CREATING ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVES OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY: USING FOUCAULDIAN ARCHAEOLOGY TO CONTEXTUALIZE NEOLIBERAL POLICY

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated firstly to my mother, Susan Syring, who instilled the value of life-long learning within me while always encouraging independent thought and action. To my friend, Lucas Olsen, who constantly challenged by presuppositions through long nights of discussion. To my sister, Janelle Bloodworth, who has pushed and challenged me to be the best version of myself possible. To Dr. Sheron Davenport who encouraged me to start my doctoral program and then supported me through coursework, comprehensive exams, and the dissertation. Lastly, to my loving and supportive wife, Lauren Williams Schwarz. Your love and support have carried me through moments of anxiety, doubt, and uncertainty, and I am so thankful I had you by my side during this journey.
Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank my dissertation committee: Dr. Steven Nelson, Dr. Derrick Robinson, Dr. Susan Nordstrom, and Dr. Eric Platt. I thank for Dr. Nordstrom for constantly pushing me to find new tools within my methodological toolbox for understanding myself, my understanding of the world around me, and the relationship between me, my work, and the world outside of me. I thank Drs. Robinson and Platt for their careful questioning of my work and for all the feedback and support they provided during the dissertation process. I thank Dr. Nelson for his years of support throughout my coursework and dissertation. He has constantly pushed me to be both a better thinker as well as a better human being. Life events and a global pandemic have made this process a long and rough road for me, and I thank you for believing in me and pushing me to finish. Lastly, I thank all of my colleagues at the University of Memphis that have offered their support, guidance, and motivation over the last five years. I would not be here if not for you all.
Preface

This dissertation is a collection of three independent articles that all examine in various ways the Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010, performance-based funding in higher education, methodologies for analyzing public policy, neoliberalization of higher education, and the benefits Foucauldian archaeological methodology can bring to these discussions. That is, all three of these articles share a concern for how we view and solve problems, and they, in their own way, each argue for adopting new perspectives that challenge researchers to shed their presuppositions about what is worth paying attention to when analyzing public policy.

All three article will be submitted to the Journal of Philosophy of Education. Guidelines for submissions are available here: Journal of the Philosophy of Education Author Guidelines.
Abstract

This dissertation follows a three-article format that build upon each other to examine and analyze how the Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010 (CCTA) both emerges from and reinforces a broader project of neoliberal reform within institutions of higher education through a Foucauldian Archaeologic framework. The first article unpacks and examines the functioning of the CCTA through common methodologies for policy analysis. Through this examination, the first article also highlights how these methodologies for policy analysis miss certain aspects for the functioning and flowing of power through the CCTA within a broader neoliberal context. The second article unpacks and examines Michel Foucault’s work on Archaeological analysis as well as his work on neoliberalism to highlight the need for an archaeological review of the CCTA to connect the findings of traditional policy analysis with how truth and power function within society to complete a full picture of the CCTA and its affects within a neoliberal society. The third article conducts an archaeological analysis of the CCTA through the examination of a constructed archive. This examination highlights the dominant discourses involved, their connection to non-discursive events found in more traditional policy analysis and constructs a polyhedron of intelligibility to understand how the CCTA functions within our society. This dissertation explores how traditional policy study captures an incomplete picture of how policy is created and functions through its focus on human actors’ beliefs and actions. Additionally, adding Foucauldian archaeology to the toolbox of policy studies allows researchers to better account for the ways in which discourse produces a field of intelligibility and action prior to human thought and action. Finally, this dissertation presents a methodological way forward that connects traditional analysis with archaeological analysis to understand how thoughts and
actions interact with discourse to produce the contingent world in which policy originates and governs.

*Keywords:* Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010, performance-based funding, neoliberalism, Foucauldian archaeology
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Chapter 1

Introduction of the Study

Higher education as we know it is changing. Institutions of higher education (IHE) have been leveraged by both politicians and scholars as the solution to the ills of globalized economics, automation, rapid growth in computing power, and deep economic inequity. Education, as a practice in IHE, can no longer be thought of as the intangible pursuit of human enlightenment; rather, education needs to be a tangible commodity that can be exchanged by those affected by these global economic challenges for the development of their human capital. This commodification and exchange, however, requires we change our understanding of what education is and how it functions, and I, as well as fellow researchers, are concerned about these changes. Perhaps we can wrestle control from those that want to see it commodified and exchanged. Perhaps we who resist these changes are stuck in a golden age fallacy seeking to return to a previously utopian state where education was pursued for its own sake and educational leaders acted as shepherds and midwives guiding students into the light of wisdom. Regardless of where we stand, the alignment between markets, states, knowledge, and power has re-positioned education within our frameworks for understanding and action.

I do not think that higher education as practice was ever perfect, and I have no interest in turning back the clock on how we as educators, researchers, and students nostalgically understand what higher education is or how it operates. Higher education, like all things, is understood through a competition of ontological and epistemological presuppositions, and, through this competition, unstable realities are produced. Opposed to a nostalgia longing, I want to better understand how and why education and specifically higher education is changing. Put
another way, I want a set of tools capable of asking different questions of the practice of education within the functioning of our society.

For decades, scholars have argued that higher education’s interactions with neoliberal economic policy have had a substantial effect on the quality and character of that education (Giroux, 1992; Saunders & Gerardo, 2017). Several authors have shown both the incursion of neoliberal thinking into higher education as well as its effects on the quality and character of that education (Giroux, 2002, 2014; Saunders & Gerardo, 2017). Neoliberal education strips education of its holistic and humanistic character in favor of a conception of education as an intermediary good that is used in an economic exchange after formal education is concluded with the ultimate goal of refining one's own human capital (Saunders & Gerardo, 2017). With an entrepreneurial understanding of their own anthropological essence, students enter an IHE to refine and develop their skills not to be rational actors of exchange, but, rather, to increase their competitive advantage in the market.

That is, higher education has become the lynchpin in the neoliberal notion of pulling yourself up by your bootstraps. Discourses about one’s moral development and political engagement in communities have faded to the background as a discourse of economic maximization has come to dominate. A folk understanding of this leads to the idea that hard work and determination in school leads to economic opportunity after school. Importantly, this places the focus on the individual, and it carries with it the implicit imperative for government and institutions to step aside, i.e. make education more productive and efficient through a reduction of educational bureaucracy.

**Background of the Study**
This section will discuss the major themes, terms, and problems that will consistently recur throughout this research project. First I briefly discuss Foucault’s notion of governmentality and his examination of neoliberalism. I then move to a brief discussion of PBF. Here, I focus on providing the traditional narrative of PBF that examines its origins, effects, and trajectory through the development of individual actors engaged in a complex web of cause-and-effect relationships. I begin with Foucault as understanding governmentality and neoliberalism will be necessary for understanding the particular view of history, knowledge, and power I bring to bear on the specific contingent origins, effects, and advocates for PBF. Throughout the project the traditional narrative of PBF will be reinterpreted through neoliberal governmentality to highlight the complex creation of knowledge that also explains the origins, effects, and trajectory of PBF.

Why is History Important?

A recurring theme throughout this project will be a search for an alternative narrative or an alternative history. That is, this research project seeks to understand how competing forms of historical analysis and how the ordering of history researchers chooses creates different formations of the world available to study. For the purposes of this study, I will discuss two theoretical frameworks for ordering historical events. First, and most common, is a human-centric view of historical development that places intentional human action at the center of research study. Here, human actors have beliefs, develop intentions, act on those intentions, and directly affect the world around them, and these items become the loci of most research projects, not merely historical research. Importantly, this string of analysis is causally ordered starting with beliefs, moving to actions, and ending with effects becoming the impetus for new causal chains. Operating within this mode of historical analysis, a researcher examining the history of
higher education reform within states—the Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010 (CCTA) for example—would examine the beliefs and intentions of legislators, voters, special interests to explain the policy’s origin, and these researchers would look to outcome data to understand its effects. That is, a narrative would take shape explaining why proponents wanted the policy while opponents worked against it, and data would be used to evaluate which side’s beliefs and intentions proved right.

While many forms of historical analysis compete with this traditional approach, this project takes up Michel Foucault's archaeological analysis and its importance given in historical analysis to ordering events around the given epistemological and ontological grounding of the past and present. Here, the human-centric causal chain is replaced with an archive of texts that seeks to illuminate what made individual beliefs, intentions, and action conceivable and possible in the first place. Put another way, research informed by archaeology seeks to understand why a set of beliefs and actions were possible and desirable in the first place. From here, researchers would ask how knowledge was configured to open a space for the Complete College TN Act of 2010. Rather than asking why Group X supports it while Group Y opposes, archaeological analysis asks, “How was knowledge configured such that the Complete College TN Act of 2010 could emerge, be accepted as reasonable, and convey benefits and disadvantages to groups of people and institutions?” As demonstrated in this simple example, this approach does not negate the traditional human-centric historical approaches; rather, archaeological methodologies incorporate them into a larger narrative seeking to understand why a particular thing exists rather than an infinite number of alternatives.

The Traditional Narrative of Performance-Based Funding
Thus far, I have used the term performance-based funding (PBF) frequently to refer to a set of practices, events, and ways of thinking that are reshaping the form and function of higher education. This work aims to problematize the way in which researchers understand the process through which they interrogate PBF policies and practices specifically, but it will also open up a general framework for analyzing the history of policy as well as its current contingent position within a larger body of knowledge and discourse. As discussed above, the archaeological approach relies on examining the discursive construction of epistemological and ontological concepts through discursive events, but this is only one piece of archaeological analysis. In addition to the discursive elements described above, Foucault (2010) posits a non-discursive element comprised of “...institutions, political events, economic practices, and processes,” and the archaeologist must examine these non-discursive elements closely to understand their interconnection with the discursive world (p. 162). Below, I will provide a brief overview of the key non-discursive moments identified in the research literature. Then, I discuss the connections between the discursive and non-discursive setting up a closer reading in Chapter 4 that will examine this connection through the development of the concept of neoliberalism.

Nationwide, 23 states have adopted performance-based funding models that allocate some portion of funds based on predetermined outcomes (Nodine, 2015). This number may vary depending on how researchers are defining what counts as PBF. Nevertheless, there was a wave of adoption after the Great Recession accelerated in 2008. State revenue was drying up while more and more people turned to higher education to wait-out the recession. With increasing demand and diminishing capacity, state governments renewed their love affair with performance-based funding and its focus on the efficiency of degree production.
While it would be wonderful to have an individual or group pushing the agenda of performance-based funding within our stage of neoliberal governmentality, knowledge/power does not parse itself out into discrete units, and we can see this at very specific nodes of power within government (Foucault, 1995). In American politics, there is a greater alignment between individual actors and neoliberal policy among those identifying as Republican. According to McLendon et al. (2006), states with higher percentages of Republicans in the legislature were far more likely to adopt performance-based funding policies. While all major American political parties support neoliberal ideology, generally, Republican have been more ideologically pure in their application of neoliberalism into policy (Giroux, 2002b; Giroux, 2014a; Giroux, 2014b; Giroux, 1992; McLendon et al., 2006). Although analyzing neoliberalism from a policy and program viewpoint, Giroux (2002b, 2014a, 2014b) consistently implicates all American political parties and Western governments more generally as complicit in a program of neoliberal reform.

Archaeology - Historiography and Policy Analysis

Placing Foucauldian archaeology at the heart of my methodology yields an archaeological methodology that analyzes a constructed archive to uncover the hidden similarities and disruptions constituting the ontological and epistemological order at a specific point in time (Foucault, 2006a).

Archaeological policy analysis is fundamentally an historiographical methodology that seeks to reorder our understanding of the past (Foucault, 2006a). How this story is told, then, relies on certain presumptions about historical objects (Foucault, 2006a, 2010). Typically, as shown in my outline of the theoretical framework, historians make two important assumptions. First, they may posit transcendental objects (concepts) that exist, beyond reason, through the ages. Here, think of historical analyses of economic systems that see something, say capitalism,
existing throughout time with minor changes that result from the historical setting. Second, a reading of Marx (Foucault, 2006a) leads some to posit a trajectory to history; that is, history as that which is unfolding towards something. Thus, for example, policy analysts utilizing a multiple streams framework are required to posit an historical order to understand the motivations of citizens and policy makers as well as the configurations of the present so as to understand the opening of policy windows seized by policy entrepreneurs (Sabatier & Weible, 2014). The point here is that how the events are ordered is intimately bound-up with the methodology used to understand some phenomena. Typically, in policy analysis, the theory that orders events is assumed rather than baked into the heart of the methods of analysis.

Therefore, starting with Foucauldian archaeology requires us to utilize a methodology that takes an active concern with how history is ordered. The overarching goal, here, is not to understand neoliberalism and PBF on their own, but, rather, the goal is producing a certain type of historiographical understanding that shifts our understanding of these phenomena to see what they do rather than what they mean.

At its simplest, the archive is a collection of the most relevant traces of statements. Additionally, we can think of the archive as the object of study for the particular phenomenon under study. From the archive, the archaeologist can analyze statements to understand the similarities and discontinuities supported within a specific configuration of discourse (Foucault, 2006b). Thus, we can understand archaeology as a systematic excavation of an archive of the traces of statements to understand the construction and function of discourse in service of revealing the rules of entire systems of thought. This entire process is necessary to avoid the anachronistic historical analysis that happens when we act as if we stand outside of history (what happens when we try to understand what things mean). Finally, because discourse is the relation
between linguistic and non-linguistic forms, analyzing the archive lets us see the ordering of knowledge that made specific non-discursive events, e.g. specific policies, emerge and function.

Importantly, my research project takes two starting presuppositions. First, subjectivity is not coherent. Subjectivity is not neatly contained or linearly constructed within a person. Subjectivity, rather, is always in a process of becoming, and trying to understand it or what phenomena mean through the prism of a specific subject is rooted in traditional methodologies (Jackson & Mazzei, 2011). Furthermore, subjective coherence implies a level of rationality absent from subjective action. What the words and actions do in the world are beyond my planning and knowing (Jackson, 2013). Second, agency is not limited to subjects. That which acts can include discourse, policy, economic theory, technologies of power, etc. Therefore, what is under examination here is the cumulative effects of subjective and non-subjective action in the world acting on and within each other to produce something unique to a given time and place; something that could not have been subjectively predicted in advance.

Thus, there is not a unified research methodology to the articles that comprise this research project. Rather, these articles are organized around a way of seeing and interpreting the world, and this gaze requires a diverse range of questions to render the discursive world intelligible.

**Purpose Statement and Research Questions**

Given my account and critique of a certain type of historical analysis and its import into policy analysis, I undertook to provide a different framework for historical analysis to shift the focus of policy analysis. Thus, the purpose of this study is to construct an alternative history to understand how performance-based funding for higher education functions to define (thus limit)
educational practice and subjectivity. To construct this alternative history, I will adopt a Foucauldian archaeological framework that will guide me in examining the discursive formations of policy documents and academic texts to understand how certain configurations of ontological and epistemological concepts limit and condition both the range of possible solutions for funding higher education and how those concepts affect human subjectivity.

Specifically, I have several research questions: (1) What are the various discourses concerned with funding for higher education; (2) How are these discourses constituted and governed; (3) What are the points of interaction between the discursive and non-discursive worlds of funding for higher education, and (4) how can researchers best represent the outcomes of this analysis to make them productive for future research?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for two distinct yet interrelated reasons. First, further investigation is needed into PBF to better understand its spread. Current analyses focusing on the politics and effects of PBF are unable to capture why PBF is both an available policy option as well as account for its spread given its inability to produce positive results. What is needed, then, is an understanding of the discursive functioning of PBF. Through a discursive understanding, we can then understand how a specific development of ideas and knowledge commingled with non-discursive events to tell an alternative history of why PBF exists as it does at this moment. Second, an understanding that can tell an alternative history of PBF accounting for its discursive positioning will open-up new avenues of resistance against PBF. Currently, the academic and political resistance to PBF is focused on the nodes of power that produce various negative effects. This alternative history opens up the possibility for resistance against the discursive functioning of PBF.
Research Design - Methodological Nodes

At the heart of this research project is the idea that a combination of post-structural and post-qualitative methodology is needed in order to radically re-order historical events; rearrange the functioning of concepts; and destabilize totalities for ethical resistance. Broadly, these post-qualitative methods aim at shedding, as much as possible, the humanistic and enlightenment baggage researchers force themselves to carry. This baggage (voice, data, representation, etc.) assumes an epistemological and ontological structure that researchers too often take for granted (Jackson & Mazzei, 2011). Humanist baggage in the form of epistemological and ontological givens is problematic as they have become “…so transparent, natural and real that we’ve forgotten they’re fictions. We accept them as truth” (St. Pierre, 2011, p. 623). These “truths” then participate in the illusion that our conceptual framing of the world is fixed and thus limiting the range of truths, identities and practices available to human actors. Furthermore, these truths act to totalize understanding through a sense making process of homogenization. That is, they seek a continuity linking everything in the world through causal relationships that can be linearly traced from person to person and action to action. While these methodologies for rendering the world can be useful for examining the non-discursive world, they, on their own, are not suited for examining the discursive elements shaping and preconditioning our consciousness. Therefore, archaeologists need to operationalize and deploy their theoretical perspective as an activity weaved throughout the research process.

Study Overview

Since a Foucauldian archaeological research project examines how the discursive and non-discursive aspects of the world function and interact, this research project will unfold over several discrete steps all contributing to a larger project.
Article 1 examines PBF, as expressed through the Complete College TN Act of 2010, through several traditional methodologies for examining and analyzing policy. Doing this serves two important purposes for this research project. First, it will clarify the non-discursive field. As stated above, Foucauldian archaeology does not negate and ignore traditional research projects rooted in human actions and thoughts; rather, many aspects of the traditional methodologies are incorporated within archaeology to explain the non-discursive forces shaping the configurations of knowledge and reality. Second, conducting several traditional analyses of PBF through the Complete College TN Act of 2010 will allow for a clear picture of what these methodologies miss in attempting to explain the existence and effectiveness of a specific policy.

Article 2, then, will provide a thorough detailing of archaeological analysis and its constituent part: the discursive, the non-discursive, the statement, and the archive. I begin with an elucidation of my theoretical framework because this operates within a concept as method methodological framework. Therefore, I cannot separate the archaeological theory of Foucault from how I read and interact with texts. Further, archaeological analysis does not follow a linear path like most quantitative and qualitative research. It is a fundamental decentering of the human-centered research project. Additionally, Article 2 explicates Foucault’s definition of neoliberalism developed within his work *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France 1978-1979*. Explicating Foucault’s definition of neoliberalism here will be useful for two reasons. First, his examination of neoliberalism is one of his clearest examples of using archaeological analysis to examine a phenomenon contemporary to his analysis. Second, his examination of neoliberalism will provide discursive clues for this research project when turning attention towards our contemporary struggle with neoliberalism and PBF. That is, Foucault’s examination of neoliberalism, and the academic literature’s focus on linking PBF with
neoliberalism will provide a guide when examining this project’s archive for discursive similarities.

Article 3 then picks up Foucault’s archaeological project as well as contemporary archaeological research projects within the study of education (Bourke et al., 2013; Bourke & Lidstone, 2015) to produce a polyhedron of understanding that organizes the discursive and non-discursive aspects of PBF in conjunction with the structures of understanding provided by neoliberalism. I turn to a polyhedron of understanding as a visible representation of the phenomenon under study as a means to avoid the

This project then concludes with a summary of the work presented here as well as some ways researchers and activists may move forward to unseat neoliberalism and PBF as dominant forms for understanding our world generally and the practice of education specifically.
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https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708616669529


https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800417732634
Chapter 2

Performance-Based Funding in Tennessee: Traditional Methods of Analysis and Suggestions for a Way Forward

Abstract

Robust and comprehensive methods of policy analysis are essential for understanding the origins and effects of public higher education policy. The methodology, however, can impart blind spots within a study, and, if too many studies share the same blind spots, then the overall body of knowledge suffers. Within studies examining the origins and effects of public higher education policy, these accumulated blind spots can have equity implications that follow people for the rest of their lives. In particular, the Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010 (CCTA) is an often-studied piece of legislation due to its implementation of an aggressive performance-based funding formular that allocates nearly all state funding for higher education based on student and institutional outcomes. The CCTA is the subject of study both for its effects on higher education in Tennessee but also for how it fits within larger discussions regarding the neoliberalization of higher education. This article first examines the CCTA through three common policy analysis methodologies. In doing this, the article will highlight how all three methodologies share presuppositions that orient researchers to only examine the cause-and-effect relationships between people and their thoughts and actions. This article will examine how future work using Foucauldian archaeology can help researchers better understand the broader non-discursive context from which these policies emerge.

Keywords: Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010, performance-based funding, neoliberalism
Performance-Based Funding in Tennessee: Traditional Methods of Analysis and Suggestions for a Way Forward.

The decade following the Great Recession of 2008 saw an expansion of neoliberal policies within public spaces generally and especially in the public education spaces (Giroux, 2014; Giroux, 1992; Taylor, 2017). While the spread of neoliberalism unfolds differently and unevenly throughout the public sphere, public institutions of higher education (IHE) have served as a policy laboratory for a specific set of policy items. In particular, performance-based funding (PBF) policies that seek to tie compliance with other more varied neoliberal policies (e.g. research output, graduation and retention increases, greater efficiency in degree attainment) has spread to a majority of states’ systems of higher education (Blankenberger & Phillips, 2016; Cattaneo et al., 2016; Cornelius & Cavanaugh, 2016; Dougherty et al., 2014; Hillman et al., 2018; Ward & Ost, 2019). These policies claim to reward IHE that meet neoliberal policy objectives with increased funding, yet the real impacts of the policies seem to fall far short of their stated aims. At the same time, PBF policies have continued to expand despite their unfulfilled promises.

The purpose of this article is to construct an analysis of one specific set of neoliberal reforms introduced in the state of Tennessee, the Complete College TN Act of 2010, and then reading it through and in the context of the existing body of literature surrounding performance-based funding for higher education. In doing this, the article will produce a comprehensive literature review concerning the rise, implementation, and impact of PBF policies within institutions of higher education. This review, however, will not simply be an overview of the academic literature; rather, this article will read the Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010 CCTA and academic literature through the lens of major methodological frameworks for
analyzing public policy. This process will highlight not just what is being discussed and researched within the academic literature, but how it is being operationalized as a focus of societal change. Reading the policy and literature in this way will help map how power is produced and functions through individuals, institutions, and their interests, and it will highlight where alternative methodologies for examining the impacts of policy can create new avenues for discussion. It operates like a canal system channeling productive power into some people and concepts while draining it from others. Thus, this review starts from a position of accepting the dominance of neoliberal discourse while using different methods of policy analysis to understand who is winning and losing at this moment in time.

To analyze the functioning of the CCTA, I turn to multiple streams analysis, social construction theory, and policy feedback theory. Thus, this article aims at contributing to the discussion and resistance to neoliberal policies in higher education by examining the CCTA in its specificity, understanding its origin and functioning within the context of the academic literature, and offer new avenues of investigation through methodologies not commonly applied to policy analysis, like Foucauldian Archaeology, for change-focused researchers, teachers, and administrators.

**Understanding the Complete College TN Act 2010**

Before turning attention to the broader literature on PBF, neoliberalism, and the overall state of higher education, it is first necessary to start with a brief unpacking of the Complete College TN Act of 2010 (CCTA). I started here for two reasons. First, and most importantly, it will be necessary to explain its major components and functioning before we turn to the broader literature to understand how it functions to produce a certain outcome, namely how it bestows specific benefits and harms within our current society. Second, as an educator within the state of
Tennessee, it was my personal starting point in being concerned about the state of higher education and the effects of neoliberalism within it. While states are largely able to chart their own policy path independent of the federal government, state institutions of higher education (IHE) are not free from the broader discourse shaping society. Everything from the broader society’s configuration of knowledge and power to the individual actors that operate within such systems contribute to our understanding of society and ourselves, and all this theoretical baggage seeps into the specific policy manifestations within a state. In examining a policy, it needs to be explicated in its specificity first and then brought into dialogue with the broader discourses and contingent events that give it meaning.

The Complete College TN Act 2010 (CCTA) was a major overhaul of the state’s system of higher education that aimed to reform the governance, cooperation between, and financing of the state’s system of higher education. Beyond my personal and professional connections to Tennessee, examining the neoliberalization of higher education through the specific lens of the CCTA is useful for several reasons. First, the CCTA codified a master plan for the reshaping of how higher education is funded and how it ought to function. Second, TN has a long history of funding institutions in part through performance-based funding (PBF) policies beginning in 1979, and, the CCTA bookends the development of PBF in TN by tying nearly all state funding to PBF metrics (Hillman et al., 2018; Tandberg & Hillman, 2014). Finally, we can see clear connections between the state’s master plan for higher education and the broader literature concerning the neoliberalization of higher education and PBF. Therefore, we should treat Tennessee as an exemplar of neoliberal reform generally and PBF specifically. To tease out the connections between the CCTA and the broader discourse on neoliberalism, I have pulled out three of its main functions: aligning higher education with the goals of private sector business;
reforming university tract and dual-enrollment programs; and instituting a new PBF funding model that ties state funding to an institution’s compliance with the master plan. This section will then close by drawing connections between this specific policy and the broader discourse on PBF and the neoliberalization of higher education.

Alignment with the Goals of Private Sector Business

According to the act, this master plan must include, “Addressing the state’s economic development, workforce development…ensuring increased degree production…and using institutional mission differentiation to realize statewide efficiencies…” (Complete College TN Act, 2010). This highlights the state’s focus on explicitly aligning the goals of higher education with the needs of the business community. Subsection B, then allows the institutions to have their own individualized plan so long as it is “concurrent with the adoption of each revised statewide master plan” (Complete College TN Act, 2010). Although institutions can have their own plan, Subsection B makes it clear that the differences therein ought to focus on the differences in degrees and programs offered ensuring compliance with an overall goal of greater productivity. Furthermore, Section 9 is a list of ways in which the University of Tennessee Knoxville will collaborate with the Oak Ridge National laboratory to further economic and business ends (Complete College TN Act, 2010). This law makes it very clear that the duplication of at least some degrees and programs ought to be avoided in the name of efficiency and productivity, and it is in the name of efficiency that individual institutions will find their identity. Taken together, a picture of higher education develops where institutions must focus on graduating more students in less time and education in a manner consistent with the wants and needs of the neoliberal business community (Giroux, 2002a, 2002b; Taylor, 2017).

University Tract Program and Dual Enrollment
Beyond bringing higher education into alignment with business and economic interests, this law also attempts to make the matriculation from the community college system to the college and university system easier and more transparent. This is done in several ways. First, Section 8 outlines a plan to consolidate all community colleges into one system with the goal of creating a standardized set of policies “…in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness in all function areas, including but not limited to, student services, academic support and institutional support” (Complete College TN Act, 2010). This, in theory, aims to eliminate the differences in curriculum and instruction that would limit the transferability of a course to some four-year institutions. Second, this law creates a statewide baccalaureate degree tract, also referred to as a university tract program, which is applied to all institutions (Complete College TN Act, 2010). This is standardized at 60 hours with 41 hours comprising general education requirements and 19 lower-division courses and electives from their major. This block is fully transferable to all state institutions, and an associate of arts and associate of science degrees will transfer as this 60-hour block to a four-year institution. Finally, this act mandates the statewide availability of dual enrollment at both two- and four-year institutions (Complete College TN Act, 2010). This allows students to mix-and-match their educational provider for courses that make-up the university tract course required for their major. While provisions such as this are championed by their supporters as a means to increase efficiency in degree attainment for those seeking to transfer institutions, this also has the effect of constraining options in university choice, and it has been used as a means to close departments seen as redundant within the context of a statewide system (Dougherty et al., 2014; Ward & Ost, 2019). This had the effect within other contexts of shuttering courses and departments offering humanities and liberal arts courses while prioritizing business courses and courses that support business course needs.
Performance-Based Funding

To force compliance with these changes to institutional autonomy, Subsection 4a-e enacts a PBF model that uses student outcomes to allocate 100 percent of the state’s higher education budget. Clarifying this position, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission states, “The primary state policy levers for addressing the state’s educational needs are a new funding formula…a new Quality Assurance Funding program, and the establishment of institutional mission statements or profiles…” (Tennessee Higher Education Commission and Student Assistance Corporation, Complete College TN Act 2010, para. 2). This is an exceptionally high percentage of funding tied to student outcomes when compared against other states that typically tie two to ten percent of funding to performance. The goal of this, and other PBF plans is to incentivize concern for student outcomes among higher education. Superficially, this sounds appealing to both sides, but making funding dependent on outcomes set by the state government politicizes funding and, in a neoliberal context, ensures that funding supports the broader neoliberal agenda. For example, PBF at the scale we see in the CCTA necessitates that IHE focus on institutional outcomes which can only be quantitatively measured. This, then, creates conditions that incentives increasing numbers without necessarily also increasing true educational value to their students or ensuring that their educational value is equitably distributed.

The following section will unpack PBF by expanding on the larger national context in which it emerged and operates. As it unfolds, a pattern will emerge consistent with the tenets of abstract liberalism whereby advocates of PBF ground their arguments in notions of fairness, equality, merit, etc. while at the same time implicitly and explicitly creating conditions that do little to improve educational outcomes at IHE as well as reducing educational equity for college
students of color (Bonilla-Silva, 2000; Omi & Winant, 2009). This then leads to sections analyzing these conditions to determine the real, rather than the stated, policy winners and losers. In short, the remainder of the article aims to show that the CCTA and other policies like it are unable to realize their own goals while at the same time rewarding those already benefiting from a neoliberal world.

**National Trends and Backers – Advocates for PBF**

To discuss the origins of the Complete College TN Act 2010 requires situating it within the larger context of neoliberal educational reform utilizing PBF as the lever pushing changes. The Complete College TN Act fits within a larger movement of renewed interest in performing-based funding policy initiatives. Nationwide, 35 states have adopted PBF models that allocate some portion of funds based on predetermined outcomes (Hillman et al., 2018). This number varies over time as legislative priorities interact with other political and economic realities. Nevertheless, there was a wave of adoption after the Great Recession accelerated in 2008. State revenue was drying up while more and more people turned to higher education to wait-out the recession. With increasing demand and diminishing capacity, state governments renewed their love affair with PBF and its focus on the efficiency of degree production.

Beginning with the policy advocates, it appears at first glance that politically conservative people and groups advocate for PBF. According to McLendon et al. (2006), states with higher percentages of Republicans in the legislature were far more likely to adopt outcome driven performance-based funding policies. While all major American political parties support neoliberal ideology, generally, Republican policy makers have been more ideologically pure in their application of neoliberalism into policy (Giroux, 2002b; Giroux, 2014a; Giroux, 2014b; Giroux, 1992; McLendon et al., 2006). While this does not mean Democrats are free from
critique, it does demonstrate alignment between a set of policies and a political party that
generally embraces neoliberal principles. Within this context, it is unsurprising that the Complete
College TN 2010 Act came out of a legislature dominated by Republican politicians without
much opposition from Democrats (Complete College TN Act, 2010). While party control of the
legislature does correlate to the vitality of the PBF adopted by the state, McLendon et al. (2006)
argue that adoption of PBF in general correlates to change in control of the legislature. On this
understanding of PBF adoption, a political party that takes majority control over a legislature is
likely to be inclined towards passing legislation that focuses on accountability and oversight of
government agencies previously governed or financed by the outgoing party. Thus, while
political affiliation might help explain an individual’s or organizations affinity for PBF, it is
more helpful to understand PBF as part of a broader movement within public higher education
towards greater overall accountability (Hillman et al., 2014)

In addition to this national political movement, The Lumina Foundation, Complete
College America (CCA), and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation have spearheaded a
national movement of reform within higher education focused on making it more productive and
efficient (McKeown-Moak, 2013). Their lobbying, grants, and financing of research has been a
major force in the renewed interest both political parties have in implementing PBF. Kelchen
(2018) summarizes this point when stating:

During 2011 to 2015, at least 24 more states adopted PBF policies, supported by a
new wave of conservative legislatures, governors, and influential foundations
such as the Lumina Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundations. (p.
704)
These foundations have spent millions of dollars in states and institutions of higher education that are experiencing a funding crisis—real or imagined—but the money comes with strings attached. The Lumina Foundation, in particular, sets the tone for what types of neoliberal reforms institutions or systems must adopt to qualify for the funds, and they provide much of the research used by other foundations (Nodine, 2015).

**The Impacts of PBF**

The outcomes of PBF in TN and nationally have been mixed at best (Hillman et al., 2014; Tandberg & Hillman, 2014). PBF has successfully served as a lever to entice institutions to align their mission with state and business goals, but, in producing the results its neoliberal measures promise, there is little to no evidence that PBF has any positive effect on graduation rates, and no study has yet demonstrated a statistically significant impact on the outcomes this funding is supposed to support (Tandberg & Hillman, 2014; Dougherty & Reddy, 2011; Hillman & Corral, 2017; McLendon, Hearn, & Deaton, 2006). While the literature is largely in agreement on PBF’s outcomes, the fragmented approach to higher education in America makes drawing comparisons difficult. This is, not surprisingly, cited by the Lumina Foundation when responding to critics of PBF citing the uneven gains PBF policies make on their own terms (Nodine, 2015). No two states have the same method for PBF, and this is especially difficult with Tennessee. TN and Ohio are the only states that tie 100 percent of funding for higher education to student outcomes, and TN is able to realize many, if not all, of the goals of reform-focused organizations. Furthermore, TN is a difficult state to measure as it first adopted PBF in 1979, and studies that include TN do not use pre-PBF data to compare changes in educational outcomes (Dougherty et al., 2014; Rutherford & Rabovsky, 2014). What this research does indicate is that PBF and neoliberal reform are not merely about improving student outcomes but about ideological purity.
This aligns with other examples of the application of neoliberal policy, and it was a feature of Milton Friedman’s, an intellectual founder for neoliberal policy, which placed ideological virtues like individual freedom over economic performance and equity (Klein, 2007). Thus, the worry is that PBF is a policy mechanism that serves an implicit ideological goal rather than any explicit goal.

While research supporting the claims of neoliberal reform utilizing PBF is scant, a particularly problematic consequence of performance-based funding is the effect on funding minority serving institutions (MSIs) experience immediately after implementing these policies. Increasing efficiency and productivity, or at least acting in service of these ideals, through PBF homogenizes education in a way that rewards institutions serving the already privileged at the expense of the oppressed as higher education becomes more selective to reduce their financial risk (Dougherty & Reddy, 2011). Hillman and Corral (2017) provide a useful analysis of the dangers of performance-based funding. Specifically, performance-based funding models negatively affect the equitable educational outcomes for minority serving institutions. Hillman and Corral (2017) examine how performance-based funding affects MSI’s by conducting a difference-in-differences regression analysis across all PBF states, and they conduct a state-specific model to accommodate differences between states. Their analysis yields three findings: (1) shifting to PBF does not reduce overall funding for higher education, but it does reduce funding for MSIs; (2) MSIs are affected differently depending on the state’s model for PBF; and (3) two states, Ohio and Tennessee, lose funding for all institutions based on their PBF model with MSIs losing a significant amount of funding.

Multiple Streams Analysis
Having outlined the Complete College TN Act 2010 as well as an analysis of its main mechanism for compliance, PBF, in the previous sections, I now turn attention to an in-depth analysis of this act through various frameworks that aim at uncovering how and why policies emerge as solutions when they do.

The first lens used to explore this act more closely is the Multiple Streams Analysis (MSA), and its use of the concept of ambiguity to make sense of policy. At its core, MSA wants to understand how specific policies are adapted in an otherwise ambiguous environment. That is, it is concerned with how problems take on a specific definition requiring an equally specific solution when these could be defined many different ways (Zahariadis, 2014). To understand how a particular definition of the problem rises to dominate the others, MSA argues that people known as policy entrepreneurs—neoliberal politicians, corporate lobbyists, and neoliberal foundations—successfully manipulated the systems concerning the various streams—problem, policies, and politics—of public discourse to focus attention on the definition they want, i.e. their selection bias. This section, then, will add to an understanding of MSA while applying it to a critical reading of the Complete College TN Act.

The Problem Stream

The concept of ambiguity employed in MSA is easy to find in the dialogues concerning the problems of funding high quality higher education—and education more generally. The issue of ensuring an affordable high-quality education immediately presents three broad questions: (1) how is quality defined, (2) how is affordable defined, and (3) what measures are appropriate to guarantee an affordable yet high-quality higher education (Complete College TN, 2010). Ambiguity emerges in the multiple ways these questions can be answered. For example, the neoliberal will answer the first question with quantitative student outcomes, e.g. job placement
rates and salaries, while critical theorists will speak about the qualitative development of students’ critical consciousness, critical thinking, and desire for life-long learning (Giroux, 2014).

The Complete College TN Act 2010 is an ambitious piece of legislation attempting to address a wide range of perceived problems. Problems addressed include: increasing college enrollments, decreases in the state’s capacity to consistently provide a high level of funding, dramatic increases in tuition, and providing employment for college graduates to meet state’s economic needs (Complete College TN, 2010). These problems, on their own, are ambiguous, and different solutions to them have arisen at different places and times. The problems, however, were focused during the Great Recession beginning in 2008 renewing attention and opening opportunities for manipulation from policy entrepreneurs (Dougherty et al., 2014; McLendon et al., 2006; Rutherford & Rabovsky, 2014). This focusing point served as the first opening for neoliberal policy solutions. According to Zahariadis (2014), “Conditions and focusing events direct attention to specific evaluative dimensions of particular problems; attention is fixed by the media or policy entrepreneurs” (p. 32). For the Complete College Act 2010, the Great Recession focused everyone’s attention on the economy and the diminished capacity of the state and federal governments’ budgets. Additionally, as governments faced a diminished capacity to provide services, more and more people were retreating from the dire economic situation within higher education to build skills and knowledge while the economy recovered. Thus, we can see the Great Recession as the focusing point that brought attention to the problems of higher education while also providing the opportunity for neoliberal policy entrepreneurs to offer their view of effective solutions.

Policies
According to Zahariadis (2014), “The policy stream includes a ‘primeval soup’ of ideas that compete to win acceptance in policy networks” (p. 33). Here, ambiguity continues to be important as many ideas are developed about how best to solve the various problems. Furthermore, more information does not narrow the policy options available as ambiguity is not solvable through reasoned argument. For example, the problems addressed with the Complete College TN Act focused on providing a high-quality higher education affordably to as many students as possible (Complete College TN, 2010), but the lens through which these problems are viewed determines which solution is selected. Furthermore, the policy network within which the idea is developed and disseminated will help determine how easily the idea spreads and competes with rivals. For the Complete College TN Act, the idea that came to dominate was that neoliberal notions of quality—the efficient production of degrees that result in jobs—and accountability—student outcomes linked to business interests—be the main mechanisms for solving this problem (Complete College TN, 2010). Finally, the dominance of the Republican party, the prior existence of neoliberal ideology informing higher education policy, and the presence of national organizations advocating for neoliberal reform of higher education ensured a tightly integrated network able to spread information and manipulate the discourse (Zahariadis, 2014). Taken together, this ensured that competing ideas, i.e. broad across the board funding increased for higher education, were at a competitive disadvantage.

Politics

The politics stream is defined by the national mood, pressure group campaigns, and administrative and legislative turnover (Zahariadis, 2014). For the Complete College TN Act to emerge as the official solution to the problems highlighted by the Great Recession, the right neoliberal actors and systems needed to already exist as advocates for change. The national
mood was one in which a new reform movement was reshaping public institutions in the neoliberal image (Giroux, 2015; McKeown-Moak, 2013) and there was a national revival of interest in PBF for higher education (Dougherty et al., 2014; McLendon et al., 2006). This renewed interest found support from the many organizations such as The Lumina Foundation, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and Complete College America that developed or shifted their focus to support the reformation of higher education to support PBF, accountability, and greater alignment of higher education with the business community (Tandberg & Hillman, 2014; McKeown-Moak, 2013; Rutherford & Rabovsky, 2014). Finally, the literature demonstrates how the adoption of PBF tracks shifts in the control of administrative and legislative power, and 2010 saw a shift in national politics in response to the Democratic victories in 2008 (McLendon et al., 2006).

Policy Window and Policy Entrepreneurs

As the Great Recession continued past 2008, many state governments found themselves in dire economic situations. Even those that managed to maintain balanced budgets or budget surpluses were in a position to cut spending as a preventative measure as commerce slowed and savings increased. What started as a focusing point grew into a full policy window as policy entrepreneurs brought the problem, policy, and politics streams together at this moment. The sustained recession created the need to act quickly to solve the problem of funding higher education, and it provided the immediate window in the politics stream for the policy entrepreneurs to exploit their manipulation of the event (Zahariadis, 2014). This allowed for a doubling-down of what had otherwise been a predictable institutionalized window from within the politics stream (McLendon et al., 2006; Zahariadis, 2014). The forces acting in the politics stream had been dominant for so long and had become so interconnected that neoliberal reform
and PBF found their longest uninterrupted use in Tennessee. Thus, policy entrepreneurs saw an opportunity to manipulate a new policy window to institute more dramatic reforms.

**The Process of Adopting the Complete College TN Act 2010**

Thus far, we can understand the origin of the Complete College TN Act 2010 as forged by neoliberal policy entrepreneurs that manipulated discourse in response to the Great Recession, the policy window, to join the problem, policies, and politics stream to favor their biased view of the problem and policies within their current political context. However, accomplishing this does not necessarily guarantee victory. The neoliberal policy entrepreneurs successfully focused attention on the window that had opened in the politics stream to drive reform founded in political and economic ideology rather than on evidence-verified outcomes (Dougherty & Reddy, 2011; Hillman & Corral, 2017). According to Zahariadis (2014), “What matters more is the solution to be adopted rather than the problem to be solved” (p. 37). Therefore, we can see why policy entrepreneurs would focus attention on political ideology over student growth; the policy window dictated it as the effective path.

Furthermore, these policy entrepreneurs—made up of sitting politicians, large foundations, and corporate interests—were effective in their capacity to have the organizational slack necessary to spend resources finding solutions to problems well-before a window had opened (Zahariadis, 2014). This ability gave them the ability to effectively frame the discourse as an economic necessity to recoup losses of both financial and human capital from the Great Recession. The need to recoup, then, drove their effect priming techniques focused on protecting public institutions from a financial collapse. This is evidenced in the Act’s frequent references to aligning the interests of higher education with corporate and business interests (Complete College TN, 2010). According to Zahariadis (2014), “A negative [national] mood is likely to
lead to more confrontational policy” (p. 39). This also facilitated the use of the frequent symbols of neoliberal reform such as individual liberty, government accountability, and a decadent intellectual elite (Giroux, 2002; Giroux, 2014; Klein, 2007). Finally, the ability of policy entrepreneurs to utilize the existing political, foundational, and institution supports already in place allowed an effective use of “salami tactics” allowing for the discourse and perception of the problem to occur simultaneously from all sides while being presented as a tidy series of sequential events. (Zahariadis, 2014).

Social Construction Analysis

Moving on from an in-depth analysis of the Complete College TN Act 2010 through the MSA frameworks, I now apply a social construction framework (SCF) to continue the process of uncovering the causes, effects, and implications of the Complete College TN Act. The distinguishing characteristic of SCF is its focus on understanding how policy, and the policy process, creates social identities and then assigns value to those identities. Identities are forged in the policy creation process as a way to target certain populations or interests for the benefits or burdens of that policy. Unfortunately, according to Schneider, Ingram, & Deleon, (2014), these constructed identities are then deployed to impact public opinion, social constructions of groups, the distribution of political power and legitimacy of certain knowledge systems. Furthermore, how value is determined depends largely on the identity’s political power and their perception as deserving or undeserving among the general population. Thus, the presuppositions policy makers have when constructing or exploiting a socially constructed identity have both an immediate impact on how resources are allocated as a result of that particular policy, but, often, it feeds on existing identities further reifying them and reinforcing their impact. This section, then, elaborates on the SCF through its application to the neoliberal reform of higher education and the
CCTA. This section will first examine how policy allocates benefits and burdens to different populations. It then examines how different groups of people become the advantaged, the contenders, the dependents, and the deviants, and how the CCTA assigned different groups benefits and burdens consistent with these groups. Continuing, this section will examine how policy feedback explains policy’s effect on the socially constructed identities it affects. This section closes with a brief comment on how advocates CCTA first took hold of social identity to promote their proposed policy; however, these identities and groups can also be leveraged to chart a new path forward.

**Proposition 1: Allocation**

The most important proposition for understanding the effects of SCF states that policy takes existing socially constructed identities or creates new identities to distribute rewards and burdens, and these allocations depend on the power and general perception these identities hold. According to Schneider et al. (2014), "The allocation of benefits and burdens to target groups by public policy depends on the extent of their political power as well as their positive or negative social construction" (p. 109). Therefore, socially constructed identities can be represented visually in a continuum to pinpoint the mixture of power and perception a group holds. Where a group falls on this continuum determines how a policy will affect their allotment of rewards and burdens from a particular policy. Broadly, these groupings have four designations: (1) advantage, (2) contenders, (3) dependents, and (4) deviants. Applying these designations to the groups involved in neoliberal higher education reform will help compare the real beneficiaries of these policies against the policies stated intentions.

Additionally, as we think about how socially constructed identities become endowed with varying degrees of power and influence, it is useful to highlight Michel Foucault’s (2008)
analysis of neoliberalism in his lecture series *The Birth of Biopolitics*. In it, Foucault argues that the conceptual lynchpin of neoliberalism is the evolution of the concept of labor into human capital. Foucault (2008) states, “...labor comprises a capital, that is to say, it as an ability, a skill; as they say: it is a ‘machine.’ And on the other side, it is an income, a wage, or rather a set of wages; as they say: an earnings stream” (p. 224). Neoliberalism, as outlined by Foucault, is a state where human capital has shifted from economic theory to motivate policy discussions as well as inform how we view others and ourselves, i.e. as agents in possession of some potential and/or realized skill that must be maximized for our own benefit as well as that of society at large.

**The Advantaged**

The advantaged are those that have both high levels of political power and a very positive social identity, and this imparts an idea that they are the most deserving of rewards (Schneider, Ingram, & Deleon, 2014). In the arena of neoliberal policy design generally and the Complete College TN Act 2010 more specifically, the advantaged group is broadly understood as the middle class, or those with the greatest share of human capital that can be marshaled through public policy. While the language of reform targets everyone, the reforms favor those that would already take part in higher education. The middle class contributes the majority of college students, and this provides them a great deal of political power within this context (Giroux, 2014; Giroux, 1992). Furthermore, the middle class enjoys an immensely favorable perception as the site of “true” American values. Taken together, this ensures that reforms in higher education appeal to both the values and perceived needs of this population. The Complete College TN Act embodies this idea in its focus on dismantling reducing barriers internal to higher education as a mechanism for more efficient degree production. Additionally, this act’s focus on aligning higher
education’s goals with the needs of business offers a pathway for graduates to experience quicker financial return on their educational product (Complete College TN Act, 2010). What this act does not do is expand access to higher education or offer support for individuals and institutions that do not value middle class norms and values, and this ensures that rewards are assigned to the group already advantaged in higher education: the American middle class.

The Contenders

The contenders represent those that have significant power but lack a positive image. According to Schneider et al. (2014), "Contenders have substantial political resources but are negatively regarded by many in the population as relatively selfish, untrustworthy, and morally suspect" (p. 111). That is, contenders have significant enough political power to demand rewards, but their image requires that rewards are distributed out of sight. Within the context of the Complete College TN Act, and reform movements in education more generally, the contenders are the business and special interest groups (Giroux, 2002; Giroux, 2014; Giroux, 1992; Klein, 2007). From this act, businesses gain more efficient production of skilled workers to fill the jobs they need filled. Put another way, businesses and special interest groups need greater access to human capital to better compete in a global marketplace. While the benefits from the law are written to seem like the ideal beneficiary is the middle class, these benefits only make sense within a larger network where business interests demand workers just skilled enough. Special interest groups and the neoliberal ideologues that found and run them, on the other hand, benefit from the move towards greater ideological purity this act offers. They may believe that neoliberal reform will bring greater prosperity, but the neoliberal ideologue’s main goal is to diminish the power of the state in favor of pure individual liberty (Klein, 2007).

The Dependents
Dependents represent the inverse of the contenders; they have little to no political power, but they have a positive public image. This positive image, however, differs from that of the advantaged. The dependents viewed with pity in need of someone’s help. According to Schneider et al. (2014), "Because they do not have a strong role in the creation of national wealth, dependents are viewed as 'good' people but considerably less deserving of actual investments than advantaged groups" (p. 112). While the advantaged receive public rewards and the contenders receive their rewards under the cover of darkness, the contender is offered a string of promises that result in little if any rewards. In the neoliberal reformation of education, the dependent category is almost exclusively reserved for the student that is low-income and from a racial minority group. These students are consistently held-up as those with the most to gain from tearing down the old systems in favor of individual and business centric neoliberal policies, yet they are expected to abandon their culturally specific identities, experiences, and knowledge in order to develop their own capital in alignment with policy and special interests. MSIs and HBCUs see their funding cut under PBF while traditionally white institutions see their budgets hold steady or grow (Tandberg & Hillman, 2014; Hillman & Corral, 2017). Nevertheless, the image of an individual from a “disadvantaged” background lifting themselves up out of poverty is a compelling image that garners positive attention, yet that attention does not translate into meaningful policy.

For the dependents in neoliberal reform, the message is clear: we pity you enough to send platitudes, yet we do not fear your small share of political power enough to allocate any rewards.

The Deviants

The deviant lacks political power and has a negative social image. Punishment can be freely allocated to the deviants as they lack the power to fight back and the general population,
by and large, views this group with contempt. In a neoliberal world, the two dominant deviant
groups are minority communities and the intellectual elite. While the individual minority student
is to be pitied in their struggle for higher education, the community from where they came is
characterized as a site of unproductivity, wasted human capital, and values founded on a group’s
identity, history and knowledge (Dumas, 2016; Dumas, 2013). This runs counter to the tenets of
neoliberalism’s emphasis on efficiency, productivity, and individuality, and embracing these
groups’ identities would, according to the neoliberals, result in a complete breakdown of the
economy.

For reforms like the Complete College TN Act to be most effective, reformers must also
place the liberal intellectual elites into the deviant category. They are small in number, and, due
to the structure of higher education, often isolated from each other, limiting their ability to form a
strong network of political power. They are cast as members of a decadent elite cloistered within
ivory towers that have lost touch to the reality of people’s lived experiences (Giroux, 2014). This
image draws on the pervasive anti-intellectualism that exists within the United States, but it is
also amplified through an economic lens that sees intellectuals as economically unproductive—
despite the lack of evidence for this position. This image allows The Complete College TN Act,
and other like it, to make the intellectual elite the prime target of punishments in the form of
reducing redundancies in academic departments within the state; cutting funding for professors’
salaries in favor of more economically lucrative personnel like coaches; and creating onerous
working conditions that give faculty full teaching schedules with high expectations for research
output (Giroux, 2014).

Proposition 2: Feedback
Here, feedback refers to the effects that policies have on people's "…attitudes, orientations towards government, and participation patterns" (Schneider et al., 2014, p. 117). Put another way feedback explains how policy’s use of socially constructed identities informs the beliefs and actions of that group. For example, women’s suffrage took decades to reach the same levels as men after the passage of the 19th Amendment (Schneider et al., 2014). In neoliberal reform, the advantaged middle class will continue to see their symbolic and material status increase as the act reduces their barriers to a college degree and post-college employment confirming, for them, that their efforts and view of government were correct, encouraging them to expand their political agency. On the other hand, dependent and deviant groups will have their image as lazy, unfit, and counterproductive reinforced as the act narrows the pathways to a college degree and post-college employment as middle class pathways become more efficient. The diminished funding for MSIs and limited improvements in outcomes for minority students will discourage their participation in higher education and politics.

**Propositions 3: The Origins**

The root of the socially created identities developed and maintained through policy are derived from intuitive and emotional reactions and then are confirmed with careful selection of data and evidence (Schneider et al., 2014). Neoliberal policy, then, exploits presuppositions about minorities and people in poverty, originating in slavery and the industrial revolution, to create an identity of minority students, as dependents, needing saving from their communities and faulty culturally-based knowledge and experience by neoliberal ideologues and politicians (Dumas, 2013; Fancher, 2011). This is not based on reasoned arguments or evidence, but on the intuitive emotional presuppositions people hold, and, by using this as the starting point, policy acts as a potent perpetuating force.
Propositions 4 & 5 as a Way Out

Policy, however, need not reinforce and perpetuate these dubious identities given to us from emotion and faulty reasoning, proposition four. It is clear that the CCTA will perpetuate the power and perceptions of the advantaged, contender, dependent, and deviant groups through its allocation of resources, yet a sustained effort to leave deficit understandings of non-dominant racial and class-based identities can work to transform the perception these groups enhancing their bargaining position in future policy debates. Thus, SCF offers hope for positive change through changing people’s perceptions of group identities (Schneider et al., 2014). According to Schneider et al. (2014) “Only when such forces move to rearrange a group’s social construction do we find a condition of political conflict and possible change. Importantly, as proposition five makes clear, understanding how identities are socially constructed opens up an understanding of how policy can be created to push for change without encountering too much pushback from the advantaged groups to make the project politically unsustainable (Schneider et al., 2014). For example, The Complete College TN Act can allocate all the meaningful rewards to the advantaged middle class without becoming unstable because they hold the largest share of power, but a policy aiming at providing all or most rewards to the dependent or deviant groups would face a strong enough opposition from those with power to make the effort untenable. Therefore, the SCF reveals that policy, on its own, is not the most effective starting point for changing the allocation of rewards and punishments, and efforts aimed at resisting neoliberal reforms are best directed elsewhere.

Policy Feedback Theory

Policy feedback theory (PFT) examines the ways in which policy affects politics. Policies, by and large, establish the boundaries of permissible participation within the political
process. It determines who has the power to speak, i.e. vote, and it determines the force their voice carries, i.e. their political power (Mettler & Sorelle, 2014). PFT is a useful lens of analysis as the current wave of support for neoliberal reform and PBF, more specifically, due to their grounding in and enhancement of previous policy. Decades of previous neoliberal reform have shaped the landscape into a fertile ground for further and more ideologically pure reform. PFT does not simply trace the political and economic origins of current policy; rather, it aims to incorporate the political and economic beginnings within a larger understanding of how past and present policy decisions affect the distribution of power and resources. Thus, PFT examines the cumulative effect of policy on democratic participation to understand "…what might otherwise become 'unintended consequences' of policies…” (Mettler & Sorelle, 2014, p. 152). This section, then, examines neoliberal reform expressed through the CCTA through the lens of PFT to understand how previous policies gave power to the groups that benefit from these current policies, and it uses this framework to understand how current policy may affect power and participation amongst political communities in the future.

**Meaning of Citizenship and the Power of Groups**

The majority of the analysis regarding neoliberal reform and PBF through the framework of PFT will focus on how policies shape what groups are granted access to citizenship and what that means in relation to other groups. According to Mettler and Sorelle (2014), "Citizenship encompasses the rights, duties, and obligations imposed by the government, as well as citizens' responses to them, including their political attitudes and participation" (p. 156). Thus, governments and their citizens stand in a reciprocal relationship to each other, and this necessitates that an action by one party will produce a reaction in the other. Within this relationship, citizenship then refers not only to one’s legal status as resident, but it also includes
the de jure and de facto ability for citizens as members of political communities to act. That is, how welcome or unwelcome a group is affects how likely they are to participate in the political process. This could be the direct result of exclusionary policies—e.g. literacy tests to vote—or policy can inculcate a negative view of participation through the way it distributes resources and endows meaning—i.e. social welfare (Mettler & Sorelle, 2014). Going back to Foucault and his discussion of neoliberalism, we can see how neoliberalism can skew a society’s understanding of a citizen’s duties, rights, and relationships by filtering it through the concept of human capital. This means that a full citizen is one that is in possession of certain skills and/or traits, either realized or potential, that are brought into alignment with a particular governing order (Foucault, 2008). Thus, whether intentional or not, neoliberal reform and PBF serve to allocate resources and meaning to certain groups that inherently affect how much political power and participation they experience.

Understood through this framework, decades of neoliberal policies have given preference to the political participation of the white middle-class, business interests, and neoliberal politicians through the distribution of resources and meaning that assign positive value to them and their interests at the detriment of others based on a careful calculation grounded in human capital (Giroux, 2014; Klein, 2007). This is captured well by PFT that argues that policies shape the political status of communities by contributing to the assignment of political power and social rights (Mettler & Sorelle, 2014). The groups most affected by neoliberal reform have been marginalized by centuries of policies aimed at reducing their power and influence (Dumas, 2016). For example, long traditions of being denied, either de jure or de facto, the right to vote and policies that disproportionately target racial minorities for detention and imprisonment serve to create a hostile environment for their participation while also instilling within those groups a
negative perception about political participation while also ensuring that they develop their own human capital in a way that serves the interests of those with more privileged identities (Mettler & Sorelle, 2014).

Furthermore, the ability to meaningfully participate socially and politically depends upon the ability to attain economic security and living standards in accordance with the rest of society. According to Mettler & Sorelle (2014), "Social welfare, education, and other economic policies thus affected...'social citizenship,' which [is] viewed as essential for individuals' free exercise of other rights on terms of equality with each other" (p.157). PBF, in particular, has a demonstrable record of favoring institutions that serve middle-class whites while harming the financial health of MSIs and HBCUs (Hillman & Corral, 2017). This, then, limits the access to resources that would enhance the political capital of certain groups effectively limiting the extent by which they can participate as citizens in a political process.

Thus, we can start to see how previous exclusionary policies created an environment where those groups most negatively affected by the neoliberal reform of higher education have been made politically weak through the implementation of previous policies. The Complete College TN Act 2010 very clearly seeks to align higher education with the interests of the state’s business community while making it easier for the middle-class to access it as a resource. This is due, in part, to previous policies that have favored the norms and values of the middle-class and business community, and this will serve to continually concentrate power, thus enhancing the citizenship, of the middle-class and business political communities (Mettler & Sorelle, 2014). Business communities will become enhanced as their rubrics for success now operate for higher education, and this will continue to align the general public’s notion of what a quality educational product is (Complete College TN Act, 2010). And, the reduction in barriers for those
already planning to attend college—e.g. easier transfers, faster post-graduation employment, and a simpler bureaucratic structure—ensures that the white middle-class continue to enjoy the increased benefits to their social status resulting in the enhancement of their political participation.

Finally, the power that has accumulated within the middle-class and business groups endows them with a much more potent reserve of power than groups opposed to these reforms. Businesses need both the human capital produced by higher education as well as the financial resources of the middle class to purchase their goods and services. Policies that channel resources towards the middle-class will also find business interests nearby as it is in their best interest to see resources channeled to the middle-class (Mettler & Sorelle, 2014). This economic imperative is then endowed with the symbolism within policy that establishes middle-class norms and values as American norms and values (Giroux, 2014). This confluence produces a fertile ground for politically strong interest groups to form in favor of neoliberal reform while neoliberal detractors are at a disadvantage. The trend towards more ideologically pure reform will see more and more resources channeled to middle-class business interests further entrenching their power and influence.

**Forms of Governance and Policy Agenda**

The Complete College TN Act 2010 and neoliberal reforms of higher education generally highlight the second proposition of PFT: once a policy is established, it can affect the available policy alternatives and interpretations in the future. That is, policy shapes perceptions about the appropriate domain of government activity. Decades of neoliberal reforms within all levels of government have seen a reduction in the government’s spheres of influences in favor of private business activity (Giroux, 2002; Giroux, 2014; Giroux, 2015; Giroux, 1992). By tying 100
percent of state appropriated funding to student outcomes, the government has removed itself as an advocate for principles beyond productivity and efficiency, e.g. equity. Furthermore, the outcomes measured are in support of the state’s economic and business interests ensuring that higher education is in service of business economics rather than the public good (Complete College TN Act, 2010). These neoliberal policies feed off previous neoliberal action to further constrain the limits and abilities of the government. This will eventually lead to a place where questions about the government's legitimacy to effectively deliver higher education are a legitimate view worthy of continued expansion. In pushing the government out of education, past and present policy also fosters an attitude that education is best left to neoliberal reformers and business leaders (Dumas, 2013). According to Mettler & Sorelle (2014), "Policies created at earlier points affect…how social problems are understood, whether they are defined as matters worthy of public attention and government action, and whether they find a place on the political agenda" (p. 163).

**Concluding Remarks**

What, then, do these multiple means of policy analysis tell us about the past, present, and future of PBF policies? Multiple streams analysis (MSA) emphasized how neoliberal policy entrepreneurs harness this ambiguity to link the past, present, and future into a cohesive narrative of change born of necessity (Zahariadis, 2014). That is, MSA shines a light on how PBF came to dominate policy discussion in public higher education when it did. The capacity, organization, and cunning manipulation shown by neoliberal reformers was leveraged following the Great Recession with great efficacy. Social construction analysis (SCA), then, helped shed light on the winners and losers of PBF. SCA helps to illuminate who the advantaged, disadvantaged, dependents, and deviants are as well as providing an account as to why certain individuals came
to occupy these roles by linking them to pre-established socially constructed roles. Finally, policy feedback theory (PFT) clarifies the work of SCA by providing a useful lens on how previous policy shaped the conditions for contemporary policy by endowing certain groups with power and legitimacy. Therefore, it is helpful for understanding how a policy as ideologically pure as the Complete College TN Act 2010 could come to be viewed as a mainstream policy solution to the problems of higher education. Decades of previous policy have endowed the white middle-class and the businesses that rely on them with a majority share of the power in political discussions. Furthermore, policy feedback theory shed light on how contemporary policy will continue to concentrate power within these groups and their symbols.

To move the research forward and open new fronts in the intellectual and physical struggle against neoliberalism, we need to learn from the approaches above, and we need to move beyond them to new approaches able to tell different narratives about why PBF and why now. While these means of policy analysis have utility in understanding how PBF functions as well as who benefits at the others’ expense, it nevertheless fails to capture the broader question of how society was primed to receive PBF policies at this moment. That is, researchers concerned with neoliberalism generally and PBF specifically need to engage with alternative research methodologies to engage with how concepts historically function and move through other disciplines (Gale, 2001). The above frameworks for analyzing policy documents all excel at analyzing the nodes of power, the who and what, yet they fail to capture why PBF is both an available policy option as well as account for its spread despite its inability to produce positive results. That is, these frameworks are unable to interrogate how they might be bound up within and implicated by the same systems that create and enable neoliberal and PBF policy. As Jackson (2013) posits:
A critique does not consist in saying that things aren't good the way they are. It consists in seeing on just what type of assumptions, of familiar notions, of established and unexamined ways of thinking the accepted practices are based, in showing that things are not as obvious as people believe . . . (p. 839).

This is necessary since the way we try to understand neoliberalism may already be infected with concepts and methods which give neoliberalism power. This, then, is just a beginning.
References


Chapter 3

Analyzing Policy Issues Affecting Higher Education with Foucauldian Archaeology

Abstract

Neoliberal policies within higher education continue to be proposed and implemented in state houses across the United States despite decades of research and debate highlighting problematic and sometimes dangerous outcomes. While there exist a large body of literature critiquing these policies, traditional forms of policy analysis are ill-equipped to challenge the broader structures of truth and power from which specific policies emerge. These forms of policy analysis rely on methodologies grounded in a humanist tradition that gives priority to human thought and action. This then leads to a presupposition of history as flowing from one human thought or action to the next. Research following from such presuppositions runs the risk of leaving out how human thought and action are limited prior to the individual thinking and/or acting. This article argues that policy analysts could benefit from adopting a Foucauldian archaeological methodology allowing access to incorporate the broader arrangement of truth, power, and knowledge into understanding how policy is born, functions, and perpetuates. This article outlines the problems traditional policy analysis faces when critiquing neoliberal policies and proposes a Foucauldian archaeological methodology for integrating the discursive and non-discursive elements of theses problems into one shared narrative.

Keywords: policy analysis, Foucauldian archaeology, neoliberalism
Analyzing Policy Issues Affecting Higher Education with Foucauldian Archaeology

A common central theme of the policy and practice, and the discussions thereof, concerning higher education has been through its neoliberalization and how that neoliberalization works in conjunction with systems of thought. Henry Giroux (2002) captures these concerns well when he states, “The legacy of public discourse appears to have faded as the U.S. university reinvents itself by giving in to the demands of the marketplace (p. 432). Put another way, many researchers identify that something different is happening at the level of practice and policy that, for many, is leading to a less favorable position for higher education overall.

Following this line of inquiry requires researchers to posit a theory of historical analysis for events and ideas. The problem I hope to address in this research project is largely a theoretical issue with practical implications concerning how historical analysis is not evaluated thoroughly enough to understand how the ordering of historical events leads us to specific conclusions and considerations. That is, tackling an inequitable present steeped in neoliberal policy requires researchers to reconstruct the historical process which led to the present moment. As noted in Mills (1959, as cited in Gale, 2001):

It is at once historical and systematic - historical, because it deals with and uses the materials of the past; systematic, because it does so in order to discern 'the stages' of the course of history and the regularities of social life .(p. 155)

Too often in policy analysis, implicit elements of analysis are presupposed rather than being interrogated seriously for how it affects the development of research and practice. Researchers
ordering of the past and present produces implications for how they understand, analyze, and attempt to solve problems about today.

For example, Giroux (1992, 2002, 2011, 2014a, 2014b, 2015) has published extensively from this Neo-Marxist position advocating that higher education has been co-opted by the corporate interests of savvy capitalists. Events are arranged in order of action and reaction, and Giroux, as well as many other thinkers operating from similar positions, ascribes those actions and reactions to intentional actors enacting their specific agendas. In effect, Giroux (2014) assigns a particular group of people a specific ideology that animates them against another group with their own interests, and we can see that in when he states:

Neoliberal policies have a long genealogy and have intensified since the 1970s with a vengeance. As disparities in income, wealth, and power intensify, the unchecked political and cultural influence of the ultra-rich in shaping educational policies become more visible and dangerous (p. 170).

Put another way, the Marxist critique Giroux gives voice to a position emphasizing a downward pressure by those with a disproportionate share of power upon those without economic, cultural, or societal power. In the more common Marxist interpretation of policy, neoliberalism is an active force pushing down on people and institutions forcing them to break and reconstitute in alignment with its own goals of privatization (Flew, 2014; Springer, 2012; Taylor, 2017). Focusing on the process and effects of the commodification of higher education, the Marxist readings propose an analysis that sees neoliberalism as an effect of an elite class eroding public institutions aimed at preserving public intellectualism and democratic institutions.
Importantly, I set myself in opposition to the attractive Marxist critique of higher education that argues that the neoliberalization of higher education is a coordinated attempt by technocrat economists to engage in class warfare by hollowing out the experience of higher education. While I do not disagree with the Marxists that oppose the neoliberalization of higher education, and all of human experience for that matter, I do think they tell an incomplete story. That is, the Marxist critique offered up from Giroux does an admirable job of critically interrogating the stage of the present and the actors occupying it. What they lack is a unified description of why these actors are arranged on this stage. Or, put another way, how are knowledge and discourse arranged in such a way as to perpetuate and intensify neoliberal policies within higher education. Thus, I became motivated to seek richer explanations of why and how the neoliberalization of higher education is possible.

While on the surface this appears to be a simple question about the history of neoliberalism, i.e. a history of ideas rather than actions and events, it is in fact asking for a critical description of the epistemological and ontological concepts that make the present possible. That is, neoliberalism in education cannot be understood solely through a view of history that sees a great continuity of human thought with small disruptions and innovations attributable to specific individuals. Rather, the greater configurations of discourse and knowledge create a field of understanding through which our work is made intelligible. Thus, we are limited in how we can know and understand which therefore also limits what is and is not possible. Without an understanding of how the past and current configurations of knowledge led to this contingent moment, researchers risk inheriting a problematic historical understanding of the problem and/or contributing to a body of literature without a cohesive understanding of the history of knowledge that enables all of us to participate in neoliberalism.
This article, then, proposes researchers adopt new theoretical frameworks for viewing and analyzing problems within the study of higher education. In particular, I propose leveraging a Foucauldian archaeological framework for understanding how changes within educational policy are discursively connected to and affected by other socially constructed concepts. This will allow researchers to better understand the social field from which these concepts emerge, the interplay of concepts in affecting policy outcomes, and the various pathways to move beyond our current situation.

**Archaeology - Moving Beyond Traditional Policy Analysis**

Whereas traditional policy analysis focuses its attention on the given object, the policy, Foucauldian archaeology attempts to use the object as a window into the conditions that made its existence possible (Foucault, 1994, 2006a). Just as traditional archaeology is an excavation of objects from the ground to understand the bigger picture of extinct human civilizations, Foucauldian archaeology is an excavation of discursive objects to understand the conditions that made their existence possible. According to Andre Burguiere's (2009) description of Foucault’s evolution of historical thought, “...his research now focused on the analysis of normative texts, which allowed him to arrive more quickly at the heart of this objective, the history of truth (p. 204). For Foucault, and those motivated by his works, this background truth from which accepted forms of knowledge and power emerge is the episteme, and the episteme is specific to a particular place and time (Foucault, 2006a; Gutting, 1995). That is, the world we can know and how we can know are historical accidents contingent on the arrangement of discourse and the power given to specific concepts. Furthermore, it is through the episteme that the competing forces of knowledge and power produced through societal institutions are made intelligible and given legitimacy. Burguiere (2009) continues, “Knowledge is always established or destined to
become official, since it confers a position of power on the one who holds it…from the moment it is accepted. And that acceptance determines the criteria of truth” (p. 201). Thus, the episteme establishes the regime of truth and power giving truth to what is said and power those individuals and institutions that are able to speak the prevailing truth, and those utterances, individuals, and institutions work to reinforce the episteme as they speak and act in agreement with it.

For researchers seeking to understand an inequitable system, then, it becomes imperative to understand the episteme, and how it conveys truth and power (Bruguiere, 2009; Foucault, 2010). While the episteme is not immediately accessible to researchers, it can be accessed through the visible traces of discourse, and the traces point towards the episteme, or the background, from which the texts emerge and become visible and true. According to Foucault (2006c):

By 'archaeology' I would like to designate not exactly a discipline but a domain of research, which would be the following: in society, different bodies of learning, philosophical ideas, everyday opinions, but also institutions, commercial practices and police activities, mores—all refer to a certain implicit knowledge [savoir] special to this society (p. 261).

Here, with the hidden episteme and its visible traces, we see at least two levels being developed. The first is the level of appearances and experiences (Foucault, 1994). This is the level at which we have immediate access. We can, for example, see the performances of gender and race, and we can see policy as a foci of power. There is, however, a deeper level we cannot directly access, and ignoring this level leads to faulty presuppositions about the functioning of power. Foucault makes this clear when he states:
What appears to me to be deceiving and naïve in reflections on and analyses of signs is that one supposes them to be always already there, deposited on the figure of the world, or constituted by men, and that one never investigates their being (Foucault, 2006, p. 266).

Thus, to understand the meaning of things given to us on the level of appearances, we must dig deep in our search for meaning. It is at this second, deeper level where meaning and power are assigned. This is the level of archaeology.

What researchers hope to access through archaeology is, simply put, reality. Reality, here, is understood as the conditions of possibility. That is, reality is shaped by a contingent arrangement of epistemological and ontological conditions that allow for certain things to be said and done while prohibiting other things from being said and done (Foucault, 2010). Reality, understood as the conditions of possibility, is not an objective external environment; rather, importantly for the analysis of specific policies, it is the ordering of discourse into bodies of knowledge (systems of thought) that allow some statements to be true or false while some other statements are simply absurd (Foucault, 2006a). That which is absurd stands outside the conditions of possibility, i.e. unintelligible.

What Archaeology is focused on, and what the conditions of possibility refer to, is a system of rules that account for the multitude of discursive events in existence and their change over time. Foucault is not interested in uncovering a hidden level beneath experience that shows us how every varied thing is in fact the same; rather, Foucault’s archaeology uncovers an order that produces incompatibilities, contradictions, and dispersions in addition to sameness (Foucault, 2010). Foucault frequently calls archaeology an alternate history (Foucault, 2006a; Foucault, 2006b; Foucault, 2010). A focus on uncovering rules presents a history focused on the
underlying rules of discourse; the interaction between the discursive and non-discursive world; and a history focused on understanding the types of change as well as what makes change possible. This looks much different than traditional historical analyses that presuppose an underlying sameness from which all historical events can be examined in relation to that original sameness, i.e. subjectivity (Foucault, 2006a). Foucault, 2006, underscores this point in his reply to the Epistemology Circle when he states, “...it might be said that knowledge, as a field of historicity…is free of any reference to an origin or to a historico-transcendental teleology, detached from any reliance upon a foundational subjectivity (p. 332-333). That is, traditional historical analysis takes and protects a unified subjectivity as the epistemic foundation of its activity, and seeking to tell an alternative history, or narrative, requires removing subjectivity from the center of research. Change, then does not manifest from a unified subjectivity that breaks free of its conditions of possibility; rather, as Bruguiere (2009) summarizes:

…the emergence of a new episteme, which results from a critique of established knowledge, does not occur through a burst of thought or a liberating power of truth transcending the institutions and power relations within society. It is born from the contradictions of society itself (p. 201).

Thus, to examine the conditions of possibility for a given episteme, researchers must extract and remove individual agency as the prime engine of change from their analysis in order to see how society itself produces change. Through historical presuppositions grounded in this type of conceptualization of history, policy minded activists can begin to reconstruct societal structures created from and supporting a particular episteme. This, nevertheless, does not negate activism operating from a presupposition of history as grounded in the subject; rather, it opens up a space for analysis of the conditions of possibility of specific actions and utterances.
To examine the frameworks of our episteme and its vicissitudes through specific utterances and actions, I turn to Foucault’s own theoretical and methodological apparatus: archaeology. While Foucault’s theoretical and methodological tools are common within educational research, most of the literature is concerned with operationalizing his genealogical frameworks. While Foucault’s genealogical method is most often employed for understanding the functions of power, I draw on his archaeological analysis for its ability to understand the rules for the construction of discourse and knowledge. Archaeology as an alternate theory of history rather than a theory of power, even though a history of knowledge implicates systems of power, aims at, in this work, capturing how competing discourses of performance-based funding as a function of neoliberalism more generally changed over time and interacted with non-discursive events to position the current neoliberal model as the dominant mode of funding higher education. It looks for the continuities and disruptions buried within the rules of knowledge to tell a more complete history of why certain funding policies came to be rather than others (Foucault, 2010; Walton, 2010). Archaeology, as we will see, seeks to understand the contingent competition between discourses that brings about something new.

**Foucauldian Archaeology**

Foucauldian archaeology may appear a somewhat disjointed concept as it evolved out of Foucault’s early works before being systematized in *The Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. In many ways, then, utilizing a Foucauldian archaeological framework may look slightly different amongst different researchers, but archaeological analysis has several key similarities across deployments: what it seeks to uncover and its levels of analysis (Leone et al., 1987). Here, we see at least two levels. The first is the level of appearances and experiences (Foucault, 2010; Gutting, 1995). This is the level at which we have immediate access. We can,
for example, see the performances of gender and race, and we can see policy as a foci of power. There is, however, a deeper level we cannot directly access, and ignoring this level leads to faulty presuppositions about the functioning of power. To understand the meaning of things given to us on the level of appearances, we must dig deep in our search for meaning (Bourke & Lidstone, 2015; Foucault, 1994, 2010). It is at this second, deeper level where meaning and power are assigned. This is the level of archaeology.

While broadly in-line with traditional constructivist perspectives that we language our world or, put another way, that the world of human experience is created through language, Foucault’s archaeology makes a stronger claim than sidelines human agency as the prime mechanism which brings the world of human experience into being (Foucault, 1994, 2006b). Rather, Foucault’s oeuvre lays out a complex interconnection of statements, concepts, and discourses that form bodies of knowledge that create a space of intelligibility through which humans can know certain things and act in certain ways (Foucault, 1994). This decenters human agency since the configurations of concepts edified into bodies of knowledge act as preconditions for the evaluation of truth and validity as well as for the structure of power dynamics. This, therefore, removes human agency from the center of analysis since the range and impact of human agency are conditioned in advance of any given human action.

What researchers hope to access through archaeology is, simply put, the boundaries of our reality, i.e. the conditions of possibility. That is, reality is shaped by a contingent arrangement of epistemological and ontological conditions that allow for certain things to be said and done while prohibiting other things from being said and done (Foucault, 2010). Reality, understood as the conditions of possibility, is not an objective external environment; rather, importantly for policy, it is the ordering of discourse into bodies of knowledge (systems of
thought) that allow some statements to be true or false while some other statements are simply absurd (Foucault, 2010). That which is absurd stands outside the conditions of possibility, i.e. unintelligible.

What archaeology is focused on, and what the conditions of possibility refer to, is a system of rules that account for the multitude of discursive events in existence and their change over time (Foucault, 1994). Foucault is not interested in uncovering a hidden level beneath experience that shows us how every varied thing is in fact the same; rather, Foucault’s archaeology uncovers an order that produces incompatibilities, contradictions, and dispersions in addition to sameness (Foucault, 2010). Foucault frequently calls archaeology an alternate history (Foucault, 2006a; Foucault, 2006b; Foucault, 2010). An examination focused on uncovering rules presents a history focused on the underlying rules of discourse; the interaction between the discursive and non-discursive world; and a history focused on understanding the types of change as well as what makes change possible. This looks much different than traditional historical analyses that presuppose an underlying sameness from which all historical events can be examined in relation to that original sameness. This type of historical analysis is seen in works, like a history of economics or gender expression, which explains how an epistemologically stable concept changed over time. Foucault frequently charges these types of historians with anachronism as they take common features of their time and presuppose their continuity throughout history. This then blinds them to radical differences and discontinuities within their supposed object of study.

**Discourse**

Starting a more rigorous unpacking of the various components of archaeology and how the archaeologist can use/study them to understand these conditions of possibility. Discourse lies
at the heart of archaeology because it is that which orders our reality (Foucault, 1994, 2010; Gutting, 1995). While the term developed throughout Foucault’s oeuvre, he consistently maintains that discourse is the relationship between linguistic and non-linguistic forms (Gutting, 1995). Discourse captures the way we language the limits of our world as well as the way non-linguist action happens within this space of possibility. Discourse is made an even slippier concept because it can simultaneously refer to the whole of ordered language and to specific discourses when discussing these relations (Besley, 2015).

Discourse, then, is not merely pure thought; rather, discourse is always a connection between language and non-linguistic events. In its capacity for setting the boundaries of reality/possibility/knowledge, discourse determines the conditions for truth and who gets to speak truth (Foucault, 2006a; Gutting, 1995). Discourse serves to set the limits of understanding for our world. This is important because it removes Truth, as a property, from the natural world. Truth is not found; rather, truth is created through the ordering of discourse (Foucault, 1994), and it invests the power to speak that truth within certain subjects. For example, the power to speak medicinal knowledge is reserved for subjects that have performed very specific practices (medical school, residency, testing) as opposed to other very specific practices (folkloric, apprenticeship, and prophesy). Discourse shows us how practice and knowledge are held together in a very specific relationship. But, the picture is not a nicely ordered one. There are a multitude of discourses constantly in tension with one another, and it is the configuration of these competing discourses that determines the development of higher order discourse (Foucault, 1994).

For example, when looking at the discourse for funding higher education, we must consider a wide range of competing discourses. We can conceptualize the higher-level discourse
of funding higher education as a 20-sided die with each side being a competing individual
discourse. Over time, the discourses push on each other, some discourse are replaced with others,
and they interact with non-discursive objects. This constant flux and tension will, over time, let a
particular discourse be on top, and this dominant discourse sets the tone for the entire interplay
of competing discourses. In fact, this discourse can be so dominant that, without archaeological
analysis, it can become regarded as self-evidently true and natural (Foucault, 1994, 2010). Thus,
we come to see the 20-sided die as merely “6” and not the collection of competing discourses
and forces that produced “6.” We can see this clearly in histories that attempt to draw superficial
linkages between radically different discursive events. For example, many historians have told an
economic history that shows how economics has existed since the dawn of man, and, through a
process of development, economics has become better and better. This is an example of an
anachronistic history that distributes the discursive practices of contemporary history throughout
the past. Just because they share a similar name does not mean they resemble each other as much
as is presupposed.

Consider also Newtonian physics. As the body of scientific discourse changed with
Newtonian physics never stopped counting as true, but the way in which it was true was shifted.
The individual discourse of Newtonian physics bumped up against the discourses of Einstein and
quantum theory and the whole body of scientific discourse shifted as a result. Thus, what it
means for Newtonian physics to be true and how it functions now varies considerably from what
it meant and did in 1900. This type of shifting truths can serve as entry points for the
archaeologist to understand the broader change at the heart of this specific shift. From here, we
can begin to understand how large changes in epistemic knowledge created new practices and
invested new subjects with the power to speak truth.
Statements

While discourses are composed of many parts, the most important part is the statement. Just as the ocean is made up of drops of water, discourse consists of statements. Since discourse is the relationship between linguistic and non-linguistic forms, statements serve as our starting point for understanding the linguistic part of the equation. To begin, statements are not: speech acts, propositions, sentences, or an utterance completely tied to a specific time and place. Statements, at their simplest, are individual utterances brought to life in text or speech (Foucault, 2010). Statements most resemble mathematical equations in that a statement is a function of existence. They are simultaneously material and abstract. Their traces are found in documents yet their effect on the world is directly tied to the shifting sands of discourse (Foucault, 2010). Furthermore, we must resist the urge to reduce the traces of statements (sentences) to the statement itself. For example, a distribution curve, as a statement, would require an infinite number of sentences to explain. The distribution curve is always doing more and meaning more than any collection of sentences ever could.

The Archive

Finding traces of statements, then, becomes the project of the archaeologist because statements give us our most direct experience of discursive reality. Analyses of discourse allow us to understand the linkages between bodies of knowledge that allow for the formation of specific discourses. Methodologies informed by archaeological analysis grab hold of the traces of statements from texts, interviews, and observations to reconstruct the underlying rules of our discursive reality to understand how knowledge and its associated power have changed over time.
Within the whole of discourse, how do we limit our archaeological analysis to the relevant specific discourses to reveal the underlying systems of knowledge? That is, the level of appearances does not on its own compare and contrast discursive acts and events to reveal the hidden order; rather, the researcher must construct an archive relevant to the discursive domain under study. At its simplest, the archive is a collection of the most relevant traces of statements. Additionally, we can think of the archive as the object of study for the particular phenomenon under study. From the archive, the archaeologist can analyze statements to understand the similarities and discontinuities supported within a specific configuration of discourse. Thus, we can understand archaeology as a systematic excavation of an archive of the traces of statements to understand the construction and function of discourse in service of revealing the rules of entire systems of thought. This entire process is necessary to avoid the anachronistic historical analysis that happens when we act as if we stand outside of history. Finally, because discourse is the relation between linguistic and non-linguistic forms, analyzing the archive lets us see the ordering of knowledge that made specific non-discursive events, e.g. specific policies, happen.

**Foucault and Neoliberalism**

Up until this point, neoliberalism has been mentioned as a motivating concern for undertaking this research project. This is due in large part to the importance Foucault (2008) placed on it in his lectures collected in *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College De France 1978-1979*, but my interest is also due to its prevalence and ambiguity within research studying higher education (Flew, 2014; Rowlands & Rawolle, 2013; Springer, 2012; Taylor, 2017). The importance placed on giving neoliberalism its own thorough accounting is also due to the near ubiquity of the term to describe and explain a variety of phenomena.
Neoliberalism can best be understood within Foucault’s oeuvre as a governmentality. Here, we should understand governmentality as a framework for understanding how the techniques of power intersect with our anthropological understanding of humankind to produce relationships to ourselves and others from which specific actions and knowledge are produced. Foucault (2004) states, “First, by ‘governmentality’ I understand the ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics that allow for the exercise of this very specific, albeit very complex power…” (p. 108). Here, Foucault (2004) is elaborating a position that explores power exercised by the state not as a unified whole with its various apparatuses working in unison. Foucault (2004) elaborates that governmentality has three important characteristics: a target, a dominant form of knowledge, and a technical instrument. Governmentality, then, is a constantly changing notion dependent on the alignment of those three characteristics. Thus, we can talk about the governmentality of the Middle Ages, but we cannot draw direct comparisons to our present neoliberal governmentality because power took different targets, held a different dominant knowledge, and utilized different technical instruments.

Foucault’s second point on governmentality states that the type of power that has held dominance throughout the course of Western European history has been power emanating from government. Foucault (2014) states:

...by ‘governmentality’ I understand the tendency, the line of force, that for a long time, and throughout the West, has constantly led towards the pre-eminence over all other types of power - sovereignty, discipline, and so on - of the type of power we can call ‘government’ and has led to a specific set of apparatuses (appareils) on the one hand, [and on the other] to the development of a series of knowledges (savoirs). (p. 108)
Here Foucault is making an important distinction in the discussion of power. Often we think of “power” in a totalizing sense where there is a monolithic source from which all power springs exerting equal pressure upon all of its target. Power, on the other hand, is best understood as a productive force that is separate but intimately tied to knowledge. From this intimate connection it follows that power exists diffused throughout society wherever domains of knowledge are concerned, e.g. the family, prisons, schools, hospitals, etc. While explained in more detail later, it is “knowledge” within the power-knowledge dyad that I examine through an archive of texts organized around PBF.

Foucault’s final point in defining governmentality is that it has developed in a very specific way in Western European history. Foucault (2014) states,

Finally, by ‘governmentality’ I think we should understand the process, or rather, the result of the process by which the state of justice of the Middle Ages became the administrative state in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and was gradually ‘governmentalized’” (p. 108-109)

While I cannot devote space to completely unpacking this statement, the relevant point here is that the type of power emanating from the state has been undergoing a long process of investing power within its various apparatuses rather than, for example, flowing from the authority of the sovereign. Historically, state power has become disinvested from specific individuals (the monarch) into ministers, agencies, and the general bureaucracy of government. This disinvestment generalized state (read as coercive) power into many aspects of society granting this type of power an ever-present quality constantly acting on people to act and think in certain ways.
Moving to Foucault’s formulation of neoliberalism, we can locate the central argument in his lecture series *The Birth of Biopolitics*. As noted above, governmentality has three important elements (knowledge, a target, and technical instrument. To understand what neoliberalism is, we must look at the historical development leading from liberal to neoliberal governmentality by examining transformations in the three elements of governmentality generally.

Beginning with knowledge, Foucault outlines two important epistemological transformations that occurred as we transitioned from liberal to neoliberal governmentality: the theory of human capital and theories of criminality and delinquency. First, the theory of human capital was proposed by neoliberal economists as a way to analyze labor. Labor, according to Foucault (2008), had, for the majority of the modern era, been quantifiably reduced to a single variable, e.g. time for Ricardo. This reduction, then, limited the scope of analysis and thus importance of labor as a variable. Foucault (2008) states, “...economic analysis, from Adam Smith to the beginning of the twentieth century...takes as its object the study of the mechanisms of production, the mechanisms of exchange, and the data of competition...” (p. 222). That, economic analysis during this period was focused on the historical relationship and effect of mechanisms, processes, and things through quantitative inputs and outputs.

For the neoliberal economist, labor was not only a robust variable for determining economic activity that needed to be analyzed in its qualitative complexity rather than reductions to quantitative calculations but also the most productive method of analysis of economic activity. But, labor is substantially different than the types of mechanisms, processes, and things analyzed in the classical framework. When we take labor as the method for economic analysis, we are in effect taking human persons as the subject of analysis. Foucault states:
...to bring labor into the field of economic analysis, we must put ourselves in the position of the person who works; we will have to study work as economic conduct practiced, implemented, rationalized, and calculated by the person who works (p. 223).

Economics, thus, becomes concerned about human behavior since it is human behavior that allocates scarce means to a variety of ends. Put another way, human subjects, as the bearer of these behaviors, become the object of economic analysis.

Taking the worker/person as the object of economic analysis entails examining what they can “do” within the economic sphere. Rather than referencing the exchange of labor for wages in the classical formulation, the neoliberal economist posits that labor from the perspective of the worker is a functioning of both capital and earning. Foucault (2008) states, “...labor comprises a capital, that is to say, it as an ability, a skill; as they say: it is a ‘machine.’ And on the other side, it is an income, a wage, or rather a set of wages; as they say: an earnings stream” (p. 224). It is here where we can see the importance of human capital as it comes to refer to the abilities and skills through which an income is possible. Human capital, thus, becomes central to not only understanding economic activity, but, also, it became the focus of the productive power inherent within this knowledge. If states/governments are interested in supporting economic spheres of existence and the dominant method for economic analysis is centered on the individual and their skills we can see how specific techniques of power will work on and through the individual to develop their capital in accordance with the dictates of economic analysis. While shifting the focus of economic analysis to human capital, neoliberal economists posited an anthropological understanding of defined humanness through the concept of homoeconomicus.
Through homoeconomicus, we can see the true mobility and productive power inherent within neoliberal knowledge. Foucault (2004) states that in neoliberalism “there is also a theory of homo economicus...Homo economicus is an entrepreneur, an entrepreneur of himself” (p. 226). On Foucault’s account, the introduction of human capital into economic analysis reformed the classically liberal understanding of homoeconomicus as a creature of exchange (e.g. exchanging labor for wages). With neoliberalism, individuals are self-contained economic beings that work to produce their own happiness through consumption. Rather than needing to operate within a system of exchange, individuals can leverage their human capital to produce for themselves the income needed to consume happiness. Foucault (2004) states that homoeconomicus is “being for himself as his own capital, being for himself as his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earning” (p. 226). Thus, to compete with others for the maximization of our happiness, individuals must compete to have the human capital necessary to attain their ends, and governments interested in regulating economic activity must now also

Knowledge of human capital and homoeconomicus acts productively within the political and economic sphere, and it attaches to the general trend in the development of governmentality to disinvest state power and distribute it throughout all of society. This intersection of neoliberalism and disinvestment combine to produce a neoliberal governmentality that diffuses neoliberal knowledge and practice throughout all of society (Lambert & Pezet, 2012; Read, 2009). As Read (2009) states:

From this intersection the discourse of the economy becomes an entire way of life, a common sense in which every action--crime, marriage, higher education and so on--can be charted according to a calculus of maximum output for minimum expenditure; it can be seen as an investment. (p. 31)
It is here that we can clearly see the truly productive power of neoliberal economic analysis paired with a trajectory of distributing state power throughout society. In a world dominated by neoliberal knowledge, economic analysis is applied to every aspect of the individual, and the individual is pressured by this power by all aspects of their social lives and internalized by themselves. But, this is not to say that neoliberalism is merely an antagonizing ideology that we can choose not to ascribe to. Read (2009) continues by stating, “Neoliberalism is thus a "restoration" not only of class power, of capitalism as the only possible economic system, it is a restoration of capitalism as synonymous with rationality" (p. 31). Neoliberalism, thus, becomes unavoidable as it becomes the underlying logic of a given society for how relationships between as well as subjectivity become understood.

In addition to Foucault, I turn to a body of work on the neoliberal nodes of power to elaborate and understand the surface level effects of neoliberal policies to underscore the ethical imperative of destabilizing neoliberalism’s totalizing concepts. Foucault helps us see how knowledge and power are structured to permit types of applications of knowledge/power, but by examining how this then gets deployed within governmentality, researchers can stress the ethical imperative of their research, an aspect often felt missing from research only utilizing Foucauldian frameworks. This will be emphasized differently throughout the various articles, but they will all be concerned with specific policies, schools of thought, and actions that have had a demonstrable effect on people. This will be examined through several aspects: (a) the dismantling of rules and regulations in favor of private markets (Anyon, 2014; Giroux, 2014a; Klein, 2007); (b) the selling off of public assets to delegitimize the role of government (Dixson et al., 2015; Klein, 2007; Warren, 2005); (c) the implementation of new managerial practices to fill the void left by a retreating government (Hillman et al., 2018; Kuehn, 2000; Saunders &
Gerardo, 2017; Ward et al., 2015); and (d) the dramatic effects of neoliberal policies on the role, purpose and functioning of higher education to contextualize these other aspects within higher education (Giroux, 2014a, 2014b, 2015).

Thus, we can think of neoliberalism as both a type of knowledge concerned with human capital and homoeconomicus and as a governmentality. These are not competing definitions, but, rather, part of the knowledge-power dyad. While the above overview is far from complete, it will be the foundation from which the subsequent articles are built upon. As the commonsense logic of neoliberalism is filtered through society, specific manifestations of this productive knowledge-power dyad become visible. Examining these manifestations allows researchers to both understand the event itself as well as excavate the power-knowledge dyad itself through the signs and symbols left behind on the specific manifestations. Through these signs and symbols, researchers can peer into the configurations of knowledge and power from which the specific, visible events arise.

Archaeology as Method

Up until this point, I have reviewed archaeology as a theoretical framework that established a position from which researchers can see certain interesting things. This, however, is not all that archaeology offers us. Archaeology, in addition to theoretical framework, acts as a methodology with specific methods for reading text, organizing an archive, and connecting concepts through and between discourses. To underscore the multifaceted nature of archaeology, I draw on concept as method.

Concept as method is a post-qualitative methodology grounded in the turn towards New Empiricism that radically calls into question the primacy usually ascribed to the humanist cogito
of scientific inquiry that cast humans and their becoming at the center of all research practices (Taguchi, 2016; Taguchi & St. Pierre, 2017). As we saw above with my overview of Foucauldian archaeology, the limits of the world are organized prior to and independent, to a degree, of human agency and access. Thus, to reach the limits of our world, i.e. knowledge, and that which springs forth from it, i.e. concepts, researchers must take center stage as they possess the ability to move from and between different worlds of understanding (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987).

Lenz Taguchi (2016) describes the importance of concept as method “...as a doubled and entangled action or movement of tracing-and-mapping” (p. 214). Concepts move and a researcher employing concept as method follows and charts these movements through bodies of knowledge while noting how it interacts with other concepts. This animated view of concepts is possible from their arising out of problems. For example, Colebrook (2017) recounts how the concept of the cogito arose out of the mind-body problem. The cogito, then, moves from this problem into other disciplines and practices to solve and reinterpret problems. In doing this, the concept of the cogito interacts with other concepts, and these interactions change the functioning of the cogito as a concept. The researcher charts these movements and interactions because it is through them that they can understand how beliefs and practices became normalized in particular ways. Taguchi’s (2016) reading of Deleuze and Guattari captures this well by stating, “The concept captures a material-semiotic event in an ongoing process of doing (sense making) and becoming (differing) in its multiplicity of inseparable variations” (p. 214). The concept is always on the move, and the researcher pursues it through these movements, interactions, and normalizing effects.
Thus, for educational researchers, in particular those focused on the impacts of neoliberal policy, researchers can adopt archaeology as both a way of seeing and of acting to trace and map the movements and interactions of concepts central to neoliberals while always staying mindful of the normalizing effects these concepts have on institutional practice and individual subjectivity formation. Furthermore, a methodology which orients our actions infused with a theoretical perspective will aid the archaeologist in resisting an enlightenment-based worldview that is unable to break out of neoliberal discourses.

Conclusion

Adopting a Foucauldian archaeological perspective opens a manner of research that has the researcher seeing, thinking, and acting with theory. That is, archaeology opens a way of reading, organizing, and analyzing texts to resist reducing the history of ideas and the shaping of the world to the intention and action of human subjects. It seeks to tell an alternative story of our past and present that accounts for the multitude of competing discursive and non-discursive events.
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Chapter 4

Utilizing Foucauldian Archaeology to Map and Analyze Performance-Based Funding as Neoliberal Public Policy

Abstract

The passing of the Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010 (CCTA) was a moment of profound change for higher education operated in the state of Tennessee. While limited in scope to Tennessee, the (CCTA) follows broader national trends in the neoliberalization of higher education. In particular, the CCTA implemented an aggressive performance-based funding formula tying nearly 100% of state-allocated funding to student and institutional outcomes. Many studies examining the impact of the CCTA and other policies like it have found that these policies consistently fail to deliver the results they promise while creating unexpected negative consequences for already marginalized student communities. Despite these results, policies leveraging performance-based funding continue to spread. Studies leveraging traditional forms of policy analysis are unable to account for how these policies spread despite their failures. This article utilizes a Foucauldian archaeological policy analysis framework to create a discursive archive illuminating how the CCTA, and policies like it, emerge from a contingent arrangement knowledge. Through this analysis, the article will demonstrate how the CCTA emerged from and is effective at maintaining a broader neoliberal agenda. Finally, this article uses a polyhedron of intelligibility to demonstrate how the discursive and non-discursive elements of policy analysis can be represented.

Keywords: Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010, Foucauldian archaeology, polyhedron of intelligibility
Utilizing Foucauldian Archaeology to Map and Analyze Performance-Based Funding as Neoliberal Public Policy

The Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010 (CCTN) was a watershed moment in Tennessee’s governance of its institutions of higher education (IHE). The CCTN is most notable for linking 100% of funding for IHE to student and institutional outcomes. Foucauldian archaeology will show us new and fruitful avenues for understanding how policy documents function within a broader context of knowledge and discourse. These new avenues are important as traditional quantitative and qualitative analyses almost unanimously find little to no improvement in the outcomes tied to funding after PBF policies like the CCTN are put into place (Cattaneo, Meoli, & Signori, 2016; Dougherty & Reddy, 2011, 2011; Hillman, Tandberg, & Gross, 2014; McKeown-Moak, 2013). In fact, the implementation of these policies creates significant issues affecting minority serving institutions (MSI) (Hillman & Corral, 2017; Jones, 2016) and academic rigor (Cattaneo et al., 2016; Hillman et al., 2014; McKeown-Moak, 2013). What the above cited literature reveals is that despite the lack of positive results, these policies have continued to expand. This apparent contradiction has left me with one unanswerable question: why do these policies continue to expand to new states and in scope in states where they were already in place even though there is little evidence to support their efficacy?

To establish a framework for answering that overarching question, this article will introduce and construct a polyhedron of intelligibility to explain the emergence of the CCTN within a broader trend of performance-based funding for higher education that is made intelligible by neoliberal discourse. This chapter is primarily illustrative as it only examines the CCTN. What’s important here is not a rigorous examination of PBF generally, but an introduction to how this methodology will unfold over the next chapters. Archaeology is both a
deep and wide examination. While my principal focus is understanding the CCTN in its specificity, its emergence and functioning cannot be understood fully in isolation. Thus, this article aims at satisfying two functions: (1) to provide an overview of how archaeology as methodology can function in the and (2) focusing on the discursive emergence of the CCTN to better understand it’s unique development. The individual sections within this chapter will then be expanded upon in future chapters to provide a wider understanding of PBF.

To accomplish this illustrative example and analysis, this essay will first provide an overview of Foucauldian archaeology. This overview will examine how archaeology opens up fecund avenues of analysis through its attention to bodies of knowledge, discourse, statements, and the archive. Following this overview, I will briefly discuss how thinking with theory allows us to also think of archaeology as also a self-contained methodology for examining discourse.

I then briefly discuss abstract liberalism to highlight how tracing discourse and concepts is not merely a theoretical activity but can have an impact on identifying oppressive intellectual structures. After abstract liberalism, I then move onto an analysis of the CCTN showing how it both comes out of and informs a larger body of knowledge regarding performance-based funding. Additionally, this analysis will show how the CCTN connects to discourses of accountability, efficiency, and productivity. I close with a discussion that compares this approach to traditional methodologies for policy analysis.

Thinking with Foucauldian Archaeology

I begin this paper with a brief review of Foucauldian archaeology and its main concepts. I start here because I place theory at the heart of the entire project. Following Jackson & Mazzei's (2011) work on thinking with theory and Taguchi & St. Pierre's (2017) work on thinking with
concept, theory lives within and guides every step of the research project. Thus, I begin with an outline how archaeology and its constituent concepts as a way of simultaneously explaining the theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods employed through this paper.

Traditional theoretical frameworks and research methodologies leave us stuck at a crossroads. On the one hand, they are effective at informing researchers that PBF policies have little positive impact on student and institutional outcomes, and, in light of PBF’s expansion throughout the country, they seem unable to offer equity minded researchers, educators, and activists a comprehensive pathway towards an alternative. For example, Henry Giroux’s work concerning the neoliberalization of higher education (Giroux, 2002, 2014, 2015) is excellent at naming individuals and institutions then tying them to specific beliefs and actions that seek neoliberal reforms to benefit them at the expense of others. While important work, research of this kind is, on its own, inadequate to curtail neoliberalism, or any ideology, because its focus on the people and institutions with power is unable to fully address why they have power in the first place. That is, they seem trapped by a particular presupposition about historical change positing a series of cause-effect relationships with individuals at the center without being able to open a space to examine why neoliberalism, its specific manifestations, and those supporting it have power.

To better understand why PBF is a powerful tool of the neoliberal agenda, I turn to Foucauldian archaeology. Foucauldian archaeology is a theoretical perspective operationalized into a research methodology giving researchers the tools to understand the implicit structures of society. According to Bourke & Lidstone (2015), Foucauldian archaeology is an “...approach in educational research to help avoid cause–effect oversimplicity” which seeks to question and interrogate the inherent rationality of concepts (p. 834). By examining only the level of
individual actors and their effects, researchers are failing to interrogate why these concepts are accepted and powerful now. Thus, archaeology is focused not on answering different questions; rather, archaeology is concerned with opening new domains of understanding. According to Foucault:

"By 'archaeology' I would like to designate not exactly a discipline but a domain of research, which would be the following: in society, different bodies of learning, philosophical ideas, everyday opinions, but also institutions, commercial practices and police activities, mores—all refer to a certain implicit knowledge [savoir] special to this society" (p. 261).

Here, Foucault is opening a domain of research to study the implicit knowledge hidden behind causal chains, transcendental objects, and human agency but which imbues concepts with truth and people with power.

This implicit knowledge, for Foucault, is tenuously arranged in the background of reality, and its arrangement produces the experiential world (Gutting, 1995, p. 256). Its production of the experiential world does not mean that it is actually producing the people and objects in the world; rather, this field of implicit knowledge is what gives meaning, validity, and power to the world. Additionally, the conditions of possibility for the world refers to that which gets to count as truth, and who has the ability to speak that truth, and these conditions are set through the use and functioning of language. This leads to a conception of the world where human actors, language, thought, and action interact with each other to produce a contingent configuration of knowledge and power. Knowledge because this configuration determines what counts as true. Power because it determines who can speak this truth, and those that have access to act on truth are endowed with power within this contingently arranged society. Or, in a more Foucauldian
telling, the contingent arrangement implicit knowledge setting the conditions of possibility for the social world is brought into being through the interaction of discursive and non-discursive formations (Gutting, 1995, p. 256-259).

Attempting to understand this arrangement, will naturally decenter the primacy traditional research frameworks give to individual people, institutions, and the causal chains flowing from them as it shifts the focus to the interplay of these discursive and non-discursive formations. Within an archaeological analysis, non-discursive formations refer to the elements of traditional analysis: actions and events that occur. Unlike traditional analysis, non-discursive factors open up possibilities rather than socially determining the conditions of possibility (Foucault, 2010). An accounting of the dominant discursive formations within a society, then, are needed if we are to understand the implicit field of knowledge setting the conditions of possibility for the emergence of specific concepts and the endowment of those concepts with power.

Discourse, on the other hand, refers to the elements from the socially constructed linguistic world, and discursive formations constitute the rules that govern the production and function of knowledge (Foucault, 2010; Koopman, 2008). Discourse, then, is the collection of what is spoken and written within a given society, and its impact on the world is determined by its internal arrangement, i.e. how concepts interact and move through each other, as well as its interactions with non-discursive factors that either follow its rules or open up new possibilities. Furthermore, discourse is not grasped directly in its entirety; rather, researchers must construct textual archives that collect statements, the visible traces of discourse, which point to and capture the discursive formations from which they emerge. The textual archive comprised of discursive statements is then brought under analysis along with non-discursive factors to understand how all
these competing forces cohere into a contingent expression of reality setting the conditions of possibility for knowledge and power.

The subsequent sections of this article deploy Foucauldian archaeology as a methodological approach for examining the discursive and non-discursive factors shaping the social reality from which the CCTN, and PBF more generally, emerged. To do this, I gather together an archive of discursive statements and bring them into interactions with the non-discursive events that occurred alongside them, and I will visually reconstruct these interactions within a polyhedron of understanding.

**Abstract Liberalism**

To draw attention to the importance of research projects utilizing archaeological frameworks and methods, I turn to the concept of abstract liberalism. At its core, abstract liberalism is a tactic used to further racially oppressive agendas where true motives for policy and action are hidden in plain sight using enlightenment ideals. According to Bonilla-Silva (2000):

> The new racism invokes the liberal and individualist ideology of the Enlightenment - ideological constructions that were not extended to racial minorities in the past - but with a twist. The twist is that notions of equality, fairness, reward by merit, and freedom are invoked in an abstract and decontextualized manner (p. 189).

Here, the new racism refers to systems of power and domination that no longer uses the exclusion of one racial group to ground the superiority of other racial groups. That is, white superiority was previously grounded in a complex intellectual apparatus that posited an innate
inferiority of other racial groups. Within this framework, white people need only appeal to skin color to justify their position within society.

New Racism, on the other hand, uses liberal ideals like equality and merit within a color-blind context to secure one group's dominance over another (Bonilla-Silva, 2000; Omi & Winant, 2009). These ideals are abstract in that they are often poorly defined, and, when enacted in social and political context, they often lack any mechanism to ensure an equitable outcome is possible. This, then, allows white people to justify their advantageous social, economic, and political positions with appeals to their ability to “succeed” within a fair, color-blind framework. This then, helps ground the practical importance of this work. Productive power flows through policy creating and reaffirming societal roles and the power afforded to them. How this functions can be difficult to uncover, and it often needs excavation due to intentional and unintentional obfuscation of the power knowledge conveys. In using an archaeological methodology, this article aims to uncover concepts and discourses central to the Complete College TN Act of 2010 opening up space for future research to trace the history and power of them.

**Analyzing the Complete College TN Act of 2010**

In many ways, this policy analysis is inspired and informed by Bourke & Lidstone's (2015) archaeological analysis of policies regulating standards of professionalism for teachers in Australia. Their work revealed the utility in visually representing through a polyhedron of intelligibility the arrangement of discourses and contingent events that create the conditions of possibility for the CCTN. Additionally, I adapted their methods of analysis for analyzing policy documents, the relationship of discourse and non-discursive contingent factors, and constructing and analyzing a textual archive. Although I decided to adapt many of their methods of analysis, an important difference between my project and theirs was in how our archives of academic...
documents were created and analyzed. Bourke & Lidstone (2015) use Foucauldian archaeology for use as a theoretical framework that uses traditional methods employed when conducting a discursive analysis that prioritizes a predetermined order of operations favoring reproducibility rather than emergent analysis. They selected texts that were linked through bibliographic information. While I had initially planned on following a similar strategy, I wanted to limit my archive to texts from about 2010 onward as these texts are situated in the same historical moment as the CCTN. Specifically, I looked for articles that were focused on analyzing the outcomes of students and IHE affected by recently introduced legislation.

**The Complete College TN Act 2010**

To begin this analysis, I started with a close reading of the CCTN. Since neoliberalism has already been identified as the dominant body of knowledge for understanding and regulating human activity (Foucault, 2008), I used key discourses from neoliberalism as keywords to help locate and identify the dominate discourses shaping the creation of the CCTN. These concepts included productivity, accountability, human capital, and the generalization of market logic (Foucault, 2008). While I used these keywords to guide my research, I did not let it limit my search for relevant discourses. This is important for potentially identifying new discourses in specific statements can allow for a charting of how the configuration of discourse have changed over time.

The CCTN was a major overhaul of the state’s system of higher education that aimed to reform the governance, cooperation between, and financing of the state’s system of higher education (McKeown-Moak, 2013). Simply put, the goal of this piece of legislation was to introduce efficiency, productivity, and accountability into higher education (“Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010, 2009 Tenn. SB 7006,” 2010). Applied in this context, increasing
productivity refers to increasing the number of degrees awarded, reducing the time it takes students to graduate, and uniting the missions and objectives of the individual institutions with the state’s master plan. This master plan is centered on holding institutions of higher education accountable for the academic success of their students while also aligning the outputs of these institutions with the goals of the state and business interests.

To force compliance with these changes to institutional autonomy, Subsection 4a-e enacts a performance-based funding model that uses student outcomes to allocate 100 percent of the state’s higher education budget. Clarifying this position, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission states, “The primary state policy levers for addressing the state’s educational needs are a new funding formula…a new Quality Assurance Funding program, and the establishment of institutional mission statements or profiles…” (“Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010, 2009 Tenn. SB 7006,” 2010, para. 2). While previous sections of this policy aligned higher education to the goals of the market, performance-based funding places market rationality at the heart of higher education. The explicit goal of this, and other performance-based funding plans is to incentivize concern for student outcomes among higher education (Dougherty & Reddy, 2011; McLendon, Hearn, & Deaton, 2006). A summary of this analysis is available in Table 1 below.

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discourses Present in the CCTN</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Name of Policy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Publication</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Author and Institution (Who was Speaking and with what Authority)</strong></td>
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While not referenced in the policy documents, Lumina's report "Improving the Yields in Higher Education" (2015) lists TN as a beneficiary of a one-year planning grant in 2008 and four-year implementation grants in 2009 just prior to the adoption of the Complete College TN Act of 2010. Lumina also worked with HCM Strategists to educate state leaders on performance funding, student incentives, new models for academic delivery, and implementing business efficiency all aimed at increasing state-wide degree production (Improving the Yields in Higher Education, 2015).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Discourses</th>
<th>Discourse of the Economic Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examples of Common Statements</td>
<td>&quot;Foster economic growth by significantly increasing the number of science, technology, engineering and mathematics doctoral students produced at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and other state universities...&quot; (p. 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Recognizing the potential leverage and synergy that can be achieved by collaboration among the public and private entities, it is hereby declared that the University of Memphis, the University of Tennessee Center for the Health Sciences and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital are lead collaborators in the Memphis Research Consortium&quot; (p. 6-7).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Although it is not directly using the term human capital here, the two statement examples here work together to show how the state has an interest in acting on human activity to guide degree attainment in alignment with the state's economic interests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Discourses</th>
<th>Discourse of Productivity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examples of Common Statements</td>
<td>&quot;Ensuring increased degree production within the state's capacity to support higher education&quot; (p. 1).</td>
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<th>Key Discourses</th>
<th>Discourse of Efficiency</th>
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<tr>
<td>Examples of Common Statements</td>
<td>&quot;Courses in the university tract program shall transfer and apply toward the requirements for graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standardization of the first 60 credit hour requirements across all state</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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with a bachelor's degree at all public universities" (p.3)

institutions to facilitate more efficient transfer and standardized curricula.

"Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, after July 1, 2012, four-year institutions governed by the board of regents and the University of Tennessee board of trustees shall not offer remedial or developmental courses" (p. 4).

"As part of its plan, the board shall identify and implement consolidation of services among institutions and standardization of processes between institutions in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness in all functional areas, including but not limited to student services, academic support and institutional support" (p. 5).

Specifically for two-year institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Discourses</th>
<th>Discourse of Accountability</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examples of Common Statements</td>
<td>&quot;An institutional mission statement...shall address institutional accountability for the quality of instruction...&quot; (p. 1-2)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;shall establish uniform standards of accounting, records and statistical reporting systems&quot; (p. 2).</td>
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<tr>
<th>Key Discourses</th>
<th>Discourse of Market Logic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examples of Common Statements</td>
<td>&quot;Funding recommendations made by the commission shall reflect the priorities of the approved master plan&quot; (p.2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;These outcomes shall include end of term enrollment for each term, student retention, timely progress toward degree completion and degree production and may also include, but not necessarily be limited to student transfer activity, research, and student success, as well as compliance with transfer and articulation principles&quot; (p.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Completing an Archive

Having identified the main themes and discourses within the CCTN, my next step was to complete my archive with academic texts discussing the CCTN directly or indirectly through analyses of similar policies. Staying true to the ideas of emergent design embedded in thinking with theory (Taguchi & St. Pierre, 2017), I decided to use the key discourses from Table 1 as keywords to guide the completion of the archive and guide analysis due to the structure of the text contained within the CCTN. Upon examination, the CCTN is clearly designed around the key discourses forming neoliberalism as explored above. Thus, turning to the academic literature focused on the connection of these discourses to PBF policies reveals how these discourses function to create and maintain policies like the CCTN.

To locate relevant texts, I used those identified themes and discourses as keywords to find texts examining PBF policies. Using these keywords allowed me to easily and directly locate similarities and differences at the statement level of discourses within the academic literature. Google Scholar also allowed me to easily limit my results to texts published since 2010 while also considering a wide range of academic publications. In addition to Google
Scholar, Hein Online was used to check for periodical to identify intersections of academic and non-academic discourse, yet only one brief result was returned. Future research will conduct interviews to locate these intersections. Finally, I wanted most of the texts included to be research studies examining how PBF policies have affected the outcomes for institutions and students.

Furthermore, and in keeping with the spirit of antimethodology (Nordstrom, 2018) found in post-qualitative research, this analysis of this archive unfolds as a philosophical critique that uses thinking with theory to actively interrogate the texts as I engaged them and brought them into conversation with each other (Jackson, 2013; Nordstrom, 2018). Thus, my analysis cannot be fully reproducible. How I engage, experience, and inhabit these texts occurs at a specific historical moment and is contingent on my relationship and experience of those texts. This is important as we think about how to challenge neoliberalism without falling back on or being subsumed in discourses that maintain policies like the CCTN.

Analyzing the Archive

Identifying Similarities

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<th>Table 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summary of Discourses in the Archive and Where They Appear</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Discourse</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Logic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic Developent</td>
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The first level of analysis will be to examine the archive to understand what the various texts and statements “say” in common. That is, analysis begins reviewing “…the various retrieved texts for archaeological isomorphism or sameness in the statements, mapping when statements emerged and when new statements began to function (surfaces of emergence)” (Bourke & Lidstone, 2015, p. 839). Tracing similarities across texts requires tracing original ideas and borrowed ideas to construct a temporal map of the diffusion of statements (Bourke & Lidstone, 2015). Importantly, this mapping also includes recording the regularity of statements and the author of those statements, Regularity points to dominance within the competition of discourse, and the authors point to who, in the general sense, has authority to speak these statements (Bourke & Lidstone, 2015; Foucault, 1994). Discourses found within this collective archive are summarized above in Table 2.

The first and most prominent discourse shared across the archive is the need for accountability (Ahmad, Farley, & Naidoo, 2012; Cornelius & Cavanaugh, 2016; Dougherty et al., 2014; Jones, 2016; McLendon et al., 2006). Importantly, within the academic literature, there are constant references to the need for very specific quantifiable measures of holding public institutions accountable (Ahmad et al., 2012; Cornelius & Cavanaugh, 2016; Hagood, 2019;
Hillman et al., 2014; Jones, 2016). According to Ahmad et al (2012) "However, with the greater demand for more accountability in the use of public resources, there is a need to introduce more transparent funding model that improve efficiency in the use of public money” (p. 563). Accountability, defined within a neoliberal context, creates a tangible need to surveil public institutions and the people served by those institutions to ensure public goods are not being wasted. Accountability, then, is tied to quantifiable measures that makes sense within a neoliberal context allowing anything not valued within that context, e.g. student satisfaction with their university experience, to be discarded as illogical.

While I separate productivity and efficiency in my analysis, these two are likely the most closely linked discourses uncovered. In addition to this national political movement of accountability, we can see accountability as functioning in alignment with the need for more productivity and greater efficiency linked through a variety of documents including the CCTN, academic texts, and interest group position papers (Ahmad et al., 2012; Cornelius & Cavanaugh, 2012; Hillman et al., 2014; Jones, 2016). For example, the Lumina Foundation has spearheaded a national movement of reform within higher education focused on making it more productive and efficient (McKeown-Moak, 2013). According to Nodine (2015):

Three concepts undergird Lumina’s pursuit of greater productivity in higher education: (1) increasing the number of college degrees and certificates conferred while (2) holding down costs and (3) maintaining (or increasing) access to educational quality (p. 1).

I highlight this quote as an example of the close connection between productivity and efficiency but also directly relates this goal to lobbying efforts by Lumina within the state of TN to support PBF policies (Nodine, 2015). Furthermore, this quote tracks how the archive conceptualizes the

Finally, and closely tied to a discourse of accountability, are another pair of closely related discourses: applying the logic of the market to non-market phenomena and giving priority to economic development (Ahmad et al., 2012; Foucault, 2008; Jongbloed & Vossensteyn, 2001; Toutkoushian & Paulsen, 2016). As Foucault showed us in the above discussion of neoliberalism, an important discursive feature of neoliberalism as a body of knowledge shaping our reality, the explicit purpose of the policies like CCTN are to tie university legitimacy to its ability to support economic principles and align with the logic of the market. While Foucault signaled this shift much earlier than the time period under discussion, we can see these discourse begin to creep into higher education policy as early as 1979 and Tennessee’s first experiments with PBF.

First, the archive shows that the main mechanism for applying this logic is the discourse on PBF. Here, we can consistently see that PBF is tied closely to producing the most degrees possible at the lowest cost (in both time and money) (Cattaneo et al., 2016; Rutherford & Rabovsky, 2014; Tandberg & Hillman, 2014). Furthermore, the outcomes measured are in support of the state’s economic and business interests ensuring that higher education is in service of business economics rather than other conceptions of the public good or personal development (“Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010, 2009 Tenn. SB 7006,” 2010). Missing in the CCTN is any mention of quality as it relates to personal growth and development, the developing of a critical consciousness, or education’s ability to shape the public good (Giroux, 2002, 2014b,
These discourses, thus, feed off the previous neoliberal action to further constrain the limits and abilities of the government.

This can then be understood to function in a way that rearranges our understanding of the government's legitimacy to effectively deliver higher education are a legitimate view worthy of continued expansion. In this, we can see Foucault’s (2008) warning Milton Friedman’s (2002) hope that the government and its institutions would be held to economic standards first rather than traditional discourses of personal enrichment and development. In pushing the government out of education past and present policy also fosters an attitude that education is best left to neoliberal reformers and business leaders (Dumas, 2013).

Isolating Difference

The second step is to find contradictions within the archive. According to Bourke & Lidstone (2015) “The second step was to uncover irruptions, discontinuities, contradictions or distances between statements (fields of initial differentiation). Foucault refers to this as the analysis of ‘contradictions’” (p. 839). Disruptions are just as essential as similarities even though they are often ignored in historiographical research (Foucault, 2006c, 2010). Incorporating the disruptions and contradictions within the statements and discourses giving order to our world rejects tidy, transcendental histories. Disruptions are necessary, for example, to see how the functioning of the Complete College TN Act 2010 emerges from a field of possibilities to contingently do a particular thing at a particular time. That is, how did one particular functioning come out on top given all the other possibilities?

Equity emerged out of the archive as a contradicting discourse. Within the CCTN, equity is described in the context of the equitable distribution of funds (“Complete College Tennessee
This, then, tracks the occurrence of equity within the rest of the archive, and the manner in which dissent to PBF policies are framed (Hillman & Corral, 2017; Jones, 2016; Rutherford & Rabovsky, 2014; Tandberg & Hillman, 2014). The way in which equity is framed in the context of the other discourses involved has largely ties dissent to claims that PBF is not effective or efficient at increasing degree production equitably. That is, while the majority of the academic literature points to findings of inequitable funding outcomes amongst IHE that serve minority, low-income, or non-traditional student population, the discussion is typically framed as one of using the wrong performance measures or of having overly general performance outcomes that only consider large research institutions.

**Moments of Interaction**

Finally, researchers must understand how similarities and differences work together to produce something. According to Bourke & Lidstone (2015) “…the third step in analysis was to look for simultaneous exchanges between different discourses. In this step, we conducted an extensive literature review of the history of Australian education in order to outline the non-discursive domain” (p. 841). These events are connected to discourse in that discourse creates the conditions that make them possible, but they are not merely created by discourse; rather, contingent events occupy a space within Foucauldian archaeology that are termed non-discursive events (Foucault, 2006b, 2010). Foucault (2010) makes it quite clear in the *Archaeology of Knowledge* that the non-discursive domain occupies events including political and economic events, but these events can provide a nudge to current discursive formations that meaningfully reshape the dominant configurations of knowledge.

Within the historical development of neoliberalism, PBF, and the CCTN, the literature identifies several important contingent events that facilitated the institution neoliberalism as a
dominant body of knowledge generally and the CCTN as a specific enactment of those discourses and knowledge. The first major set of contingent non-discursive events began in the 1930s and helped facilitate the shift from liberalism to neoliberalism as a dominant body of knowledge (Foucault, 2008). Foucault (2008) highlights how a general reaction to the dominance of Keynesian economic policy, growing intervention of the federal government into the market and economic development, and growing intervention of the federal government into domestic issues led to an opening that let the central tenets of neoliberalism to gain a discursive foothold. While this opened up a space for neoliberalism, it took another set of contingent factors to open up another discursive space for the application of these neoliberal principles to higher education at the state level. Here, the scholarly literature in this archive points to two major events from 2007 through 2010 that opened up this space. First, is the Great Recession and its impact on severely contracting state budgets that resulted in new policies for state budgets to stay solvent (Dougherty & Reddy, 2011; McKeown-Moak, 2013; McLendon et al., 2006). Second, after the Democratic Party gained political control of both the executive and legislative branches of the federal government, Republican politicians saw big wins on the federal and state-level political stages in the following election cycles (Cornelius & Cavanaugh, 2016; Dougherty & Reddy, 2011; McLendon et al., 2006). Taken together, we will later see how these political shifts caused a society wide demand for greater accountability. Figure 1, at the end of this document, shows how and when these non-discursive events arose and how they shifted the configuration of discourse.

The Polyhedron of Intelligibility

An important question worth asking at this juncture is why is a polyhedron of intelligibility useful if I have already mapped out and charted the dominant discourses in the
academic literature? Visually representing the configuration of discourse interwoven with the various contingent events reveals the momentary and contingent nature of our presently constructed reality, and, following from the first point, it shows how delicately our given situation is (Jackson, 2013). An analysis of the archive shows that the CCTN and PBF policies are held together through a complex interplay of discourse, contingent events, and economic and political strategies. Laid out visually, allows us to see how these configurations are not as fixed as they may seem (Bourke & Lidstone, 2015). For example, we can think of any given historical moment as a 20-side die (i.e. the polyhedron). While the result of throwing a 20-sided die gives a player the reality of their turn, the slightest difference in their next role will likely offer up another result. Thus, as we will see more clearly in the implications below, the polyhedron of intelligibility specially opens up avenues of dissent and discussion. It shows us how new contingent events can open new discursive spaces. It shows how competing discourses on the margins open can work to dislodge or recontextualize other discourses. That is, it shows us that PBF policies like the CCTN “…are not necessarily more right or more truthful than other possible mechanisms, but are the ones that have been given more political strength at this point in time” (Bourke & Lidstone, 2015, p. 849). The constructed polyhedron is available in Figure 2, at the end of this document.

Implications

Foucauldian archaeology does two important things for the analysis of policy. First, it reveals the discursive world as a new plane on which to understand how policy functions. Foucault (2010) tells us that there are two planes of existence available and necessary to us. First in the surface level understood as a collection of contingent events and foci of power. At this level, resistance has clear lines of attack. It locks onto specific policies and instruments of power
in order to cast their efficacy into question. Here, think of the various texts from this archive that challenge PBF on how efficacious various policies are in allocating funds (Jones, 2016; Rutherford & Rabovsky, 2014; Tandberg & Hillman, 2014) or the broadly Marxist critiques that challenge structures and instruments of power (Giroux, 2014a, 2014b).

The second level is the layer where we need archaeology. It is the pre-agential level that is an unstable configuration of knowledge through discourse that gives the world intellectual coherence. This is the level that a Foucauldian archaeological discourse analysis can understand how systems of knowledge and the discourses that make them up are arranged to produce certain types of subjects and regimes of truth (Bourke & Lidstone, 2015; Foucault, 2006b). More specifically, following Bourke & Lidstone's (2015) project, a Foucauldian archaeological analysis allowed me to understand how the CCTN is constructed and maintained as an object of knowledge. That is, it allows us to understand how it came to be an object of history and at a specific moment suspended within a network of competing discourses, configurations of knowledge, and contingent events (Bourke & Lidstone, 2015; Foucault, 2006b). In the case of the CCTN it shows us that it functions to further the application of neoliberal discourses through very specific strategies of implementation and not merely a method of allocating funds for IHE. This does not diminish the attacks on the efficacy of PBF; rather, it shows us that there are deeper structural elements that need to also be understood and acted upon to bring about change.

In seeing this other level of analysis Foucauldian methodologies are often criticized as inherently pessimistic (St. Pierre, 2000). If we posit that the social conditions of our reality are always already in place shaping are thoughts and actions, how can we operate from within to effect change? Put another way, if Foucault tells us that the limit for our ontological and epistemological concepts are established independent of direct human action, what hope can
those seeking to reimagine higher education have for reversing the dominance of neoliberal knowledge? The answer to these questions is in readjusting out scope. Traditional critiques tell us that we can plan profound policy shifts through an identification of all of the surface-level variable as well as their interaction and efficacy. But, as the polyhedron of intelligibility shows us, the seemingly stable ontological and epistemological concepts that give meaning to our world are unstable (Bourke & Lidstone, 2015). Therefore, we can, for example, undermine the CCTN through small daily subversions (St. Pierre, 2000) of the various dominant discourses, or we can support the competing discourse of equity to shift the whole focus of the project. This also means we can seize on contingent events that could undermine the shaky grounds of the CCTN and other PBF policies. This, for example, could be during a strong economic period where a state has a budget surplus. The point here is that resistance to a policy can happen in a multitude of small daily actions that soften the soil beneath the discourses providing their foundation.

Finally, if we accept Foucault’s conclusion that knowledge and discourse can shape subjectivity formation (Foucault, 2008, 2010), we must examine this level in order to understand how universities are informing the creation and maintenance of certain identities that align with neoliberal ideals. While further research in the form of participant interviews is needed here, eventually the archive can expand to include the statements of students, staff, and faculty to understand how these discourses, contingent events, and strategies for implementation intersect to create and maintain identities (Bourke & Lidstone, 2015; Foucault, 1994, 2008, 2010). Thus, for example, we can start to add to discussions on the funding implications of PBF for MSIs like we see in Jones' (2016) work. New additions grounded in archaeological methodologies can examine how PBF and the CCTN and their allocation of funding grounded in discourses of productivity, efficiency, market logic, and the primacy of economics creates new ways for
students, faculty, and staff at these types of IHE construct their identities (Bourke & Lidstone, 2015).

**Conclusion**

As we think about new possibilities in higher education, I hope that we embrace philosophical critiques grounded in Foucauldian archaeology to challenge the actions of political regimes in new ways. I hope for this paper to serve as a proof of concept of archaeological methodologies for examining the ways in which discourses create our ontological and epistemological world. Examining these discourses present researchers with new horizons to extend their research while at the same time giving policy activists tools to uncover the hidden structures of domination and subjugation lurking within texts. Understanding this will hopefully allow us to better understand and resolve issues in higher education that have thus far remained unresolvable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>Intersection of Discourse and Contingent Event</td>
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</table>
Adapted from Bourke & Lidstone (2015).

**2007-2010 Noticeable Shift in Discourse**

**Discourse Shift from Liberalism to Neoliberalism**

Foucault identifies Robbins definition of economics as... the science of human behavior as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have mutually exclusive uses... as a crucial pivot point in tracing the movement from economics as focused solely on the means of production to focused on human behavior (cited in Foucault, 2008, p. 222).

**Contingent Factors**

- Reaction to Keynesian economic policy
- Growing intervention of the state into the market started by the Great Depression and WWII
- Growing intervention of the state into domestic issues involving anti-discriminatory actions

According to Foucault (2008), "...Keynesian policy, social pacts of war, and the growth of the federal administration... together formed the adversary and target of neoliberal thought... (p. 217).

**Outcomes**

- The purpose of IHE become understood as developing human capital.
- Global market competition and technological disruption in the domestic economy causes increased need to educate citizens
- The seemingly low completion rates of IHE position them as part of the problem
- States pass legislation linking market reforms of IHE to PBF
- TN passes the CCTN in 2010 becoming the first state to be 100% of state funding to outcomes
- PBF policies do little to affect student and institutional outcomes.

**Top trend in PBF policies with only a handful of states adapting them. TN was first to adopt PBF in 1979**

**Discourses Shaping Economic Thought**

- Human capital becomes subject of economic analysis
- Governments are responsible for ensuring economic growth
- Governments are responsible for ensuring equitable access to high-quality education
- Methods of economic analysis are used to analyze the functioning of government.

**Strong economic growth gives state governments little incentive to intervene with IHE (1990s - early 2000s)**

**Contingent Factors**

- Great Recession (2007-2008)
- Divisive Political Climate during the 2008 US presidential election
- 2010 US midterm elections saw Republicans gain power many statehouses

**Strategies**

- States need greater degree production to compete economically.
- Due to the recession, increased production must occur as efficiently as possible.
- States renew efforts to implement PBF
- States work with organizations advocating market-based reforms in IHE (e.g. Lumina Foundation).

**IHE are a part of the problem, but the state can reform them to succeed. State governments begin taking large role in regulating the output of IHE**

**State governments must intervene in education to aid economic growth and development while also keeping cost as low as possible. Higher education must develop human capital.**

Figure 2
Adapted from Bourke & Lidstone (2015).
References


https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716214541042


https://doi.org/10.1177/0725513614535965


Chapter 5

Conclusion

To close out this research project, I would like to offer a few reflections on the cumulative effect these three articles have when placed together as well as draw attention to avenues of development for future research. The three articles included within this research project all aim to account for and resist a specific policy phenomenon that has broad implications for how we educate others, interact with each other, and understand ourselves, i.e. performance-based funding and neoliberalism. More specifically, this research project was motivated by a general frustration with the general slipperiness of performance-based funding (PBF) and neoliberalism as concepts. By slippery, here, I refer to the general ability of these concepts to resist definition and, by extension, resist attempts to overcome their dominance within the theory and practice of higher education.

Despite this opposition, neoliberalism and PBF have only grown in their conceptual and practical importance. As we have seen throughout the previous articles, this is not due to the opposition’s failings; rather, I argue that this is caused by how the opposition typically establishes their theoretical and methodological frameworks. By and large, the conversation and research surrounding specific instances of neoliberal policy incursions into institutions of higher education (IHE) has made an important, albeit limiting, presupposition, i.e. the main drivers of history are human intention and action. This, however, leaves out the way the socially constructed epistemological and ontological edges of our world condition possibility, knowledge and action. This horizon conditions and limits the theoretically infinite possibilities of thought and action. Thus, while human actors do make intentional actions with respect to public policy, their thoughts and actions are always already limited by the dominance of certain concepts
within discursive formations. This research project, then, undertook to capture this other side of policy analysis that lies outside and prior to human agency. In doing this, researchers can tell the full story of neoliberal policy encroachment and fight it at every front.

**Summary and Review**

Taken together, the three articles comprising this research project have completed three important steps. First, Article One analyzed how performance-based funding (PBF) is understood as a growing tool in the creep of neoliberal policy within institutions of higher education (IHE). Analyzing the academic literature, current events, and a specific policy implementation of PBF allowed this article to reconstruct how many have approached and analyzed this policy phenomenon. It used common frameworks for policy analysis to chart the ways in which policy and, to an extent, academic knowledge funnels powers into policy winners and policy losers. These forms of analysis, however, are unable to capture the entire picture as it only accounts for the human actors on the policy stage without critically engaging how the rest of the stage – i.e. the concepts used, how agency is understood, and the ordering of historical events – is set up and interacted with. That is, Article One reveals how most analyses of neoliberalism and PBF in IHE are focused on the intention, agency, and interaction of human actors without leaving a conceptual space to think about how epistemological and ontological concepts interact and disperse throughout history to also impact and shape the contingent conditions human actors find themselves inhabiting. While this is an important front for those involved in the war against neoliberal policy, it has been unable on its own to stop or slow the spread of these types of policy decisions despite these policies being largely ineffective at achieving their own aims. This presents a situation where neoliberal policies like PBF continue to spread without traditional
Article Two, then, picks up conceptually where Article One left off. That is, if Article One reveals and examines an over reliance on human intention and agency to analyze educational policy, then how can researchers examine the spaces in between that fail to be seen with traditional methods of analysis. Put more simply, researchers bring in their own presuppositions about the centrality of human action to how they read and interact with history and policy, and, while these presuppositions are not wrong, these presuppositions create blind spots within the researchers gaze that tend to structure what can be seen in advance. To bring these blind spots into view, Article Two proposes using a Foucauldian Archaeological framework to theoretically and methodologically orient the researcher away from human intention and agency towards the functioning of concepts and bodies of knowledge within a discourse.

Adopting an archaeological perspective allows us to see that traditional research projects, while important, are unable to give us a perspective on every angle of the problems that neoliberalism introduces. Gary Gutting (1989) expertly summarizes this point by stating:

    First, his idea of writing history of thought on an archaeological level beneath that of human subjectivity opens up an important new dimension for understanding our past. It should not…be regarded as a replacement for other, standard approaches to the history of ideas. But it does represent a particularly valuable means of developing new historical perspectives and for correcting and sharpening views from old one (p. 287-288).

Archaeology’s focus on constructing and analyzing an archive through careful attention to concepts and statements allows us to see the epistemological and ontological landscape conditioning how traditional analysis unfolds. Without this, traditional policy analysis lacks a
full historical perspective capable of understanding how and why human agents were capable of thinking and acting in certain ways.

Finally, Article Three creates an archive based on the literature analysis from Article One and reinterprets it through a Foucauldian Archaeological framework from Article Two. That is, Article Three re-examines the academic literature and policy documents (the discursive) along with contingent historical events (the non-discursive) to create a visual representation (the polyhedron of intelligibility) to understand the emergence of PBF within a neoliberal world without human subjectivity at its center. Utilizing a polyhedron of intelligibility allows for non-discursive human action and contingent historical events—typically the domain of policy analysis—and arranges it alongside the discursive events captured in the dominant discourses that were traced through policy documents and academic literature. Arranging the findings in this way opens up an understanding about how concepts and knowledge produce conditions channeling power into specific nodes, i.e. the people, organizations, and institutions that act in accordance with the contingent arrangement of knowledge. It is precisely from this article that future research and daily resistance will launch as it articulates a methodological analysis able to capture the larger epistemic context that gives PBF and neoliberalism meaning.

Areas for Future Research

In a very real sense, this research project is a prologue or jumping off point to much deeper dives into the specific concepts and discourses at the heart of PBF and neoliberalism. Broadly, there are two distinct yet intrinsically linked avenues for this specific research project to develop into. One obvious avenue is the continued development of this archaeological project to incorporate a larger, more comprehensive archive that can further trace the vicissitudes of PBF and neoliberalism as they weave and intermingle through disparate discourses. As we saw in
Article Two, Foucault outlined human capital’s conceptual importance to understanding the logic of neoliberalism as well as endowing neoliberalism with its ability to move through and between discourses—e.g. human capital helps illuminate how neoliberalism has become a potent theory of economics, political theory, and anthropology in the form of homo economicus. Furthermore, Article Three found the concept of equity as a common dissenting concept within the polyhedron of intelligibility comprising PBF. To understand how best to push back on PBF’s expansion, research must go into understanding its intellectual history especially as it relates to the policy and practice of higher education.

Additionally, further research ought to examine the practical implications of these articles for specific new fronts in the intellectual war against neoliberalism engagement with higher education. While Article One establishes the need for new theoretical and methodological perspectives in policy analysis, Articles Two and Three both articulate a process for identifying knowledge and power that dominates as well as opening up new arenas for resistance. Again, Gutting (1989) articulates this point well by stating:

Second, Foucault’s use of histories of thought for the critical purpose of questioning the authority of major bodies of contemporary knowledge is a valuable counter to some of the best hidden and most effective mechanisms of domination in our society…Unlike the typical revolutionary, he does not see one all-pervading enemy, whose existence corrupts everything and whose elimination will solve all our problems. Rather, he thinks the liberation of human being requires an unending series of local battles against an ever-changing series of particular evils (p. 288).
Neoliberalism is pernicious precisely because of how hidden most of its functioning remains, and traditional analyses of it fail to produce productive solutions and viable alternatives because they can only offer us solutions and alternatives based on the heroic power of the revolutionary. Foucault is important at this moment in IHE because he reveals through archaeology the tiny battles that must be fought daily to subvert the contingent and tenuously arranged discursive world giving neoliberalism and PBF meaning and value.

Therefore, the most important research moving forward continues to expand the archive while also nurturing local sites of resistance. PBF is only one expression of neoliberalism that is gaining traction within IHE, and the creation of new archives will open up new avenues for understanding the epistemic arrangement of concepts permitting the persistence of our discursive world. As Bourke & Lidstone (2015) state, “Policies and practices that initially appear to be self-evidently good or incontestable thereby reveal themselves to be carefully crafted ‘fictions’” (p. 849). Continuing the archaeologica l project, then, allows for a new understanding of our world; an understanding that sees meaning and power as contingently built upon unstable foundations waiting to be toppled.
References


Composite References


_Harvard Educational Review, 75_(2), 133.