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Becoming-Policy in the Anthropocene

Ryan Evely Gildersleeve
University of Denver
United States

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Abstract: This paper takes up the theme of “Education Policy and Methodology in a Post-truth Era” by emplacing policy within the contemporary condition of the Anthropocene. The conditions of the Anthropocene demand a radical reconfiguring of policy as an apparatus for governmentality, and therefore of methodology. I intraject a potential ethical posture befitting such a reimagined becoming-policy and reconceptualized environment. The Anthropocene serves as both context and concept as the “Age of Humankind” in need of speculative and radical building and making. Drawing on prior critical policy analyses of higher education policy affecting undocumented students, I proffer plausible postures in thinking education policy and methodology that engage the contemporary moment of both “post-truth” and the Anthropocene.

Keywords: education policy; methodology; ethics; post-truth; Anthropocene

Convertirse-política no Antropoceno

Resumen: En este artículo se retoma el tema de la “Política de Educación y Metodología en la era posverdad” y las posiciones políticas dentro de la condición contemporánea del Antropoceno. Las condiciones de la Antropoceno exigen reconfiguración radical un aparato de la política es gubernamentalidad, y de la metodología por lo tanto. El Antropoceno sirve tanto el contexto y el concepto de la “Edad de la Humanidad” en la necesidad de la creación de radicales y especulativas y decisiones. Basándose en análisis previos de política críticos de la política de educación superior que afectan a los estudiantes indocumentados, profiero posturas plausibles en la política de educación y el pensamiento Que metodología de involucrar al momento contemporáneo de ambos “posverdad” y el Antropoceno.

Palabras-clave: política educativa; metodología; ética; posverdad; Antropoceno

Tornando-se política não Antropoceno

Resumo: Este artigo retoma o tema “Política e Metodologia da Educação em uma Era Pós-Verdade” e posiciona a política dentro da condição contemporânea do Antropoceno. As condições do Antropoceno exigem uma reconfiguração radical da política como um aparato de governamentalidade e, portanto, de uma metodologia. Entrego-me a uma postura ética potencial condizente com um ambiente reformista e reconceituado reinventado. O Antropoceno serve tanto como contexto como conceito como a “Era da Humanidade,” necessitando de construção e feitura especulativa e radical. Baseando-me em análises políticas críticas anteriores sobre políticas de educação superior que afetam estudantes indocumentados, profiro posturas plausíveis em pensar políticas e metodologias educacionais que envolvam o ímpeto da “pós-verdade” e do Antropoceno.

Palavras-chave: política educacional; metodologia; ética; pós-verdad; Antropoceno

Becoming-Policy in the Anthropocene

Geologists can demonstrate how humankind exerts geologic force on the planet, changing its constitution and manipulating its environment. Simultaneously, the Earth, and its diverse entanglements of species, act on and shape the experiences of humankind. As progressive wings of Earth science and the humanities grapple with the contemporary condition of the planet and what it means to be human, education research must grapple with the environmental and social consequences of such new knowledge. The Anthropocene serves as both concept *and* context for such theory and concept-building (Gildersleeve & Kleinhesselink, in press). Erstwhile knowledge regimes compete for prominence in and providence of education as a social institution. Such conditions demand that canonical concepts, such as policy and truth, be revisited in education research. In this paper, I make such an attempt. I emplace education policy within the Anthropocene and explore what might be produced, ontologically, when policy, the Anthropocene, and a “post-truth” movement come to bear on/through one another. Notions of entanglement and intra-section are key components to my essay, by which, I mean to suggest that concepts and contexts move through each other, changing one another, as well as carrying the potential to generate new ontological becomings. The focus of this essay, therefore, is to suggest a new way of thinking and doing policy in a “post-truth” era, evoking productive tensions and exposing necessary shifts in how traditional research in education has engaged policy and truth.

I suggest a notion of becoming-policy that is constituted in and through the Anthropocene, serving as a cauldron for intra-secting concerns, ideas, practices, and things. After briefly reviewing

how education policy has been approached methodologically, I dive deep into the Anthropocene and carry canonical concepts through intra-ventions that speculate their reconstitution. I intra-ject notions of “post-truth” considerations that challenge any fixity that traditional notions of policy and methodology might desire. Policy becomes an apparatus for governmentality and truth becomes an incomplete notion of certainty. Entangling these ideas betwixt and between one another, an opportunity emerges to design educational futures that engage the conditions of the Anthropocene toward more utopian means and ends. I use the evolution of my own previous work focused on an education-immigration policy regime to highlight how Anthropocene concepts and context can come to matter in developing methodology for policy research in a “post-truth” era.

A Few Notes on Education Policy and Methodology

Policy analysis generally seeks to establish reliable and repeatable explanations of how policy intervenes in daily life. These normative analyses typically take shape in one of three broad forms of research: policy development, policy implementation, or policy outcomes. (Note: this three-part organization admittedly is overgeneralized and insufficient, but for the sake of space in this article, I am indulging in its utility to provide a basic understanding of how policy research looks in education.) Policy development research often seeks to describe how various policy initiatives came into being. This line of research often relies on qualitative descriptions of the policy process, and it can include analyses of the politics that inform policy adoption. For example, Dougherty, Nienhusser, and Vega (2010) did extensive interviews and archival research across Arizona and Texas to provide an explanation of how each state came to adopt radically different positions related to in-state resident tuition (ISRT) policy for undocumented students in public higher education.

Policy implementation often seeks to understand how various social institutions move a policy from its development and adoption into operationalization. Implementation research can be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method, and it generally tries to document how a policy informs and perhaps is informed by everyday practice. Implementation studies often draw from organizational theory to help explain how policy mediates educational practice within schools or institutions. For example, Nienhusser (2018) examined how ISRT policy shaped the practices of front-lines administrators (e.g., financial aid and admissions officers) at New York public colleges. He leveraged organizational theories within his analysis of interview data to explain shortcomings in relying on public policy to effect change in the educational participation of undocumented students. Despite a progressive ISRT in New York, too little training and too complex of division of labor strained the possibilities for administrators to effectively use the policy in support of undocumented students’ access and success in higher education.

Policy outcomes research most often relies upon quantitative data, and it has been used to explain how human behavior changes as a result of policy initiatives. For example, Flores (2010a) used national and state datasets to analyze the effect of ISRT policy on undocumented college participation in Texas and California. Further, Flores (2010b) used state-level data to determine the net cost to states was negligible for extending in-state resident tuition rates to undocumented students. Qualitative studies of policy outcomes generally seek to understand how a policy is experienced in the daily lives of those it might affect. For example, McDonough, Venegas, and Calderone (2015) analyzed interview and focus group data with Latino youth in higher education to provide explanations of decisions that Latino families make in light of federal and state financial aid policy.

Overall, qualitative policy analysis, has relied heavily on interview data in order to describe and explain the normative experiences of how policy becomes developed, implemented, and lived

out by those affected by it (Lester, Lochmiller, & Gabriel, 2016). These normative explanations have been extremely useful in providing landscape views of policy regimes in education. However, they remain limited in at least two capacities: power and pathways. First, as normative analyses and explanations, they often fall short of excavating how power is at stake in various policy regimes. Structures and exercises of power circulate throughout policy processes, yet often go unnoticed in analysis unless explicitly accounted for in research design. Indeed, the nature of power operates as such—hidden, covert, and seemingly naturalized. Power thus structures and exercises policy into regimes of truth that often go unquestioned in analysis. Normative qualitative analyses of policy development, implementation, and outcomes regularly treat policy as an artifact—fixed and given, even if researchers acknowledge that policy changes over time and/or is implemented or experienced unevenly across social actors/populations. As such, they are often ill equipped to explain how derivative injustices and inequalities might be addressed.

Second, they assume a linear pathway for how policy circulates in social life. If policy is understood as an artifact or given condition of social life, it becomes immutable in analysis and therefore only recognizable as something real, knowable, and fixed. Whereas much of policy's power lies in its incipient characteristics—its plausible mutations, exploitations, and context-specific instantiations. As Jasmine Ulmer (2015) illustrated in her analysis of technology policy in education, policy actually plays back-and-forth and betwixt-between power brokers and contexts. Policy can become something different across its commonly organized domains of analysis, while also remaining the same. In short, parallel outcomes (or pathways) are plausible in the life of policy and policy research.

Each of these limitations are symptoms of epistemological and ontological assumptions of how researchers understand policy and its role in building and maintaining society. To begin to address them, policy must be wrested from the liberal humanist assumptions from which current treatments in research operate. For policy in research—development, implementation, and outcomes—operates as something fixed, whole, and bounded. Some progressive notions of policy have emerged, largely viewing policy as instantiations of governmentality (see Allan, 2010). That is, education policy works to regulate human life in relationship to its social environment. In either case, methodology tends to reify the liberal humanist concept of policy as something whole, fixed, and bounded.

Yet, if we take seriously that policy serves as governmentality, it suggests both epistemological and ontological shifts become necessary for methodology. Such shifts become readily apparent and available when policy as a concept is emplaced within the contemporary condition of the Anthropocene.

Welcome to the Anthropocene

The Anthropocene is the geologic and stratigraphic idea that recognizes human power over the environment can now be seen in the history of the Earth. Humankind's carbon imprint on Earth can now be read as a stratal layer of Earth's geologic time frame. Many scientists consider the Anthropocene to be our current geologic epoch. Such science raises significant ontological questions about the concept of the human and humankind's relationship to the Earth, as well as ontologies of Earth itself. These ontological questions beget further considerations to wrestle across education policy and methodology.

For example: What kind of impact has humankind made on Earth, and what has such impact recursively made on humankind? Consequently, how do social institutions, such as education, play a role in wrestling with this newly recognized relationship between humankind and

the Earth? Further, what kind of governing apparatus (e.g., policy) is needed to support an institution such as education and any role(s) it may play in fashioning an Earth worth living?

As a consequence, Raffnsøe (2016) points out, “human influence upon the climate is already so extensive that it is difficult, and in principle impossible, to operate with any idea of the Earth’s climate as a ‘natural’ balance that is beyond human impact” (p. 13). The realities of the Anthropocene are not equitable distributed (Gabardi, 2017). Countries primarily responsible for human impact on the environment are not generally the same as the countries now facing challenging decisions on how to (re)shape an economy that can be responsible toward the environment. Technologies developed for—and largely controlled by—rich nation-states use resources from poverty-stricken nation-states. The material relations across human bodies and the broader environment are not singular in structure, scale, nor scope, even at the level of species population.

The Becoming-Human in the Anthropocene

As constitutive Earth components, humans do not exist autonomously nor individually. Rather, the human body is a dynamic relationship of multi-species engagements. Biologically bacteria, virus, and other organisms co-constitute what we currently recognize as *our* bodies. The “human” relies upon these co-habitants within ourselves for vital biological needs. Also, human bodies are dependent upon myriad environmental entanglements for survival, even, especially, or perhaps in spite of the very particular impact that human activity has generated across the Earth. For example, water and food sources, materials for shelter, and complex processes of landscape configuration for human consumption/production practices (e.g., globally integrated supply chains for goods and services) all enable humankind to engage culturally and organize socially on the planet. Raffnsøe (2016) observes: “Humankind and nature appear to be intimately interlinked in this ambiguous mutuality that constitutes a common destiny come into being, a destiny following a path that it seems impossible for either party to leave” (p. 13). The Anthropocene situates humankind as inexorable from nature and vice versa, breaking down the human/nature dichotomy.

Donna Haraway (2016) suggests that we recognize Earth as an interdependent multi-species environment, inclusive of human and non-human actants. Humans, in this conceptualization do not only exist *on* Earth, but as *part of* Earth. Referencing climate change, conceptually, Raffnsøe (2016) summarizes that “the climate only comes about through an interaction between human and nature, which in turn makes it problematic to regard them and study them as separate things if one wishes to understand the fundamental dynamic and its results” (p. 13). Far from autonomous beings, humans are entangled processes of materialization and constantly in states of *becoming*. This conceptualization contrasts with an ontology of humans as having arrived at our current state through lines of progress that were inevitable due to human authority. In brief, human power to design our own destiny is at best limited, and most likely has never been total. Humankind has not fashioned itself and its environment independent of the self-organizing indeterminacies of its Earthly co-constituents.

Thus, it perhaps is better to configure a *becoming-human*, one that emerges from the entanglements of discourses and practices generated by the multi-species environment. The becoming-human recognizes the constant movement of persons both physically and psychically. That is, our constant state of becoming affords us the possibility of change, yet such constancy also affords us a consistency with which to take hold as persons. The becoming-human is, in part, a mutually constituting artifact *and actant* of the Anthropocene.

Intrajection: Post-Truth and the Anthropocene, Part 1

The Anthropocene, however, may not be a new epoch. It may, in fact, be a mid-point of a yet-to-be-known time in the Earth's history, or for that matter, it could be the end-point. Far from an epoch itself, the Anthropocene, as a recognition of the anthropogenic layer in the Earth's stratigraphic record, might simply be a period of transition. Either way, the probable explanations rely on a notion of coexistence that begets an appreciation for difficult pluralities in the epistemes operating across the Earth in any given moment (Veland & Lynch, 2016). Thus, post-truth might simply be a symptom of the Anthropocene, rather than a new disease. That is, the conditions—social, political, and yes, geological—of the human-generated imprint on the planet might very well require a post-truth episteme, as one of many available epistemic postures. My point is not to valorize post-truth as a moral standpoint. Rather, from an a-moral position, I put forth that post-truth has been part of what it has meant to constitute “the human” for quite some time, possibly for as long as the “human” concept has been available.

Education Policy in the Anthropocene

A *becoming*-human needs different questions asked and answered than an arrived human. And a becoming-human that recognizes the post-truth constitution of an arrived human fits more readily within the broader context of the Anthropocene. Becoming-human has more potential for effecting change through radical entanglements of practices. The political and policy questions of the becoming-human of the Anthropocene might look more like:

- What kind of governmentality apparatus (e.g., policy) should structure social institutions, like education, for a tomorrow yet unknown?
- How to assess such an apparatus for outcomes unexpected?
- How to engender equity in personhoods so as to become more-than-human through policy activity?
- What kind of participation modes and models are desirable for various educational goals to meet the dynamic demands of the Anthropocene's readymade inequalities?

Among the consequences of these questions is a creative reconceptualization of *things* and *thing power*, extending agency/actant-ness to non-human beings (becomings) and artifacts (Bennet, 2010; Braidotti, 2013). Such a concept of agency requires an acknowledgement of the entangled nature of our multi-species environment and the *zoe* (life) that we and other constituents of the planet ascribe, practice, and therefore produce in relationship to these things—a process of materialization (Connolly, 2013; Haraway, 2016). Recognizing that what we have reified as “the social” is actually a process of materialization, one (or more than one) that is (or are) inflected betwixt the various forces of actants (including material things or bodies, but also discourses), then we must re-think the roles, purposes, and functions of any given policy apparatus. Indeed, as an apparatus for governmentality, policy needs to be reconceptualized along the lines of flight produced from our current condition – the Anthropocene.

Becoming-Policy in the Anthropocene

Policy in such conditions emerges as an assemblage of discourses, things, objects, artifacts, and relations across the multi-species environment (i.e., becoming-policy). Policy is not a uniformed apparatus that appears on the stage in just right moments of necessary intervention. It is not a whole, nor is it fixed or even bounded. Rather, policy in the Anthropocene, might best be recognized as dynamic sets of entanglements generating and circulating *biopower*—particularly as we recognize the intra-sectionality of life, or *zoe*, beyond the limited-to-human species. We need a policy apparatus that can account for our *becoming* nature as an interdependent multispecies environment. Policy needs to be generated and understood as a constant state of becoming rather than as an effort to fix a set of relationships.

Policy cannot set its sights on serving the human alone, but rather, must serve the dynamic processes of entanglement that emerge from and constitute the multi-species *environment*. This becomes incredibly pressing when considering the newly constructed indeterminacies made available from the rapid influx of technologies that entangle with the multi-species becoming human and other environmental constituents. Policy, as an indeterminate sets of entanglements, then, is always in a process of *becoming*. Methodologically, we need to be able to account for such radical indeterminacies and creative entanglements across things, persons, processes, texts, and other materials that structure reality.

Intrajection: Post-Truth and the Anthropocene, Part 2

However, a parallel outcome to the post-truth condition of the Anthropocene remains plausible. Our current moment of “post-truth” might indeed also be a transition point, ala the stratigraphic layer, recognizing that “truth” has been negotiated over time and not always based on fact. The globalized capitalist food system illustrates this point. Most people are so far removed from their food source, they wittingly believe the marketing and advertising that show animals and green pastures and that preserves the discourse of the hard-working and idyllic farmlands (Datar & Bolton, 2017). Yet, most protein sources are produced in industrial farming conditions that barely resemble human relations to animals ever-present in our imaginations. Humankind has been comfortable alongside the “post-truth” social layer for quite some time.

Post-truth, perhaps, is co-constitutive of the human condition of the Anthropocene. Perhaps reconfiguring post-truth to mean something is missing from any given truth, rather than “after” truth is more productive. In this sense, “post-truth” more accurately reflects the becoming-human condition in the Anthropocene. It recognizes that truth, as a concept, has never actually materialized as a complete composition, but rather always, inherently remains incomplete. Post-truth, is perhaps a reckoning or reconciliation rather than a crisis.

Education policy and methodology then, must find ways of working through the reconciliation of the Anthropocene, not only in addressing the becoming-human but also in addressing the insecurity of any given (i.e., produced), truth (or semblance thereof). At the same time, a post-truth condition need not succumb to falsehoods. The criteria for truth has always been more stringent than any given criteria for a falsehood. And this remains unchanged in the Anthropocene.

Becoming-Policy in the Anthropocene: The Case of the Immigration-Education Policy Regime

To be more specific, thinking of policy as a *becoming* requires that researchers intentionally obfuscate traditional objects of policy analysis, such as policy development, implementation, and outcomes, and seek to follow the plausible lines of flight made possible through policy entanglements. It removes the artefactual quality of policy from its conceptualization. Rather, becoming-policy might be thought of as radically inclusive of all policy related activity. A methodology for analysis of becoming-policy would then need to examine the materialization of policy *regimes*.

For example, I have sought to examine the immigration/education policy regime, with a particular interest in postsecondary educational opportunity for undocumented students (Gildersleeve, 2017; Gildersleeve, Cruz, Madriz, & Melendrez-Flores, 2015; Gildersleeve & Hernández, 2012). In my earliest work using policy discourse analysis to examine in-state resident tuition policy for undocumented students in U.S. higher education, colleague Susana Hernandez and I sought to explain how the ISRT policy regime produced possible peoples whom became known as “undocumented students” (Gildersleeve & Hernandez, 2012). We analyzed the text of 12 ISRT policies that extended in-state tuition benefits to undocumented students. Our analysis involved reading the texts in relationship to each other as well as the broader context of immigration and immigrant college-going in the US. For example, we found that a discourse of legitimacy emerged from the policy texts. The legitimacy discourse was produced largely from the action of the policy regime’s obfuscation of federal and state interests. Specifically, these policy texts relied upon an affidavit as a tool to legitimate the state’s interest in serving immigrant bodies. These immigrant bodies were simultaneously being produced as “alien students” through an interweaving of language that we identified as humanizing/dehumanizing references to immigrants.

The intertwining of talk (e.g., humanizing/dehumanizing language) and action (e.g., the use of the affidavit) produced: “a crisis over who has the right and responsibility to manage and/or construct opportunity for undocumented students consequently politicizes the undocumented immigrant body” (Gildersleeve & Hernandez, 2012, p. 12-13). Such analysis led us to conclude that, “this nexus [of discourse] is a contestation of subjects [i.e., people] becoming objects of policy and consequently politicizing immigrant bodies” (p. 13). Attending to the discursive production of policy subjects and policy problems within and across the ISRT policy regime afforded us the plausible explanation that ISRT policy, despite its potential positive outcomes for undocumented student college-going, did little to change the marginalized positioning of immigrants in and across U.S. institutions, such as higher education.

Even so, our analysis relied on reifying human subjects as separate from and indifferent toward the materiality that shaped (and were recursively fashioned by) them. Put more simply, we were able to suggest that the text producing the affidavit did something to undocumented students, in as much as the affidavit operated as a discursive tool within and across the policy regime. (Aside – the affidavit is a requirement across all legislative ISRT policies that extend benefits to undocumented students.) However, we were unable to suggest that the affidavit itself—the signed piece of paper or the electronically initialed data form—emitted any force or that power circulated through the affidavit. We were limited to the discursive power of the text to produce reality. Its materiality was subsumed into its talk and action. We could not say *how* the politicized immigrant body materialized, only that it plausibly came into existence. We had not emplaced the immigrant body within the multi-species entanglement of the Anthropocene.

In another qualitative engagement with policy analysis of immigration and education, I worked with a team of graduate students to move beyond the limits of legislative policy texts (i.e., ISRT policy texts) alone (Gildersleeve, Cruz, Madriz, & Melendrez-Flores, 2015). We examined policymaking at the federal level and the discourse of its politics as instantiated at state and institutional levels. Rather than centering the policy texts of ISRT policies, we flattened the distinction between the text itself and its author/speaker. Specifically, we used the Obama Administration's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) executive order as a departure point for our analysis, but treated its author, former Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, as co-existing actant within the ontological plane of the policy regime.

Napolitano has played multiple roles in the immigration-education policy regime. In addition to serving as U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security, she also served as Governor of Arizona, a state that is now recognized for its hostility toward immigrants, and she assumed the role of President of the University of California shortly after the Obama Administration's first term. By using DACA as a departure point, we then followed Napolitano's engagement with the policy into her role as UC President. Using texts from DACA and public interviews given by Napolitano, we analyzed her participation in configuring Latino immigrants as an educational caste in a neoliberal context of higher education.

Configuring Napolitano as a co-existing actant within the ontological plane of the policy text itself flattened the anthropocentrism of traditional discourse analysis, wherein text and talk (and action) is wholly attributed to a liberal human figure. Our flattening of Napolitano as a figure within the broader policy regime allowed us to preserve the humanity of "Janet Napolitano," as a person, yet follow the line of flight induced by Napolitano as a positional actant (i.e., Secretary of Homeland Security/President of University of California). It enabled our analysis to trace the workings of the policy as it materialized into a regime of entangled practices while avoiding the seductive tendency of qualitative research to uncover or interpret meanings based on Napolitano's personhood (e.g., her intentions, feelings, experiences).

Still, anthropocenic conditions were ignored, even as the analysis approached a useful semblance of a post-truth—a truth with some pieces still missing. The incomplete turn toward ontology began to privilege processes of materialization of agency and politics as potential goals of analysis, oft overlooked in traditional policy research approaches. Embracing the multispecies entanglements of discourses and materiality begged to be pushed further.

In a third attempt to work policy as a becoming, I followed a line of flight from the policy texts of ISRT statutes out to the political discourse embodied in the 2008 and 2012 U.S. presidential election campaigns, entwined with the materiality of popular discourse produced through editorials appearing in major national news outlets, and entangled with the figure of Napolitano's neoliberalism (Gildersleeve, 2017). This led to conceiving undocumented students as a migrant figure within a broader field of adverse relations:

Whereas the migrant (and the *Illegal*) belongs to the field of adversity, the undocumented student is made and becomes human capital. Thus, the undocumented student policy regime operates from disciplinary power as well as biopower. Through discourses of economy and surveillance, and security, it disciplines migrants into following certain rules and regulations, academic and juridical. (Gildersleeve, 2017, p. 10)

Without bounding undocumented student policy into policy texts alone, nor by the political or populist discourse surrounding them, nor by the institutionalization of policy statutes (e.g.,

Napolitano), I was able to examine the *regime* of undocumented student policy in higher education, sustaining its dynamism, flow, and identifying junctures of departure for post-truth-making:

These same discourses (state and federal policies, political campaign speeches, popular media), present across the rhetorical technologies of the undocumented student for the securitization of the American economy. These discourses exercise biopower in how they transform the migrant into the undocumented student. (Gildersleeve, 2017, p. 10)

Analyses presented a new kind of post-truth, one with plausibility and emergent from the entanglements across unbounded becoming-policy. It proffered a fractured, yet sustaining configuration of the policy consequences: “Yet, the undocumented student is still a migrant. She is separated without being excluded. Thus, her own precarious positioning in U.S education persists” (Gildersleeve, 2017, p. 10). Thinking the undocumented student policy regime, as a becoming-policy, allowed for envisioning the post-truth of the inclusive separation to materialize. The Anthropocene demands that we recognize truth as always “post-,” but to use our analytical tools to diffuse falsehoods and build possible futures for the multi-species entanglements of the becoming-human/nature Earth (and education). As I summarized in my most progressive attempt to dissolve boundaries/borders between materiality, discursive, and anthropocenic reality-producing encounters:

Such an inclusive separation is the outcome of the intra-sections of disciplinary power and biopower. Bodies are disciplined for measures and means of controlling the terms of their potential death while bodies (some similar, some different, all migrant) simultaneously are generated and produced as becoming-human capital. These discursive intra-sections build walls – with or without the high-tech fencing and employer verification systems – that Americans (migrant, permanent, or in-between) must live beside, in a confusing loneliness together. (Gildersleeve, 2017, p. 10).

The materiality of what happens in the becoming-technology realities of the anthropocene and the discursive distribution of surveillance-building disciplinary and biopowers expanded what policy analysis for a post-truth condition might encumber and produce. Policy, as an apparatus, grew larger than legislative texts and slid through, across, between and among the political rhetoric that often powers its implementation. Becoming-policy emerged from following the lines of flight made plausible by ignoring the qualitative seductions of interpretation and meaning-making but rather through examination of how power circulated in the becoming-productions of more-than-human beings (e.g., migrant figurations and political actants).

Education Policy Research & Methodology in a Post-Truth Era

Recognizing the becoming-policy (concept) in such conditions (context) is necessary for making sense of how to engage education research to craft an education for an Earth worth living. Harnessing the possibilities of “post-truth” as an absence or that which is missing from truth provides opportunities for new lines of flight to emerge for education policy research. In a sense, becoming-policy for the Anthropocene affords a co-optation of the “post-truth” era that can refute the falsehoods that too often become propagated as post-truth realities.

Inquiry, as a field of study and application to policy, can subvert the potential falsehoods of post-truths by expanding the notion of policy beyond the fixed, whole, concretized concept

traditionally operationalized into development, implementation, and outcomes. Rather, examining becoming-policy affords an imaginative turn into speculative analyses that might challenge how we see the life, or zoe, of policy as it emerges into and through the real. In this sense, becoming-policy for the anthropocene proffers an ethical posture that requires fluidity and dynamism radically conceived; such a posture follows the lines of flight afforded by looking at the practices, discourses, and materials—the things and thing power—that intrasect in regimenting policy into an apparatus of governmentality.

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About the Author

Ryan Evely Gildersleeve

University of Denver

Ryan.Gildersleeve@du.edu

Ryan Evely Gildersleeve is Associate Professor and Department Chair of Higher Education in the Morgridge College of Education at the University of Denver, Colorado, USA. His research interrogates the philosophical foundations and social contexts of tertiary education, with particular interests in supporting Latino (im)migrant communities' struggles for educational opportunity. He is the author of *Fracturing opportunity: Mexican migrant students and college-going literacy* (Peter Lang), and he was a 2012-2014 National Academy of Education Post-doctoral Fellow.

About the Guest Editors

Jennifer R. Wolgemuth

University of South Florida

jrwolgemuth@usf.edu

Jennifer R. Wolgemuth is an Associate Professor in Measurement and Research at the University of South Florida. Her research focuses on the socio-politics of social science research. Her work illuminates and disrupts categorical accounts of the contexts, ethics, and outcomes of social science research, including their personal and social impacts on researchers, participants, and those who shepherd research evidence into policy and practice.

Mirka Koro-Ljungberg

Arizona State University

Mirka.Koro-Ljungberg@asu.edu

Mirka Koro-Ljungberg (Ph.D., University of Helsinki) is a Professor of qualitative research at the Arizona State University. Her scholarship operates in the intersection of methodology, philosophy, and socio-cultural critique and her work aims to contribute to methodological knowledge,

experimentation, and theoretical development across various traditions associated with qualitative research. She has published in various qualitative and educational journals and she is the author of *Reconceptualizing qualitative research: Methodologies without methodology* (2016) published by SAGE and co-editor of *Disrupting data in qualitative inquiry: Entanglements with the Post-Critical and Post-Anthropocentric* (2017) by Peter Lang.

Travis M. Marn

Southern Connecticut State University

Marnt1@southernct.edu

Travis M. Marn (Ph.D., University of South Florida) is a Professor in the Curriculum & Learning Department at Southern Connecticut State University where he teaches child development and educational psychology. His scholarship focuses on philosophically informed empirical accounts of performative identities, employing new materialism and posthumanism in psychological research, and contributing to the development of qualitative and post-qualitative methods and methodologies.

Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie

Sam Houston State University

tonyonwuegbuzie@aol.com

Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie is Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at Sam Houston State University, where he teaches doctoral-level courses in qualitative research, quantitative research, and mixed research. Further, he is a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of Johannesburg and an Honorary Professor at the University of South Africa. His research areas primarily involve social and behavioral science topics, including disadvantaged and under-served populations such as minorities, children living in war zones, students with special needs, and juvenile delinquents. Also, he has conducted numerous research studies on factors that predict educational achievement at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Additionally, he writes extensively on qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methodological topics applicable to multiple disciplines within the field of the social and behavioral sciences.

Shaun M. Dougherty

Vanderbilt University

shaun.dougherty@vanderbilt.edu

Shaun M. Dougherty is an Associate Professor of Public Policy and Education, Peabody College of Education & Human Development, Vanderbilt University. His work focuses on applied quantitative analysis of education policies and programs, equity, and career and technical education.

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