually present. The sample media data that this study examined were print media, television and film, and street advertising, and through careful analysis I identified several inter-textual themes from the data (Altheide & Schneider, 2013; Creswell, 2016; Stokes, 2013).

At the outset, the study was designed to provide information on the similarities of educational initiatives that are discussed and promoted in Indian media to those espoused and promoted in the broader context of the globalization of education (Spring, 2015a). To accomplish this, I collected media data around the much anticipated announcement of annual standardized school board exam scores for two consecutive years. Additionally, the study design called for careful attention to media messages on education that revealed potential or outright resistance to the increasingly dominant and global market-model in an effort to understand the full complexity of the issue (Hall, 2012). Based on the pilot study I conducted in 2017 it was clear that global neoliberal education themes dominated India’s media, and after a second year of field-data collection in the summer of 2018, I can say with resolve that the global educational objectives of so-called meritocratic and market-model structures, assessments, and achievements dominate India’s media and can fairly be described as hegemonic (Ball, 2012; Baltodano, 2017; Klees, 2017; Spring, 2015a).

**Hegemony.** The hegemonic power that is broadly apparent in the literature on globalization generally, and the globalization of education in particular, is economic neoliberalism (e.g., Baltodano, 2017; Giroux, 2014; Ball, 2012; Klees, 2008; Harvey, 2005; Bannerjee & Linstead, 2001). The following global education initiatives have been identified by educational theorists and researchers as neoliberal trends: structuralized meritocracy (Ravitch, 2013; Khan, 2010); high-stakes testing and outcomes assessments (Spring, 2015a; Ravitch, 2013); curriculum standardization with a STEM emphasis (Ravitch, 2013); school choice and
privatization (Klees, 2017; Menashy, 2017; Lawrence, 2005; Apple, 2005; Tooley & Dixon, 2005); public-private partnerships (Baltodano, 2017; Srivastava, 2010); vouchers (Klees, 2017; Apple, 2005; Kingdon, 2005); and the marketization of both school curriculum and school choice (Baltodano, 2017; Klees, 2017; Spring, 2015a; Ball, 2012).

These neoliberal educational initiatives were readily apparent in the data I collected for the 2017 pilot study and the follow-up field study in 2018. However, this two-year study also revealed that not all of the societal stakeholders in India simply or fully accept the overt market model education system that has become normative. Rather, there is proactive resistance that potentially calls into question the long-term viability of market-centered education moving forward. Thus, the broad thematic findings that I articulate in article two are somewhat mixed as follows: (a) Constructing meritocracy, (b) Maintaining meritocracy, and (c) Contesting meritocracy. The first two of these thematic findings conform to the increasing homogenization of global educational structures and aims, and the third theme problematizes this otherwise neat and tidy conformity.

**Conceptual Pattern in Article Three: Contestation and Transformation**

While the methodological design of article two could have been extended to investigate responses by individual recipients and stakeholders of India’s current educational climate within the same study, it has been argued that in media studies that employ qualitative content analysis, it is very difficult to measure the actual effect of media content on society—i.e., to establish the causal effect of media on society (Stokes, 2013). There were certainly data in the pilot study that demonstrated resistance to global education initiatives—such as print media stories reporting on entire villages abandoning low-fee private schools en masse in favor of free government schooling. Stories such as these ran counter to the much more common news stories promoting
school privatization, and they demonstrate how qualitative content analysis of media texts reveal a complex and heterogeneous discourse (Altheide & Schneider, 2013). While this resistance is importantly discussed in the findings of article two, the decision was made to design a stand-alone third study to gather information on individual reactions to global, market-model education in India. Thus, the third article in this three-article dissertation is an ethnographic study that explores student motivations to resist participation in the socially prescriptive global knowledge economy through their pursuit of tertiary education in traditional Indian craft and design.

**Contestation.** Traditional cultural crafts are big business and important exports for India (Bano, 2016), and as such, one might assume that there is an educational infrastructure that supports and promotes craft traditions and the business of craft at all levels. However, the educational tracks and careers in business are still esteemed as inferior to tracks in science and technology (Zakaria, 2015), and this is largely a result of the influence of global education trends that serve to support the broader global knowledge economy (Altbach, 2015; Tierney & Lanford, 2015). For this reason, students who deliberately choose to pursue higher education in the field of craft appear at the outset to be *contesting* the more normative status quo of global trends and societal expectations in India—especially students who are not necessarily socio-economically privileged but who still have and make the proactive *choice* to study traditional craft.

This third study was designed to investigate individual student motivations to pursue craft education as well as to observe the process of craft pedagogy in a formal higher educational setting. This was accomplished by conducting class observations and semi-formal and formal interviews with students and faculty at a prominent college of craft and design in Jaipur, India for a period of three months in 2018. Additionally, I extended the observations beyond the more formal college setting to observe craft instruction and artisan interactions in craft workshops in
and around the city of Jaipur—a city and region particularly known for traditional craft production (DeNicola & DeNicola, 2012). This ethnographic data collection process was designed to deliberately gather information on student and artisan stories across gender, class, and caste lines, and this process is explained in more detail in chapter four of this dissertation.

**Transformation.** During the design phase of this study it was perhaps premature to conjecture in advance of data collection and analysis whether or not students in traditional craft and design studies resist all forms of globalization (e.g., globalized education and global capitalism). However, given the sheer volume of governmental revenues generated from craft production in India (Bano, 2016), it seemed plausible to predict that students who pursue careers in craft have intentions to enter the global market infrastructures—perhaps as intermediaries and liaisons between the urban global markets and the rural craft producers and artisans (DeNicola & DeNicola, 2012; Wilkinson-Weber & DeNicola, 2016). I thought that if this is the case, one could potentially make the case that students who eschew STEM studies and careers—fields that conform to global aims and that support a global knowledge economy—are actually utilizing and transforming the very global infrastructures that were constructed to condition Indian society to global agendas over and above local cultural concerns (Hall, 1997). Rather than reverting to traditional cultural forms in the effort to escape the current global world, as Gandhi (1909/2012) had encouraged the Indian population to do in the wake of Western impositions of the industrialized state, these students of traditional Indian craft could potentially be understood as exerting their cultural identity and agency within the global system—rejecting some aspects and accepting and/or transforming others (Anderson-Levitt, 2003; Klymicka, 2013; Tierney & Lanford, 2015).
The findings from this third study do partially support the initial conjectures I made in the design and sampling phase of this study; however, they were more complicated than I had anticipated. Students from the samples that I interviewed and observed articulated a wide variety of motivations to pursue formal education in traditional craft and design—some of which did not conform to or validate the expected model. Likewise, the pedagogical mission, goals, and objectives articulated by administrators and faculty at the institution where I conducted research did reveal a clear aim to contest and transform the more standardized and normative processes utilized in more typical education settings in India (i.e., those that support standardized skills and assessments supporting STEM fields). However, based on months of class observations that I completed in various contexts, it is clear that efforts to ‘deprogram’ and subsequently ‘reprogam’ students from rote memory robots to critical and creative free thinkers was more of a stated goal than a consistent pedagogical reality. These mixed findings do not render the study moot. On the contrary, they demonstrate the ubiquity of global educational initiatives in India and the complex ways individual students and institutions attempt to contest and resist structural hegemony from within the broader system (Collins, 1991).

**Research Questions of the Three Articles**

Earlier in this introduction the following umbrella research questions to this study were posed: How will Indian culture fare in the presence of global forces? Will India simply acquiesce to global hegemony (particularly as it applies to education), or will people embrace, resist, or even transform global hegemony to their advantage (Anderson-Levitt, 2003; Hall, 1997)? The three articles that comprise this dissertation were designed to help answer these broad questions, and in turn, each article is guided by its own research questions that serve to inform the designs of the individual studies.
Article one, as a more theoretical and historical paper, explores the development of formal education in India from the colonial period to the current era of globalization. The central and guiding questions in the article are as follows: (a) In what ways have colonial liberalism and global neoliberalism impacted education in India over time, and (b) in the current educational climate in India “[i]f public schools are in such disrepair and these schools are constitutionally guaranteed as vital and fundamental Indian institutions, then why not make a concerted effort to fix them?” (Boucher, 2017, p. 60). The implication of this second question is that India purports on one hand to value and support public education as a societal means to help all children advance in an equitable manner; but on the other hand, there is copious evidence that India also promotes market-model education initiatives that are not available to the majority of Indian students who are poor, and this perpetuates social inequality (Probe, 1999). This first article explores the historical development of this social problem by examining the rhetoric and utilitarianism of colonial liberalism and global neoliberalism and the impact of this rhetoric on education in India.

Article two was designed to examine the extent to which global educational initiatives have been imposed on and implemented in India. The study is a bounded case study that investigates media reporting of educational stories around the annual announcement of standardized board exam scores, and it explored answers to the following research questions: (a) How might the anticipation and announcement of high-stakes standardized board exam scores impact the types of media messages that are promoted leading up to and following the exam score announcements? (b) Further, to what extent does media in India serve to potentially condition the public to globalized market-model education initiatives, and how might this impact socio-economic and socio-political equitability for marginalized students? These questions
directly inform the design and methods of the study where inter-textual media discourse becomes the primary source of inquiry (Altheide & Schneider, 2013; Stokes, 2013; Hall, 2012).

While article two is an inter-textual study that analyzes the discourse within and among media texts on educational subjects, article three was designed to investigate student reactions to globalized, market-model education promotion. Instead of directly interviewing students to ascertain their reactions to particular media messages and educational expectations (a method that could have been utilized as an extension of article two), the design of this study was informed by the following questions: (a) What are the motivations that students express as their impetus to pursue formal higher education in traditional craft and design? (b) Further, in what ways does craft pedagogy align with or contest pedagogies that support a global knowledge economy, and (c) how might a focus in traditional Indian craft enable students to engage and preserve their unique identity in the emergent presence of a global culture? By identifying and interviewing a diverse mix of students who have made the proactive choice to eschew studies that directly comply with globalized education, societal educational expectations, and the broader global knowledge economy, this study aimed to provide information on the complexities of resistance toward and transformation of global hegemony.

**Proposed Journals for Publication Submission**

This dissertation format was adapted from the three-articles dissertation model developed at the University of Texas-Austin (2015). A requirement in that model is that doctoral students who follow this format provide their advisory committee with the proposed journals where they plan to submit the completed articles. The committee has the task of deeming whether or not the journals selected by the student are appropriate or realistic given the topic and scope of the individual article, and the committee can suggest alternate journals as they see fit.
As mentioned above, the first article in this dissertation was previously published in an international, peer-reviewed journal dedicated broadly to topics in global studies (Boucher, 2017). Per the UT guidelines, it is acceptable that one of the three articles has been previously published in an academic journal. That article is presented in chapter two of this dissertation, and per copyright agreement, it appears as it was initially published in *The Global Studies Journal*.

As a first choice, I plan to submit article two (on media promotion and discourse of globalized education in India) to *Comparative Education Review*, a top-tier journal published and edited by the Comparative International Education Society. I believe this article will substantively contribute to the field of comparative and international education, and it will further fill a significant gap in the scholarly literature through its investigation and analysis of the promotion of globalized market-model educational initiatives in Indian media. My second choice for submission of this article, should it not be accepted by *Comparative Education Review*, is the international, peer-reviewed, and open access *Journal of Education and Cultural Studies*. This journal publishes original scholarship in all areas of education and culture, and since my study substantively investigates the coalescence of education and cultural media studies in India, it stands a good chance of being accepted in this particular journal.

I have selected *Cultural Studies* as my first journal choice for submission of article three. This interdisciplinary and peer-reviewed journal, published by Taylor and Francis, publishes original scholarship on topics related to culture practices and transformations and resistance toward institutions and structures of power. Several formative articles that helped to inform my study were published in this journal, and I feel the aim and scope of my third article (that investigates craft education and pedagogy a transformative of global hegemony) uniquely aligns with the aim of this journal. My second journal choice for this article is *Identities: Global*
Studies of Culture and Power published by Taylor and Francis. This journal’s aim is on cultural identities and agency in the transformation of global systems of power, and this is a process I consider in article three. Both of these journals encourage interdisciplinary studies, and either one would be a good choice for submission of my third article that engages the interdisciplinary topics of craft, culture, globalization, and education.

Chapter Summary

This introductory chapter articulated the colonizing effect of globalization as the broad and overarching research problem that is shared by the three discrete articles that comprise this dissertation. The purpose of the study as a whole is to investigate the implications of globalization generally, and the globalization of education in particular, on education and culture in India—as a means to establish the ubiquity, hegemony, and sheer reach of global processes. After establishing the research problem and purpose, I described the aim and scope of the three articles that constitute this dissertation and described my personal connection to India and to the study. I followed this introductory material with a conceptual literature review on the topic of globalization and globalizing narratives.

The conceptual literature review was intended to theoretically and thematically situate the broad study in relation to social-construction theory, world-system theory, world-culture theory, post-colonial theory, and finally, cultural-agency theory. Following the conceptual literature review, I discussed the connection of the three articles, with their topics on globalization, education, and culture in India, to the themes and concepts presented in the literature review. I then restated the research questions of the three articles, and concluded with a proposal of journals I plan to submit the articles to for potential publication.
In chapter two I present article one in its entirety as it was originally published in 2017 with the title: Colonial Liberalism, Global Neoliberalism, and Education in India. The article is preceded by a brief introduction that is intended to connect the article to the broader research problem, research purpose, and conceptual framework of this dissertation as a whole.
References


(Original work published 1817).


Chapter Two

Colonial Liberalism, Global Neoliberalism, and Education in India

Introduction to Article

Global imperialism is not new. Since at least the sixteenth century, European nations began to expand their economic and political interests beyond Europe to virtually all other areas of the world—creating a hierarchical and interconnected world-system (Wallerstein, 2011). By the nineteenth century, Britain was arguably the most hegemonic European empire, and of its holdings, India was prized as the jewel in its crown (Wolpert, 2008). As such a prized and lucrative holding, the British sought to utilize every resource that India had to offer to support their colonial empire, and these resources substantively included human resources. In the nineteenth century the British implemented the formal education of Indian students in the effort to train Indian human resources in support of British interests.

Following independence from the British, India retained the public education system that was first introduced by the British, but due to increasing educational decentralization, the lack of political will and governmental investment, and general corruption, the Indian public school system was generally in disrepair by the 1990s (Cheney, Ruzzi, & Muralidharan, 2006; Dreze & Sen, 2013; Kingdon, 2005). It was in this decade that a new form of global imperialism was substantively introduced into India—namely, global neoliberalism (Oza, 2012). The imposition of neoliberal economic reforms in India’s social services such as education was a condition set

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by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in exchange for international loans and loan restructuring (Corbridge & Harriss, 2001; Dreze & Sen, 2013).

It is these two waves of imperialism into India and their impact on education in the country that is investigated in this article. The colonizing aim and impact of educational initiatives is presented as the broad research problem, and the purpose of the article is to provide information on the coloniality of past and current educational structures, policies, and initiatives in India. This article represents the knowledge construction and colonial continuity phases of the broad conceptual model of this dissertation (Figure 2.1).

**Figure 2.1.** Connection of article one to global conceptual model.
Abstract

This article is a study of the impact of liberalism and neoliberalism on educational policy in India. The focus is on two waves of colonial enterprise into India. The first phase occurred in the nineteenth century and was ideologically fueled by post-Enlightenment liberalism. At this time the British conspicuously and proactively colonized India and justified this colonial project on liberal, Eurocentric grounds. In this context, I examine the impact of liberalism and utilitarianism on education policy and argue that modern, secular education was uniquely an outcome of colonial ideology in India. In the second section of the article, following post-colonial and critical theorists of education, I argue that global neoliberalism is a continuation of colonialism, albeit in different form, and that this new form of global colonization is reversing educational commitment and policy in India from secular public education to privatized education and school choice in the service of global neoliberal interests.

Keywords: colonialism, liberalism, globalization, neoliberalism, education, India
Colonial Liberalism, Global Neoliberalism, and Education in India

Globalization has had a profound impact on economies, polities, and cultures worldwide, with scholars from various disciplines striving to make sense of this nebulous concept. Central to much of the discourse is whether there is a global superstructure that transcends national boundaries, economies, and cultures; manifesting as a hegemonic global culture (Spring, 2015). The debate is lively, and there is no broad consensus. World-culture theorists argue that there is a clear globalized entity that is homogenizing the cultures of the world into a sort of monoculture (Ross & Gibson, 2007). Culturalists disagree and argue that global agendas and imports are sometimes selected, other times rejected, and always transformed at the local level (Anderson-Levitt, 2003). Still, others argue, from a post-colonial and critical theoretical perspective, that globalization is a continuation of Western colonialism that came to an end following WWII but continues in a neo-colonial form today in the guise of globalization (Banerjee & Linstead, 2001).

It is this postcolonial view that this article adopts in which the educational policies in India are examined from the colonial to the current era as a way to illustrate the position that neoliberal globalization is a continuation of Western colonialism.

The neoliberal globalization of education has adversely impacted India’s education system. India constitutionally guarantees quality public education for all, while India’s public schools are failing due to the lack of investment and political will to ensure their quality (Probe report, 1999). In alignment with global neoliberal education aims, India’s schools are becoming increasingly privatized, and this further marginalizes poor students who cannot afford private education and perpetuates social inequality (Probe report, 1999). This article explores the historical development of this social problem by examining the rhetoric and utilitarianism of colonial liberalism and global neoliberalism and the impact of this rhetoric on education in India.
While public schools served the economic interests of the colonial empire, private schooling serves global neoliberal interests. Both systems established hierarchies to serve their interests, and thus, both can be viewed as hegemonic colonialisms. To better understand the connections between classical liberalism in the colonial age and global neoliberalism in our current age, the purpose of the first section is to describe and define these ideologies.

A central argument in this article is that the British colonial powers utilized the post-Enlightenment concepts of liberalism and utilitarianism as a justification to maximize political and economic hegemony in India. An important part of the colonial plan was to manage and educate the Indian population in the service of the British colonial empire. With that context in mind, in the second section, this article argues that our understanding of modern, secular education has roots in colonial-era India. To support this claim, this article examines three tracks of colonial education policy: orientalism and indigenous education, missionary education, and colonial government education.

The third section of the article explores the concept of global neoliberalism as it applies to Indian education policy. The economically hegemonic powers of neoliberalism embraced by many in India since the 1990s has reversed the colonial trend of secular public schools to trends that favor privatization of education (Oza, 2012). Consequently, the constitutionally supported commitment to free universal public education in India is giving way to neoliberal economic pressure and growing social inequality. Schooling is becoming commodified to sort and stratify students along economically competitive lines that carry over into life chances beyond school (Gupta, 2000; Oza, 2012). As the following section details, the historical development of colonial liberalism to global neoliberalism reveals interesting parallels.
Colonial Liberalism and Global Neoliberalism: Comparisons and Contrasts

The concept of liberalism has changed over time. One might think of a socio-political liberal as a person who values equitable education policy, civil liberties, and social justice. This is an accurate understanding of liberalism as we use the word today, and it has a historical connection to classical liberalism. Furthermore, the term neoliberalism is more than just a new form of liberalism. In order to avoid confusion, it is important to consider the historical contexts in which these related, but different, concepts emerged.

Classical Liberalism

Classical liberalism emerged out of the European Enlightenment in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and embraced science, rationality, and objectivity over religious and superstitious worldviews (Jeynes, 2007). There was an emphasis on both freedom and liberty in political, economic, and social matters. Thus, the roots of both social justice and economic liberty are found in classical liberalism, which complicates our current understanding of liberalism as economic liberty is typically associated with politically right-wing conservatism and at odds with left-wing liberalism.

Proponents of classical liberalism were reacting against monarchial economic hegemony. Familiar phrases such as no taxation without representation reflect the call for democratic ideals. However, the leading voices of classical liberalism were primarily writing for the educated upper classes of their societies (Jeynes, 2007). Although they claimed universal and inalienable rights for all, in truth they were calling for greater agency for the economic elites of society and not for the common people. Thus, classical liberalism was founded on hierarchical grounds, and the implication and impact have been the establishment of structural inequality based on class.
By the time of the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century, the disparities between the elite and laboring classes were becoming pronounced. This posed a problem for economic elites who justified their prosperity through liberal ideas of democratic equitability but whose status necessitated cheap labor. The opening of international colonial markets relieved some of the pressure of this inherent contradiction (Antonio, 2003). Colonial markets offered Western powers cheap labor, raw materials, and new export opportunities. Moreover, colonial powers justified their colonial ambitions on liberal values. Specifically, they claimed to be spreading “civilization” and industry to backward areas of the world, producing a progressive step forward for the colonized (Metcalf, 1995). Those who advocate global scale neoliberal policies employ this same rhetoric.

**Global Neoliberalism**

Neoliberalism is a form of global economic imperialism, generally understood as an ideological initiative to promote so-called “economic rationalization,” centering on economic liberalization and privatization on a global scale (Keating et al., 2013, p. 247). While proponents of neoliberal thought claim to be promoting democratic values of equitability for all, critics argue that neoliberalism is a thinly veiled imperialism or neo-colonialism (Spring, 2015). The origins of neoliberalism are typically tied to the Reagan and Thatcher regimes in the US and UK, with subsequent support for neoliberal economic policies being supplied by the Clinton, Bush, and Obama administrations (Keating et al., 2013).

Precedents to a theory of neoliberalism can be found in world-system theory. This perspective rests on the neo-Marxist idea that there are core and peripheral nations, with the core nations exerting influence over the peripheral nations (Wallerstein, 1990). According to world-
system theory, the peripheral nations of the world are beholden to the more powerful nations, and the hegemony of the core over the peripheral was transparent and unapologetic.

Global neoliberalism can be understood as a more clandestine extension of the world-system approach because neoliberal policies and rhetoric pose as altruism (Samoff, 2013). In short, those who control the so-called global superstructure assert that their genuine interest is to assist the developing world to develop socially, economically, and educationally (Samoff, 2013). Western economic interests and international non-governmental organizations invest in developing nations as a means to gain future economic returns (Keating et al., 2013). Thus, neoliberal policy is supported by a form of economic rationalism that views education in general, and education in developing nations in particular, to be an investment in human capital (Apple, 2005).

A human-capital theory was articulated in an article in 1966 (Klees, 2016), but remained a fringe economic theory until it was utilized and promoted by Reagan and Thatcher, and every American and British administration since (Morrow & Torres, 2013). The central concept of human-capital theory is that the global economy, often referred to as a knowledge economy (Spring, 2015), can only function with a foundational labor force that is trained, skilled, and competent enough to maintain the knowledge economy (Keating et al., 2013). The second imperative for the global knowledge economy is open access to the world’s markets and resources, including its human resources (Samoff, 2013). Education becomes the training ground for this human resource, and those who control the economies make every attempt to control education on a global scale (Spring, 2015). Much like classical liberalism, global neoliberalism is rooted in class distinctions supported by socio-economic theories, and the comparisons and contrasts between the two are instructive.
Comparisons and Contrasts

There are important distinctions to be made between colonial era liberalism and global neoliberalism. First, while classical liberalism was conspicuous in policy and open about its agenda, global neoliberalism is more clandestine. Neoliberal policy is often cloaked in progressive lingo that ostensibly promotes positive economic development for all (Ross & Gibson, 2007; Samoff, 2013), but in reality, it advocates for deregulation, privatization, and profit accumulation at the expense of social programs and democratic social justice (Apple, 2005). This is not to say that colonialism was not economically hegemonic. It was. However, the capitalistic forces during the colonial age that promoted public policies in support of colonial hegemony have now given way to the neo-colonial form of hegemony—namely global neoliberalism (Banerjee & Linstead, 2001).

Another relevant point of comparison has to do with education. The British organized colonial education policy in India along liberal and utilitarian lines. The British trained Indian students along western lines to create educated and indoctrinated human capital for the service of the colonial empire (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1997). Educated Indian elites worked in bureaucratic administration positions while lower classes were nominally educated and served as the labor force. Likewise, in neoliberal India, education policy functions as a sort of human-capital model where the elite study and train at exclusive private schools and the lower classes attend underfunded and mismanaged public schools—if they go to school at all (Oza, 2012). Both systems promote an unequal hierarchy in service of imperial hegemony and profits. The fundamental difference is that colonial-era liberalism promoted public and secular schools, and neoliberal proponents promote private schooling in India.
Colonialism and Education in India

In the early Victorian era, education in Britain was primarily religious. It is true that following the Enlightenment new non-religious subjects such as science were pursued, but by and large, the idea of a public education was inseparable from religious influences (Metcalf, 1995). As the nascent form of public education was emerging in England, the British colonial empire was expanding its hold in India. In the hundred-year period from the battle of Plassey in 1757 to direct rule in India in 1857, the British variously worked out their theoretical and administrative education policies. It was in colonial India that the British concept and practice of secular education first emerged.

The British did not concern themselves with education policy during the early period of colonial control of Bengal. Instead, they primarily focused on commercial pursuits. However, following the Regulating Act of 1773, Parliament implemented both commercial and legal control over Bengal (Dirks, 2006), which, in turn, impacted education policy. The British began to educate and train colonial agents and Indians in the service of their colonial empire. Still, education remained limited to a few institutions of higher learning (Metcalf, 1995). It was with the Charter Act of 1813 that education policy took center stage. This act stipulated three articles of policy that would have profound effects on education in India. First was the formal expression of British sovereignty over Bengal. Second, missionaries were no longer banned from proselytizing or from opening up religious schools. Third, the act allotted an annual stipend for the promotion of education among Indians. This act paved the way for colonial education policy that would emerge along three tracks (Mondal, 2015).

The first educational track was indigenous learning, and as in England at the time, this was commingled with religious education. The second track was Christian missionary education.
Before the 1813 Charter Act, missionary education was banned in Bengal. Many colonial administrators felt that any attempt to convert Indians would disrupt the delicate commercial relations. However, following the Charter Act, missionaries began opening mission schools, and while the underlining intent was to promote Christianity, the result was an educational mix of non-religious Western curricula, Christian religious teachings, and a limited acceptance of non-religious indigenous learning (Mondal, 2015). The third education track was one promoted by the East India Company and was strictly secular and utilitarian and intended to promote “civilization” among indigenous Indians (Metcalf, 1995, p. 34).

**Indigenous Forms of Knowledge**

Scholars have argued that pre-colonial education systems in India were “permeated by religion” (Langohr, 2005, p. 161). In other words, Indian education systems were primarily intent on memorization of scriptures and mastery of religious tenets and secondarily concerned with utilitarian subjects. This view is partly accurate, but it belies the fact that both Hindu and Islamic education systems were long established and commingled religious and secular subjects. Thus, as the East India Company established commercial trade in Bengal, far from encountering an illiterate population, the Indian people had long-standing education systems that they highly valued. Acquisition of indigenous Indian knowledge became a central tactic in early colonial administration (Cohn, 1996).

**Orientalism and the Appropriation of Indian Knowledge**

In 1773 British Parliament passed the Regulating Act of Bengal, and this act transformed the EIC from a commercial trading company into a formal colonial government. Following the Act, EIC agents were given the mandate to manage both commercial interests and the legal administration. As such, Warren Hastings, the top EIC agent, became the first British Governor
General of Bengal. Much of Hastings’ success in managing EIC affairs was due to his appreciation and understanding of local culture and customs (Cohn, 1996; Metcalf, 1995), and he was intent on continuing this in matters of law. Hastings attempted to reconcile his primary task of maximizing EIC profits with his policy of respect for indigenous customs. Through collaboration with like-minded EIC agents and Indian pundits, he began collecting primary Indian sources of knowledge (Cohn, 1996). Consequently, a new field of inquiry emerged—orientalism.

Among the colonial agents in Bengal who supported Hastings and engaged in orientalist inquiry, Sir William Jones (1746–94) was the most notable, often credited as the founder of Indology (Inden, 1990, p. 44). He established the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and his stated agenda for founding this institution was “to know India better than any European knew it” (Said, 1979, p. 78). His intent was to discover the ancient textual wisdom of India. After establishing linguistic connections between India and the West, Jones studied Indian mythology in comparison to ancient Greek and Roman mythology, and he found substantial similarities (Pachori, 1993). This led Jones to the conclusion that India and the West were related in the ancient past and that India’s historical wisdom had much to teach everyone in the present—East and West. This understanding of Indian knowledge was a clear boon for Hastings and his policy of ruling via local sources of authority.

Orientalist inquiry and discourse paved the way toward colonial theory and praxis in the educational curriculum. Hastings, Jones, and members of the Asiatic Society of Bengal found value in Indian knowledge. They viewed ancient Indian knowledge as evidence of a sophisticated civilization. Thus, following these sentiments, three institutions of higher learning were founded for the promotion of Indian knowledge: (a) The Calcutta Madrassa in Bengal for
instruction of Islamic learning, (b) The Sanskrit College in Benaras for the study of Hindu learning, and (c) The College of Fort William in Bengal for training colonial agents in both Indian languages and culture as well as European curriculum.

While these institutions were founded as centers of Indian knowledge with the underlying assumption that this knowledge was valued, they were still structurally established along British forms of education. Bernard Cohn (1996) explained that “the British conceived of education as taking place in institutions, meaning buildings with physically divided spaces marking off one class of students from another, as well as teachers from students” (p. 48). Cohn further suggested that while Hastings viewed these institutions as a means to rule according to local customs and to preserve Hindu and Muslim learning, the net effect was to institutionalize and control Indian knowledge along British lines with the British as the decision makers of just what was worth preserving.

This view was most explicit with the College of Fort William where the acquisition of Indian knowledge moved from appreciation and preservation to degradation and exploitation. The college prepared British colonial agents and Indian civil servants in the service of the East India Company. They studied Indian subjects in comparison to European subjects and increasingly as a means to belittle India and highlight the superiority of the British over India. It is in this context that post-colonial critics of orientalist discourse are justified. Gyan Prakash (1992) was clear in his description of and disdain for orientalism:

Orientalism was a European enterprise from the very beginning. The scholars were Europeans; the audience was European; and the Indians figured as inert objects of knowledge. The Orientalist spoke for the Indian and represented the object in texts (p. 355).
The agenda(s) of the orientalist project in a quest for the procurement and preservation of Indian knowledge was clearly mixed. From Hastings’ initial intent to procure Indian legal sources for jurisprudence, orientalism and its associated educational institutions shifted and took on a more utilitarian agenda. The intent was no longer to understand India in a positive, comparative context; rather, India was represented as a timeless, heathen, despotic, and backward world that could only improve in spiritual and material ways with the guidance of the British. In this way, the relativism and comparative contexts of orientalism gave way to essentializing and totalizing narratives of universalism (Inden, 1990).

“Universal” Colonial Education in the Wake of the 1813 Charter Act

The East India Act of 1813 had a profound impact on educational policy in India. This act formally invoked British sovereignty in India, and it asserted the financial support of a secular education for indigenous Indians. It went far beyond the limited education of Indian civil servants at the College of Fort William and extended to the grassroots of the Indian population. The intent was to put into practice the liberal ideals of universal civilization, and for colonial education policy in India, universalism took two broad forms. The first form was along religious lines with missionary schools in the service of Christian civilization, and the second form was secular and utilitarian in the service of liberal civilization. While both forms had different agendas, they both viewed India as a lost people who needed to be civilized. Moreover, according to Thomas Metcalf (1995), the universalist sentiments of the British held that “contemporary European, especially British, culture alone represented civilization. No other cultures had any intrinsic validity. There was no such thing as ‘Western’ civilization; there only existed ‘civilization’” (p. 34). This exclusivist posture was nothing new in religious matters. The whole premise on which Christian missions began was the idea that Christian truth superseded
any other forms of religious truth. However, the secular, liberalist idea that British civilization exemplified the apex of reason and material progress was a new justification by the British to materially, economically, culturally, and socially colonize India.

Missionary Schooling

While colonial administrators, such as Warren Hastings, were resistant to allow missionaries into Bengal for fear that their proselytizing would upset the delicate relations he had forged with Hindus and Muslims, others such as Charles Grant, a member of the Indian Home Administration, argued that missionaries were needed in India. Grant proposed the “Pious Clause” to the 1793 Company Charter to support missionary activity in India. His rationale was as follows:

Such measures ought to be adopted for the interests and happiness of the native inhabitants of the British dominions in India, as may gradually tend to their advancement in useful knowledge, and to their religious and moral improvement. (Dirks, 2006, p. 299)

This sentiment points to a broader British sense of superiority in all matters, including religion. Grant’s moral paternalism came to fruition with the inclusion of the “Pious Clause” in the 1813 EIC charter renewal.

It was the coming of the Baptist missionaries to India that had so concerned Hastings and his successors. The Baptist theological view was that Hindus and Muslims were destined for hell unless they converted to Christianity with a public repudiation of their former religion and a public baptism to symbolize their conversion. This was a hard sell in India. For Muslims, Christianity was tolerated as one of the dhimmis (or people of the book), but Muslims held distinctly different theological views. For Hindus, conversion to Christianity required a repudiation of their caste, and this resulted in a complete social shun from their community.
Thus, conversion to Christianity was rare in India, but this did not stop missionaries from opening up mission schools.

William Carey, John Marshman, and William Ward founded the earliest and most notable Baptist mission in 1800. Due to the ban on missionary proselytizing in Bengal the mission was established in the nearby Dutch colony of Serampore. While the Serampore mission became an active and important center of learning in colonial India, they were limited in the scope of their work until the passage of the 1813 Charter Act. Following the Charter Act, the Serampore mission founded many schools for the education of Indian children (Laird, 1968; Mondal, 2015). The proliferation of mission schools was instrumental in the development of education in colonial India. What started out as a project to convert Indians to Christianity expanded into a broad school curriculum that eventually included religious and secular learning as well as elements of indigenous learning (Mondal, 2015).

Serampore mission schools were founded throughout Bengal and beyond, and they became the popular school choice for many Indians. The earliest schools were in English-medium instruction, but they expanded the curriculum to include literacy and education in Indian languages as well. They even offered instruction in science, botany, geography and astronomy. The curriculum seems to have developed in association with the interests of the Serampore missionaries themselves (Laird, 1968; Mondal, 2015). For example, William Carey, in addition to his efforts in Indian language and literature, was interested in botany. His son, Felix Carey, was interested in science and anatomy and translated many Western science and anatomy books into the Bengali script.

As the Baptist mission schools expanded, they tended to promote the secular and utilitarian aspects over and above the religious teachings, sometimes ceasing Bible instruction
due to complaints by the parents of their pupils (Mondal, 2015). The reason mission schools took a decidedly secular turn is a matter of speculation. It seems plausible that they were trying to attract students to their schools to promote Christian values while at the same time attempting to avoid alienating non-Christian Indian students and their families. To further endear Indian students to the mission schools, they included indigenous learning into the curriculum, and according to Amrita Mondal (2015), “it can be said that the Serampore Mission prepared balanced curriculum, while incorporating indigenous knowledge along with western science” (p. 82). Thus, the legacy of Serampore mission schools in India is intact even in post-colonial times as a well-rounded curriculum in liberal arts and science. The most interesting outcome is that while the mission schools set out to convert Indians to Christianity, they succeeded in converting many Indians, not to a new religion, but to a modern and secular educational curriculum that was created in colonial India. In this way, the missionaries contributed to the broader British colonial vision of liberalism, dominance, and cultural reproduction.

**Utilitarian Liberalism and Education**

In addition to allowing the missionaries to actively work in British India, the 1813 Charter Act provided the colonial government a substantial stipend to promote education among the Indian population. Before the Charter Act, the EIC had not intervened in education policy in India, with the notable exceptions of the Calcutta Madrassa, the Sanskrit College in Benaras, and the College of Fort William in Bengal. These institutions were primarily founded to promote and procure indigenous knowledge for the British rule of law in India and to appease indigenous sentimentalities. Thus, the Charter Act paved the way for the first experiments of exclusively secular education in India, and this educational policy was heavily influenced by the utilitarian and liberal ideologies of James Mill, John Stuart Mill, and Thomas Macaulay.
Inspired by John Locke’s *Second Treatise on Government*, James Mill argued that “the criterion of utility was the measure of social progress” (Metcalf, 1995, p. 30). Locke had argued that men should be free to pursue life, liberty, and property. James Mill viewed the pursuit of private property as a measure of both social progress and happiness, and it was the role of government to ensure happiness. However, Mill did not feel that the British needed to promote liberty or representational government in India (Metcalf, 1995). On the contrary, Mill’s utilitarian vision emphasized that the ends justify the means. In this way, exploitation was inevitable, and liberty was not one of Mill’s objectives.

In *The History of British India*, James Mill (1818/1975) sought to prove his counterthesis to William Jones’s sympathetic representation of India. As Thomas Metcalf (1995) explained:

> After scrutinizing India’s arts, manufactures, literature, religion, and laws, [Mill] concluded, vigorously disputing Sir William Jones’s claims, that the Hindus did not possess and never had possessed, “a high state of civilization.” They were rather a “rude” people who had made but a few of the earliest steps in the progress to civilization. (p. 30)

This representation of India had an impact on Mill’s son and intellectual heir, John Stuart Mill, who also worked for the East India Company and whose political and philosophical writings impacted colonial policy in India. John Stuart Mill agreed with his father’s assertion that India needed British guidance via utilitarian means. However, unlike his father, J. S. Mill believed that happiness and liberty were inextricably linked and felt that “neither race nor environment dictated whether a people could enjoy the benefits of a representative government”
Thus, J. S. Mill believed that, in the spirit of liberalism, it was the British duty to educate Indians in a way that would progress their civilization.

John Stuart Mill believed in the perfectibility of India—albeit, along British lines. Similarly, liberals like Thomas Macaulay felt that through education India could one day perhaps outgrow the British system, but in the meantime, Western learning was necessary for India. In his *Minute on Indian Education*, Macaulay (1835/1995) explained that through education the British could reproduce “a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect” (p. 430). Macaulay’s recommendation was to “form a class who would be interpreters between [the British] and the millions whom we govern” (p. 430).

This class of Indian educators would be trained in decidedly secular and Western curriculum. Macaulay’s proposal in his *Minute* was to teach English language and English literature to select Indian educators. His view was that English “stands pre-eminent even among the languages of the west, [and] that the literature now extant [in English] is of far greater value than all the literature which three hundred years ago was extant in all the languages of the world together” (p. 428). He believed civilization was conveyed in the English language, and that as the language of the colonial government and commerce, it was necessary to educate Indians in English. In contrast, Macaulay assumed that vernacular languages in India were incapable of conveying the complexities of Western, secular education, and thus, it would take time for the English-educated Indians to “enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from Western nomenclature” (p. 430). Just as James Mill had repudiated Hastings’ and Jones’ uses of Indian knowledge and sources of authority in cases of law, Macaulay repudiated Indian languages and curriculum in education. This furthered the British colonization of India, from commercial and political endeavors to intellectual colonization, and in this way follows Bourdieu’s critique of
colonial educational endeavors as cultural and social reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1997). This process was pushed even further with the introduction of English literature into colonial education.

With indigenous Indian learning systems, moral and religious training developed in conjunction with utilitarian education. The colonial government was unwilling to promote a Christian moral training in their schools, so as to not create religious tensions (Metcalf, 1995). Instead, the government schools were to appear to be centers of objective learning and not religious. However, colonial educators found it necessary to implement a form of moral education in British tradition and civilization, and this was “productively resolved through the introduction of English literature” (Viswanathan, 1995, p. 432). Interestingly, the subject of English literature appeared in Indian government schools before it was formally taught in England. Metcalf (1995) explained, “neo-classical literature, along with Shakespeare, formed the core of the curriculum in the government schools” (p. 40). In this way, moral training was provided to Indian students, and at the same time, the curriculum remained secular.

The project of liberal, secular education was uniquely possible in this colonial setting because the colonial government had the power to omit indigenous cultures and systems of learning in favor of their hegemonic culture and educational curriculum. Those students who wanted the opportunity to work in the colonial economy and for the government needed to prepare in colonial schools. The EIC had a monopoly on the best government jobs, and it was at their discretion to dole out jobs to Indians based on merit. In contrast to indigenous systems of learning that emphasized utilitarian subjects in connection with religious learning, the government schools were mostly public and distinctly secular. Just as colonial education in India was organized and influenced to serve the liberal economic interests of the British colonial
empire, today global neoliberalism is influencing Indian education around the global market and profit concerns.

**Global Neoliberalism and Education in India**

Education is one of the most valued social institutions in India (Probe report, 1999), and access to education has given individuals and families hope for better economic prospects (Dreze & Sen, 2013). However, since the 1990s, economic reforms along global neoliberal lines have altered and diminished public education funding and regulation in India (Corbridge & Harriss, 2001). The free, public, and secular education promised by the Indian Constitution and the Right to Education Act (Indian Const. art. XLV, § Directives Principle; Indian Const. amend. LXXXVI) is giving way to global neoliberal economic pressures that constitute a new manifestation of imperialism and non-occupational colonialism; or as Banerjee and Linstead (2001) phrased it, “globalization becomes the new global colonialism” (p. 683).

Instead of demonstrating a commitment to public schooling, national and local Indian governments are criticized for giving lip service to public education while in reality, they are creating conditions that promote the privatization of education (Oza, 2012). The government is not the only responsible party. The demand for quality private schools is largely coming from the elite and middle classes that have been burgeoning since the economic reforms in the 1990s (Gupta, 2000; Samoff, 2013). Some argue that this is the result of a sort of global culture of consumerism that promotes conspicuous consumption as a mark of economic and social agency (Gupta, 2000). The result of this culture of consumption is that the lower classes in society, the vast majority of India’s population, remain educationally and economically disenfranchised.
Historical Influences on Indian Educational Policy

Just as India had been a commercial target and prize for the British in the colonial era, so too did America view independent India as a potential developing country ally in the emerging cold war against the Soviets, and as a potential commercial market. However, Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of independent India, clearly asserted India’s non-alignment posture with regard to cold war politics (Wolpert, 2008). He was intent on building a truly independent India that was not beholden to foreign powers or influence. Following the tenets outlined in the Indian Constitution, Nehru envisioned a socialist, industrial state that provided economic opportunity, social agency, and justice for all Indian citizens (Corbridge & Harriss, 2001), a vision that included universal and free public education for all Indian children until the age of fourteen (Probe report, 1999).

The initial enthusiasm and support for a socialist and democratic republic exhibited by Nehru were tempered by Congress Party conservatives who favored the rights of big private-sector business (Appadurai, 2012; Corbridge & Harriss, 2001). Thus, many of the more socialist initiatives remained unrealized. Public government-run education in India from the time of independence in 1947 until the neoliberal economic reforms of the early 1990s remained underfunded, irresponsibly unregulated, and simply inadequate (De, Khera, Samson, & Kumar, 2011; Probe report, 1999). Public schools during this forty-year period can rightly be viewed as a decaying form of the colonial government schools that preceded it (Dreze & Sen, 2013). Tragically for those unable to afford educational alternatives, the neoliberal reforms of the 1990s further mismanaged India’s public schools in favor of privatized schooling alternatives (Chakravarty, 2013).
The 1990s and the Neoliberal Economic Reforms

The contemporary global reach of neoliberal economic liberalization and privatization reached India in the 1990s. Corbridge and Harriss (2001) outlined four clear ways in which India implemented economic reforms in the early 1990s: (a) investment reform that promoted deregulation of foreign equity investment, (b) trade policy that reduced tariffs on both foreign trade imports and domestic exports, (c) financial reform that deregulated, to a significant extent, the formerly state-run banking system, and (d) privatization of many previously state-controlled services and industries. While it can be argued that these four broad neoliberal economic reforms were largely responsible for India’s relative economic prosperity and the rise of an impressive middle class (Corbridge & Harriss, 2001), it is also true that the reforms threatened, and continue to impact, the most economically vulnerable populations—the lower classes (Gupta, 2000).

Gupta (2000) made the important distinction between internationalization and globalization. He argued that with internationalization nations mattered, but for the neoliberal powers of globalization, individual nations no longer matter. Consumerism, ready access to commodities, and profits are key in neoliberal globalization, and, according to Gupta, “a consumerist globalized approach takes our attention away from considerations for the disprivileged and downtrodden” (p. 91). Social services, like education, that were formerly provided by the government were either simply done away with, ignored, or became the domain of privatized, and often global, corporations (De et al., 2011). By this process, education became a commodity that required, and continues to require, financial means to acquire, thus creating an economic divide. Thus, the reforms of the 1990s significantly changed the educational landscape in India, and the most notable aspect has been the proliferation of privatization in schooling.
Indian Schools: Public versus Private

It should not be inferred that national and local governments in India do not oversee and fund public schools. The Indian Constitution guarantees free and compulsory public education. However, following the reforms of the 1990s, private schools have appeared across the country in both urban and rural areas as alternatives to state-run public schools (Tooley & Dixon, 2005). In fact, India has three school types—government schools, aided schools, and private schools (Kingdon, 2005). Government schools and aided schools are both publically funded, and the only difference is that while government schools are directly managed by the government, aided schools are privately managed. Thus, aided schools in India can be compared to charter schools in America where the school management is private, but the funding is public (Kingdon, 2005). Actual private schools are privately managed and privately funded through tuition fees, and for this reason, they are usually out of reach for the lower classes (Probe report, 1999). There has been a huge increase in the growth of private schooling in India’s urban areas and rural areas alike (Kingdon & Pal, 2014). The reason for such massive popularity of private schooling seems to have to do with academic standards and outcomes in private schools compared to public schools. Based on studies that compared standardized achievement tests of public and private schools, Kingdon (2005) concluded: “private schools outperform their public school counterparts” (p. 13).

Obviously, parents prefer to send their children to high-performing schools, but the problem remains that the majority of India’s population is poor and cannot afford private school tuition fees. Even those who argue that low-cost private schools are the best solution for India’s poor (Kingdon & Pal, 2014; Tooley & Dixon, 2005) fail to recognize or appreciate that even low-cost tuition is beyond the reach of the poorest families (De et al., 2011; Probe report, 1999).
Thus, there is structural inequality in Indian education. To help remedy this inequality, in 2002 the government ratified the 86th Amendment to the Constitution guaranteeing free and quality education to all children between the ages of six and fourteen. The amendment further required that all private schools reserve 25 percent of their seats for poor students with tuition to be paid by the government (Kindgon & Pal, 2014). This policy is very unpopular with private schools and their middle and upper-class advocates who seem to view access to a quality private school education as a privilege and a right for the upper classes only and not the poor (Chakravarty, 2013; Oza, 2012). So, in most cases, students in the lower classes have no educational choice other than public schools (Probe report, 1999).

The Failure of Public Schooling?

It is not just that India’s private schools academically outperform public schools. In truth, the public school system is broken. In Aravind Adiga’s (2008) Booker prize award winning novel, *The White Tiger*, the rural village schoolteacher in the story is depicted as completely inept and corrupt. He is usually absent from work, and when he does show up, he is either drunk or asleep. He steals money that is intended to fund school uniforms, and he feels justified since he claims that the government rarely pays his salary. Adiga presents a scenario that is well known about India’s public schools. The public schools are in physical disrepair, poorly managed, underfunded, and often ignored by the state (De et al., 2011). Teacher absenteeism is well documented (Corbridge & Harriss, 2001; Dreze & Sen, 2013), and even though overall spending on education is ironically on the rise since the 1990s (Kingdon & Pal, 2014), it seems that those funds are paying for scheduled seats for poor students in private schools, funding privately managed aided schools, or simply being otherwise mismanaged (De et al., 2011).

Thus, proponents of the public education system call for more governmental investment to repair
public schools (Chakravarty, 2013; De et al., 2011; Dreze & Sen, 2013; Oza, 2012), and critics of the public school system argue that there is not enough funding and support by the government on school privatization measures (Dixon, 2012; Kingdon & Pal, 2014; Kingdon, 2005; Tooley & Dixon, 2005).

This whole situation begs the question: *If public schools are in such disrepair and these schools are constitutionally guaranteed as vital and fundamental Indian institutions, then why not make a concerted effort to fix them?* This was the purpose for India’s recent public reports on basic education (De et al., 2011; Probe report, 1999), and the expressed appeals in these reports were to fix the public school system in the spirit and effort for social justice. In their words, “concern for social justice informs this entire report” (Probe report, 1999, p. 1). Others who are dissatisfied with the public schools argue that since the public school system is broken, the solution might be to ditch the public system and instead embrace public-private partnerships or outright private schools (Dixon, 2012; Kingdon, 2015; Tooley & Dixon, 2005; Worldbank, 2009).

Some argue that recent education reforms are not much more than governmental propaganda ploys to appear that they support public schools as a vital social service when in fact, similar to the economic reforms in the 1990s, they are allowing privatized and global forms of education to take the place of government schools (Chakravarty, 2013; Gupta, 2000). Of course, a variant interpretation could be that the governmental regulating agencies really do have a commitment to public education in India, and they are simply unable to compete with the neoliberal forces that promote the privatization of schooling.
Global Neoliberal Propaganda: Promoting Private Schools

Regardless of Indian governmental complicity or resistance to school privatization, the growth and popularity of private schools are a reality in India. By most all accounts private schooling accounts for more than 40 percent of all schooling, and it is increasing exponentially (Kindgon, 2005). Some estimates claim that by 2022 private schools will comprise 60 percent of all enrollments (Jain, Dhawan, & Ishwaran, 2014). This is in large part a result of media bombardment of the special merit of private schools and the concomitant demerits of India’s public schools (Chakravarty, 2013). Just as the 1999 and 2011 Probe reports publically called for a renewed commitment to improve India’s public schools as a means for universal agency and social justice, so too are global neoliberal corporations and NGOs funding and promoting school privatization (Arno et al., 2013; Spring, 2015).

There are high-profile Indian academics in India and abroad who proactively advocate for the privatization of Indian schooling, and their work affects public sentiment and educational policy in India. In some cases, their research is supported by organizations such as the World Bank—a paradigmatic inter-governmental organization that promotes neoliberal globalization and privatization (Spring, 2015). For example, Kingdon, a scholar of education policy at London University, gave a presentation at a 2005 conference held at Harvard University titled “Mobilizing the Private Sector for Public Education,” sponsored by the World Bank. Kingdon’s presentation was titled “Private and public schooling: The Indian experience” (Kingdon, 2005). While the stated agenda was to present an objective account of the state of education in India based on empirical research, her presentation served to call into question India’s public schools and to advocate for the privatization of schooling. In her summary, Kingdon (2005) asserted that “publically funded schools [in India] function poorly because schools and teachers do not have
incentives for performance and there is a lack of local level accountability” (p. 25). She then advocated for governmental reform along the lines of public-private partnerships, school choice, school and student competition, and voucher programs (p. 27). All of these arguments are in support of reforming the public school system to transform it into a private system (Arno et al., 2013).

If Kingdon’s presentation was primarily academic with a limited audience, her 2015 article in the New York Times was for a broad public audience. Titled “Indian Schools Are Failing Their Students,” Kingdon spoke against the right to education (RTE) reforms passed in 2009—calling the RTE ineffective. She specifically argued that the reforms hinder the ability of private schools to operate by setting arbitrary licensing standards. In short, she blames the government for not supporting private schools (Kingdon, 2005). This public media appeal in support of private sector schooling in India is a popular tactic. The article headlines and opinion editorials run titles such as “Many of India’s Poor Turn to Private Schools” (Bajaj & Yardly, 2011), or “India Opens a Door to Private Education” (Shaw, 2012). Shaw (2012) tells the story of student Pankaj Disht to highlight the benefits of private school:

Like many 6-year-olds, Pankaj Disht clams up when speaking to a stranger. But since switching to a private school, he has become more open and says he enjoys school and has many friends. (p. 1)

It seems clear that the media promotion of private schooling is having an impact on the popularity of private schools. The message that private schools are better for children than the failing public schools can easily become internalized by parents, and when influential academics and experts of education policy are leading the agenda, it seems authoritative and reasonable.
Conclusion

This article argues that in colonial-era India the colonial policies of liberalism and utilitarianism resulted in the creation of a distinctly secular and public education system, a system utilized to train Indian students in the service of the British colonial empire. The article then addressed the ways in which the agendas of global neoliberalism affect post-colonial Indian education policy. In this neoliberal context, public schools are giving way to private ones. The privatization of services and industry is a primary concern for the advocates of global neoliberalism. These private schools become a choice, a commodity to consume, a status symbol, and a credential necessary for entry into the global marketplace. The winners in this process are those who can afford the tuition fees for private schools, and in large part, this consists of India’s middle and upper classes. More dramatically, the ultimate winners are the trans-national corporations that have colonized all aspects of the global marketplace. Liberalism and neoliberalism both promised progress, development, and inclusion, but these ideologies can also be seductively used as propaganda. What looks like a benefit might actually manifest as bondage. This occurred with occupational colonialism in India, and in terms of education policy, it appears globalized neoliberal privatization is a continuation of global colonization. If the winners are those who control the globalized system, along with those who can afford private education, then the clear losers are those who cannot afford to participate. This disparity runs counter to India’s constitution, and a renewed commitment to quality and well-managed public schools is essential if the goal of education is universal agency and social justice rather than hierarchical domination.
References


Chapter 3

Announcing Exam Scores: A Case Study Exploring Globalized Education, Meritocracy, and Media Propaganda in India

Introduction to Article

The preceding article provided historical and theoretical contexts on the development of India’s education system. It discussed the ways in which economic liberalism and utilitarianism from the colonial era were used to justify the creation of a public, secular school system all in the broader service of the British colonial empire. Following this discussion, the article explored how globalization, in particular global neoliberalism, functions as a new form of imperialism that is again (since the 1990s) utilizing education in India to achieve its aims of profit and power fueled by a global knowledge economy (Altbach, 2015).

As a theoretical and historical piece, the preceding article presented anecdotal evidence of the neoliberalization of education in India, and it further provided the necessary background and impetus for a formal research study on the topic of the globalization of education and its presence in India. This present article is a logical and somewhat organic response to that impetus. In this chapter I present a case study that investigates and analyzes media messages on education topics bounded around the annual announcement of standard secondary board exam scores. The study is designed to investigate the societal messages and discourse propagated in media outlets around education generally and market-model education in particular.

This media case study is connected to the thematic conceptual model of the broader dissertation in the areas of homogenization and hegemony (Figure 3.1). In the introductory chapter, homogenization was discussed in the context of world-culture theory; a theory postulating that the world is increasingly conforming to a transcendent world culture.
Figure 3.1. Connection of article two to global conceptual model.

or world society (Meyer, Boli, Thomas, & Ramirez, 1997). This study investigates the extent to which global education policies are manifest in media discourse in India—implying conformity or homogenization of education in the world.

Key sociological features in the process of ideological homogenization are habituation and maintenance (Berger & Luckmann, 1967), and based on the data collected over two years around the same bounded case of standardized exam score results in India, this study finds that both global and local media are regularly habituating Indian society to global market-model
education. The phenomena where diverse and localized education systems are becoming increasingly aligned to one another has been interpreted as evidence of an emergent world culture (Shofer & Meyer, 2005). However, considering that the common factors in global educational alignment are market-model factors (Altbach, 2015; Spring, 2015), it seems plausible to suggest that what some scholars refer to as a world-culture might alternatively be understood as global neoliberal hegemony (Klees, 2008).

In the introductory conceptual framework, the concept of hegemony, or pervasive and coercive power, was associated with global neoliberalism where virtually all political, economic, and cultural concerns are increasingly united under the aims of commercialization and consumerism (Giroux, 2014; Klees, 2008). These processes have directly impacted education policies and structures in India where high-stakes testing is established as normative, public-private partnerships and school privatization are actively encouraged, standardized testing and curriculum are promoted, as well as several other initiatives that treat education as a commodity in the global knowledge economy (Altbach, 2015; Kingdon & Pal, 2014; Srivastava, 2013). The purpose of this article is to investigate the extent to which global neoliberal educational initiatives have become hegemonic in India by analyzing the discourse in the media.
Abstract

This case-study theoretically draws from critical media studies and critiques of economic neoliberalism inherent in the globalization of education. The study employs a cultural studies lens to investigate the presence and potential impacts of global neoliberal education promotion in India via the media. The case in this study is bounded around the annual announcement of standard secondary board exam scores. This event garners heightened media attention to educational matters, and in this article I investigate and inter-textually analyze various media forms and media messages for the two weeks preceding and two weeks following the exam score announcements for the years of 2017 and 2018. My analytical tool is a form of qualitative content analysis known as ethnographic content analysis (ECA). My research samples consist of print media, television and film, and street advertising, and my research site is Jaipur, India. The primary and broad findings of the research reveal that India largely conforms to and promotes educational initiatives in support of structural meritocracy and other global education agendas. However, the data also reveal that in both mass-media messages such as film and in the margins of media reports there is evidence of growing unrest toward the inequitable education system that perpetuates an inequitable and hierarchical society in India.
Announcing Exam Scores: A Case Study Exploring Globalized Education, Meritocracy, and Media Propaganda in India

The forces and processes of globalization have impacted nearly every political, economic, social, and cultural aspect of the world (Friedman & Mandelbaum, 2011; Spring, 2015). With major technological advances in communications and transportation, information is readily accessible to nearly everyone on the globe, and while there are arguable benefits and conveniences that accompany access to global information (Friedman, 2007; Tierney & Lanford, 2015), there are potential negative consequences as well (Altbach, 2015; Hall, 1997). Those who establish the global agenda and control the flow of information have the potential to shape public opinion and patterns of behavior (Hall, 2012; Herman & Chomsky, 2012; Jowett & O’Donnell, 2006). On the issue of globalized education, this has resulted in a shift in the fundamental aim of and approach to education from that of a basic human right and social service for all students to an outright market commodity for those who can afford to participate (Arnove, Torres, & Franz, 2013; Giroux, 2014; Klees, 2017; Spring, 2015; Srivastava, 2010). If education was once a vehicle for socio-economic equity, it is now becoming increasingly stratified and divisive along socio-economic lines (Klees, 2008). This study employs a cultural studies analysis to provide information on the role of the media in propagating—and propagandizing—the marketization of education on a global scale, and in order to illustrate this global reach, the focus here is on media reporting on education in India.

Contextualizing the Case: School Board Exam Results in India

Every March across India standardized school board exams are administered to students in grades ten and twelve. This includes students in government schools, government-aided private schools (confusingly to outsiders, these schools are often referred to as public schools),
and independent private schools (Kingdon, 2005). Exam season in India is a particularly pressured time for students and their families. The highest stakes board exam is completed by students in grade twelve, as this exam determines the educational track, path, and opportunity for students in their post-secondary schooling and in future career prospects. Thus, the grade twelve board exam creates the most pressure in students across India.

In fact, many students from families with the financial means choose to leave their homes and regular secondary schools and classes to attend private, residential test-prep centers. In these private test-prep centers, such as the Allen center in Jaipur (Figure 3.2, Appendix B), students spend the majority of their days preparing specifically for the subjects tested on the standardized board exam, forgoing social or leisure activities, and only completing their regular twelfth grade work in the evenings, online, and during the weekends (K. Sen, personal communication, June 6, 2018). With all of the societal stress and importance of the board exams, the results are announced with great fanfare toward the end of May each year. Students and their families anxiously await the announcement in the media, and when they are finally announced, people scramble to the board exam web portals to check their personal exam marks—usually in such numbers as to cause the websites to crash as they did in both 2017 and 2018.

It is not an exaggeration to suggest that India’s entire secondary and higher educational systems, to some degree, revolve around the grade twelve board exam. This exam, along with the grade ten standard board exam, establish the core curriculum in secondary school (Ministry of Human Resource Development Government of India, 2018), and it is used to determine the tracks and programs that students qualify for in the higher education system. The exam also serves as the epicenter for an entire educational industry in curriculum development, elite private schools, test-prep materials, and independent test preparation centers. With all of these inter-
related interests in this exam, the announcement of exam results garners heightened media attention across media platforms and across all of India. For these reasons I chose the annual exam result announcement as the event around which to bind this case study.

**Research Questions**

I specifically investigated media reporting and advertising on educational matters during the two weeks prior and two weeks following the announcement of board exam results to the public. The data from this bounded case was collected and analyzed to seek answers to the following research questions: How might the anticipation and announcement of board exam scores impact the types of media messages that are promoted leading up to and following the exam score announcements? Further, to what extent might media in India serve to condition the public to globalized market-model and meritocratic education initiatives, and how might this impact socio-economic and socio-political equitability for all students? In order to explore these questions, I consulted newsprint media, television and film media, and other forms of advertising on educational subjects over a month period in Jaipur, India for two consecutive years in 2017 and 2018. Jaipur was selected due to its status as the state capital of Rajasthan whose media provide coverage of both urban and surrounding rural educational news and whose educational context is similar to a majority of other locations in India; allowing for a typical case sample from the broader population (Creswell, 2016).

**Scholarly Contribution**

Several studies have researched broad political and economic impacts of globalization and neoliberalism on India (Chakravarty, 2013; Corbridge & Harriss, 2001; Gupta, 2002; Oza, 2012; Srivastava, 2013), and generally, the findings express a negative impact of market-based initiatives on India’s poor. In contrast, others have specifically investigated the perceived
benefits of school privatization and have found this trend to be a promising way forward to realize quality education for all children in both urban and rural settings (Dixon, 2012; Jain, Dhawan, & Ishwaran, 2014; Kingdon, 2005; Kingdon & Pal, 2014; Tooley, 2004; Tooley & Dixon, 2005). Still others have criticized market-model educational initiatives, in particular private schooling and public-private partnerships, as problematic and fundamentally inequitable (De, Khera, Samson, & Kumar, 2011; Probe report, 1999; Srivastava & Noronha, 2016). There remains a gap in the literature on the role of media reporting, advertising, and promotion of global, market-model education in India. These media messages are ubiquitously present in multiple media forms, most notably around exam season, and they can serve as potential means to condition the Indian public to globalized education initiatives (Hall, 2012). The present study is designed to contribute to the literature, and it does so by engaging a qualitative research method known as ethnographic content analysis (ECA). This approach allows the researcher to inter-textually investigate, triangulate, and analyze multiple modes of media messages in a particular cultural domain (Altheide & Schneider, 2013)—in this case media messages promoting and normalizing meritocratic and market-model education in Jaipur, India.

**Reviewing the Literature and Theoretically Situating the Case**

**Globalizing Educational Markets**

Globalization is impacting the education systems of the entire world, and in the process education is promoted and managed as a market commodity (Apple, 2005; Giroux, 2014; Klees, 2017; Spring, 2015). This form of globalization is often referred to as neoliberalism (Giroux, 2014) and has been defined as a type of economic rationalism where all social services such as education are considered as mere commodities in a global marketplace (Keating, Preston, Burke, Van Heertum & Arnove, 2013). Baltodano (2017) described the fundamental agendas of
neoliberalism as follows, “neoliberalism calls for a reduced governmental role, increased free
trade agreements, deregulation of labor laws, reduction of corporate taxes, and privatization of
public institutions, particularly schools” (p. 141). In this scenario, students are treated as human
capital in service of a broader globalized economic system (Apple, 2005; Keating et al., 2013;

Inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) such as the United Nations Educational,
Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Organization for Economic Co-
operation and Development (OECD) as well as the World Bank and the International Monetary
Fund (IMF) and many transnational corporations advocate for this market-based globalized
education model (Hartong & Nicholai, 2017; Miller, 2017; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Spring, 2015;
Stromquist & Sanyal, 2013). The following policies have been identified as indicative of global
educational initiatives: (a) educational privatization and public-private partnerships (Apple,
2005; Menashy, 2017; Srivastava, 2013, 2010), (b) corporatization of educational management
(Apple, 2005; Srivastava, 2013), and (c) standardized outcomes assessments (Komatsu &
Rappley, 2017; Ravitch, 2016; Spring, 2015). Instead of promoting education as a democratic
social service and inherent right of all children, this marketized education model serves to
homogenize education and to sort and stratify students according to their potential contribution
to the global economy (Altbach, 2015; Giroux, 2014; Miller, 2017; Spring, 2015).

One consequence of this market model of education is that the cultural identities and
agency of many students are put in jeopardy (Banks, 2008; Spring 2015). Another consequence
is the further marginalization of students who are already the most economically and socially
vulnerable in their societies (De et al., 2011; Probe report, 1999; Srivastava, 2013, 2010). For
example, while some have argued that low-fee private schools are a viable solution to advance
UNESCO’s vision of education for all (Dixon, 2012; Kingdon & Pal, 2014; Tooley & Dixon, 2006; Tooley, 2004), others disagree and have argued that even low-fee private schools are out of reach for the majority of poor people and, in reality, serve to treat education as a commodity rather than a social service and right of all students (Apple, 2005; Probe report, 1999; Srivastava & Noronha, 2016; Srivastava, 2013).

UNESCO’s promotion of universal education for all (EFA) seems to be a positive initiative that has the potential to help children across the globe, and there are instances where EFA initiatives have brought education to very poor students who had not had access to formal education before (Ball, 2012; Dixon, 2012). However, it has been argued that global partnerships, such as UNESCO, and multistakeholder governance of global education policies have a tendency fall in line with the majority agendas of market-based education models instead of engaging in the more difficult discussions that might call neoliberal policies, such as school privatization, into question as hegemonic and inequitable for the majority of students (Menashy, 2017; Srivastava & Noronha, 2016). This global-scale marketization of education has been promoted as a progressive development to developing nations (Dixon, 2012), but it also serves to condition the world to market-based globalization (Ball, 2012; Klees, 2008; Spring, 2015). A common way this conditioning occurs is through mass-media messages (Herman & Chomsky, 2012).

**Theorizing Mass Media and Propaganda**

The powers that control mass media have the ability to persuade the public on any number of issues related to society (Herman & Chomsky, 2012). The mechanism that is most effectively used is mass media propaganda (Bernays, 2005). Propaganda has been defined as “the deliberate attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to
achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist” (Jowett & O’Donnell, 2006, p. 7). In sociological terms, media propaganda serves to socially construct, condition, and maintain a desired worldview in the public opinion (Berger & Luckmann, 1967).

Modern media propaganda has its roots in the 19th and early 20th centuries with the advent of mass-media technology and communication. Edward Bernays (1928/2005), nephew of Sigmund Freud and consultant to both the US government and American industrialists, was an early advocate for propaganda techniques. He was involved in the aggressive propaganda campaigns during WWI, and following the success of those campaigns he argued unapologetically for the merits of propaganda in a democracy. He explained that, in theory, citizens advocate and vote for matters of public and private policy via political representatives, but, in practice, people yield those decisions to invisible agents who set policies for the public. They do this, he argued, by engaging in media propaganda. In Bernays’ (1928/2005) words: “From our leaders and the media they use to reach the public, we accept the evidence and the demarcation of issues bearing upon public question” (p. 38).

Similar to Bernays, Herman and Chomsky (2012) articulated a propaganda model where the mass-media interests reflect those of the dominant elite in society and “filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across to the public” (p. 204). This propaganda model is primarily aimed at powerful Western countries, but it can equally be applied to countries such as India that have a prominent and powerful media presence (Oza, 2012). Additionally, since the 1990s, India has implemented global neoliberal economic policies that tend to promote privatization and middle and upper class interests in social services such as education, while marginalizing the more economically vulnerable population (Boucher, 2017; Corbridge & Harriss, 2001). These dominant messages
are regularly propagated through India’s mass-media outlets (Chakravarty, 2013; Gupta, 2002; Oza, 2012).

Just how mass-media messages are received by the public is difficult to gauge, and the impact of media propaganda is of central concern to cultural studies analysts (Becker & McCall, 1990; Davies, 1995; Hall, 2012). In Hall’s (2012) article “Encoding/Decoding” he proposed three primary ways by which dominant media messages, or codes, are generally received by the public. First, there is the \textit{dominant-hegemonic code} that is generally, and perhaps universally, understood and internalized by the target public. Next, is the \textit{negotiated code}, and this is what Hall described as a “mixture of adaptive [internalized and dominant] and oppositional elements” (p. 143). Third, is the \textit{oppositional code}. This is a dominant media message that certain groups will be in clear opposition to, and this situation has the potential to provide a space for resistance to structural hegemony (Hall, 1997). Hall (2012) did suggest that there are many more possible codes or reactions to media propaganda. However, the important point in this context is that dominant messages have real coercive power in societies, and these messages are not always or simply received in the manner that the propagandist hopes; suggesting that the public has agency (Anderson-Levitt, 2003; Appadurai, 1990). This study was designed to carefully explore dominant, negotiated, and oppositional codes related to education within the cultural media domain in India.

\textbf{Methods}

\textbf{Research Site: Jaipur, India}

Jaipur is the capital city of the Indian state of Rajasthan and has a population of approximately three and a half million people. Important to the design of this study, Jaipur’s
urban location is still very much connected to smaller cities and rural areas in the state via family and tribal ties, market infrastructure, and the media. These circumstances allowed me to investigate media reporting that covers both urban and rural areas and concerns. This broader perspective would be less likely if I chose either very big urban cities with a more urban consciousness such as Delhi or Mumbai or if I chose a smaller or rural area that would have more of a small-town perspective.

**Sample Data and Cultural Media Forms**

The sample data was drawn from: (a) print media articles and advertising, (b) television and film media, and (c) street-signage advertising (Table 3.1). The inclusion of multiple forms of media allowed me to triangulate the data as a measure to compare and contrast media forms. I selected media forms based on the frequency and predominance of their presence in the cultural media domain, and print, television and film, and street-sign media messages were the most common during my field research in both 2017 and 2018.

**Newsprint Media.** The selected newsprint media was drawn from three leading daily newspapers in Jaipur: *The Times of India* (Jaipur edition), *Daily News and Analysis* (Jaipur edition) and *Hindustan Times* (Rajasthan edition). These papers are widely circulated and commonly read on a daily basis throughout Jaipur and surrounding areas in both Hindi and English mediums. Unlike places such as the US where print-media circulation has sharply declined recently, newspaper circulation in India is increasing at an all-time high (A. A. K., 2016; Razgaitis, 2013). One of the speculated reasons for this is that literacy rates have dramatically increased in India, yet access to online news is still largely unavailable to the increasing literate population due to cost—making newspapers the obvious and popular choice for news consumption (Razgaitis, 2013). Even when television and online media sources are
Table 3.1. Media Data Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspapers (Hindi and English versions)</th>
<th>Television/Film</th>
<th>Street Signs/Neighborhoods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Times of India</strong></td>
<td>Zee Entertainment/Living Foodz (food and lifestyle)</td>
<td>Jawahar Nagar; Raja Park; Bani Park; Old Pink City; Jalupura Basti; Jawaharnagar Basti (slum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daily News and Analysis</strong></td>
<td>Recent Bollywood Hindi Films (e.g., Hindi Medium; Toilet: Ek Prem Katha)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hindustan Times</strong></td>
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available to people, many Indians prefer print media due to a societal belief that print media presents authentic news as opposed to the plethora of fake news stories rampant in other media (A. A. K., 2016).

**Television and film media.** A second data source was television and film media. In particular, I watched several recent hit Bollywood films with dominant story lines on education in India, and these films reach a massive, and primarily youthful, audience across India (Chakravarty, 2013). I also explored the lifestyle cable channel on Zee entertainment that produces television programming on educational topics, and this programming is targeted to middle class and upper class audiences who are typically adults with families who have the means to engage in the leisure activities promoted by the lifestyle network. This is an important consideration because it is primarily the middle and upper classes in India that are calling for initiatives such as school privatization and public-private partnerships, and they are also the ones who potentially benefit most directly from such measures (Chakravarty, 2013; Oza, 2012; Probe report, 1999).

**Street-sign media.** The third data sample I investigated was street-signage advertising. While print and television media often present macro views of educational reporting, investigation of street signage allowed me to capture a narrowed and context-specific view from
Figure 3.3. Mobile educational advertising in Jaipur. The advertisement on this tuk-tuk promotes a private learning center that prepares students for the REET exam (Rajasthan Eligibility Exam for Teachers). This is a common way that private test-prep centers in Jaipur advertise their businesses. The cultural obsession with standardized entrance assessment exams creates a lucrative market for educational entrepreneurs.

the street (Krause & DeSena, 2016). Whether it is a learning center for test preparation or a private K-12 school or a public or private university, there is signage on nearly every street post, on every tuk-tuk, and in every neighborhood to promote these choices to the public (Figure 3.3). This type of media was so visible and pervasive that it almost became invisible (Prosser, 2007), and in this way it functions as a cultural commonplace. Even if people become numb to the ads, advertisements are always there to condition the public to the central importance of particular forms of education (Harper, 2002; Herman & Chomsky, 2012).

Jaipur’s neighborhoods are well established and clearly demarcated. Thus, the street-sign data were carefully collected with consideration of particular neighborhood characteristics including: (a) socio-economic status, (b) population demographics, and (c) neighborhood use.
By identifying these various criteria in relation to the types of street-sign messages that were present, I was able to identify important media propaganda strategies based on target audiences.

**Data Analysis: Ethnographic Content Analyses (ECA)**

In this study I employed an interpretive qualitative research approach known as ethnographic content analysis (Altheide & Schneider, 2013). ECA is a variation of qualitative content analysis with its reflexive analysis of textual and non-textual documents (Krippendorf, 2004) and ethnography where the goal “is to describe how a cultural group develops patterns of action, talking, and behavior from interacting together over time” (Creswell, 2016, p. 264). The aim of ECA is “to identify similarities and differences of how the documents—or parts thereof—reflect other aspects of culture, including other communication and mass media materials that are a part of the cultural context” (Althendie & Scheider, 2013, p. 27). This inter-textual and inter-media ‘conversation’ apparent in Jaipur’s media revealed rich data on educational policies, practices, and opinions in this study, and coupled with the carefully designed and bounded case where I analyzed media texts bilingually in both English and Hindi, ethnographic content analysis of the cultural media domain in Jaipur proved to be a powerful means through which to view media promotion of educational messages and conditioning in the minds of the public.

**Findings: India’s Imagined Educational Meritocracy**

“Education in India is *merit based*, and as such, our system has always been cut-throat. This is a generally accepted fact here”

(S. Chotia, educator, personal communication, August 3, 2018).

India’s educational structure might best be described as an imagined meritocracy. Structural elements have been deliberately constructed, promoted through the media, and implemented into policy to identify, assess, and reward the highest-performing students.
Likewise, those who do not perform at the highest levels are typically not allowed to progress in the system beyond the constitutionally mandated age of fourteen (Planning Commission Government of India, 2013). The obvious problem is that a truly meritocratic system implies a level playing field (Khan, 2010), and in India the educational playing field is not level or equitable (Probe report, 1999; Srivastava & Noronha, 2016). Students who achieve the highest marks on the outcomes assessments that matter most in society almost always have the social capital and familial financial means to participate in elite or private schooling and private sector test preparation programs that give them an edge on the high-stakes board exams that function as the gateway to quality higher education and socio-economic agency in life. Those students and families without these affordances have little chance to compete (Probe report, 1999; Srivastava & Noronha, 2016). Thus, to call India’s education system a true meritocracy is a misnomer, and it is at best an imagined meritocracy. However, this does not render the structures and policies any less salient, present, or impactful in the lives of real people.

As the data emerged in this study, it became abundantly clear that India views and values education as meritocratic, and the cultural media domain I explored in Jaipur largely constructs and maintains this view through the stories they report and the advertisements they publish. Thus, the first two broad thematic findings are identified here as: Constructing Meritocracy and Maintaining Meritocracy. This theoretic and cyclical logic follows Berger and Luckmann’s (1967) social construction of reality model where powerful social agents externalize a desired worldview and subsequently maintain that worldview in the social imagination by careful and calculated reinforcement.

While the desired meritocratic educational model appears to be nearly ubiquitous and internalized in society, there were several examples present in the media of resistance to the
established system. This, too, aligns with the phase in the cyclical social construction of reality model where certain people in a society contest and resist a dominant or hegemonic system (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Hall, 1997). The data that demonstrated resistance came through both mass-media sources such as film as well as through marginalized news stories generally reported in the back pages and opinion editorials of newspapers. This form of resistance can be powerful and has the potential to not only challenge the establishment, but also to plausibly enact real structural change (Goh, 2008; Hall, 1997). Thus, the third broad thematic finding is presented here as *Contesting Meritocracy*.

**Constructing Meritocracy**

Tangible structures and policies have been constructed and enacted in India to facilitate an educational meritocracy. The structures and policies I identified during the course of this study include: (a) educational privatization and the predominance of elite schools, (b) the establishment of high-stakes testing, and somewhat counterintuitively, (c) the presence and broad reporting of what I refer to as high-stakes cheating. These structures are the building blocks of India’s so-called merit based education system, and they align with global education initiatives that favor private solutions and investment as a strategy to fund education (Tierney & Sabharwal, 2017) as well as with the obsession of standardized outcomes assessments as a meritocratic sorting and stratifying mechanism (Komatsu & Rappley, 2017; Menashy, 2017; Spring 2015). However, these structures very clearly undermine a legitimate merit-based system due to socio-economic limitations that prevent a majority of students from attending private and elite schools or private test preparation programs (Khan, 2010; Probe report, 1999). If we follow the messages in the media and the stories of students who are the highest performers on the standard board
exams, then we can clearly see that success in this system requires socio-economic means. This runs counter to India’s constitutional commitment to quality education for all students (EFA).

**Educational privatization and elite schools.** While the majority of Indian students attend government schools, India’s primary and secondary education system is becoming increasingly privatized (Jain et al., 2014). By educational privatization I am referring to any aspect of education that is administered as a commodity and with a for-profit motive. The following examples of educational privatization prominently emerged in the data during this study: (a) elite and privately administered schools that rely solely on tuition fees; (b) government-aided schools that are privately owned and administered, that charge tuition fees, and that receive partial government funding; and (c) private tutoring and test preparation in exchange for fees. The results for students who have access to these services are very different than those for the majority of students who cannot. Thus, as India’s central and state governments turn more and more to market solutions for public social services, the realm of education becomes increasingly stratified and inequitable.

**Undermining government schools via headlines.** The tension between government schools and their private or semi-private counterparts played out in the print media each day surrounding the grades ten and twelve board exam announcements. For example, on May 30, 2018, the day after the grade ten board exam results were announced, Jaipur’s *Daily News and Analysis* ran a front page story with the following headline, “CBSE [Central Board of Secondary Education]: In Delhi region, government schools drop pass percentage” (Iftikar, 2018, pp. 1, 4). This brief headline questions the preparedness of government school students for the CBSE grade ten board exam, and in the process it employs the media reporting strategy of “creative deceit” where the headline only tells one aspect of the story (Jowett & O’Donnell, 2006, p. 9). It
is true that in 2018 students in government schools did drop to a lower board exam pass percentage than in 2017, but they did nearly as well as private school students (i.e., 69.32% vs. 78.62%). Also, in 2017 the private school students passed at a rate of only 78.1% compared to government students at 92.44%. These further details were not reported in the headline, and this tactic serves to mislead the reading public and to undermine government schools.

On the same day, the *Times of India* ran the following headline, “Teachers believe that scrapping school wise examinations brings seriousness among students” (Gaur, 2018, p. 2). The ‘teachers’ referred to in this headline are teachers working in elite and private schools, and the story describes how the school curriculum and assessments have been pared down to solely prepare students for the board exams. In this way these schools do not waste time on school curriculum that does not relate to the all-important board exam. The broader context is that with this exam-centered curriculum, private and private-aided schools that follow this scheme are claimed to be noticeably superior to government schools and can compete in the Indian educational marketplace with other elite schools and with the rigorous test preparation programs.

The implication in this complex story is that government schools are required to follow a more holistic and standard curriculum developed and promoted by India’s central education Ministry of Human Resources Development (Shrimal, 2018). According to this story, teachers believe this broader curriculum wastes time by not directly teaching to the board exam, and reportedly, this had the effect of students not taking exams seriously enough. The issue then becomes one about public perception. These stories present a narrative, via short-blurb news headlines, implying that private and private-aided schools are better quality schools than government schools. This sentiment aligns with numerous newsprint stories and headlines from my data in both 2017 and 2018 that overtly malign government schools (e.g., “Falling standards:
Board results show poor teaching is the real problem,” 2018). To be clear, students from both
government-run and privately-run secondary schools pass the grades ten and twelve board exams
with similar percentages, but the nation’s exam toppers with the highest scores almost always
attend elite private schools as well as for-profit test preparation programs (Gohain & Sharma,
2018). The media’s regular reporting and promotion of these institutions may explain the societal
obsession with educational privatization.

**Elite schools.** In May 2017, during my first phase of fieldwork for this study, the megahit Bollywood movie *Hindi Medium* was released (Vijan & Choudhary, 2017). This sometimes
hilarious comedy took on the very serious business of education in India, and it is not a
coincidence that the movie was released in the weeks leading up to the announcement of exam
results for 2017. The fictional (yet all too realistic) plot line tells the story of a wealthy Indian
couple who are the parents of an only child, Pia, who they desperately want to enroll into the
prestigious and elite Delhi Grammar School (a not-so-subtle allusion to the real, well-known,
and elite Delhi Public School). However, the father’s social station as a sari shopkeeper, however
successful, keeps his daughter from qualifying for entrance into the school. The parents then
hatch a plan to pose as a very poor family to potentially qualify for the central government’s
affirmative action lottery under the 2009 right to education act. This constitutional amendment
requires all schools to reserve 25% of their seats for scheduled caste and tribe (SC/ST) and low
income students. The lengths this couple goes through to pull off this scheme, albeit
unsuccessfully in the end, parodies the very real lengths Indian parents go through to give their
own children a competitive edge in the Indian education system. This movie centrally highlights
the social inequity of elite private institutes in India, and by the end of the film the message is
that open-access, Hindi medium, government schools are vital social institutions that only need proper funding to function as they were originally envisioned. This story seamlessly aligns with the calls by countless educational experts and researchers who decry the lack of investment into government schools in India (e.g., De et al., 2011; Probe report, 1999; Srivastava & Noronha, Srivastava, 2010, 2013).

While the producers of Hindi Medium are clearly critical of educational inequity in Indian society, the movie did not impact or reduce the copious educational advertisements and promotions that are published in the weeks leading up to and following the announcement of board exam results. If anything, in the year following the release of the film there were more stories and advertisements in the media surrounding the exam result announcements, and during this time, nearly every day and in every paper there are full page ads promoting elite private schools in Jaipur (e.g., Figure 3.4). According to a geography teacher I spoke to from an elite private school in Jaipur, these schools require success in rigorous entrance exams, student
proficiency in English, and high tuition fees. Thus, they are primarily accessible only to the children of middle to upper class families (R. Das, personal communication, June 9, 2018).

Low-fee private schools to the rescue? If elite schools are reserved primarily for the middle and upper classes in society, low-fee and rural private schools were promoted in television and newsprint media as a plausible way to bring quality and contextually-relevant education to poor rural students as well as to poor urban students living in India’s slums.

Rural solutions. Amidst the announcements of board exam scores in late May and early June in 2017 (and aired again during the same time in 2018!), the popular Zee Entertainment cable lifestyle channel aired a documentary episode on the Chef on Wheels program with celebrity chef Gautam Mehrishi (Mehrishi, 2017). This episode featured a private school venture in the rural Sendhwa region of Madhya Pradesh intended to teach vulnerable village children a unique approach to learning. The school infused the academic curriculum with instruction in farming, cooking, and craft production as a means to provide practical skills to poor and rural students. This was an emotional show with the big and tough chef Gautam being touched to the point of tears several times as he toured the school’s gardens and cooked with the students.

The episode was particularly powerful due to the high-quality production, feel-good message, and genuine celebrity endorsement. What was the message? Sendhwa’s government public schools are failing and irrelevant, and this unique government-aided private school has the ability and vision to provide the relevant agricultural and craft education necessary for poor, rural students. The documentary itself was a sort of advertisement for donations to the Sendhwa school, and it compellingly promoted the potential benefits of low-fee private schools for India’s poor (regularly advocated by: Tooley & Dixon, 2005; Kingdon, 2005; Kingdon & Pal, 2014). The fundamental inequity within this story is the inherent assumption that rural, tribal students
only have the option to work in agriculture and craft, and they somehow do not deserve a quality government-funded education that would potentially give them the choice to live and work in rural India or perhaps to do something very different (Srivastava & Noronha, 2016).

Urban slum solutions. In his Man-ki-Baat (national radio address) in late May of 2018 Prime Minister Narendra Modi took the opportunity to praise a tea stall owner who also owns and runs a low-fee (or no fee for those who can't pay) private school for slum kids. This is a private-aided school that 59-year-old D. P. Rao has run and funded for the past 18 years with proceeds he earns from his tea stall as well as from government subsidies. The article reporting this story explained that children who attend this school would probably not have had the opportunity for any education without its existence (Mohanty, 2018, p. 4). In addition to a basic education to the third grade standard, the school also offers the students a uniform, slippers, and a midday meal of milk and biscuits. The tea-stall owner acknowledged that many of the parents of these students only reluctantly allow them to attend the school because of the meal provided. Otherwise, the children would be expected to work in order to help the family in any capacity possible.

This is truly an amazing story of kindness and selflessness, but it belies a more complex social problem. The social service that this particular story distracts the reader from is that the government of India is already required by constitutional mandate to provide open-access and free education to all students through the age of fourteen (Probe report, 1999; Indian Const. amend. LXXXVI, 2009). In most places in India, these government schools do exist, but they are usually woefully underfunded by both the central government and the states (Srivastava, 2010, 2013). In this case, we see India’s Prime Minister and the editor of the Hindustan Times
proactively promoting a low-fee private school alternative to regular government funded and administered schools that are required by law.

These two stories demonstrate the emphasis that is being placed on educational privatization across India. From elite private schools to low-fee private schools in rural and city slum contexts, the privatization of schools in tandem with public-private partnerships aligns directly with educational policy recommendations by the World Bank and other inter-governmental agencies (Spring, 2015; Stromquist & Sanyal, 2013). However, each of these stories highlighting the merits of low-fee private schools for rural and poor students fail to address the inequities in Indian education. While both schools offer examples of pragmatic, caring, and innovative educational programs, neither school provides their target students with the tools necessary to equitably compete or succeed in India’s current system that revolves around student success on high-stakes and standardized board exams.

**High-stakes testing.** A second, and probably most fundamental, structure that contributes to the construction of India’s so-called meritocratic education system is high-stakes testing. In fact, one could accurately characterize India’s system as an organizational culture of high-stakes testing (Tierney, 1988). I have already discussed how many elite and private schools directly teach to these exams in their secondary school curricula.

**School exam and curriculum boards.** The standard exams are designed, written, and assessed by eight autonomous school and curriculum boards that are officially recognized by India’s Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD, 2018). The school boards compete among themselves for school patronage and affiliations, and the board that is generally viewed as the most prestigious is the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). The CBSE is the dominant board in Delhi and the surrounding areas, and most of the elite schools in Jaipur are
affiliated with the CBSE. However, the competition among school boards to attract school affiliations is significant enough that all boards have engaged in the practice of grade inflation, or grade spiking, in their evaluation of standard ten and twelve board exams. Each school board wants to report exams results that show they have the highest-achieving students from their affiliated schools, and this has resulted in impossibly high scores that reveal the whole system as an organized scam. This issue was heavily reported on in 2017, and the *Times of India* ran a telling headline summarizing the obvious problem created by grade inflation, “What’s behind the great Indian marks race: As school boards competitively inflate Class 12 marks, it becomes hard to tell the best student apart” (Gohain, 2017).

**Tolerating grade spiking.** In 2017, the issue of grade inflation was debated in India’s High Court after the CBSE issued allegations that rival school boards were increasingly inflating student marks on the board exams. A newspaper headline from May 24, 2017 conveys the High Court’s decision: “Grace marks to stay this year, Delhi HC tells CBSE” (Sharma, p. 1). This decision reveals how an organizational culture of grade inflation, referred to here as grace marks, is not only normative in India, but it is legally sanctioned by the highest court.

By following this story for several days and through various news outlets, I learned that the High Court in Delhi was prepared to force the school boards to cease the practice of grade inflation in the current year of 2017. This apparently delayed the announcement of board exams to the public, as the boards had to re-adjust the marks they were planning to release. However, it was a group of concerned parents who successfully convinced the court that the practice of inflating exam grades was the established practice in India, and that by curbing grade spiking the court would unfairly and adversely impact their children’s prospects of attaining entrance into the best university programs. The court cautioned that while they would tolerate grade inflation
in 2017, they would take a new and serious look at the issue in 2018. Tellingly, grade inflation was not discussed in the media around the exam results announcement in 2018, even though the marks of topper students were even higher than the previous year. Even the CBSE clarified to the *Daily News and Analysis* that they were “opposed only to ‘crazy’ upward spiking of marks” (Sharma, 2017, p. 6).

The fact that students, parents, teachers, schools, the school boards, and India’s High Court all tolerate the structural manipulation of exam scores explains much about the organizational culture of high-stakes testing in India. This tolerance of unscrupulous practice in education, that is arguably the ladder to social agency and mobility in India, has been described as an organizational culture of corruption (Tierney & Sabharwal, 2017). However, while grade spiking by the school boards is tolerated, direct cheating by students is not.

**High-stakes cheating.** The drama of grade inflation was rivaled in 2017 by an emerging national story out of the eastern Indian state of Bihar. Following the exam result announcements of rival school boards, the Bihar School Exam Board announced their scores and publicly praised their 2017 BSEB exam toppers in the media. Following this, the national media picked up on the story with the following headline: “History repeats: Topper can’t answer basic questions” (Salomi, 2017, p. 1). The extended article told the story of this ‘topper’ student who reportedly paid someone to take the exam in his place. Upon questioning by the media, he was unable to answer simple questions on the topic of music—a subject he scored very high in on his exam. The article equated this scam to similar topper scams from previous years and suggested that this form of cheating was endemic and inevitable in a culture of high-stakes testing—and in particular in very poor states such as Bihar where educational agency can be the only path to a minimum level of economic security.
This particular story did not end with the exposing of the topper scam. The following day
a *Daily News and Analysis* headline further sensationalized the story:

Bihar topper, 42, arrested for faking his age. The Bihar School Exam Board (BSEB) had
withheld the result of its Intermediate Arts (IA) 2017 “topper” 42-year-old Ganesh
Kumar, who was arrested late Friday evening for falsely mentioning his age as 24 in the
admission and registration forms. According to sources, Kumar also has two children,
who study in primary school (Salomi, 2017, p. 1).

Reportedly, this accused student had shaved his head and expressed that he did this in grief over
a lost family member—a cultural practice in India. In reality, according to the news story, he had
shaved his head to alter his identity and to hide his true age from the Bihari authorities. The
result was that he was caught and arrested for his crime. The story’s drama continued in the
*Times of India* where it was reported that “Teachers will face the music” (2017) in the topper
scam involving Ganesh Kumar. Nitish Kumar, Bihar’s chief minister, personally promised to fire
the teachers and administrators who were aware of the scam and who were accused of accepting
bribes as a part of the scam. One can discern through the news stories that the topper scam from
Bihar was a very sad human story where one man went to great lengths to better his future for his
family by way of cheating. However, at the same time, India’s media also praise the exam
toppers as national celebrities. On June 2, 2017 Ganesh Kumar was a national hero for his top
board exam scores, and the very next day he was nationally disgraced and arrested for cheating.

Unscrupulous and sanctioned grade inflation as well as blatant and structural cheating on
standard board exams reveal some of the more dubious impacts of India’s organizational culture
of high-stakes testing. Similar scams littered the news headlines in 2018, and the most serious
allegations related to pre-exam leaks of questions on the CBSE board exam (Pandey, 2018). This
suggests that society largely accepts the high-stakes exam system as an established and inevitable measure of student academic merit. It is also a structural system that individuals will attempt to manipulate, or scam, to their advantage, and the subsequent public censure of revealed cheating schemes only bolsters the public perception of the importance and inherent merit of board exams. It is for this reason that I included the theme of high-stakes cheating in this section outlining the structural elements of India’s imagined educational meritocracy.

**Maintaining Meritocracy**

The media messages and propaganda that have served to construct India’s so-called educational meritocracy also serve to maintain the imagined meritocracy. There are several elements and strategies within Jaipur’s cultural media domain that serve to reinforce the educational structures. I identified three examples in particular through my analysis of the data collected for this study as follows: (a) The business of test preparation, (b) Topper praise and the creation of exam celebrities, and (c) The manipulation of student suicide reporting.

**The business of test preparation.** An organizational culture of high-stakes testing provides the perfect conditions for the emergence of educational entrepreneurs (Tierney & Sabharwal, 2017), and in India the test preparation business is thriving. As with any business venture, timely and strategically targeted advertising is important. The annual announcement of board exam scores provides the ideal time for tutoring and test prep centers to advertise their services. The two most common ways the educational entrepreneurs of Jaipur promote their businesses is through street signage and newsprint advertising.

**Street signage.** With the vast amount of data related to street-sign advertising collected for this study, I will by necessity limit discussion here to only two examples. The first example is target marketing street signs. In the city of Jaipur, neighborhoods are clearly delineated, and this
facilitates target marketing of education services. For example, the southeast neighborhoods of Raja Park and the adjacent Jawahar Nagar both consist of upper socio-economic residential homes with a myriad of local businesses catering to the residents of the neighborhoods. The population in these areas is generally well educated and English (a clear predictor of education in India) is commonly spoken. Similarly, Raja Park and Jawahar Nagar have educational street sign advertisements on nearly every available street pole or wall, and the majority of these signs are in English—again, catering to the target population. As I carefully and deliberately explored the view from the street, I found that the majority of the education ads were promoting high-end, English language test preparation services for the subjects assessed on the standard board exams as well as for other college entrance exams such as the JEE (engineering), NEET (medical), and CLAT (law) (Figure 3.5). The ability of educational entrepreneurs to target market their

![Image](image_url)

**Figure 3.5.** Jawahar Nagar street sign promoting test prep. This particular advertisement was posted on a quiet residential street in Jawahar Nagar, a very upscale neighborhood. Again, there is a clear targeting of tutoring and test prep services to families who can likely afford them. This particular ad is for tutoring services in the most elite engineering and medical track subjects for grades 9-12.
businesses directly to the middle and upper class students who have the means to participate in the programs helps the test prep industry thrive. This strategy also serves to condition the population to a perceived need to enroll in such programs.

A second example of educational street advertisements was identified in the Johari Bazaar and Bapu Bazaar areas of Jaipur’s old pink city near the southern Ajmeri Gate. This neighborhood is mostly known for stores selling handicrafts, fashion and household items, as well as bookstores selling test-preparation materials. People of all socio-economic groups shop in these markets. Around the public announcement of the standard secondary board exam results, as well as the college entrance exam results in late June, there is a snowball effect where media stories and advertisements cause students to scramble to these stores to locate and purchase affordable test-preparation books (Figure 3.6). One cannot visit this area during the exam announcement months of May and June without noticing the high value that is placed on education in India and the central importance of preparation for high-stakes exams.

![Figure 3.6. Test prep signage and stores in Jaipur’s pink city. Depicted here are various advertising, test-prep books for sale, and test-prep bookstores in the Johari and Bapu Bazaar areas of Jaipur. Notice how the exams are advertised as competitions.](image)
Newsprint advertising. Just as street advertising promoting the test-prep industry increases around the announcements of exams, so too does the publication of newsprint ads. There were literally dozens of examples of full-page, and often front page, advertisements promoting for-profit test preparation centers in my data sets for both 2017 and 2018. In 2017, one particular advertisement from the front page of the Hindustan Times caught my attention for the ironic honesty used to describe Jaipur’s test-preparation industry and the religious self-righteousness used to promote their own venture, and it is worth citing at length here:

FIITJEE Students celebrate 25 years of glorious legacy by achieving Stupendous Results in JEE Advanced 2017. We do what we say. We are poised to redefine education. This is the Kaliyug [i.e., age of degradation] and antisocial elements in their characteristic dacoit & terrorist style try to loot the good work of committed institutes. Modus operandi is simple—fake results, poach faculty & even buy Students by offering their parents high sums of money. General public without analyzing the character & virtue of these institutes take admission with them. Except for a few brilliant students, there is no care. That is why disillusioned & frustrated children commit suicide. With divine blessings FIITJEE is committed to destroy this negativity & purify education (FIITJEE Students celebrate,” 2017).

Accompanying the text of this advertisement was a picture of the Hindu deity Krishna with quotes from the Bhagavad Gita about the immortality of the soul. The implication is that FIITJEE is a testing center that remains moral and pure in an age of moral decline. What is most important is the insight we gain into the practices of test-prep centers. It appears that the central feature of India’s education system (i.e., the high-stakes exam) has led to entrepreneurial corruption in the test prep industry. This diatribe against a corrupt test-prep system might better
inform the public by implicating the inequitable and high-stakes nature of the board exam as the root cause of the corruption in its own industry—but that would undermine their own business interests in the private, for-profit education sector.

In 2018, following the JEE exam (i.e., the standard engineering entrance exam) results, I carefully scanned the Hindustan Times to see if this same learning center would place another full page advertisement, and I was not disappointed (“FIITJEE Students celebrate,” 2018). In the 2018 ad, the center highlighted the Hindu deity Shiva and his all-seeing retribution against corruption in society—again, implicating the corruption of the test-prep industry in general and this center’s competitors in particular. The ad also included pictures of FIITJEE’s students who were toppers on the 2018 JEE exam, and it is this ubiquitous practice of creating topper-student celebrities in advertisements and news reporting that is most directly used to maintain the imagined meritocracy in Indian education.

Creating celebrities and conditioning society. In 2017 following the announcement of the grade twelve standard exam results, Jaipur’s Daily News and Analysis reported the following front-page story:

India misses perfect CBSE score by .4%. Result was unimaginable. Sunday started on an unusual note for Raksha Gopal, who emerged as the all-India CBSE topper in the class XII examination results announce on Sunday, with a score of 99.6%. 17-year old Raksha Gopal from Amity International School, Noida certainly shot to fame. (“India misses perfect CBSE score,” 2017, p. 1).

Several issues emerge from this headline news story. First, we learn that the highest 12 standard exam topper in India was a female student who received the top scores in the Humanities track. This distinction is important. While her achievement is impressive, India’s
school boards and India’s media go to great lengths to celebrate the success that female students have in the Humanities track, and this was the topic of several news stories published during my 2017 fieldwork: “Girls overshadow boys in RBSE XII Arts result” (2017); “RBSE Class 12 Arts: Girls outdo boys again in board exams” (2017). And, as if experiencing déjà vu, the 2018 all-India CBSE 12 board topper, Meghna Srivastava, was also a female, also from an elite school in Noida, and also the all-India topper in the Humanities track. Meghna’s story was told in stories on the front pages of Hindustan Times (Jha, 2018) and the Times of India (Gohain, 2018), and her score, 99.8%, was even higher than Raksha’s the previous year. Especially considered together and over consecutive years, these stories reinforce a societal expectation of male students to enter STEM and female students to excel in the Humanities tracks (Zakaria, 2015). These gendered educational roles become more internalized in society when female student toppers such as Raksha Gopal and Meghna Srivastava become the celebrated faces and role models of female student success in Humanities. Meghna was even so celebrated in the national media as to be featured in the celebrity section of Jaipur Times, an insert in the Times of India usually reserved for top Bollywood stars (Lal, 2018).

From examples such as these, it is apparent that India’s media has the influence to create celebrities out of board exam toppers while at the same time reinforcing gendered educational tracks and expectations. The news stories of Raksha and Meghna demonstrate stories where the students had access to the educational infrastructure and resources necessary to excel on the high-stakes exam at the highest level. However, during my two consecutive years of fieldwork I encountered dozens of stories of celebrated students who overcame physical or economic adversity and who still managed to become nationally recognized exam toppers. Here is a headline and quote from one such student from North Andhra, India: “IAS topper but no money
to travel: I am poor in financial terms, but not in thinking, determination and hard work” (Kumar, 2017). Another example was a story about a boy with compromised vision who was still able to succeed as a top academic performer despite his disability: “He managed a 9.8 CGPA with just 25% eyesight” (2017). And from 2018 there was a moving story with the following headline: “Boy who cannot sit, wrote exams standing, gets 93%” (Srinivasan, 2018).

These stories serve to condition society to the value of hard work and diligence (i.e., merit) in academic performance, and the underlying message is that if they can do it, so can you. However, this message belies the structural inequality of a system where access to test preparation, test-specific curriculum and instruction, and quality educational facilities are severely limited to the poor majority of India’s population (Srivastava & Noronha, 2016). This makes the possibility of becoming an exam topper on the high-stakes exams an unattainable dream for most—despite the media headlines to the contrary.

**Cracking under pressure.** Maybe the most well-known secret accompanying topper praise and other stories commending high-achieving students with physical challenges is that student suicide incidences increase each year in direct relation to the announcement of high-stakes exam results. In spite of this common knowledge, India’s media is far more likely to spin positive stories about student success than they are to convey stories of failure. An exception to this, as noted earlier, is the media’s proclivity to report on exam cheating scams such as the 2017 scandal in Bihar. That story gained traction as a means to warn against the dire consequences associated with cheating in the current system. It was a sort of morality tale that at the same time admonished cheating and praised India’s meritocratic exam system and Bihar’s governmental justice in place to defend it.
When the media does report on student suicides following exam result announcements, they often do not explain the reasons why students are committing suicide, and they will sometimes refer to the victims as minors or teens instead of as students. Examples of this tactic include reports such as “Minor dies after falling from terrace,” (2018), “20 year old hangs self in Kota,” (2018), or “Teen jumps off terrace of private varsity” (2018). Other reports offer slightly more information: “16 year old kills self, 10th case in Kota since Jan” (2018), and even more explicit, “TN [Tamil Nadu] coolie’s daughter fails in NEET [medical board exam], kills self with rat poison” (Jagannath, 2018). This last story reveals that the student failed the NEET exam not because of her aptitude or ability, but because a majority of the NEET exam questions were incorrectly translated into Tamil, causing her responses to be confused. These headlines and stories clearly demonstrate this seriously negative social impact of high-takes testing. Instead of directly addressing the tragic problem, the media, the police, and educational leaders, more often than not, overshadow the suicide stories with the feel-good stories of under-dog students who succeed on exams despite severe physical or economic challenges. In this way the educational structure, and the media and broader society that support it, are not directly implicated in the tragic loss of life.

There were voices in the media that criticized this tragic impact on so many Indian students who simply cannot take the pressure put on them by the high-stakes exam system. In an anonymous opinion editorial in the Daily News & Analysis following the 2018 twelve standard board results, one critic expressed that while the public acknowledgment of top performing students is necessary, the overwhelming amount of student suicides directly follow from India’s “fixation with [exam] toppers” (“Saving our students,” 2018, p. 8). In 2018, the school boards themselves recognized this problem and set up counseling services across India for students who
did not perform as well as they had hoped to reach out to mental health professionals (“CBSE sets helpline for students,” 2018). While these services are certainly necessary, they are aimed at treating the symptom rather than the cause of the problem—namely, the wide use of high-stakes exams and excessive topper praise.

The schemes of counseling services and curbing topper praise for the social problems of excessive student pressure and student suicides are good starts. However, these solutions suggest to the public that the problem lies with the students who crack under pressure, rather than calling into question the education system as the real problem. Thus, media reporting on student suicides and preventative counseling measures only serve to maintain the meritocratic status quo. It will likely require both high-profile and more frequent calls for structural change before India’s education system becomes as equitable as many reform advocates envision it becoming.

**Contesting Meritocracy**

It is perhaps ironic that the very student who became a national celebrity for topping the twelve standard board exam with a score of 99.8% in 2018, would become the most vocal opponent of board exams. In Meghna Srivastava’s own words, “I think the board exams are so over-rated” (Lal, 2018, p. 1). She went on to say that she was glad that she missed one point on the English portion of the exam because the exam is too overhyped, and “English is a language in which you can’t score 100 marks” (p. 1). Clearly, it seems easy for a student who has the affordances to prepare for such a high-stakes exam over the period of years and who received the nation’s top marks to express that the exam is no big deal and that the whole obsession with exam marks is overplayed in India. However, her status as an exam celebrity and her access to national mass-media renders her comments powerful and potentially influential in the perception of other students who take the time to internalize her remarks.
When we add Meghna’s public criticisms together with other mass-media critiques of India’s inequitable educational structure, such as the box-office hit movie *Hindi Medium* that I discussed above, the possibility of a real and concerted movement of educational change emerges. The film *Hindi Medium* was the eighth all-time top grossing movie from Bollywood, and this demonstrates that a massive audience heard this story that critiqued elite and private schools, the high-stakes testing structure, and other issues related to India’s current education system. And even though this movie was released in May of 2017, and the typical media reporting in support of India’s market-model education structure continued as per usual around the board exam announcements in both 2017 and 2018, the message of the movie continues to have the potential to impact the decisions families make when choosing the type of education they want for their children.

It is true that most of the stories that resist the current education structure remain marginalized to the back pages of the papers. But these stories take on new relevance in the wake of high-profile and mass-media criticisms. For example, I previously described how low-fee private schools are being promoted in rural areas of India as a means to provide quality and relevant education and skills to rural students. A direct challenge to these initiatives was reported in the *Times of India* in June of 2017:

> Private is passé, Gujarat villagers go old school. A group of villagers in Morbi have decided to tread the unconventional path, pulling their kids out of private schools to enroll them in the village government school. This is a fresh chapter in their lives, the fight to strengthen infrastructure at the government school (*Kaushik, 2017, p. 9*).

This remarkable story stood alone in the data I collected in 2017. Even the reporting in this story suggests that private schools are the norm in poor and rural areas of India, when in fact, private
schools account for only 25% of all K-12 enrollments (Planning Commission Government of India, 2013; Jain et al., 2014). Additionally, the majority of poor and rural students attend government schools (Probe report, 1999). This story exemplifies Hall’s (2012) conception of an oppositional code to hegemonic media messages; in this case opposition to an assumption that private schools are superior to government schools.

Given the timing of the release of the movie Hindi Medium and the reporting of this story from Gujarat, it is plausible that these village families were inspired by the message from the movie. However, I suspect that there are countless other families across India that are tired of the constant media bombardment praising global market-model educational initiatives such as privatized schools over and above India’s constitutionally guaranteed free, open-access, and quality government schools (Indian Const. art. XLV, Directives Principle; Indian Const. amend. LXXXVI, 2009). The challenge for those who resist a market-model education system remains formidable and an uphill climb. At least in the short term, those who contest this system will have to contend with the inequitable and gentrifying effect of high-stakes testing and the ongoing privatization of education more generally—initiatives that were originally imposed on India by global inter-governmental agencies (Corbridge & Harriss, 2001). But India remains the largest democracy in the world, and if the masses choose to do so, they have the potential to promote change through their actions just as those villagers in Gujarat have done.

Conclusion

I once read a book that discussed the complexity of the ancient Greek society with the organizational starting point of a single coin, and I was amazed at how something so seemingly commonplace could be unpacked to reveal so much. Likewise, this study was organized around the seemingly mundane announcement of exam scores. From this starting point, this study
explored the complexities of the globalization and marketization of education and its impact on and implications for India. With the heightened media attention the announcement of board exam results garners in India, this was the ideal case around which to explore the educational messages and agendas promoted by the media. The broad thematic findings that emerged—i.e., Constructing Meritocracy, Maintaining Meritocracy, and Contesting Meritocracy—as well as the several sub-themes discussed, such as high-stakes testing and educational privatization, reveal that India largely follows the global neoliberal market-based education model that increasingly characterizes education around the world (Baltodano, 2017; Giroux, 2014; Klees, 2017).

**Outside Educational Influences**

While I discussed the implications and challenges presented by market-model educational policies for societal equitability in India, it is important to emphasize that many of the policies and agendas were initially imposed on India from outside sources. For example, high-stakes exams were introduced into India by the British during the colonial era when public, secular education along Western lines was instituted (Boucher, 2017). Later, free and universal public education was included as a right of all citizens in the Constitution of independent India (Indian Const. art. XLV, Directives Principle), but in the 1990s the World Bank required that India encourage and implement market-solutions to fund education as a condition for loans and loan restructuring (Corbridge & Harriss, 2001; Dreze & Sen, 2012). The result has been what emerged in this study—namely, standardized and high-stakes assessments that facilitate the conversion of education as a public social good to a for-profit and personal-good model that favors those with the means to participate. Even though India’s system is presented and understood by many as meritocratic (S. Chotia, personal communication, August 3, 2018), this
study reveals that India’s system could be best understood as an imagined meritocracy that perpetuates educational inequity that carries over into other life chances.

**Societal Resistance and Paths Toward Future Study**

This is not to suggest that India is just blindly following outside models. In important ways there are signs of resistance to inequitable education structures and initiatives. This was revealed through several examples from media data analyzed during this two-year study. In particular, high-profile and mass-media news reporting and the 2017 block-buster film *Hindi Medium* provided key examples of resistance to global market-model educational schemes. Other examples of resistance were more difficult to identify. This is largely due to the power of India’s media to high point the stories that powerful actors deem reportable to the society at large (Herman & Chomsky, 2012), and this demonstrates the sheer power and influence of media.

The primary media data sources in this study consisted of newsprint, television and film, and street-signage. A future study might well expand the inquiry of media sources to substantively include online and social media sources such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. These sources would perhaps provide the important understanding of the educational concerns and opinions of India’s youth. Additionally, these social media forms allow users broad latitude of expression without the minders and gatekeepers that are more likely to exist in older and more traditional media sources such as newsprint. However, newsprint was important in the design of this study due to that fact that the majority of Indians (particularly parents of students) still regularly consume this form of media—more so than in other societies around the world who have turned more to online sources for their media consumption (A. A. K., 2016).

Another path one might take in a future study would be to directly identify and investigate societal stakeholders who are directly impacted by the media reporting and messages
on education. This approach presents challenges due to the difficulty in gauging the extent to which media messages impact perceptions and behavior in society (Stokes, 2013). But a researcher could creatively and deliberately design an ethnographic study that explores societal stakeholder motivations to resist the market-model system that currently exists in India. This could be done by directly observing and interviewing people such as the village families in Gujarat who left the private school *en masse* in favor of the village government school (Kaushik, 2017). This would become a very different form of study, but it would potentially contribute important sociological data on the topic of global influences in Indian education. Future research in the topics explored in this study are vital in large part because market solutions and so-called meritocratic assessments generally run counter to the spirit and goal of UNESCO’s education for all (EFA) and India’s right to education (RTE), and vulnerable students will be perpetually left behind if India’s imagined meritocracy continues along its current path.
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Chapter Four

Local Culture in a Globalized World: Student Motivations to Pursue Craft Education in Jaipur, India

Introduction to Chapter

The preceding chapters have established the research problem that this study seeks to address. The research problem, in its broadest sense, is the colonizing impacts of globalization, and I discussed this at length in Chapter One. I narrowed the research problem in Chapter Two where I presented my published article that investigated historical and theoretical justifications for implementing and manipulating education in India in support of colonial and global agendas. That article provided the background and impetus for the second article in this study that I presented in Chapter Three.

The second article refines the research problem even further and focuses on the extent to which the globalization of education has impacted India. Article two is a bounded case study where I conducted a triangulated media study around the announcement of standardized board exam results. The research methodology that I utilized is known as ethnographic content analysis, and this method of analysis allows the researcher to investigate multiple societal media sources and messages in an inter-textual and reflexive manner to get a sense of the societal (i.e., ethnographic) conversation and media conditioning around global market-model education issues in India. The key limitation of article two was the inability to gauge the causal effect of the educational media messages on societal stakeholders beyond those presented in media stories (Stokes, 2013), and this created the opportunity for this third article/study.
In the effort to investigate the impact of and reaction to global market-model education promotion, I identified a population of students who have eschewed the dominant global and societal higher educational paths of STEM fields in favor of tertiary education in traditional Indian craft and design. The working assumption in this sampling process is that traditional craft education is a culturally reifying field of study that places local cultural values and forms over and above globally hegemonic values and agendas (Gay, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2014). This does not imply that these students resist all forms of globalization, but through their educational decisions, they clearly reject the dominant globalized preference of majors that directly contribute to a global knowledge economy (Altbach, 2015; Spring, 2015). Further, their chosen field of traditional craft suggests they hold local cultural forms in high esteem and worth preservation (Wilkenson-Weber & DeNicola, 2016). This study was designed to explore both the motivations of students to pursue higher education in traditional craft and design fields as well as the role craft pedagogy plays in broader cultural flows in our age of globalization.

One could measure the impact of global market-model education by exploring examples of complicity. It would be possible to identify complicity with a quantitative study measuring the correlation of targeted media promotion of educational privatization with the number of new private school ventures that opened during a defined period. There are countless other approaches one could use to measure complicity, but I chose instead to explore individual examples of resistance. This resistance is what Hall (2012) referred to as an oppositional code or contrary response to the dominant or hegemonic media messages (in this case messages promoting global market-model education), and this stance of opposition provides groups with the opportunity to proactively reject or even transform the societal message (Hall, 2012; Anderson-Levitt, 2003). This potential rejection or transformation of globalized ideologies
connects this article to the two final stages of the broad conceptual model that weaves these three discrete articles together as a cohesive and complimentary whole (Figure 4.1).

**Figure 4.1.** Connection of article three to global conceptual model.
Abstract

Globalization has the potential to threaten individual cultures. This is problematic because culture is a reflection of a group's identity, autonomy, and agency in all social, political, and economic spheres. The purpose of this study is to provide information on ways distinct cultural groups respond to global influences that directly impact their cultural traditions and societal agency. I present in this article a qualitative ethnographic study that explores the intersections of globalization and local cultures by investigating student motivations to formally study traditional Indian craft and design at a renowned craft institute in Jaipur, India in an era when the global and societal norms and expectations are for students to pursue higher education in subjects that contribute to the broader global knowledge economy.
Local Culture in a Globalized World: Student Motivations to Pursue Craft Education in Jaipur, India

In Jaipur’s pink walled city there is a historic Muslim neighborhood informally named Purani Basti (literally, “old slum”). In June of 2018 I accompanied a recent craft design graduate from a noted college of traditional craft and design to this neighborhood to meet with a renowned Jaipuri block carver/maker named Abdulji (Figure 4.2). We were fortunate that Abdulji agreed to meet us considering it was a Friday, an important communal prayer day for Muslims, during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan; however, the rendezvous was a business meeting that could prove beneficial to the young craft designer as well as to Abdulji and his family of block makers. We entered a modest two-story building that served double duty as Abdulji’s family home and as his block making workshop. The workshop was on the second floor adjacent to the family kitchen that was separated only by a cloth partition. We squatted on the dirt floor in the small workshop around the imposing but kind presence of Abdulji, a true master craftsman who carves impossibly intricate designs into sheesham hardwood blocks that are then used by chippas (block printers) to stamp traditional design motifs onto Indian textiles. These traditional block print textiles are highly valued in India and increasingly in global market contexts.

The designer I accompanied, Naveen Sharma, graciously greeted his host Abdulji and showed him a recent contemporary design that he wanted to contract the block maker to carve for him. They haggled over the details of the design and the price, but they eventually agreed to a deal. Naveen is just 24 years old, and he comes from a block printing family who has been doing this same work for nearly two centuries. He initially wanted to deviate from the family business and work in another field such as international business, but his father asked him to take the lead
of the family block printing business. Naveen eventually agreed on the condition that he could introduce newer and more contemporary designs into their work (designs he explored as a student at the craft college), and this is what brought us to Purani Basti during Ramadam. Both Naveen Sharma and Abdulji believe that through their collaboration they might possibly produce and sell relevant and desired contemporary block print textiles to emerging global markets, and in the process continue the traditions that both of their families have been practicing for generations. Somewhat ironically, it has been the invention of modern printing techniques with screen printing and chemical dyes, as well as cheaper labor from global contexts and consumer demand for lower prices, which together have threatened the sustainability of traditional Indian block printing. However, Naveen is counting on the presence of global markets to not only sustain his cultural craft traditions, but to allow these traditions to thrive.

A meeting such as this between a craft designer and a craft artisan is a common event in Jaipur, but careful attention to the details of this otherwise common meeting reveals, in part, that globalization has the potential to threaten individual cultures (Friedman, 2007; Spring 2015). This is problematic because culture is a reflection of a group's identity, autonomy, and agency in
all social, political, and economic spheres (May, 2009). This is why it was so important to Naveen’s father that his son continues with their family block printing business—to not lose sight of their long-established traditional cultural practices as textile designers. We also learn through this meeting that global infrastructures can plausibly expand local, cultural commodities such as block print textiles (DeNicola & DeNicola, 2012; Hall, 1997). Thus, in the broadest sense, this study seeks to provide information on the complex ways distinct cultural groups respond to global influences that directly impact their cultural traditions and societal agency. To accomplish this, I conducted an ethnographic study that explored the intersections of globalization and local cultures, and I narrowed this inquiry to more specifically research student motivations, such as those of Naveen Sharma mentioned above, to formally study traditional Indian craft and design at an established institute in Jaipur, India in an era when the global and more typical societal norms and expectations are for students to pursue higher education in subjects that directly contribute to the broader global knowledge economy (Altbach, 2015; Spring, 2015; Zakaria, 2015).

Dominant systems of power, such as globalization, are reproduced through education (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977), and this is also the process used to preserve traditional culture (Kiebl & Roy, 2004). In addition to exploring student motivations to pursue formal study of traditional craft, this study investigates cultural pedagogy as a means to gather information on cultural activities in relation to globalization (Geertz, 1973). In this context, cultural pedagogy is defined as the process and techniques of teaching, reinforcing, and reproducing cultural artifacts and awareness within a particular cultural group (Bourdieu, 2013; Jaeger & Breen, 2016; Salazar, 2011). The central questions guiding this research are as follows: (a) What are the motivations that students express as their impetus to pursue formal higher education in
traditional craft and design? (b) Further, in what ways does craft pedagogy align with or contest pedagogies that support a global knowledge economy, and (c) how might a focus in traditional Indian craft enable students to engage and preserve their unique identity in the emergent presence of a global culture?

There is opposing literature that investigates the intersections of globalization and culture, and the findings usually fall into one of two sides of a binary. On one side it is argued that varied facets of globalization are so pervasive that local cultures will eventually succumb to the broader global culture and essentially be absorbed, if not erased (Meyer, Boli, Thomas, & Ramirez, 1997; Waldron, 1995; Wallerstein, 1997). The other position articulates that individual cultural groups are so deeply rooted that they will resist any attempt to fundamentally transform their identity and practices (Anderson-Levitt, 2003; Appadurai, 1990). This either-or binary belies the complexities of cultures operating within our current era of globalization (DeNicola & DeNicola, 2012; Hall, 1997, 2012; Hannerz, 1997; May, 2009; Robertson, 1997), and this study investigates this liminal, yet potentially empowering, space between the binary.

I selected Jaipur, India as the location to conduct this ethnographic study because it is a city known for its cultural craft traditions (Cooke, 2014; DeNicola & DeNicola, 2012; Wilkenson-Weber & DeNicola, 2016), and it is considered by many to be the central hub of Indian handicraft (A. Sen, craft designer, personal communication, June 10, 2018). At the same time, Jaipur is a major city in India that is connected to the broader global economy, and for these reasons, this was the ideal location to investigate the crossroads of globalization and local culture.

Jaipur is also the home of an established college of craft and design where I was granted liberal access to investigate student motivations to formally pursue craft education as well as
examine the process of craft education in both formal and informal settings. Many of the students I gained access to through the course of this study had the means, and largely the familial expectation, to pursue higher education in current and modern disciplines that would land them stable and globally-relevant jobs. Typical educational tracks that are deemed to be stable career paths in India include science, engineering, law, commerce, and even the humanities (Zakaria, 2015). However, the majority of the students I spoke to were passionate about their role in preserving their indigenous craft traditions. Most of the students view themselves as globally-competent people who have the opportunity and the tools necessary to navigate multiple spaces in the efforts of their work. This might include a command of both local languages such as Hindi or Urdu and the more global language of English. They have access to communication, transportation, and networks that allow them to navigate the spaces that exist betwixt and between the rural craft villages where handicraft products are produced, the regional urban markets in cities such as Jaipur or Mumbai where they are sold, and the global trade shows in places such as London or Las Vegas where these traditional craft products are increasingly sought after and consumed. These students could have pursued other lines of study in college, but they proactively chose to pursue work in the craft sector. This study seeks information on the motivations of these particular students to resist the more prescriptive educational fields.

Many of the students I spoke with, as well as their supporting faculty and administration from the college of craft and design they attend, consider traditional handicrafts to be vital cultural artifacts that have relevance and potential in both local and global contexts, and by working in the craft sector they believe they preserve a part of themselves as well as their broader culture (e.g., H. Shivani, craft student, personal communication, July 5, 2018). This point of view aligns with findings from scholars working in craft studies who have described
craftwork and craft education as vital cultural activities and processes that serve to preserve a group’s cultural traditions (Bhat & Yadav, 2016; Pollanen, 2011). Crafts are also considered cultural artifacts that are visible commodities in the global economy (Cooke, 2014; Jena, 2010; Kiebl & Roy, 2004; Morris, 2016; Wilkinson-Weber & DeNicola, 2016). My interviews with students, faculty, and administrators as well as my observations of classes and the pedagogical methods used to instruct students in craft curricula largely align with these earlier findings.

However, I discovered over the course of months of ethnographic fieldwork, that students possessed multiple and complex motivations to formally study craft. The information they reported in more formal interviews did not always align with information revealed in other informal conversations or observations. Thus, the findings presented in this article are varied and complex. I had originally envisioned a deductive study where I would test whether or not the methods of craft pedagogy or the motivations of students to study craft fit neatly into cultural-agency theory and culturally responsive pedagogy, but early on in the fieldwork I realized that I needed to be open to a more inductive approach in order to discern and convey the stories that emerged from the data rather than to manipulate or corral the data into a particular preconceived conceptual framework (Repko, Szostak, & Buchberger, 2017). What I found in this study was that the data both conform to and reify established conceptual frameworks and, at the same time, point in new directions and to new or reinterpreted models of the global-local nexus.

**Global-Local Intersections: Conceptual Frameworks**

As mentioned above, there are conflicting findings in research studies and theoretical works examining the impact of globalization on individual cultures. One common finding is that globalization is so pervasive that the myriad cultures around the world are becoming homogenized into a single global culture or global society (Boli & Thomas, 1999; Friedman &
Mandelbaum, 2011; Meyer et al., 1997). Those who articulate or espouse this position are referred to here as world-cultural theorists. In contrast, others have found that local cultures, because of the agency they possess by identifying and acting as distinct cultures, can autonomously accept, reject, or transform elements from the global culture in ways that specifically benefit and advance their particular interests (Assie-Lumumba, 2017; Anderson-Levitt, 2003; Appadurai, 1990), and I refer to those in this camp, largely comprised of cultural anthropologists, as cultural-agency theorists. There is a third theoretic point of view that I most specifically adapt in this ethnographic study, and this view is one where there is not necessarily a rigid dichotomy between a so-called global culture and discrete individual cultures. Rather, there are spaces for mutually-beneficial cultural flows that might be considered liminal spaces due to the ways in which these flows potentially undermine respective underlying objectives of both the global system and the local, cultural interests (e.g., Goh, 2008; Hall, 1997). Nevertheless, this liminal space is navigable, and I refer to this third perspective as cultural-fluidity theory.

**Globalization and the Emergence of a World Culture**

The global culture has impacted several areas of distinct and local cultures. An example relevant to this study is the globalization of education along neoliberal and market-model lines (Ball, 2012; Baltodano, 2017; Klees, 2008; Spring, 2015). Global educational initiatives have been proactively imposed on nations such as India (and others such as Chile, for example) in the effort to normalize both the structures and the product of education as global-market commodities (Corbridge & Harriss, 2001; Stromquist & Sanyal, 2013). Some argue that these globalized education policies, such as school privatization, are positively improving school systems such as India’s and enabling students to better participate in the world culture (Dixon, 2012; Kingdon & Pal, 2014, Meyer et al., 1997). Even adamant critics of globalization
acknowledge the pervasive process of the globalization of education in service of a global knowledge economy (Altbach, 2015; Klees, 2008; Spring, 2015). In the realm of globalized economics, several scholars and economists have discussed the ways in which India’s economy has become aligned with the neoliberal and capitalist interests of the world economy—particularly since the 1990s (Corbridge & Harriss, 2001; Dreze & Sen, 2013; Gupta, 2012; Oza, 2012). Proponents for a cosmopolitan world culture stress that globalization gives localities agency and justice within the broader system; and as articulated from this perspective, a global culture that replaces individual cultures is an inevitable and positive development (Waldron, 1995). All of these examples are offered here to demonstrate that the presence of an established or emergent world culture is generally accepted as an ontological reality, and compliance to this world culture is becoming increasingly normative (Meyer et al., 1997).

Cultural Agency and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Alternative perspectives articulate that groups have agency and autonomy in the world as a direct result of their identity and collective action as distinct culture-sharing groups (May, 2009). In separate qualitative research studies in Finland, Pollanen (2011) and Kouhia (2015) found craft education to be an example of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) that empowered students in their social and economic outcomes. The importance of CRP is that this pedagogy equips students with the agency to draw from their particular lived experiences and cultural wealth while navigating the assessments and expectations of a broader system (Gay, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014). Similarly, Bratich and Brush (2011) investigated the relationship between cultural agency and craft production and found that craftwork served to bind cultural groups together in collective action. These studies do not deny the existence of globalization or portray all facets of globalization as negative, but they do demonstrate how distinct cultural
groups, through cultural activities and their own cultural wealth, have the autonomy to select, reject, and transform elements of globalization to their own advantage (Anderson-Levitt, 2003).

**Cultural Fluidity**

These first two theoretical perspectives (i.e., world-culture theory and cultural-agency theory) suggest a binary of global culture versus individual or particular cultures. However, an alternate point of view suggests that interactions between the global culture and individual cultures are not so rigid. From this perspective, culture is viewed as a way groups understand their identity and agency in the world, and cultural groups are understood as fluid and constantly changing to accommodate the varied world in which they live (Anzaldúa, 1987; Hall, 1997; Hannerz, 1997; Marginson & Rhoades, 2002; May, 2009; Robertson, 1997). In this paradigm, people from particular cultural groups contribute to and even comprise the larger global system. Robertson (1997) referred to this as the “globalization of particularisms” where individual cultures collectively constitute the mosaic that becomes a so-called global culture (pp. 77-78).

I view this somewhat differently than Robertson based on my experiences with the craft students I interacted with during the course of this study. Several students described to me the ways they operate in and belong to both the global system and to their own individual cultural tradition. They clearly are not succumbing to an all-powerful world culture, and they are not merely picking and choosing and adapting elements from the global infrastructure to their particular advantage. They also do not see themselves as one among many unique cultural expressions in a global mosaic. Rather, craft students expressed to me the unique desire, or ability, to navigate what I refer to here as the liminal spaces between and within the global and the local. They have agency both inside the global structures and inside their particular cultural context in ways that others do not. I only started to understand these complex hierarchies within
and among the groups of India’s craft sector, and this is certainly a topic others have investigated in interesting ways (e.g., DeNicola & DeNicola, 2012; Mohsini, 2016).

I also get the sense that even though some craft students express this agency to navigate multiple contexts, they do not always feel fully a part of either the global culture or their local culture (which, in fact, is many subcultures). Insights such as these demonstrate how the lives of real people communicating their stories and their ideas meaningfully and honestly can serve to reveal the complexities of cultural flows in our global era. All too often conceptual frameworks drive research methods and design, but in this ethnographic study it was the careful and deliberate research design that allowed me to gain access, trust, and meaningful information that, in turn, contributes to a better understanding of complex conceptual frameworks. In the following sections I discuss the issues and processes involved in the design of this ethnographic study, and I follow this with a presentation of the findings of the study accompanied by discussion of the implications.

**Establishing Trust to Gain Entry and Insight: By Design**

As mentioned above, craft education has been identified as culture-centered pedagogy (Bratich & Brush, 2012; Kouhia, 2015; Pollanen, 2011), and this ethnographic study was carefully designed to examine and describe (a) student motivations to formally study traditional Indian craft and design, (b) the practice of formal craft education as a potential example of cultural pedagogy, and (c) the ways in which education and work in India’s craft sector could potentially allow students to maintain and promote their particular cultural heritage in our increasingly global world. To accomplish this, and, more broadly, to understand the complex ways people from distinct cultural groups negotiate their cultural identity and agency in our era of globalization, I first had to identify and gain entry and access to an institution that offers craft
education. Following this, I had to forge relationships with administrators, faculty, and carefully sampled student populations from the institution. In substantive ways, the story of how I gained access to my research site and the trust of my research participants is as important and revealing as the thematic findings from this study. In fact, the story detailing the research design and rationale should be understood as a constitutive part of this study’s findings, as it provides contextual background and vital information on the organizational culture of the research site.

**Rationales for the Research Site**

The physical research site where the majority of field observations and interviews took place in this study is an established college of Indian craft and design located in the capital of the Indian state of Rajasthan. But before I discuss the rationale for choosing this particular institution, it is important to understand why India as a country and Jaipur as a city were chosen as geographic locations for this research.

**India.** This study explores the intersections of globalization and individual particular cultures, and the preliminary assumption was that there is a tension between the agendas of a global culture and local cultures. It has been asserted that globalization seeks a united world-culture (e.g., Meyer et al., 1997), but global values and interests have emanated in the powerful and influential West and, from there, have been imposed on the rest of the world (Altbach, 2015; Samoff, 2013). This global imposition became most recently and fundamentally manifest in India in the 1990s when the country implemented global neoliberal economic and social policies in exchange for international aid and loan restructuring (Corbridge & Harriss, 2001; Dreze & Sen, 2013; Oza, 2012). I selected India as my geographic research site in order to observe the influence of (and perhaps resistance to) globalization from the perspective of a nation, with long-standing cultural traditions, where global agendas have been proactively imposed (Gupta, 2002).
**Jaipur.** I further narrowed the research site to the city of Jaipur, the capital of the state of Rajasthan. This city is well known as a hub for Indian handicraft production (Wilkinson-Weber & DeNicola, 2016), and it is also a major regional and global economic center. In fact, Jaipur’s walled pink city was founded nearly 300 years ago and organized into districts according to craft production (Cooke, 2014). The residents primarily worked in handicrafts that catered to the patronage of the royal and elite families. People such as Abdulji, the block carver I discussed in the introduction of this article, continue this work to this to this very day in Jaipur’s pink city. Jaipur is also experiencing major growth in global industry. The south business district skyline is becoming littered with modern skyscrapers, and the city is both a major educational hub in northern India and, increasingly, a medical hub with public-private research facilities. Thus, as a

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**Figure. 4.3.** Bapu Bazar is Jaipur’s main handicraft market. You can still find authentic hand block-printed textiles here, but most vendors sell factory-made knockoffs and claim that they are the real thing. This makes the continuation of traditional methods very difficult.
center for both traditional cultural and global economic activities, Jaipur was the ideal location to conduct this research.

The college of craft and design. After I settled on the country of India and the city of Jaipur to conduct this research, I had to determine how and where I would explore the craft sector as an example of local culture. Craft is literally everywhere in this city. You cannot escape it. Handicraft products dominate the city markets. It is common to walk through Bapu Bazar, Jaipur’s major craft bazar that is lovingly named Bapu for Mahatma Gandhi, and hear vendors shout, “देखो देखो [look, look], real hand block prints, no screen print, अच्छा दाम [good price]!” (Figure 4.3). Of course, this points to the cheap handicraft knock-offs, often made in China, that pose as authentic and handcrafted Indian textiles. Everywhere in the city people proudly wear Jaipuri crafts as clothing and accessories. Craft is also apparent in the architecture within and around the city—literally in the ancient forts and walls surrounding the city as well as in the surrounding villages. With the ubiquity of craft, I needed a plan and a point of entry for my research.

Securing research permissions. I decided early in the planning phase that I would attempt to conduct research at an institution that teaches craft to Indian students. As already mentioned, my feeling was that students who pursue formal education in craft were likely more concerned with cultural preservation than with competing in the job market for employment in a more global economy. I thought these students might demonstrate examples of resistance to globalization. I was aware of the renowned NID (National Institute of Design) in Ahmedabad, Gujarat and NIFT (National Institute of Fashion Technology) in New Delhi, but I was more interested in locating an institute that taught specifically traditional Indian craft. NID and NIFT both appeared to me to be more concerned with the aesthetics of high design, the function of products, and with contemporary fashion, and only secondarily concerned with traditional and
indigenous forms. With a little effort and a little luck I stumbled across references in journal articles that mentioned an institute of craft and design in Rajasthan that claimed to teach traditional Indian craft techniques. The institute had a very basic website that listed the name of the school and a single email address for further information. I sent an email to the address listed on the website inquiring about the school and mentioning my research interests, and after some six months I finally received a return message.

I was pleased that my email was returned directly by the Director of the college, and he requested that I contact the Dean of academics and that I send a formal prospectus of my research plans. I did so, and a year later, after productive back-and-forth email correspondence, I visited the college directly to meet with the Director and the Dean in the effort to gain their trust and to gain access to the institute for formal research. To my surprise, when I arrived on campus for my scheduled meeting with the Director in 2017, I was told that he had recently stepped down. Thankfully, the Dean of academics personally introduced me to the new Director who had reviewed my research prospectus and email correspondence, and she generously agreed to grant me access to complete my research in the following year. After my meeting with the new Director, the Dean gave me a personal guided tour of the campus and introduced me to several faculty members and a few students who had only recently graduated from the institute. I was fortunate to keep in occasional email contact with these graduates to follow their post graduate work opportunities, and when I returned for my formal fieldwork I reconnected with these people as research participants. I share these elongated events that led up to my ethnographic fieldwork because they are integral parts of the story of this project. Only after countless emails and written correspondence and two physical trips to Jaipur, was I finally collecting field data.
Navigating unforeseen changes. I arrived in Jaipur in May of 2018, and my first task was to meet with the Director of the college to further explain my research and fieldwork objectives. I conveyed to her my excitement to interview students to get a sense of the reasons they chose to study at this unique government-funded institute of craft and design. That is when I learned that the institute had very recently undergone significant structural changes. The college was initially founded as a government institute of craft and design in the effort to help celebrate and preserve traditional Rajasthani crafts. In this context, students studied the various regional crafts and incorporated traditional designs with contemporary designs to keep the craft products relevant in our current era. Students were trained to see themselves as craft designers who would work with traditional craft artisans in Jaipur and surrounding villages to both sustain the cultural craft traditions and to provide meaningful and necessary work for India’s increasingly marginalized artisans; marginalized in large part due to near impossible competition from cheap factory-made imports and by the rigid craft-sector stratification. Thus, the government viewed this public institute as a solution for the cultural and economic sustainability of the craft sector.

However, in 2018 the college transitioned from its founding as a government scheme and institute to a fully privatized venture. There were several fundamental changes that accompanied this transition. First, class sizes had previously been capped to a 10:1 student-to-teacher ratio to give the students the maximum personal attention and training by the faculty. After the switch, classes were increased to a 35:1 student-to-teacher ratio. The rationale for this is obvious—more students equates to more tuition revenue for the institute. In addition to increased student enrollments was a substantial increase in tuition costs. Previously, when the college was a government project, school fees were largely subsidized so that students of varied socio-economic stations could potentially attend; however, the 2018 increase in tuition has effectively
gentrified the institute—allowing only those students from families with substantial financial means to attend. The one exception to this is the affirmative action constitutional amendment that requires all private-school ventures in India to reserve 25% of their enrollments to students from low-income scheduled castes and tribes (Right to Education, Indian Const. amend. LXXXVI, 2009). The Director highlighted the efforts that they are making to include students from low-income craft artisan families, but I later learned that substantially fewer than the mandated 25% SC/ST students are actually enrolled (B. Mani & S. Chopra, faculty, personal communication, July 15, 2018).

I had learned during my 2017 visit to the college that they were in the process of negotiating a collaboration with the University of Rajasthan (RU) whereby graduates of the craft institute’s undergraduate and graduate programs would be issued formal university degrees from RU. This seemed like a very good plan when I first learned of it. Prior to this agreement, students were only issued certificates of completion from the institute. However, I have since learned that this was yet another requirement that all private institutes of higher education in India must be affiliated with a major public university in order to receive government recognition (Tierney & Sabharwal, 2017). Thus, the institute of craft and design was following the laws that pertain to their new status as a public, for-profit college. Incoming students to the college did convey to me that the institute’s granting of full university diplomas (via RU) made the choice to enroll more appealing (S. Tanu., personal communication, July 18, 2018), and former graduates expressed disappointment that they attended the school before this change was instituted (A. Sen & N. Sharma, personal communication, June 10, 2018).

Another major change that occurred simultaneously with the institute’s transition from government to private status is their mission and vision for their students. Prior to the change,
students were trained to view themselves primarily as craft designers who work as intermediaries between craft artisans (i.e., the producers) and the craft markets, and this hierarchical structure within India’s craft sector has been noted by others (e.g., DeNicola & DeNicola, 2012). However, after the change to private status, the institutional literature and direct communication from the Director emphasized that the mission and goal of the college is to blur or omit the demarcations separating designers and artisans (Director, personal communication, May 27, 2018). Students are now encouraged to view themselves as artisan-designers. This might appear as a move toward de-stratification of the craft sector, but when we scrutinize this further we can see that students and graduates who are taking over this new identity (and perhaps practice) are still from the upper socio-economic classes. The obvious question is how does the institute view the role of lower socio-economic craft artisans who do not have the means to become credentialed artisan-designers? This issue was a matter of tension among some faculty members with whom I spoke. Even if the hierarchy is removed in theory (via words), the artisans are still working for credentialed craft designers who have greater access to regional and global markets (DeNicola & DeNicola, 2012; A. Sen & N. Sharma, personal communication, June, 10, 2018). If anything, one could view this shift in the institutional vision as craft designers appropriating the very title that brings societal dignity and agency to tradition craft artisans in India. And if it seems that I am pushing this point too far, consider the point of view expressed to me by a recent graduate of the college: “In India we treat all artisans like a god because they are the real creators” (N. Sharma, personal communication, June 10, 2018).

It may seem naïve of me to not have seen these fundamental and structural changes happening during my pre-fieldwork correspondence with this college, but there was no indication either through email communication or through the institutional literature online that
these changes were in motion. Thus, it was a complete surprise when I learned that my ‘carefully selected’ research site was now complying with India’s broad initiatives to convert government schools into public-private partnerships or to outright private and for-profit ventures with limited government oversight (Srivastava & Noronha, 2016). The institutional mission and vision, as well as the types of students who were inclined to enroll in the school, had fundamentally changed, and this left me questioning whether or not I needed to rethink my research site altogether. However, it did not take me long to realize that these institutional changes were currently in the transition phase. This suggested that there would be students, faculty, and structures still in place from the old system, as well as new students and structures from the new scheme. This actually advantageously played into my research design. Instead of investigating how this college (with its focus on preserving local cultural forms such as craft) resisted the hegemony of globalization on the outside, I was now in a position to directly observe the global-local nexus from within the institute itself.

**Sourcing and Sampling**

I had originally designed the study to collect and analyze data from the following sources: (a) semi-structured interviews with students and faculty, (a) class observations, (c) content analysis of institutional literature, and (d) contextual interpretation of physical craft artifacts produced by students (Table 4.1). Through these ethnographic sources I had hoped to gain an understanding of the organizational culture (Tierney & Lanford, 2015), the normative ethos (Berger & Luckmann, 1967), and the cultural reproduction techniques (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) within this institute of higher learning that specifically focuses on craft and design. Even with the institute’s transformation from government to private status, these four sources remained valid and useful and the primary means I used collect data during the study.
Table 4.1. Ethnographic Sources of Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Semi-structured, open-ended, and one-on-one interviews with students and faculty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Active-participant and non-participant class observations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Literature</td>
<td>A collection of institutional literature (e.g., website, recruiting materials).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft Artifacts</td>
<td>Craft items designed and produced by students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The transition to a private institution did impact my sampling plan. I had originally planned to interview students according to a mix of criteria such as gender, program of study, and the student’s stage in the program (Table 4.2). However, with the institutional transformation, these criteria became more nuanced. With the change, the incoming batch of students was already partially indoctrinated into the Director’s focus and vision of students as *artisan-designers*. Even if they did not fully internalize this point of view, they were regularly exposed to this new institutional vision via institutional literature and during orientation. In fact, certain incoming students adamantly expressed to me that they originally thought they would attend this college because they heard from friends who had attended in the past that the focus of the school was primarily to help sustain India’s craft artisans, and these students were not too keen on the new focus that centers the student as the artisan over and above traditional craft artisans (S. Tanu, craft student, personal communication, July 12, 2018). The new batch of students will also be the first class to receive formal degrees that will be granted by the University of Rajasthan; thus, their perspective of their own identity and credentials is different than their predecessors. Finally, they are attending this institute as elite students (from a socio-economic measure) whose families are paying elite, private tuition rates.
Table 4.2. Sampling Categories of Research Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program of Study: Hard Materials</th>
<th>Program of Study: Soft Materials</th>
<th>Institutional Scheme (at time of admittance)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Incoming Female Students</strong></td>
<td>N=3</td>
<td>N=1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Incoming Male Students</strong></td>
<td>N=2</td>
<td>N=1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outgoing or Recent Graduate Female Students</strong></td>
<td>N=5</td>
<td>N=3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outgoing or Recent Graduate Male Students</strong></td>
<td>N=2</td>
<td>N=1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversely, the students in their second, third, or fourth years and those in graduate programs—a number totally less than the total number of new students due to the push for more tuition revenue—all entered their programs with a different vision in place, and perhaps with different motivations. They entered their programs with the promise of a certificate of completion, at a good value, from what many consider to be a second-tier, but still very good, design school (NID and NIFT are considered the top schools of design in India). For many students in this category, the appeal of this institute was the affordability and the special focus on designers working directly with artisans to preserve both the craft artifacts and the role and status of the traditional craft artisan (H. Shivani & P. Chopra, masters students, personal communication, July 4, 2018). Others from this group, especially those working on their final jury projects or recent graduates working in the craft sector, expressed a level of indignation at the new focus of the college. They explained to me that the most important skill that craft designers need to have in India is the ability to respectfully and clearly communicate with craft
artisans and to treat them fairly (A. Sen & N. Sharma, craft designers, personal communication, June 10, 2018).

With these new considerations in the sampling process of this study, I was actually better equipped to understand the complex and varied motivations of students to study traditional craft and design. One should not underestimate the implications of the new vision of the college where craft students are now considered *artisan-designers*. Students in India are expected to accept the perspectives of their teachers and their superiors, and this new view is being widely promoted to the incoming students—and presumably internalized. Some dissenting faculty members suspect that the new vision is a scheme to elevate the esteem of the institution in the broader context of craft and design studies in India (B. Mani, faculty, personal communication, July 15, 2018). If this college can be uniquely positioned as an elite, degree-granting, private institution that specializes in training students to be not only craft designers but also *artisan-designers*, then they can boast their special niche in Indian craft education. However, students and faculty who had bought into the original vision of the college feel equally adamant that the institution is unique for its promotion of traditional crafts and its focus on partnerships and respect between and among designers and artisans. Thus, there emerged a clear divergence of opinions about the identity and role of the student of traditional Indian craft and design in our current era. In the design phase of the study I could never have imagined such a rift in vision, and as I began to better understand this rift, I had to carefully gain the trust of participants in order to clearly and fully understand their perspectives.

**Positionality: Gaining Trust to Discern Perspectives**

In any ethnographic study the goal of the researcher is to gain an emic perspective of cultural processes (Creswell, 2016; Geertz, 1973; Wolcott, 2008). However, for this to happen it
is imperative that the researcher gain the trust of the culture-sharing group in the effort to
generate naturalistic and authentic data from the sources of inquiry (Creswell, 2016). I was able
to gain the trust of my research subjects and participants by actively participating in coursework
and assignments directly alongside the students, by speaking primarily Hindi (the local
language), by taking a keen interest in the students’ particular craft projects and areas of interest
in the craft sector, by conducting regular and frequent member checks of the emergent data, and
most importantly, by spending a lot of time in the field working directly and indirectly with my
participants. I also make use of a first-person narrative in this article as a means to clearly
delineate my positionality in the research and to challenge the common practice of so-called
omniscient voices in ethnographic research (McC addens, Dempsey, & Adkins, 1999).

**First-person voice.** It is a common practice in academic writing to avoid the use of first-
person narrative. However, this perspective and practice has been challenged by many critical
scholars who view the self-reflexive role of the researcher as a vital consideration in research
design (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The first-person voice can be fruitfully utilized in studies that
engage auto-ethnographies where the lived experiences of the researcher are explored as
representative of the broader culture-sharing group and analyzed as primary-source data
(Mendez, 2013). It can also be advantageously utilized to establish and make clear the role and
the positionality of the researcher when they are a cultural outsider to the culture/topic they are
exploring as well as the storyteller—as I was in this study. It was for this reason that I decided to
describe the findings of this study in the first-person voice. Of course, it was still incumbent on
me to strive to convey a trustworthy story that accurately characterized the cultural context of the
research participants. For this reason, I engaged in bilingual research where I utilized both Hindi
and English, and the use of bilingual research methods adds complexity and rigor to the study.
Use of Hindi. In India students who are pursuing higher education almost always have command of Hindi, English, and typically a third, regional language. The primary language used at the institution where I conducted this study was Hindi, and there was also a regular use of English and Hinglish (i.e., a mix of Hindi and English). Thus, for this research to be successful it was imperative that I have a working knowledge of Hindi and that I conduct my interviews in Hindi or a mix of Hindi and English. An additional benefit of conducting this research in the local language was that students felt more at ease knowing that I took the time and effort to acquire a working knowledge of their language and culture (S. Sandalya, personal communication, July 13, 2018). Of course, I was still viewed as a cultural outsider, and even with an understanding of Hindi, I am a native English speaker. This limitation required that I be vigilant in my use of regular member checks to ensure that my understanding of interview responses and my translations of Hindi into English were accurate.

Member checks. Member checks by research participants add trustworthiness and rigor to research methods (Creswell, 2016). I utilized member checks in this study from the very beginning of data collection all the way through the writing of the final report to ensure that I was accurately conveying the stories, lived experiences, and perspectives of the student participants. It was during these member checks that certain students expressed to me reservations about sharing their stories in this study, and in those instances I either chose to omit their inclusion in the final report or I told their stories from my voice as the researcher—rather than citing their direct responses and protecting their anonymity via pseudonyms as is more common. The limitation to this tactic is that it takes agency away from the research participants and limits the triangulation of data. However, there were instances in this study where the participants were willing to share their important and compelling stories and motivations to
pursue formal study in craft only if I did not directly quote them in the article, and there is one important instance where I use this tactic. Other than this conspicuous exception, I present the data from this study in the following forms: (a) direct quotations from student participant interview transcripts, (b) first person narrative and analysis from me as the researcher and participant observer, and (c) select examples of craft artifacts produced by the student participants. With trust established through the techniques described here, I was able to discern the varied and nuanced motivations students expressed for pursuing an education in craft and the pedagogical techniques that faculty utilized in the effort to promote and sustain India’s cultural craft traditions in the global era. The themed findings and implications from this study constitute the remainder of this article.

**Bucking the System**

In many ways the students who attend the craft institute where I conducted this study are similar to creative types anywhere in the world. They forego complicity and conformity to mainstream expectations, and instead, they proactively express themselves. They might do this through their actions, their style, their ideas, or their artistic creations. With all of these things they make a statement to their societies and to the world. The student participants in this study are no different. By their very choices to attend a college of craft and design, they are resisting the mainstream expectation to study and work in fields that more directly contribute to the global knowledge economy and India’s normative preoccupation with science and technology (Zakaria, 2015). Of course, the craft sector is important in India, but jobs in the craft sector are usually filled by people from lower socio-economic classes or castes who often live in rural villages or urban slum areas (Wilkinson-Weber & DeNicola, 2016). The majority of the students who I interacted with during this study are more generally from middle to upper socio-economic
families, and even though they had the means and opportunities to pursue more typical fields of study, they chose to pursue the study of Indian craft and design. One could make the case that students who come from families with financial means have the luxury of choice to pursue any field (C. Clark, personal communication, April 23, 2018), and this appears to be the case for certain incoming students. However, other students have clearly taken personal and financial risks to pursue work in the craft sector as a proactive matter of societal consciousness.

The stories that emerged during my fieldwork suggest that students who pursue formal study in craft and design are, in fact, bucking the system. The system I am referring to here is the aspect of the global system that promotes global agendas and values in India over and above traditional Indian culture. Some students are more consciously aware of their resistance to mainstream expectations than others, but this was a common theme across the data. I discerned two dominant and interrelated subthemes—namely, finding oneself and parental support. These themes revealed clear examples of resistance to established global and societal expectations.

**Preeti: Finding Oneself**

I was granted access to observe a series of student juries where students presented their final and culminating craft projects to a jury from the college that consisted of the Dean of academics, three faculty members from the student’s chosen program of study (e.g., hard materials or soft materials), and two outside jurors from other institutions or from the craft-sector community. One of these presentations required that we gather outside around a tree in the gardens of the college campus, and in this location there was a type of netted lawn furniture or hammock-like structure positioned with interlocking sectional pieces around a large shade tree (Figure 4.4). This was the final project designed by Preeti Chopra, a female student completing a masters-level program in hard materials. Preeti explained to the jury that she had spent her years
in the program exploring sculptural forms and their associations with public spaces. She was trying to find a balance between form and function where the form would represent her contemporary reinterpretation of a traditional India settee and the function would likewise facilitate the Indian cultural norms of communal lounging in public spaces. The jury loved the project, and they each took turns sitting and lounging on the netted settee seats that were tied to and supported by industrial-looking steel frames. The point of the interlocking frames around a shade tree was again culturally functional—where several people could enjoy conversation and relaxation under the same shade tree. It struck me as strange that members of the jury asked her questions such as, “Why have you not integrated a cup holder for one to place their drink into your design?” Questions such as these are product and market centered, and Preeti was clearly more concerned about creating a modern design that was reminiscent of traditional designs and culturally relevant as public craft and art.

**Figure. 4.4.** Preeti Chopra’s final “public use” jury project being tested by jurors.
As a part of her presentation, Preeti explained that she had enrolled in the masters program at the craft college in an effort to find meaning in her life and a clear occupational direction. Later in an interview, she explained to me that she had earlier decided to study sculpture as an undergraduate student after spending her secondary schooling in the constant and stressful preparation of her grade 12 board exams in Humanities. She did well on the standard board exam and had the potential to study at any of the top university programs in India, but she questioned the value of pursuing a university degree in a subject that did not “feed her soul.” She was interested in “finding herself” through her educational path.

Finding oneself is not a commonly externalized concern in Indian society. Most children and students from Preeti’s upper-middle class station work hard to achieve good marks in school to please their parents and to have the opportunity to gain admittance to the top schools to then obtain prestigious, good paying, and stable jobs. Preeti dismissed these norms as “selling out.” She described her experience in school and her perception of the system the following way:

In India they cram lots and lots of information and facts into the minds of students. People and parents are crazy about this. They forced us to memorize all these facts and then to remember them exactly on board exams. For students and children life is all about this. How does anyone get the chance to find oneself if the facts we learn are never tied to actual life or to anything meaningful?] (P. Chopra, craft student, personal communication, June, 24, 2018).
Preeti was not alone in this societal critique. Other students who I interviewed and observed during my fieldwork had completed undergraduate degrees in societally prestigious and global fields such as mechanical engineering, commerce, and pre-medicine only to leave those fields to find more fulfilling work designing board games reminiscent of the Indian game of chess, or lap-top bags made from synthetic and vegan Indian block print textiles, or traditional wooden chairs with modern sustainable materials (e.g., Figure 4.5). These are all real examples of jury projects presented by students who had previously experienced success in more typically prescribed subjects as undergraduates. Each of these students was interested in finding a meaningful path in their work and life that was directly connected, in some way, to traditional Indian culture. They expressed a desire to “find themselves” in substantive ways that also connects to their cultural heritage. Through their decisions and actions to reject the normative educational paths in preference of cultural-reifying work in craft and design, the student

**Figure. 4.5.** Final jury project by craft student. This board game, named *Net Wars*, combines the strategies of the Indian game of chess with more modern computer-based video game motifs. The student who created this left a career in mechanical engineering to formally design board games at the craft institute.
participants I spoke to can be understood as exercising their cultural agency (Anderson-Levitt, 2003; May, 2009). An important question that remains is whether or not their life work after college will be financially and socially stable and sustainable. Those students who have the full support of their parents in their decision to pursue studies and work in the craft sector are much more likely to endure the challenges associated with such conspicuous resistance to the system.

**Shree: Parental Support**

Almost every student I spoke with expressed to me the importance of their parental support in their decisions and motivations to formally study craft and design, but one student’s story stands out among the rest. Shree Sandalya is 19-years-old and a new student at the craft and design institute. She is from a middle class family from Delhi where her father has owned and run a small retail shop selling electrical parts for the past thirty years. It is a stable business, but he does not earn a lot of money. Nevertheless, he managed to send each of his two daughters to private schools that required significant tuition fees—the elder daughter attended the elite and private Delhi Public School, and Shree attended an all-girls Catholic school. Shree was also a very good student in secondary school earning very high marks in general and a nationally-ranked top score on the CBSE 12-standard board exam in science. In India the science track is arguably the most prestigious academic and career track (Zakaria, 2015), and with her top board exam score, Shree had the opportunity to attend the university of her choice with a full academic scholarship. However, Shree was not interested in pursuing science; rather, her dream was to become a craft designer and artist and to eventually work as an advocate for India’s rural craft artisans and laborers (S. Sandalya, craft student, personal communication, July 20, 2018).

The fact that Shree entered the craft institute just after the college was reorganized as a private and for-profit venture meant that her family would be required to pay significant tuition
fees. This was an economic stretch and a difficult dream to support considering her academic opportunities in science. Shree’s own words, reproduced here in Hinglish as she conveyed it to me, best describes her father’s conflicted support:

You know when I was a national [board exam] topper, I saw in my father’s eyes his pride. My picture was in all the papers, and he got to say to everyone, पेपर में मेरी बेटी है! [“That’s my daughter there in the paper!”]. As a child and now as an adult I’ve seen my father always being so proud of me. Okay, you know how in India how girls are treated, right? Like, लड़की है [she’s a girl], और उसे पर का काम करना और शादी करना और बच्चों को रखना सीखना है [she is supposed to do housework and expected to get married and have a family] and all that. लेकिन मेरे पिता [but my father], his main concern since my childhood has been to be supportive of my dreams as a person, एक लड़की के रूप में नहीं [not just as a girl], even if my dreams cause a financial burden. He will do it to make a point to everybody that girls can pursue their dreams just like boys, and so he supported my decision to pursue my studies here in craft (S. Sandalya, personal communication, July, 20, 2018).

It is because of this unusual parental support, according to Shree, that her parents were okay with her not pursuing her scholarship offer in science and pursuing her dreams in India’s craft sector instead.

An interesting and broader finding related to Shree’s description of her parental support is that even though the individual interviewees I questioned felt as if their family support was unique and uncommon in Indian society, it was actually a common story among the female craft students I interviewed. Upon closer analysis of the interview recordings, I discovered that out of five female students who emphasized parental support as a key factor in their motivation to pursue studies and careers in their chosen field of craft, all five were from families that had only
daughters and no sons. This may be a random finding, but it might also suggest that in an otherwise patriarchal Indian society where girls are often treated as बस एक लड़की [just a girl], select parents with only female children appear to reject the broader societal notions about expectations for girls. Perhaps these parents have conditioned and empowered themselves, through their love and support for their daughters, to resist coercive social, patriarchal norms in favor of their daughters’ dreams and their rights to societal agency. In a society where education in subjects that support the broader global economy has become normative (Boucher, 2017; Zakaria, 2015), it is remarkable that the parents of these five female craft students are not only allowing their daughters to formally study craft—a subject that is not viewed as financially stable or relevant in the current era—they are proactively supporting them even when the support becomes a financial burden on the family, as in the case of Shree.

There are so many intersections of resistance going on here that need to be unpacked. First, female students appear to be resisting the societal expectations placed upon them, as girls, to pursue domestic interests in anticipation of their roles as a wives, homemakers, and mothers. Next, three of the five female students I spoke to in the context of this thematic finding had unusually high academic success in science, sociology, and commerce respectively; however, they either chose to leave their fields after completing undergraduate degrees or eschewed the societally-preferred paths altogether, in favor of pursuing studies in traditional craft and design. This demonstrates resistance to the hegemony of career paths that support a global knowledge economy (Altbach, 2015; Spring, 2015). It also reveals how many students, in this case female students, proactively select the creative and culturally-reifying field of craft as a deliberate counterpoint to global and societal expectations. Following Bratich and Brush (2011), we might understand this gendered resistance through craft as “fabriculture” (p. 1).
Finally, there appears to be a correlation among (a) parental support of their female children, (b) families who have only female children, and (c) the freedom of female students to pursue their own chosen path in the field of craft. The resistance to societal norms is exerted not just by the female students, but also by the parents in the form of parental support of their children’s choices. Interestingly, craft studies seem to be serving as a catalyst for deeper and more profound structural change in India society. Some might downplay this suggestion and assert that the student participants in this study represent societal outliers; however, craft studies, or “craftivism” as it has been called elsewhere (e.g., Greer, 2014), seem to represent both resistance to global pressures to support a global economy and resistance to cultural pressures for Indian girls to behave as their society deems girls should behave. Thus, the culture-centered field of craft becomes a haven, somewhat ironically, from the cultural patriarchy that is present in Indian society, and more than just a haven, it becomes a field and locus of empowerment.

The students who are proactively bucking the system by taking real risks to find themselves and to pursue a field of study and a life that they personally have an interest in are demonstrating something that is not all that common in India; namely, they are exerting their right to choose their own path. In this case that path is the cultural-reifying field of craft. However, to problematize and complicate things further, craft and design take many forms in India. A dominant finding that emerged in this study was that for the majority of students I spoke to, the college of craft and design in Rajasthan (with its focus on traditional Indian crafts) was almost always stated as the student’s second choice.
Second Choice

Product vs. People

The National Institute of Design (NID) located in Ahmedabad, the capital of the state of Gujarat, is by far the most prestigious design school in India (B. Mani, personal communication, July 18, 2018; DeNicola & DeNicola, 2012). It has been recognized by the Indian parliament as an institute of national importance, and it ranks as a top design school in world rankings as well. Students who seek admission to this school are required to take a rigorous and competitive entrance exam, and the cut-off rates for admission are very high. Thus, only the top students (i.e., top test takers) are granted access to this elite institute. Additionally, NID has many degree programs in a broad array of design specializations, and the field of Indian craft is just one among many fields. Another characteristic of NID is that the institution is largely product driven (B. Mani, faculty, personal communication, July 18, 2018). Thus, while there is a concern to preserve and utilize traditional Indian design forms, the form and the function of designed products are deemed as primary in importance. In contrast, the emphasis at the craft and design institute in Jaipur has historically been people centered—i.e., celebrating and sustaining India’s traditional craft artisans and their hand-crafted processes and stories in collaboration with the institute’s design students and graduates.

Pursuing NID. Considering the very different missions and visions of these two institutes in terms of product versus process, it came as a bit of surprise that every student who I interviewed during this study indicated that they came to Jaipur only after having failed to gain admittance to NID. I’m sure I would not have discovered this had I not had a question in my interview protocol asking if the college of craft and design in Jaipur was the student’s first choice. I actually asked this question to get a sense of whether the students chose the field of
craft and craft design as their first choice to pursue in college, but the impact of the question, unintentionally, revealed this very interesting finding of second choice. Like so many unexpected research findings have the potential to do, this insight problematized my working assumptions going into the study. My preconception, largely supported by other data in the study, was that students gravitated to the Jaipur institute for its unique focus and curriculum that promotes the stories and the traditional culture of Indian craft. Learning that this was the second choice for all of my research participants, I had to contend with the fact that even students who proactively buck the system by pursuing studies in craft are still influenced by and conditioned to a societal obsession with elite, private, and prestigious institutions (Srivastava & Noronha, 2016). This insight, by itself, does not necessarily suggest that students who attend, or attempt to attend, NID are somehow less authentically resistant to globally hegemonic agendas, but NID’s institutional mandate is clearly one that seeks connections with a global knowledge economy (“NID Mandate,” 2018).

**Settling for second choice.** This finding reveals the complexity of the intersections of the global-local nexus. Those who, through their actions, appear to resist the globally-dominant system in favor of studies and work in support of Indian culture, are also at times complicit in the global system. One student I interviewed at the college in Jaipur, Usha Kumar, was very open about her earlier intentions to study at NID. She had completed an undergraduate degree in business in Udaipur before deciding to pursue graduate studies in craft and design, and she explained that a graduate degree in design from NID would promise her a great job—and probably an international job. Usha’s parents supported her for a full year after college so she might devote all her energy preparing for the rigorous NID entrance exam. In this effort she attended a private test-prep program in Udaipur where they also help hopeful NID students work
on their design portfolios. She indicated that these efforts nearly paid off, but she just missed the exam score cut-off for admittance to NID. In her words:

I missed the cut-off by 2 percentage points. I couldn’t believe it. NID is so competitive. My score was high enough if my family was able or willing to pay a fee, I might have gained admittance. लेकिन [But] we would never do that, my family, I mean. I just had to settle for [the college I chose], and I am so happy because I love it here. I think they really train us to appreciate our cultural heritage in traditional crafts, and I don’t know if I would have gotten that at NID (U. Kumar, personal communication, June 26, 2018).

It is very revealing that Usha suggested her family could pay a fee (i.e., bribe money) for her to gain admittance to NID. Of course, not all students would have the means for such an additional fee, but according to this student they refused the offer on principle. The outcome of her decision to study craft in Jaipur seems to be very encouraging. She bought into the institute’s vision of compassion and support for India’s traditional craft traditions and artisans, and this student has a post-graduation job lined up to work as a designer of traditional Rajasthani jewelry for a production house in Jodhpur. She also hopes to start her own jewelry line someday where she will directly employ traditional Indian craft artisans. If Usha settled for the Jaipur institute of craft as her second choice to the more prestigious NID, others came to study craft in Jaipur as a second choice after a lack of success in more typical, and socially prescribed, studies.

**Those Damn Exams**

Outmaneuvering low caste. Even though the caste system is officially banned in India per constitutional mandate, one’s life prospects are still largely predicated on caste and socio-economic standing (Adiga, 2008; Wolpert, 2008). This is still certainly true in the rural areas of India, but things may be changing in urban areas where one’s economic class has the potential to
render low-caste standing as less important (Dreze & Sen, 2013; A. Sen, craft designer, personal communication, June 10, 2018). Access to the upper socio-economic classes almost always requires access to education in fields that are deemed to be economically important to India’s status in a larger global context (Zakaria, 2015), and these fields fall largely into the category of STEM (science, technology, engineering and math). Thus, people in lower castes who wish to rise above their caste-group status can do so through academic success, and the formidable gatekeepers in India’s education system are standardized board exams. Success on these high-stakes exams is vital for all students, but it is particularly important to scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students who continue to be structurally marginalized by caste.

As previously mentioned, the majority of students at the craft institute where I conducted this study come from middle to upper class families, and people did not generally discuss caste in the interviews I conducted. It is true that most traditional craft artisans are from specific caste groups that are generally considered as lower in Indian’s traditional social hierarchy (DeNicola & DeNicola, 2012), but for the most part, the students I interviewed hold these traditional artisans in high esteem due to the crafts they preserve. So when one student I interviewed (who requested that I not directly reproduce the transcript of her interview in this report) expressed to me her very real predicament involving her low-caste status, I was surprised. This student was from a low-caste family that she described as “creamy.” This is to say that her family was economically upper class, even though they were from a traditional low caste.

In this particular case the student’s grandparents and parents had escaped social and economic marginalization through success in academics. The girl’s grandfather had been a medical doctor, earning a very good salary. Her father was a computer engineer working in a comfortable government job, and her mother was a secondary government-school teacher. Even
her siblings were currently pursuing college degrees in engineering and psychology in top schools in India and abroad. Thus, there was constant pressure for her to succeed in academics. To this end, she was enrolled in elite, private schools throughout her schooling, and she attended test-preparation classes in advance of her all-important standard 12 board exams. Unfortunately, she did not perform well at all on “those damn exams” as she referred to them, and this led to her decision to pursue studies in craft as her second choice to studies in a humanities teaching track.

**One student’s strategizing.** As she explained it, the decision to pursue studies in craft was carefully calculated to confront her lower-caste status and poor marks on exams. After a long interview response where the conversation went down many rabbit trails, I was able to discern three somewhat interrelated motivations she had for pursuing studies in craft. First, as a student of craft and design she would be in a position where her role as a craft designer would put her in an established superior role to lower caste/class craft artisans, and in this way she might conceal her own lower-caste status. Second, if after her studies she succeeded in starting her own craft brand, as an entrepreneur, it would not matter what her caste is because she would have raised her financial class. Third, having been influenced by global social media messages that portray art students and designers as somewhat inherent critics to the “system,” she could pursue studies in craft and design as a way to resist both the pressures in Indian society that expect students to excel on standard exams in academic subjects (pressure her family adamantly reinforced) and the marginalizing impact of the caste system itself.

I appreciated this student participant’s candid responses to her very difficult social position, and it is important to consider her stated motivations in a broader context. As to her first motivation to use her role as a craft designer to conceal her own caste, it is also important to understand that as a person who is both low caste and high class, she has conflicting feelings.
toward people in poverty with less socio-economic agency. On the one hand, she expressed an inherent empathy toward people who were born into lower-caste families and the extreme challenges they experience, but on the other hand, she had been conditioned by her family to assume that people in poverty, regardless of their caste status, are generally poor because they do not try to better their station. Thus, she was clearly grappling with the complexities of structural social inequities where even people in similar marginalized groups such as low castes can have very different starting points in terms of class. As to her second motivation to start a successful craft brand, it is true in India that increasingly one’s financial class can render caste less relevant (Dreze & Sen, 2013). However, the problem with this strategy is that there is no guarantee that her craft brand will be financially viable, and thus, this motivation requires risk. If she is not successful she will remain dependent on her family’s financial means to maintain her social status. And finally, her third motivation was directly influenced by broader global messages about resistance to power. This is very interesting because it demonstrates how dominant global messages about structural power can potentially be subverted by less dominant, but still powerful, messages of resistance (Hall, 2012, 1997). This student keenly decoded and internalized a social media message that articulated the field of art and design as a space for resistance to unfair systems (Anonymous, craft student, personal communication, June 18, 2018).

Clearly, for this student, the decision to pursue studies in craft was her second choice, but importantly, she still had the agency to make a choice at all. Her family’s financial means, her emergent consciousness of the complexities involved in social-justice matters, and the existence of and her access to the craft institute in Jaipur all coalesced to help her find a potential path to greater social agency in our complex global-local nexus. If this student found this path on her own and as a second choice, other students came directly from families working in India’s craft
sector, and their stories (the final ones discussed in this study) are no less complex than those already told.

All in the Family

Of all of the students I had the opportunity to interview, only two came from families who worked directly in the craft sector. Of these two, one was a recent graduate of the college who came from a family of traditional textile designers from Bagru, Rajasthan. His motivation to pursue an education in traditional craft and design was mixed. On the one hand, already with a background in traditional Rajasthani design, he hoped to explore more contemporary designs and mix these with traditional methods. On the other hand, he contemplated a future career on an international stage in the high-fashion design business and far from his roots in traditional Indian textiles. The other student was an eighteen-year-old in the 2018 incoming batch of freshmen from the city of Jodhpur, Rajasthan. His decision to study craft and design at the college went against his family’s wish that he pursue an education in computer engineering. These two stories reveal very different student motivations to study craft, and they conform to seemingly different conceptual models of global processes. Interestingly, for all their differences, both examples show the students in liminal spaces, betwixt and between the global and the local.

Naveen: The Universalization of Particularism

I opened this article with a description of a meeting in Jaipur’s Purani Basti between Naveen Sharma and the master block carver, Abdulji. Naveen’s story was unique among the students I observed and interviewed during this study. He is a recent graduate from the college of craft and design in Jaipur, and, unlike the majority of students at the college, he comes from a high-caste Brahmin family who has worked in traditional block-print textiles for centuries.
Figure 4.6. *Chippa* (block printer) in Bagru, Rajasthan. Notice the stacks of carved wood block stamps on the shelves. Some of these blocks are hundreds of years old, and the designs are still relevant in Rajasthani textiles.

Thus, he is continuing a long familial and cultural tradition. I spent several weeks accompanying Naveen in his day-to-day dealings in his craft business.

His family home and base of operations is in the craft village of Bagru, just west of Jaipur. Bagru is famous for traditional block printing, and Naveen’s family has an established workshop where they employ dozens of artisans who work as *chippas*—i.e., block printers who physically apply the natural dyes and designs to fabrics using hand-carved wood blocks (Figure 4.6). Unlike the *chippas* and other general laborers who work directly for Naveen for a very modest flat monthly wage, Naveen also contracts block carvers who are independent subcontractors working from the Muslim quarter of Jaipur’s old city and who have a long-standing working relationship with Naveen’s family. Naveen also employs a family of *dhobis*, cloth dyers and washers, who work almost exclusively for Naveen, but who have their own work space adjacent to their own home. This particular family of *dhobis* consists of three generations of men, women, and children all working together to earn a meager living in Bagru (Figure 4.7).
Thanks to Naveen’s generous access, I had the opportunity to observe the traditional hand block printing processes from beginning to end. They begin by cutting the woven fabric into the proper sizes for the product they are making; in this case it was block printed linen bedding. The fabric is then transported to the dhobis who wade in waist-deep water vats all day and physically hand dye the fabric with dyes made naturally from regional clay and plant products. Then the fabrics are laid out to dry, and the next day they are transported back to the workshop where the chippas apply the design prints with hand carved block stamps. Each chippa has a different stamp with a particular design and color of dye that contributes to the complexity and beauty of the finished textiles. After the block stamping is completed, the fabrics are transported back to the dhobis who first hand wash the cloth in cold water and again in a cauldron of boiling water to help the natural colors to set. The completed products are then hung out on lines to air dry before they are neatly packaged and transported to markets for sale in Jaipur or warehoused for future online sales. This labor intensive process took a full week to complete a large batch of bed linens.
all with a similar design motif and color scheme, and it required the labor of dozens of artisans and laborers working very long days.

This traditional production of hand-carved, hand-dyed, hand-stamped, and hand-washed block printing faces near insurmountable competition from modern factory produced textiles. Many designers and artisans are simply leaving these old traditions behind to pursue other work more directly related to the modern, global era. However, Naveen is an exception to these trends. He initially thought he would work in some other line of work after college, and he did for a couple of years. But he came back to the family textile business. He is now in the process of rebranding the business under a new name and with new contemporary designs that, he feels and hopes, compliment and honor the traditional print designs of his region. Through modern forms of communication and online marketing, Naveen aims to establish his brand as a high-end luxury line of traditionally crafted textile products that both honor the past and meet the needs and desires of consumers in the modern world (N. Sharma, personal communication, June 18, 2018). He credits his professors at the craft institute where he studied for suggesting this tactic to keep Indian craft products relevant in the global world.

In certain ways Naveen’s ambitions and aspirations exemplify Robertson’s (1997) conceptual global framework of the “universalization of particularisms” where the global world system is viewed as structurally consisting of compliant particular cultures who proactively engage the global world through its’ vast infrastructures (pp. 77-78). In this case Naveen is complying with global-scale capitalism that is powerfully propagated through carefully targeted messaging and branding over social media and the internet. Naveen’s products, that he deliberately brands as unique luxury items from India, can be internalized as valuable by potential markets across the world and sold over the internet. In this way he preserves his
regional cultural craft practices and products explicitly by engaging the global superstructure as (some argue) it was designed to operate—i.e., as a unified mosaic of cultures largely complicit in and subject to the agendas of those who control the system (Hall, 1997; Hannerz, 1990; Robertson, 1997).

What is gained, or maintained, in this process is the continuation of cultural agency for those in India’s craft sector, and this more dubiously includes the hierarchical structure where craft designers and merchants from higher socio-economic groups position themselves between the lower caste/class artisans and the broader urban and global markets (see also, DeNicola & DeNicola, 2012). In many ways not much has changed, for better or for worse, for artisans working for businesses connected directly to global markets such as Naveen’s. Naveen expressed to me that he values the artisans who work for him as gods and as family members:

हमारे artisans परिवार की तरह हैं [We treat all our artisans like our family]. They have been working with us for generations, and they are like family. If they need some advance or something, we give it to them. हम कभी कारीगरों जैसे कारीगरों का इलाज नहीं करते हैं [We never treat artisans like artisans]. भारत में [In India], everyone treats artisans like a god, not artisans (N. Sharma, personal communication, June 18, 2018).

It is revealing that, even in this praise for craft artisans, Naveen expressed to me several times that ‘his’ artisans are not treated as ‘artisans’; suggesting that artisans are not generally well treated or highly regarded in India. It is also important to understand in this context that Naveen’s business directly benefits from the skilled work of the artisans in his employ, and the normative practice of paying traditional village artisans low wages keeps the business viable in competitive global markets (Mohsini, 2016).
What is lost through this process is the relevance of authentic handmade crafts in many of India’s traditional markets. Craft markets, such as Bapu Bazar in Jaipur, that used to be the primary locations where traditional hand printed textiles were sought and sold, are now inundated by factory-produced textiles that are made to look like traditional hand-made products (A. Sen, craft designer, personal communication, June 10, 2018). As consumers demand lower and lower prices, the labor-intensive products of traditional craft designers and artisans are increasingly relevant primarily only as luxury items in global markets.

**Manoj: Eschewing the Global in Favor of the Local**

Manoj comes from a family who has long worked in the craft-sector in Jodhpur. His family works as craft merchants who source a variety of traditional craft products from among designers and artisans from across Rajasthan to then sell in both regional and international markets. Unlike Naveen, Manoj never directly participated in his family’s craft business while growing up. In fact, his family hoped he would pursue a career in computer engineering, and even though they make a good living in India’s craft sector, they largely insulated him from the day-to-day business activities. But this did not prevent Manoj from occasionally witnessing the interaction his father had with craft artisans, and, in his words:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{जब मैं जवान र्ा, तो मुझे हमेशा artisan का workshop में जाना पसंद था, और अब जब मैं इसके बारे में सोचता हूॅ, तो वे अनुभव थे जो मुझे इंजीनियरिंग से शिल्प में स्वामान्तरित करना चाहते थे। मैं कारीगरों को तैयार करने वाले वही काम को समझना और करना चाहता हूॅ, और इसलिए मैंने यहां आने का फैसला किया।}
\end{align*}
\[
[\text{I always loved going to artisan workshops as a child, and now as I reflect on it, it was those experiences that made me want to shift focus from engineering to study craft. I want to both understand and do the same work that craft artisans do, and that is why I}]
\]
chose to come to [this craft institute]. (H. Manoj, craft student, personal communication, July 13, 2018).

It was not until Manoj was in grade 12 in secondary school that he openly expressed to his parents his interest in pursuing traditional Indian craft as a career ambition. He explained how they were upset at first, especially his father, but that with time even his father expressed pride in his son following in his footsteps in the craft sector. It was his father who insisted that he study craft formally at an institute to gain a complete understanding of India’s complex craft sector. It was important to both Manoj and his father that he directly learn, hands-on, the traditional handicraft techniques of craft artisans in addition to craft design and the business of craft. In this way he can be clearly understood as conforming to the new vision of the college of craft and design, discussed above, where the goal is to train students to be artisan-designers—similar to architects who both design and build the projects they design.

Initially it seemed to me that Manoj was complicit with his father’s plan for him to fully understand all aspects of the India craft sector in order to eventually be successful as an international craft dealer, as his father was. But after spending a lot of time with Manoj, I came to understand that he was interested in pursuing craft more out of a deep respect and perhaps even nostalgia for Indian craft artisans and their hand-made products. Very different from the earlier example of Naveen, Manoj expressed an interest in celebrating and reviving Indian crafts for the sake of Indian society and not as commodities for external global markets. This understanding was gained during a class project we worked on together.

During my fieldwork I sat in on, and actively participated in, a month long class module on the topic of communication and storytelling in India’s traditional craft sector. One of our more interesting assignments was to pair in groups of two and travel to Jaipur’s old pink city to
tell the story of any craft artisan or merchant, and I was paired with Manoj. Together we identified a craft shop in the old city that specialized in the craft of *tar-kashi* (metal inlay in wood). As we explained our class assignment to the shop keeper, the owner asked us if we would like to visit her father’s workshop where he makes the crafts she sells in the shop. The workshop was just blocks away, and this visit gave us the unique opportunity to learn about the artisan’s story and work. We readily accepted and directly visited the shop of an old man who was seated on the ground next to a low table that served as his workbench. He was wearing thick spectacles and leaning over his work where he was carefully manipulating a small mallet to hammer a thin strip of fine silver into a hardwood box lid in a very intricate geometric design.

This artisan, introduced to us by his daughter as Mohanji, was very gracious as he looked up at us and motioned for us sit down with him around his work table. He explained to us how he came to do his work and how over his career he had won several awards from the government for his efforts in preserving the Indian craft of *tar-kashi*. He even asked if we would like to try our hand at the inlay work ourselves. It was at this point that Manoj excitedly expressed interest in trying the craft. I observed as Manoj took the tools in his hands to continue hammering the thin silver into the box lid where Mohanji had left off. As he worked Manoj asked the master craftsman so many questions, and he was very pleased when Mr. Mohan expressed that he was a natural at *tar-kashi*. In this unexpected interaction and conversation between Manoj and Mr. Mohan I learned that Manoj was primarily interested in seeing the craft he remembered as a child in Jodhpur become relevant again to young people such as himself who are generally more occupied with modern things such as gadgets (e.g., cell phones and computers), social media, videogames, Youtube videos, and western fads. He also told Mohanji that he was not interested
in pursuing his family work as a craft dealer in international markets. Instead, he envisioned himself working to promote traditional Indian handicrafts to a new generation of Indians.

These insights were not ones that Manoj expressed in our more formal interview where I asked him about his motivations to formally study craft and design; rather, these data emerged over time after I gained more naturalistic access and more trust from my research participants. Thus, I was fortunate to have been paired with Manoj on this very interesting assignment. The assignment itself, I later learned, was designed to broaden the students’ perspectives of educational instruction. Rather than sit in classrooms with rows of students taking notes over information from a didactic lecture given by a teacher on a given topic, this assignment was intended to “de-program” the incoming craft students from the typical form of instruction in India that they were all accustomed to. In its place, this curriculum was designed to “re-program” students as engaged students who learn by active research and subsequent storytelling (B. Mani, instructor, personal communication, July 14, 2018). This assignment with these impromptu field studies where we identified, researched, and later conveyed to our broader class the stories of individual craft merchants or artisans from Jaipur’s pink city was deliberately designed to demonstrate how traditional Indian handmade crafts will only remain relevant in the increasingly globalized economy through the use of storytelling. Much as Naveen Sharma used this tactic to portray his block print textiles as labor intensive luxury items to global markets, Manoj might someday tell the story of Mohanji, the tar-kashi master craftsman, as he promotes his own traditionally handcrafted wood inlay products in the future to his target Indian clientele.

**Connections to Conceptual Frameworks and Pointing to New Models**

The stories of Naveen and Manoj represent two very distinct perspectives by students of craft at very different stages. While Naveen is a 24-year-old recent graduate of the craft college
who works directly in the craft sector, Manoj is just 18 years old and has just recently entered the college along with his first-year classmates. Naveen’s story most closely reflects Robertson’s (1997; Hannerz, 1990) interpretation of an emergent world culture that is characterized by cultural fluidity, the ability of particular cultures to adapt to changing circumstances, and a universalization of particularisms where the world culture is described as a deliberate mosaic of particular cultures forming a cohesive global whole. Somewhat differently, Manoj’s story reflects the view of cultural agency theories where individual cultures are understood to possess cultural agency and relevance in, among, and for the benefit of themselves (Anderson-Levitt, 2003). In this view, people in particular cultural groups can acknowledge the presence of other culture-sharing groups and even the presence of an emergent global culture, but they possess the agency to accept, reject, or even transform elements from external sources as they see fit (Appadurai, 1990; Hall, 1997).

Moving beyond the existing conceptual models that help to explain global processes, I suggest here that both Naveen and Manoj operate in liminal spaces where they are neither fully a part of the global culture nor fully a part of their particular cultures (Ebersole, 1992). Naveen intentionally positions himself in both global and particular cultural contexts at the same time. He markets his cultural craft textiles as traditional Indian products intended for the expressed consumption by global, rather than local, markets. He is neither fully a part of the global and cosmopolitan marketplace that he seeks to inhabit, nor is he fully a member of the cultural craft artisans who he represents via stories promoting his textile products. As a craft designer, he sets himself apart and above the traditional craft artisans who he refers to as both gods and family members; while at the same time he marginalizes them through inequitable stratification (DeNicola & DeNicola, 2012).
Manoj is in the process of figuring out who he wants to be in this increasingly global world. He eschewed his parent’s preferred path for him as a computer engineer, and he surprised them by pursuing studies in India’s craft sector. However, he envisions working in and promoting Indian craft in India rather than to the outside world. His challenge is that he is a product of a young generation that more generally complies with the broader global or world culture (Chakravarty, 2013). This generation is conditioned through new technologies and new media, and Manoj has deliberately positioned himself at odds with his peers and his era. He is young and has the time to figure out the complexities of his liminal positionality. He could potentially work as a traditional craft artisan, but he is from an urban and upper socio-economic family who is in their position largely due to their global connections. Thus, he will never fully inhabit the nostalgic or idealized space he envisions, in large part due to the fact that what he envisions does not really exist. No culture is static or locked in space and time (May, 2009); rather, culture is fluid, and globalization is real. Thus, even while Manoj discovers, celebrates, and promotes his cultural roots through craft, he will need to engage and navigate the broader world—even if that requires the proactive transformation of global forms and agendas for the benefit of his own objectives (Anderson-Levitt, 2003).

**Conclusion: The Craft of Stories and Stories of Craft**

Qualitative research has been characterized as fundamentally un-generalizable (Creswell, 2016; S. Relles, personal communication, April 25, 2017). At best, we qualitative researchers can convey the studied stories of people from particular contexts in particular times, and in my opinion, this is what makes ethnographic research such a useful and powerful research tool. As scholars, we strive to tell the stories that emerge from the literature and data we collect. These stories address specific social problems of all types, and the stories themselves give research
participants agency to articulate their point of view. In this study, it was my objective to investigate the motivations of students in India to pursue formal studies in traditional Indian craft and design in our era of increasing globalization. What I learned through this process was that the stories that underpin the handicrafts are as important, if not more important, than the actual products. I discerned this through expressed student motivations to pursue craft and through somewhat contradictory pedagogical techniques used to teach craft and design to students.

**Stories as Student Motivations**

In the findings of this study I told the story of Shree Sandalya who decided to pursue studies in craft even though she was a national topper in the science track. During an interview she expressed that her favorite part of traditional craft and design is the stories of the craft artifacts and the stories of the artisans themselves (S. Sandalya, personal communication, July 20, 2018). In her words, “I love stories. Stories are so important!” Shree sees herself as becoming a sort of professional storyteller through her work in craft. Like so many of the students I interacted with in this study, Shree believes that the stories and the processes and products of traditional Indian handicrafts have the potential to preserve important and traditional Indian culture in our global era where things (so many things) are becoming increasingly homogenized.

If Shree represents a fairly clear example of resistance to global processes, others I interacted with seemed to welcome the global infrastructures as a way to tell their stories, and by extension sell their craft products, to broader global markets and consumers. This point of view was most clearly demonstrated by Naveen Sharma, but there were several others who had similar plans. This tactic generally complies with cultural-fluidity theory where people from particular cultures engage the very structures that were designed to condition them into complicity to a broader world culture—thus turning the system on itself (Hall, 1997; Robertson, 1997).
However, this tactic can also put those who engage it into complex liminal positions were they lose a part of themselves and their direct cultural connections while at the same time not being fully accepted into the cosmopolitan, global world where they seek acceptance. This leaves them betwixt and between the global and the local.

**Contradicting Pedagogies: Implications for the Fate of Craft Stories**

During the fieldwork for this study, I found that a dominant pedagogical strategy in craft studies was in fact storytelling. Numerous faculty members at the craft institute explained to me how the stories of traditionally hand-crafted products have the potential to elevate the products as luxury items in the global marketplace, and in this way they can preserve crafts as important cultural items and compete with less expensive and factory-produced items (B. Mani, personal communication, July 14, 2018). Thus, the students are taught the craft of storytelling about the handicrafts they design and produce in collaboration with artisans. This was also a way to deprogram students from educational practices and expectations where rote information regurgitation on standardized assessments is normative. The goal was to reprogram students into a more engaged form of learning, and storytelling was central to this. In fact, the final jury projects where graduating students present the craft items that they develop during their time in the program are said, in the institutional literature, to be as much about the story of the craft as they are about the actual craft products.

This pedagogical technique of storytelling—i.e., telling the stories and values of particular cultures through craft—is refreshing in a world obsessed with high-takes testing and utilitarian studies in service of the global economy and to the detriment of particular cultural knowledge. However, the transformation of the craft institute where I conducted this research from a government scheme to a private and for-profit college has complicated the teaching
strategies. The larger student-to-teacher ratio has led many faculty members to revert to didactic lectures as the primary means of instruction, and from my observations, this rendered the students as inactive receptacles into which knowledge was banked (Freire, 1970). As for the impact on the final jury projects, the faculty members I observed and who served as jurors seemed much more interested in the marketability of the craft products in the global marketplace than they did in the stories that their students told about the crafts. It is possible that the institute’s complicity with global educational trends to privatize education as for-profit ventures is spilling over into the institute’s pedagogical practices and values. If, through this process, the stories of handicrafts are eschewed in favor of products and profits, then it is possible that the cultural agency that is gained through formal studies in craft and design might eventually give way to the agendas and values of the global economy. But this ending is not the only possible alternative, and there is reason to be hopeful that the very motivations that led students to pursue craft studies in the first place—i.e., to preserve their unique stories and culture through craft—might very well lead them to resist the structural changes within the institute itself.
References


Chapter Five: Conclusion

As evidenced by the articles presented in this dissertation, the processes involved in globalization are complex. There is no doubt that globalization has generally increased the standard of living for countless people across the globe, and due to this, many people who did not have access to services such as education are now better able to access these services (Friedman, 2007). This is in large part due to global initiatives such as UNESCO’s Education for All (EFA) initiative that put pressure on governments to comply with minimum standard millennial goals (Ball, 2012; Spring, 2015). However, there is another side to globalization that is not so positive. Global capitalism, that I would argue is the fundamental and underlying agenda of the majority of global initiatives, has the tendency to stratify societies into rigid hierarchies where the most vulnerable people remain marginalized and without adequate societal agency. Additionally, globalization has the tendency to homogenize societies around the world by imposing values and worldviews that best suit the agendas of those who are in the most powerful positions (Hall, 1997; Meyer, Boli, Thomas & Ramirez, 1997). The potential result of this is the gradual erasure or blurring of distinct identities, values, and worldviews of particular cultures in places where global initiatives are imposed.

It is this colonizing effect of globalization that I identified as the central social problem to explore in this dissertation, and I selected India as the broad site to investigate this problem. India was really an ideal site to complete this research because it is a place that has deeply established cultural traditions going back thousands of years. Further, India has been the recipient of several waves of globalization; most recently during the British colonial occupation and during the even more recent proliferation of global neoliberal economic programs that have infiltrated nearly every economic and social system in the country (Corbridge & Harriss, 2001;
Oza, 2012). India is also a constitutional democracy (the largest in the world), and as such, there are constitutional protections for India’s citizens with regard to the sometimes nebulous concept of liberty. Similar to the United States, citizens in India view liberty in varying ways. On one end of the spectrum, liberty is viewed as the freedom to pursue one’s self interests, and this generally takes the form of economic policies and freedoms that are treated as personal goods and that have a tendency to favor the middle-upper classes (Dreze & Sen, 2013). Conversely, liberty can be understood as promise for social justice that, in theory, protects everyone in India—and in particular those who are the most vulnerable (Probe report, 1999). The balance of these competing views of liberty has tipped clearly in favor of the proponents of economic liberty as a personal good, and the result has been a broad acceptance (by those with the agency and power to influence public policy) of global neoliberal economic initiatives (Oza, 2012).

The Case for and the Anatomy of the Three Articles

**Conceptual framework.** In this dissertation I broadly explored the impact of globalization and cultural flows in India through historical, societal, and individual perspectives. More specifically, I investigated the presence and impacts of global economic policies in India’s education system. I accomplished this by conducting three distinct studies that explored the research problem (i.e., the colonizing impact of globalization) through different disciplinary lenses and methods. Conceptually, I adapted Berger and Luckmann’s (1967; Figure 1.1, Figure 1.2, Appendix A) theoretical model of the social construction of reality. This model suggests the following tenets: (a) Dominant groups in society construct and externalize their hegemonic worldview; (b) The constructed worldview is then carefully maintained and, if done well, internalized and followed by a majority of the members of society; and (c) The conditioning and maintenance of the dominant view is constant by necessity because there is always the potential
for opposition and resistance and for the externalization of rival worldviews. This final phase threatens coercive power structures and can lead to new forms of structural change (Hall, 2012). Each of the articles in this dissertation represent aspects of this conceptual model. Article one examined the externalization phase where particular worldviews about education were imposed on India. Article two examined the maintenance phase of global education initiatives promoted through India’s media, and article three explored examples of resistance by individual students who pursued formal education in craft studies.

Article one. The first study was an historical inquiry into the formation of India’s broad, public education system. In this article I first traced the British colonial agendas to create a broad education system, and I followed that discussion with ways in which the colonial system was continued as a government-funded service for all Indian students following Independence in 1947. Finally, I discussed how in the 1990s India’s education system underwent structural changes where government schools increasingly gave way to private educational initiatives, and in this discussion I noted how the marketization and privatization of education was largely promoted through India’s mass media. This pointed me in the direction of the second study.

Article two. In the second article of this dissertation I explored the societal view of education in India, and in this effort, I chose to conduct a critical media study through the disciplinary lens of cultural studies. I designed this project as a case study bounded around the annual announcement of the high-stakes standard board exams that a majority of India’s secondary-school students complete each year. This case garners heightened media attention around the subject of education, and this gave me insight into the extent to which India’s media promotes global education initiatives. In an attempt to gain an authentic view from the street and to triangulate India’s cultural media domain (Krause & DeSena, 2016; Creswell, 2016), I
explored street signage and advertising, newsprint media, and television and film. Over the course of two years of data collection gathered around the same case, I collected a mountain of data which yielded the following general findings: (a) India’s media represents education in the country as a fair and balanced *meritocracy* where the best students achieve the highest marks on societally celebrated high-stakes exams; (b) elite, private schools and fee-for-service test prep companies are regularly promoted as providing the best education, and India’s government schools are regularly disparaged as being of poor quality; and (c) there is resistance to the current and so-called meritocratic education system that is largely relegated to marginal spaces in the media, but this resistance has the potential to influence structural change via greater investments of both financial and social capital into open-access government schools. This resistance could facilitate more equitability in the education sector and, by extension, in the broader society.

**Article three.** The third study was a qualitative ethnography designed to identify and investigate examples of resistance to the more common globally and societally promoted education paths that support the global knowledge economy. In this effort I identified a college of traditional Indian craft and design where students pursue studies in the cultural subjects of craft and design with the prospect of later working in India’s craft sectors. My assumption going into this study was that students who pursue this very specific form of cultural studies would be consciously and proactively resisting the more normative educational tracks, and the findings from the study largely support this preliminary assumption. However, through interviews, participant and non-participant class observations, and other forms of formal and informal interactions with students and faculty, I found that students at this institute hold complex opinions about globalization. Every student I interviewed during this third study expressed a sincere interest in preserving their unique cultural heritage through the study, design, and
production of Indian crafts. Many students viewed global infrastructures as spaces to express their culture through craft. Students with this perspective can be understood as resisting their particular societal expectations to pursue studies that support India’s role in the global knowledge economy, but at the same time, they are supporting and contributing to the global infrastructures where global capitalism proliferates. Other students were more critical of global hegemony and its’ potential impact on Indian education and culture. Ultimately, students expressed mixed motivations to pursue the formal study of craft and design, but the underlying commonality among these students was their liminal positionality in relation to the global-local nexus.

The thread that runs through. Understood as separate parts of a broader study that explores the intersections of globalization and cultural flows, the purpose of this dissertation has been to examine the coercion of global forces as well as to problematize binary thinking where globalization is presented either as an all-encompassing superstructure that will inevitably homogenize the particular cultures of the world into a unified world-culture (Meyer et. al., 1997; Boli & Thomas, 1999) or as a real, but somewhat benign, entity that individual cultures have the power to pick and choose from or resist outright (Anderson-Levitt, 2003). The thread that weaves these discrete articles together reveals that globalization is indeed coercive, but cultural flows are multidirectional and as complex as there are contexts where the global and the local meet (Appadurai, 1990).

Limitations, Delimitations, and Future Research

Research studies are intended to address complex social issues and problems, and they are conducted to contribute new insights to an existing body of literature (Creswell, 2016). However, no one research study can address all the questions and issues on a given topic, and for
this reason, it is important to acknowledge the limitations and delimitations of particular studies. The articulation of the limitations and delimitations can provide the researcher and other interested scholars with directions in which future research might fruitfully go to add greater insight to the topic/issue/problem. While I deliberately triangulated three separate studies using distinct research methodologies to provide greater insights into the research problem articulated in this dissertation, each of the studies I conducted contains inherent limitations, deliberate delimitations, and clear paths for future research.

**Article one.** The first article in this dissertation was designed to look at the impact of global capitalism on education in India in the colonial and postcolonial eras. The boundaries I set were around the British colonial era and the current global era. In the colonial context, economic liberalism was implemented as both an ideology and utilitarian tool to exploit India’s natural and human resources, and education was used as a device to train India’s people as human resources for the benefit of the British Empire (Cohn, 1996; Metcalf, 1995). In the current era, globalized forms of neoliberal and market-model education initiatives have been implemented in India, largely to support global capitalism and the global knowledge economy (Altbach, 2015; Ball, 2012; Srivastava & Noronha, 2016; Zakaria, 2015).

This article engaged historiographical methods to understand the broader contexts that contributed to educational forms in India. The historical lens was long enough to gain an understanding of the colonial context, but a limitation in the article is a lack of attention given to pre-colonial education forms in India. There were two reasons for this. First, I needed to set delimitations, or boundaries, to keep the scope of the article’s inquiry manageable. Second, I did not have access to the needed primary sources to adequately cover this additional topic with the necessary depth it deserves, and this is definitely an important area of future research and an
important topic where there is a large gap in the literature. It would also be a timely area for future research considering the political climate in India where empowered Hindu nationalists are regularly calling for educational curriculum reforms and revisionist history that, if implemented, would further marginalize non-dominant groups in India such as Muslims. Another consideration is that India has largely adopted globalized education forms, and a better understanding of indigenous forms of education could challenge the dominance and hegemony of Western forms of education that have been imposed in India over long periods of time.

A second limitation in this article is that the historical lens is less accurate, or more difficult to focus, in fairly current events (Repko, Szostak, & Buchberger, 2017). Thus, the second major section of the article where I discussed the implementation of neoliberal forms of globalized education initiatives in the current era was essentially cursory. To adequately investigate this topic and this era I needed to engage an additional research methodology, and this paved the way for my second article where I engaged methods from cultural studies and sociology to gain a perspective of educational forms and promotion from India’s current media.

**Article two.** In the second article of this dissertation I conducted a critical media study on the topic of education initiatives utilizing the research tool of ethnographic content analysis (Altheide & Schneider, 2013). This was a case study bounded around the announcement of India’s standardized board exam results for secondary students. I was interested in gaining an understanding of the extent to which India’s media reports on and promotes market-model education initiatives that comply to globalized education. I examined four particular media sources (i.e., street sign advertisements, newsprint, television, and film) for the two weeks leading up to and two weeks following the exam result announcements. I collected data around
this same bounded event for the 2017 and 2018 announcements, and I analyzed the data by comparing and contrasting the media messages in the effort to discern identifiable themes.

The themes that I discerned suggested that India’s education system largely complies with global education initiatives. However, there is a fundamentally inherent limitation to this type of critical media study. This form of study only gives information on the media messages themselves, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine the extent to which media messages actually or directly impact behavior in society (Stokes, 2013). In other words, causality cannot be proven, and the results of the data I collected are not generalizable beyond the context of the study. I attempted to add trustworthiness to the study by collecting data from the same sources and around the same bounded case for two consecutive years, and while this helps to establish patterns, it still does not prove causality (Creswell, 2016).

Another limitation of this study has to do with the types of media from which I chose to collect data, but before I explain this limitation, I will give my rationale for the choices I made. I chose newsprint media because in India newsprint is still the dominant outlet where a majority of Indians get their news (A. A. K., 2016), and reporting and advertising on education is a major source of news in all major newspapers. I chose television because nearly everyone in the city of Jaipur where I conducted this study has some access to television—even in the slums most make-shift home structures have satellite dishes, and televisions are “always on” (Sambasivan, Rangaswamy, Cutrell, & Nardi, 2009, p. 158). I chose to examine films because this form of media reaches a mass audience in India and beyond where people from all generations, including the important view of India’s youth, watch Hindi films in inexpensive film houses throughout India. Finally, I chose street-sign advertisements on educational topics due to their ubiquity in
Jaipur and due to the way this form of media provides a view from the street where people actually live their day-to-day lives (Krause & DeSena, 2016).

I feel I have a sound rationale for the types of media I chose in this study, but a future study could (and should) exam data from established and emerging digital social media sources to be in touch with the current media infrastructures. Social media sources could also help a researcher to better gain the perspective of India’s youth who are the primary users of new social media and the recipients of their societal educational forms (N. Marrun, personal communication, April 23, 2018; Pew Research Center, 2016; Stokes, 2013). I did have some access to social media data in the course of this study due to the fact that the *Times of India* regularly publishes high-profile Twitter messages in their opinion editorial section. One particular Twitter feed went “virile” immediately preceding the grade 12 board exam result announcement in 2018, with a picture of a hangman’s noose and a caption stating that the carefree days of summer break are about to be interrupted by exam results. Thousands of India’s youth responded to this tweet, and this demonstrates how the youth in India are clearly communicating about the very serious societal consequences of high-stakes testing over social media. This example alone makes it very clear that a future study could gainfully explore digital, social sources in a critical media study. Finally, this study could have been coupled with a qualitative ethnography to gain the perspective of real people outside of media contexts, and this is what I did in the study that constitutes article three of this dissertation.

**Article three.** Similar to article two, I utilized qualitative research methods in the third study of this dissertation. In this case I conducted an ethnography where I imbedded myself within the classes and other daily activities that happen at a college of craft and design in Jaipur. I spent several months gaining the trust of students and faculty in the effort to gain an
understanding of the motivations of students to pursue formal studies in traditional craft and design. I conducted formal and informal interviews and observations with students and faculty, and with my liberal access and active participation in select classes as well as in juried assessments, I gained perspectives of the culture-sharing group and organizational culture that would not be possible with interviews and observations alone. However, even with all of my efforts to gain an insider’s perspective, a limitation of this type of ethnography is that I was still a cultural outsider. In some cases this was beneficial because several students were eager to share their stories with me precisely because I was an outsider who showed a keen interest in their lives and their work (e.g., S. Sandalya, personal communication, July 20, 2018). The fact remains that it is impossible to know if, or the extent to which, the data that emerged were conditioned or altered by my presence or by my status as a cultural outsider (Creswell, 2016).

I selected students who pursued formal studies in craft and design as the sample population in this study because I felt these students were likely to hold the preservation of their unique culture as important. Additionally, by their actions to formally study craft, they appeared to resist the more socially prescribed educational tracks that India typically promotes. Thus, in my preliminary assumption, these students represented resistance to the broader educational system that largely complies with global educational initiatives and agendas. Of course, my research design and the findings from the data did not seamlessly align. Rather, the stated motivations of students to pursue craft studies did not always jive with the more informally observed practices and actions (and overheard conversations) by students in this study. In many ways the unexpected data problematized my preliminary assumptions and revealed the motivations of certain students to study craft to be complex, liminal, and at times contradictory
or counterintuitive. Both the benefit and limitation of qualitative research is that you never know what you might find even after careful and deliberate preliminary design.

One of the most surprising findings of this study centered around the separate designations of craft designers and craft artisans in India’s craft sector. One of the delimitations of this study that was built into the design was that I was specifically interested gaining an understanding of student motivations to pursue craft studies. I only secondarily considered conducting observations of students or recent graduates in their interactions with craft artisans in field settings. This delimitation to not specifically include direct interviews and extended observations with craft artisans (outside of the influential presence of craft designers or those who employ the artisans) may have been shortsighted. I clearly could not have known in advance of my fieldwork the extent to which the craft institute was conditioning the new incoming students into an identity as *artisan-designers*—thus, blurring the lines between established craft-sector identities. The implications of these identity shifts for craft artisans are significant, and I did include limited discussion of this in article three. However, this issue is definitely an important area for future research. Article three asked students of craft why they chose to study craft and design and further how their studies complied with or resisted the broader forces of globalization. An ethnographer could design and conduct a study to investigate the perspectives of craft artisans around similar questions. This future research would add to the literature that explores the nexus between craft designers and artisans (DeNicola & DeNicola, 2012; Mohsini, 2016), and it is vital work because craft artisans are increasingly vulnerable in our era of global capitalism and largely dependent on craft designers and merchants as intermediaries to urban and global markets.
**Action forward.** In many ways the potential future research suggested here is the logical next step following this dissertation. The focus is on action research where the purpose is to gain and convey the perspectives of people who are the most adversely affected by societal and global structures and agendas that perpetuate inequities. A study that investigates the concerns of India’s youth and students in social media contexts in response to high-pressure and market-model education would provide vital information on the perspectives and concerns of the stakeholders outside of the editorial gatekeepers and minders of more traditional media. Likewise, a study that explores craft-artisan perspectives of the sustainability of their traditional cultural work in the face of relentless global capitalism and the highly stratified Indian craft sector would help to expose, and perhaps alleviate, inequities in the craft sector. Of course, this is only possible if concerned people understand the inequities, view them as unjust, and take proactive measures to correct them.
References


Figure 1.1. Berger and Luckmann’s (1967) social construction of reality. This iconic representation includes their concepts of worldview construction, internalization, worldview maintenance, and the continual possibility for contestation of established worldviews.
Figure 1.2. Global and cultural flows within the global world system. Notice the similarity to Berger and Luckmann’s (1967) model in terms of constructing knowledge/worldview/world-system and the challenges to and transformations of the dominant/colonizing worldview.
Figure 1.3. Wallerstein’s (1974, 2011) world-systems model. Image retrieved October 20, 2017 from https://schoolworkhelper.net/united-nations-world-systems-theory/
Figure 3.2. Allen test prep center advertisements. The first of these two advertisements promotes the Allen test prep center as a place to prepare for the grade twelve CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) board exam. The second advertisement highlights Yana Gupta, who was the Jaipur city topper in the CBSE for grade ten boards in 2018. There are countless other test-prep centers such as these in Jaipur and across India, and they all specialize in preparing students for the plethora of high-stakes exams that students face in order to attain entrance to the highly competitive higher education programs in India. Images retrieved August 31, 2018 from http://www.Jaipur.allen.ac.in.
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Author and Article Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Eddie Boucher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Eddie.boucher@unlv.edu">Eddie.boucher@unlv.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article Title</td>
<td>Colonial Liberalism, Global Neoliberalism, and Education in India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article Author(s)</td>
<td>Eddie Boucher</td>
</tr>
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Appendix D: IRB Permissions

UNLV Social/Behavioral IRB - Exempt Review
Exempt Notice

DATE: March 16, 2018
TO: Christine Clark, Ed.D.
FROM: Office of Research Integrity - Human Subjects
PROTOCOL TITLE: [1194916-1] Local Culture in a Globalized World: A Study of Craft Education in Jaipur, India
ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
EXEMPT DATE: March 16, 2018
REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # 2

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this protocol. This memorandum is notification that the protocol referenced above has been reviewed as indicated in Federal regulatory statutes 45CFR46.101(b) and deemed exempt.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence with our records.

PLEASE NOTE:
Upon final determination of exempt status, the research team is responsible for conducting the research as stated in the exempt application reviewed by the ORI - HS and/or the IRB which shall include using the most recently submitted Informed Consent/Assent Forms (Information Sheet) and recruitment materials.

If your project involves paying research participants, it is recommended to contact Carisa Shaffer, ORI Program Coordinator at (702) 895-2794 to ensure compliance with the Policy for Incentives for Human Research Subjects.

Any changes to the application may cause this protocol to require a different level of IRB review. Should any changes need to be made, please submit a Modification Form. When the above-referenced protocol has been completed, please submit a Continuing Review/Progress Completion report to notify ORI - HS of its closure.

If you have questions, please contact the Office of Research Integrity - Human Subjects at IRB@unlv.edu or call 702-895-2794. Please include your protocol title and IRBNet ID in all correspondence.

Office of Research Integrity - Human Subjects
4505 Maryland Parkway . Box 451047 . Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-1047
(702) 895-2794 . FAX: (702) 895-0805 . IRB@unlv.edu

- 1 -
Curriculum Vitae

D. EDWARD (EDDIE) BOUCHER

Adjunct Instructor of Asian Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies
Department of Interdisciplinary, Gender, and Ethnic Studies
College of Liberal Arts; University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Adjunct Professor of Asian History and Religious Studies
Departments of History and Religious Studies
Johnson County Community College, Overland Park, Kansas

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Cultural Studies, International Education, and Multicultural Education, 2018
Division: College of Education
Concentration: Global/Comparative Education, Cultural Studies, South Asian Studies
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Dissertation: Globalization and Cultural Flows: A Three-Article Dissertation Exploring Implications for Education and Culture in India

M.A., History, 2001
Concentration: South Asian and World History; Religious Studies
University of Missouri, Kansas City

Thesis: Hanuman and the Hanuman Chalisa: The Diachrony of a Deity.

B.A., History and English Literature, with distinction, 1996
Concentration: South Asian and World History
University of Missouri, Kansas City

Sr. Thesis: The Babrimasjid-Ramjanmabhum Affair in Ayodhya, India

PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

Adjunct Instructor (PTI) of Asian Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies, Department of Interdisciplinary, Gender and Ethnic Studies, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
2017-present

Adjunct Professor of Asian History and Religious Studies, Departments of History and Religious Studies, Johnson County Community College, Overland Park, Kansas
2002-present
PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed


Book Chapters

Manuscripts Under Review

Manuscripts in Preparation


Public Scholarship

TEACHING

Courses Taught at UNLV
AIS 101: Introduction to Asian Studies, 2017-present
AIS 201: History and Cultures of India, 2017-present
AIS 499: Independent Study in Asian Studies, 2018-present
IDS 201: Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies, 2018-present

Johnson County Community College
REL 120: Comparative World Religions, 2004-present (online)
HIST 135: Eastern Civilizations, 2002-present (online)
HIST 149: History of India, 2009-present (online)
REL 135: Religions of the East, 2004-2012
HIST 195: History of the Middle East, 2006-2012
HIST 167: History of Japan, 2008-2010
HIST 125 & 126: Western Civilization I & II, Readings and Discussions, 2002-2012

**Graduate Teaching Assistant**
Department of Teaching and Learning, Curriculum & Instruction, UNLV
CIL 621: Assessment in Literacy, Teach for America, 2016
CIL 621: Assessment in Literacy, Online, 2016

**Graduate Teaching Assistant**
Departments of History and Religious Studies, UMKC
HIST 208: World History to 1600, 2000-2002
HIST 206: World History since 1600, 2000-2002
REL 406: Contemporary Issues in World Religions, 2001

**Curriculum and Program Development**
- Original Course Developer, AIS 101: Introduction to Asian Studies, Online course shell, Asian and Asian American Studies Program, UNLV, 2018
- Original Course Developer, AIS 201: History and Cultures of India, Asian and Asian American Studies Program, UNLV, 2016
- Original Course Developer, REL 140: Religious Identities in India: History and Historiography, Religious Studies Program, JCCC. (Course developed in participation in a federal grand with the South Asia Institute, University of Texas, Austin), 2011
- Original Course Developer, HIST 149: History of India, Department of History, JCCC, 2009

**SELECTED HONORS & AWARDS**
- UNLV, Graduate College summer session doctoral research scholarship, Summer 2018
- UNLV, Scholarship for Study Abroad, International Programs, Summer 2017
- UNLV, Scholarship for Research Abroad, Graduate and Professional Studies Program, 2017
- UNLV, College of Education Graduate Access Scholarship, 2016-present
- JCCC, Nominee for the Lieberman Teaching Excellence Award for Adjunct Faculty, 2011
- UMKC, Chancellor’s Fellowship for Graduate Study, 2002-2003

**CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

**Refereed Papers/Posters**


**Invited Talks**


Boucher, E. (2010, October). *The Cultural Diversity of JCCC: A View from the Plate*. Talk at the annual international student retreat, Johnson County Community College, Overland Park, KS.

**SERVICE**

National
- Reviewer, *The Journal of Global Education and Research*, University of Southern Florida, 2018
- Conference Development, (2008, October). *Continuity, Conflict and Change in Indian Cultures and Societies*. Regional meeting for the Asian Studies Development Program, Co-Developer, Johnson County Community College, Overland Park, KS.
Johnson County Community College
- Faculty Coordinator and Leader: Student, faculty and community trip to India, 2013
- Faculty Coordinator and Leader: Student, faculty and community trip to India, 2011
- Founder and Coordinator, South Asian Cultural Festival, 2011
- Faculty Co-Coordinator, Annual Japan Festival, 2009-2012
- Faculty Mentor, Honors Program, REL 120: Exploring World Religions, 2006-2012
- Faculty Mentor, Honors Program, HIST 149: History of India, 2009-present

UNLV
- Faculty Mentor, Asian and Asian American Studies Program, AIS 499: Independent study, 2018
- Peer Doctoral Student Mentorship, Program in Cultural Studies, International Education, and Multicultural Education, 2017-present
- Faculty Participation, Campus-wide Asian Studies Program Consortium, 2017-present
- Online Education Course Development, Online Shell for AIS 101: Intro to Asian Studies, 2018-present

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Member, Comparative and International Education Society (CIES)
Member, National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME)
Member, Global Studies Research Network (GSRN)
Member, American Education Research Association (AERA)
Member, Association of North America Higher Education International (ANAHEI)

LANGUAGES

English and Hindi reading, writing, and speaking: Native English speaker.

Elementary and Intermediate Hindi Language, University of California, Berkeley, Department of South Asian Studies, 1997-1998

Advanced Hindi Language, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India, 2011, 2013, 2017-2018

LMS PROFICIENCY

Canvas
Blackboard
Angel
Desire2Learn (D2L)