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The Broken Promises of Education, Jobs and Income: An Essay Review

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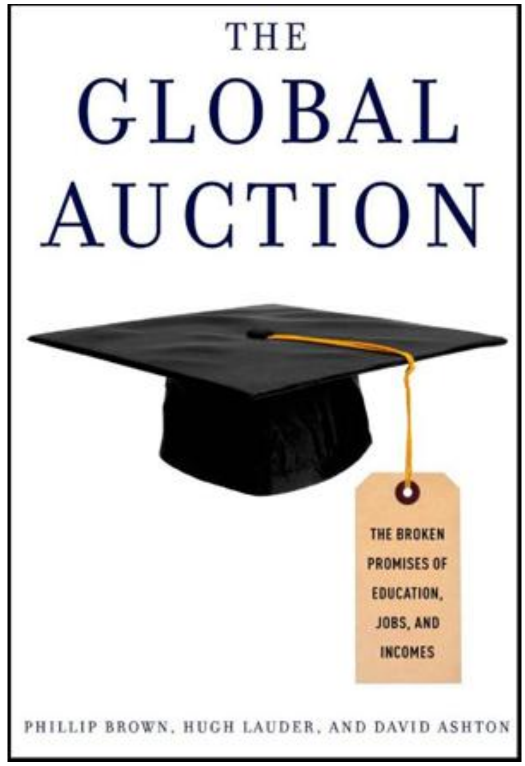
I called Macy's today to check on a discrepancy I found on my credit account, and after punching in multiple responses to an automated phone system, I finally reached a live person. After I noted the spotty connection, the woman revealed she was in India. While attempting to buy an American bicycle for my son's birthday last year, I discovered that Schwinn Bikes, the prominent American bike manufacturer of the 20th century, is now made in China. On the news, I saw a family interviewed after having pledged to live only with American-made products. When asked what they missed the most, the kids responded "television." Such examples are common today as companies constantly seek ways to maximize profits by outsourcing tasks and taking advantage of cost breaks through foreign manufacturing. Though people are eager to criticize the latest politician for their economic hardships, they readily buy their goods at Walmart and seek any means possible to avoid taxation. In their book *The Global Auction: The Broken Promises of Education, Jobs, and Incomes*, Phillip Brown, Hugh Lauder, and David Ashton (2011) question how the global market has and will continue to impact American citizens and their quest for the American Dream in light of the neoliberal opportunity bargain that promised a market solution to economic hardships supposedly created by state involvement and wealth redistribution. Expertly revealing how the global auction for jobs has broken the promise that investment in human capital through education will result in economic prosperity, they point to the unexpected ways that emerging economies like China and India have strategically moved

Ashton, Brown & Lauder

into knowledge and technology realms over which the U.S. felt it would always hold a strong advantage. To compete in today's market place while still attending to the needs of our citizens, they claim that the U.S. must create a new opportunity bargain that fosters a national reverence for social contribution rather than just seeking economic efficiency and gain.



The authors begin by summarizing the ways in which the global economy has evolved and pointing out the failures of the neobliberal opportunity bargain. Advocates of investment in human capital, beginning in the 1960s, pointed to supply-side economics and claimed that investment in training and education would yield greater wealth for workers. Reagan and Thatcher followed neoliberal economists in elevating the free market above government involvement and claimed that its trickle-down effect would even the playing field on its own. This opportunity bargain called for individuals rather than government to control their employability through education and dedication in the face of international free trade. The authors assert that this logic transformed the goals of the American people. Their focus became, and continues to be, about individuals rather than society, further evidenced by the deterioration of unions and fewer trade restrictions people believed were simply ways to protect those who can't produce. The system claimed to be meritocratic and even expanded business recruiting beyond elite institutions. However, this "enlightened self-interest" did not necessarily translate into more American job opportunities, but rather global recruitment to save money (p. 26). The authors call for American education to prepare citizens for a "world-class workforce," pointing out the drastic rise in employment inequality as Fortune 100 company executives have gone from making 39 times that of ordinary employees to a factor of 1000 in the 1990s (p. 26).

U.S. political forces from all sides continue to tout innovation speed through education as the means to economic recovery, and the authors attribute a great deal of this to America's belief that its success has rested in knowledge and innovation ahead of other countries. This changing focus from manual to mental labor became global as countries sought to trade specialization. Wealthier nations became the designers, and emerging economies learned to manufacture elements of such designs. According to the authors, the competition that started with low-skill jobs becoming part of the global job auction and moving to low-wage countries has extended to higher-skill domains, and this undying confidence in a knowledge-based system in the context of a free market is a reflection of the country falling prey to the neoliberal agenda. Whereas the economic ideology may have been sound in the 1980s, what has transpired within the global market since then demands a new evaluation.

According to *The Global Auction*, education as investment in human capital is not the problem, but rather the social circumstances surrounding the global market and how countries are responding. As education is on the rise across the globe, American education is not able to deliver the opportunity bargain it once promised and may not be capitalizing on education as well as other nations. For instance, having realized unprecedented numbers in high school since 1990, China has created numerous teacher-training institutions and offered extended benefits to graduates. India's student enrollment numbers have sky-rocketed, and the government has accordingly increased education support as it feels this is the way to compete with great nations. The U.S., projecting a bipartisan emphasis on education as the solution to economic crisis, ironically continues to face numerous education cuts, has seen public and private college costs increase at up to double the inflation rate (Glater, 2007), and pays their teachers significantly less than other nations, particularly relative to nation wealth ("Teacher Pay Around the World," 2009). In addition to educational access no longer being an American advantage, other countries seem to be using their newfound knowledge better within the global economy. As the global supply of workers with college degrees has rapidly expanded, China, for instance, has directly capitalized on the rapid expansion of college degrees. Whereas U.S. neoliberals claim that human capital will *create* demand in the employment market, China recognized the restrictions of education if they couldn't use it "to drive its entry into the global competition for high-value goods and services" (35). The authors purport that the Chinese government has successfully done this by investing in science, engineering, and technology and seeking out relationships with Western institutions willing to trade their knowledge for access to Chinese markets: "The Chinese strategy of crouching, learning, and leaping is no longer limited to home study. They have globalized the learning process by buying knowledge, technologies, and the expertise of foreign firms through strategic alliances, equity stakes or wholesale acquisitions" (p. 42). China also has invested heavily in its own research and development (R&D) in order to prevent dependence on foreign knowledge. As the U.S. ships more and more overseas, emerging nations are performing and creating more internally.

The Global Auction also shows how many of the foreign students receiving higher education in the U.S. are choosing to return to their home countries due to stricter immigration policies or better economic opportunities. The U.S. has seized the opportunity for access to tuition and research from foreign countries, not paying close enough attention to what it is losing by not conducting as much of its own research nor fostering future research among its own citizens. The book essentially claims that the U.S. is servicing the educational needs of foreign countries and then importing the very knowledge they helped build. In his 2011 State of the Union speech, President Obama pointed out the absurdity of this process:

> Today, there are hundreds of thousands of students excelling in our schools who are not American citizens. Some are the children of undocumented workers, who had nothing to do with the actions of their parents . . . Others come here from abroad to study in our colleges and universities. But as soon as they obtain advanced degrees, we send them back home to compete against us. It makes no sense. (Obama, 2011)

The U.S. faces another contradiction: Fewer students are enrolling in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) at the same time that STEM graduates are increasingly seeing fewer employment opportunities in these fields. So it seems our supply is going down, but the demand is going down more as we turn to foreign nations for knowledge. The U.S. thought that knowledge and technology could create barriers that would prevent other economies from being competitive. In reality, they have allowed emerging economies to move ahead more rapidly and close in on their advantage.

The Global Auction reveals that employment trends in the global economy are not just the result of other nations catching up to U.S. educational prominence and finding ways to bring that knowledge to the market. The authors also highlight *what* is being traded in the market as they explain that enhanced quality of work in emerging nations like China and India extends to services as well manufacturing. This is particularly salient given the way that technology has made such services completely mobile, as is the case with global integration spanning all aspects of the financial industry. More importantly, innovative research *in conjunction with* cheap skilled labor is what advanced economies are fighting against:

> Hence, the widely touted view that American workers and companies can prosper in the global economy by moving up the value chain fails to understand the realities of today's quality-cost revolution. Simply moving up market is based on the same residual thinking that assumed it would take China and India decades before they could compete with the West on brainpower. (p. 58)

This aptly coined "quality-cost revolution" is essentially the ability and willingness of many emerging economies and global workers to create quality products and services for minimal costs. One of the book's most powerful claims is unavoidability of price competition whose scope extends to manufacturing, services, research, and labor, "challenging many of our cherished beliefs about the social foundations of economic success" (p. 48).

A prominent underlying theme throughout *The Global Auction* is America's increasing focus on short-sided profit maximization over the last fifty years and how this has influenced the labor market internationally. What many companies would have never dreamed of sacrificing internally has become commonplace through globalization, with a newfound willingness to share or even lose high skill design to save money in the short run. American salary decline is an adverse repercussion of this motive:

> The gravitational pull of global competition for most American workers takes salaries in a downward direction, especially when companies are under competitive or market pressures to increase profits or reduce debt. The same market logic not only applies in the context of price competition from emerging economies but it applies equally to differences in labor costs within domestic economies, as autoworkers in Detroit are well aware. (p. 55)

Reagan and Thatcher's free market reform policies "shifted the balance of power in favor of shareholders and corporate bosses as much as the deregulation of global financial markets" (p. 125). U.S. minimization of union representation in favor of the market also saw a deterioration of social protections not experienced in European nations like Germany and France. What's more, in emerging nations, technologically advanced companies often take advantage of people lacking real opportunities. The authors raise a point with profound implications for a nation like the U.S.: "For if high tech and no tech can exist side by side, then most of the assumed connections between economic efficiency and social justices no longer hold unless there is the political will to move toward shared prosperity" (p. 64). Overarching emphasis on the free market has not effectively led to wealth trickling down, but rather concentrated it with those citizens who profit from the market.

Brown, Lauder, and Ashton's most powerful contribution lies in their explanation of what they call "digital Taylorism," providing a fresh, persuasive framework for the ways in which globalization has manipulated the workforce. In claiming that knowledge is being maximized through profit-seeking compartmentalization, they define a movement from "knowledge work" to "working knowledge" where "what is in the minds of employees is captured and codified in the form of digital software, including online manuals and computer programs that can be controlled by companies and used by other often less skilled workers" (p. 173). To effectively present their case regarding the negative impacts of digital Taylorism, the authors review Ford's assembly line, which initiated a trust in Taylorism through the efficiency and profit it yielded. Though organizations evolved in the 1980s and turned away from Taylor's organizational efficiency in favor of a great reliance on creativity to meet the market demands of more sophisticated consumers, they claim that Taylor's ideas are alive and well, only this time, as knowledge in digital form. This digital Taylorism is the mechanism through which society is utilizing "working knowledge" that is available to any person from any location. Call centers where human interaction is limited and follows a script operate much the same way that the assembly did, a process for which Ford was criticized through his neglect of worker ingenuity in favor of process. For example, call center cases filter through technology-based mechanisms until those needing more personal attention are left, thereby limiting time needed to attend to customers and thus reducing customer service costs. From online applications to call center menus to over-the-counter derivatives, every industry has found a way to put the Fordest production line into digital form.

In creating a strong analogy between Taylor's original scientific management and what has evolved into digital Taylorism, the authors reveal that U.S. companies have not made much progress in how they function, but merely used new formats to concentrate profits. Digital Taylorism also has ensured that workers possess less power as their skills become the systemized property of corporations: "Digital Taylorism encourages the segmentation of talent in ways that reserve permission to think to a small proportion of elite employees responsible for driving the business forward, functioning cheek by jowl with equally well-qualified workers in more Taylorized jobs" (p. 81). As employees lose power to information technology like software and computerized monitoring and "modular corporations" are created by breaking down and streamlining processes and standards, Taylorism infiltrates all levels of the job pyramid. The authors' illumination of an electronic version of scientific management begs the question of how workers will react when they can't cash in on their human capital investment. When work does not capitalize on their expertise nor compensate them in the global market, how will they respond?

While digital mechanization of employee operations is serving to hinder creativity and ingenuity, stratification of the middle class is being compounded by what the authors title the current "war for talent." As companies push work to the lowest levels and seek only the best and brightest for the top, a college education does not necessarily translate into higher income. Though white-collar jobs were distinct from blue-collar jobs as a result of academic success in past years, now companies have segmented the white-collar workforce in their attempts to exploit the knowledge economy. Whether this process is due in part or completely to talent demands exceeding supply, globalization, deregulation in the market, or advances in technology, the reality is the same for the middle class. Unless they can find ways to distinguish themselves, to rise above being good to achieving status as the best, they will not be as competitive in the labor market. The authors suggest that companies engage in a war for talent as a means of maximizing their earning potential. Particularly in areas where no concrete products are created or made (i.e. service industries), companies want the best minds with the best reputations, thereby increasing their overall value. This is actually fed by the business of higher education, which can become more selective and heighten profits as students fight for spots in better institutions: "Those defined as top talent are able to draw on their personal and reputational capital to leverage the American Dream for themselves, whereas other equally well-qualified employees find themselves in a reverse bidding war as companies try to reduce the cost of knowledge" (p. 97). So not only have advanced nations lost low-skilled jobs to the global auction, those at the top have been divided such that only a few survive, and the rest fall prey to market conditions.

In the context of educational policy, the book's most pertinent claim is that the global auction for jobs is a major player in diminishing the value of human capital returns. Moreover, what many will label the result of an economic downturn, is actually feeding its continuance, as financial hardships only lead to more labor cost saving strategies. Americans are affected differently as those at the very top are part of a forward auction while those at the bottom see the auction working in reverse. The authors explain how "the global integration of human resources in modular components and behavioral competencies" has led to an entirely new business philosophy. Not only are companies able to work around the clock by differentiating across the globe and creating numerous iterations of their products to market internationally for little extra cost, many have also decided to focus on certain "core competencies" and outsource all other parts of production. What this can yield, however, is a lack of control over quality and less and less in-house knowledge growth. Additionally, it does not bode well for employee morale. As those at the top of organizations look only to methods that ensure the greatest profits, fewer people and resources are available to handle employee relations and professional development, not to mention the dwindling labor demand. To strengthen their claim, the authors provide powerful labor data and assert that economic studies using the higher average income levels for college graduates compared to individuals without degrees mask the growing inequalities across these groups by failing to account for the staggering stratifications of the college-level population. Specifically, only the 90^{th}

percentile of college graduates have seen higher income levels since 1973, and the gap between that group and the rest has actually grown dramatically since 1989. This being the case, a higher average wage for college graduates could mean only that the elite within that group are experiencing huge increases while the rest see little change or even decline. The authors point out that CEOs, as members of the top earners in America, are gaining the most from growth statistics. For instance, their data from economist Emmanuel Saez reveals 49.7% of the nation's 2006 income was earned by the top 10 percent of the population, and even more strikingly, that roughly half of the nation's economic growth from 1993 to 2006 lay with only the top 1 percent. Even more persuasive is their extension of this argument to relative wage levels, stating that CEOs have progressed from making 24 times in 1965 to 100 times in the 1990s to 275 times in 2007 the salary of the everyday American earner. When this kind of information is considered in conjunction with an already unbalanced supply of and demand for U.S. labor, not only has the global auction rendered economic returns to education far less reliable, in many cases, they are meaningless.

While those who support the logic of human capital assert that education can bring higher earnings, the authors claim that the global auction disproves this theory as a market competition for jobs changes the playing field: "We therefore need to focus on how occupational opportunities are being transformed in the global division of labor rather than simply focus on the supply of marketable skills" (p. 124). The idea that focusing on technology and education will yield success as labor supply keeps up with technology demand has been proven flawed. Earning variations within the same professions, the way that technology has affected the global auction for jobs, and organizational impacts of digital Taylorism have complicated the traditional economic analysis of labor supply and demand. The authors appropriately label the opportunity bargain an "opportunity trap" as Americans compete for high status education and positions in ways that simply up the ante for everyone when there are not enough opportunities to go around. Their major objection to the popular focus on human capital investment is that the promised success is dependent on the jobs people can get, and as such, the power still resides with those who run the companies. The authors support the need to heighten education in ways that make Americans competitive, but the point they drive home that is often neglected in economic discussions is the need to also provide corresponding job opportunities for those who obtain this newer and better education.

The authors claim that a broader and less monetary focus on educational rewards can be realized economically and that what is needed is a "democratic conversation about new priorities that link economic activity to the quality of life that cannot be captured by the size of a person's paycheck or national per capital income" (p. 154). Though they acknowledge a limit to the demand for creativity in the midst of digital Taylorism and the ultimate goal of shareholder profit, they point to quality of education as a means to social inventiveness. This socially motivated educational system, if encouraged and funded sufficiently, requires the kind of free thought that ideas like digital Taylorism are hindering. What the authors make clear is that this process cannot occur in light of the current disconnect between society and the market. Governments may seek to enhance their citizens' livelihood through the value of human capital, but companies will attempt to reduce this value to maximize their own profits. The book definitely advocates greater state involvement, but the authors are not calling for governmental takeover of knowledge and innovation. Rather, the government must find ways to better organize and coordinate markets so that the U.S. can best invest and develop its ***own*** areas of expertise and create its ***own*** jobs such that the relationship between education, career, and social involvement can be restored. The possession of skills is simply not enough, and a productive economy that improves lives will not be realized if capitalism is the model and shareholder profit the ultimate goal.

In addition to the U.S. reevaluating its current path and finding ways to more actively engage its heightened supply of skilled labor, the book suggests an international overhaul of the way the global auction operates, perhaps through more specific guidelines. Businesses and executives must be held accountable for their role in the quality cost revolution. The authors suggest this might be accomplished through international labor policies that prohibit the exploitation of workers by those at the top, by a "better system of checks and balances that recognizes the legitimate claims of all stakeholders" (p. 160) and even mandatory relative minimum wage standards. This call for attending to humanity on a global scale may be able to accomplish more than the current partisan positions that pit Main Street against Wall Street. As some politicians and reformers emphasize the need to create jobs at home and purchase American products, consumers are still faced with the need to find the best deal they can. Often, such deals come from companies that have taken advantage of the global economy to create cheaper products, sell more, and maximize their own profits. The problem with this proposal for international reform is primarily its feasibility in the context of a world hungry for profit at any cost and a system fraught with logistic and social complexity. Given that the authors claim U.S. withdrawal from the global economy via protectionism will have dire consequences for laborers and national relations around the world, it is reasonable to assume that such proposed interventions may not be readily embraced. The current flexibility provided by lack of regulation is more advantageous for some countries than others. It may be too idealistic to assume more just labor policies can be adopted across the globe.

The authors too briefly cover what is perhaps the most important message of their work – how the new opportunity bargain must find a way to redistribute wealth to genuinely reflect productive input. This cannot be limited to only those who invent the next technological advance, but must include *everyone* involved in the process. For every well-educated technological innovator, there are numerous other people aiding in their success – from the individuals educating their children to those building the facility where they work to those selling the products they develop. Such efforts to increase social equality, according to the authors, will serve as "an ethical correction that ties rewards more closely to social contribution rather than exclusively driven by market competition and private gain" (p. 164). Reliance on the free market and globalization has created what they call a streamlined mega-corporation able to cut costs wherever and whenever necessary. From a business perspective, this is no doubt ideal for companies. Why wouldn't they, given deregulation and increasing education worldwide, take advantage of every opportunity? *The Global Auction* eloquently puts these sorts of questions in the perspective of social relationships. Namely, as shareholders maximize profits to compete, a vicious spiral begins which results in deeper cuts and more reliance on foreign manufacturing and services, including labor and research. Even those corporations and consumers that may want to support American workers and companies are forced into seeking alternative methods in order simply to stay alive in the market.

Furthermore, such measures have yielded more and more part-time employment and less and less benefits. Rather than describing the resulting unemployment and poverty that would typically appeal solely to social justice advocates, they diplomatically focus on the politically pertinent marketplace, painting a stark picture for the future of the U.S. by laying out the repercussions for the losers in this market system. This tactic of using a market framework to point out the market's limitations regarding education and employment is poignant in today's economic climate. It ensures that every type of reader, including those whose political motivation exceeds their social proclivities, is forced to contemplate what their education and the education of their children will mean in this evolving global economy.

The authors attempt to address what they anticipate will be typical responses to their theories and suggestions for adapting to the current global economy, and their strongest argument counters the current mentality that growing employment inequality is the result of automation taking jobs and dehumanizing operations. Referencing Golden and Katz (2008) who assert that such inequality is the result of America not keeping pace with rising technological demands in the market, they describe the view that boosting human capital will create a better balance between the availability and need for higher skilled employees (a view clearly being accepted by many as the President himself pushes for America to out-innovate the world). However, Brown, Lauder, and Ashton make a strong case for not blindly accepting this solution. In addition to their data on extreme wage inequality among the educated, they assert that this methodology "fails to consider the wider employment, organization, and political context that determine the way technology is used and rewarded in the workplace" (p 127). They explain that the more advanced technology that historically coincided with the assembly line was not the primary impetus for more skilled workers, but rather mass consumer markets, a demand for office work, and a rise in public jobs. Additionally, companies once targeted profits partly by increasing employee wages in order to encourage their consumption of the companies' own goods, and that in cases where labor and employer relations were strained, the state involved itself via welfare assistance. Referencing advocates of the human capital approach like Goldin and Katz, and specifically in ways that support their logic, the authors do not discount current market ideology, but rather point out its limitations. Extending such logic globally, and providing data on the variation across college graduate income, they expertly reveal how human capital is insufficient in explaining employment trends.

Regarding the call for heightened protectionism in response to the global economy they depict, the authors point out that such measures would challenge the ideology of global free trade that the U.S. has supported along with Britain for so long and that it "squanders the possibilities that now exist to shape American society and the wider world in ways that benefit future generations as well as our own" (p. 13). Though their plea for a transformation of economic ideology is a worthy aim, the authors do not give adequate attention to why protectionism, or at least some degree of it, is not a valid option. For example, why is the U.S. unwilling to tax foreign cars at the rate of many other nations (i.e. China, Korea, Germany, Japan) to encourage more domestic production and sales? Also inadequately addressed are the impacts of encouraging foreign manufacturing on U.S. soil. Thomas Heffner (2011) points out that "encouraging foreign manufacturers to produce in the U.S. creates a big defeat for us." Referencing Ohio and Indiana's heated competition for a new Honda plant, he explains how the result was incentives for Honda totaling $81 Million. Though this may have created American jobs, this was outweighed by the profits lost to Americans buying Honda products. Though the intended audience of *The Global Auction* may not be inclined to embrace such issues, if the argument blatantly discounting protectionism is to hold merit, it must be strengthened by more specific statistics and rationale.

Attending to the economic theory that market forces will eventually fix the nation's economic plight, the authors strongly reiterate the need for a new opportunity bargain. For example, though China may not be immune from global recession given their dramatic industrialization and urbanization, the U.S. cannot ignore the fact that high skill still has been globalized. As such, America's middle class can no longer rely on increasing human capital to resolve poor economic performance. The authors also present the view of economists who feel that the competitive advantage emerging economies have in terms of knowledge labor will became less of a threat as these nations see increasing middle classes whose wages will eventually reach some middle ground with more established, industrial countries like the U.S. A major problem with this theory, they point out, is that it may take decades to reach any sort of middle class income equilibrium. Even that is brought into question if emerging nations continually seek to exploit low-cost models. Furthermore, as the U.S. seeks to reduce costs through short-term cuts and outsourcing of a wide range of corporate functions, countries like China have an enormous supply of labor and ongoing development waiting in the wings. Recognizing a tapering off of wage increases in some developing nations may also create a delay in wage equalization for the U.S. as it will still rely on such countries to save money across a rapidly growing percentage of industries. The authors diplomatically locate flaws in multiple market theory predictions of eventual economic stability, and in doing so, make an even stronger case for a fresh societal perspective.

The Global Auction does not claim to support a particular system of public education nor does it critique policy regarding curriculum, teacher credentialing, or administration. What the authors do point out is that emerging economies are educating themselves in ways we did not expect and in areas that will continue to take away America's competitive edge in technology. Furthermore, their economic circumstances (such as a smaller middle class and greater purchasing power parity) are such that many of their people are willing to do high skill work for less money than American college graduates. With globalization, this has far-reaching implications for our youth. Essentially, inequality will reach new heights, as the only competitive workers will be those from the most prestigious institutions recruited to boost company reputations, and even they will likely need to work for less. The focus of education must change if it is to maintain any level of status in our society. Rather than looking at schooling as solely an investment for profit, the authors call for a return to Dewey's idea of schooling "as a freeing of individual capacity linked to social aims not limited to economic advantage" (p. 155). With a new outlook that places education in the context of societal progress, its worth will be freed from monetary constraints. We cannot ignore the multiple factors that play a part in our development as a people:

> If we believe the capabilities of all are worth cultivating as part of our common humanity, narrowing inequalities and attempting to create a level playing field in terms of family circumstances, neighborhood environment, and quality of schooling are not a recipe for a dull conformity. Rather, they are a way of ensuring that the cultural diversity of character, personality, and capabilities existing throughout the population may come to fruition. The alternative is the development of resentment and despair for an increasingly disaffected middle and working class. (p. 135)

When we look only at investment in human capital as a means to greater earnings, we ignore other key aspects of our social existence, and the authors believe education can and should enhance such elements.

Brown, Lauder, and Ashton (2011) do a remarkable job of forcing the reader to reevaluate the seemingly entrenched societal emphasis of human capital investment as a route to prosperity. As some promote globalization to cut costs and others fight it due to its tendency to take away American jobs, they attend to the often-neglected bigger picture – that the global market is likely here to stay, and that America has been a large player in its evolution. Understanding that human capital is no longer guaranteed to bring financial stability means that society must focus on its value beyond profit. The authors do not, however, address the fact that this new opportunity bargain that seeks to transform the way we value education may not be realistic, or may require a major social revolution to cultivate. How can we make this ideology work in the midst of current political forces seeking to eliminate all government involvement and regulation? How can we make companies see that more equitable employee income plans are better than eliminating much of the work force for cheap overseas and migrant labor so that a few at the top can reap greater dividends?

The authors' call for better accountability among businesses in terms of their labor relations is promising, but this too will require major ideological changes across the globe. When our own country won't sign off on health care for its own population, how can we expect it to enforce labor laws internationally? Overall, the book brings out critical problems with our nation's emphasis on human capital in light of its devaluation in the global market, but it needs more pronounced and realistic solutions to make its call for change credible.

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