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## **The Domestic Foundations of Confidence in the United Nations**

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## **THE DOMESTIC FOUNDATIONS OF CONFIDENCE IN THE UNITED NATIONS<sup>1</sup>**

### **Abstract**

Given the range of United Nations programs, it is not surprising that public support for the organization varies widely. The United Nations has been criticized as overly bureaucratic, reluctant to act, and unable to enforce its declarations. In countries where the UN has acted, the population has not always welcomed the intervention. However, many people are committed to the UN mission and strongly support its initiatives. This research seeks to explain the variation in public support for the United Nations among citizens in forty-one member states. Using data from the World Values Survey, we consider the impact of knowledge, political interest, nationalism, territorial identification, ideology, and government trust on public opinion of the

United Nations. All the explanatory variables in our analysis are significantly related to confidence in the UN in the expected direction, with the exception of nationalism (which is significant in the opposite direction than anticipated) and ideology (which is not significant). This research indicates that public opinion on the UN is a function of individual values and attitudes toward public institutions. We suggest that given limited knowledge, trust in governing institutions is a core value underpinning public opinion on foreign policy issues.

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## 1. Introduction

We begin with the premise that it takes a leap of faith for citizens to provide enthusiastic support to a large multinational organization such as the United Nations. Given competing national priorities, a general aversion to taxes, and the mixed experiences some people have had with UN peacekeeping, citizens worldwide are understandably skeptical about an international institution that is complex, broad in scope, poorly understood, and not always successful. Although many people benefit from UN development programs and UN peacekeeping operations, others feel poorly represented or underserved by the United Nations. At the extreme, the UN is perceived as a worthless organization that violates national sovereignty. While most people understand that we live in an interdependent world in which the fallout from problems in one country is often global, they also know that large governmental organizations are frequently inefficient and inflexible. Citizens may understand that health crises and environmental pollutants spill across borders, yet they perceive that smaller-scale initiatives to combat these problems are less bureaucratic and more cost efficient (Schario and Konisky 2008). Thus, public support for international organizations varies within and among states. Some groups of people are clearly more inclined to support the United Nations, while others are more skeptical of its impact. In order to explore this variation, our study uses data from the World Values Survey to assess variation in public confidence in the United Nations.

A poll conducted in 2005 for the BBC World Service by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) found that the United Nations received favorable ratings in 23 of the 32 countries. Averaging across countries, 59% of respondents rated the UN as having a positive influence. However, among the 19 countries where respondents were also surveyed in the previous year, the percentage of people rating the UN positively had dropped by an average of ten points. PIPA director Steven Kull attributes this drop to UN corruption investigations and the failure to achieve significant progress in Iraq and Darfur (PIPA 2006).

A majority of Americans support the United Nations, in spite of leaders who criticize the organization. Yet, there is a long history of movements to end US involvement in an institution that Richard Nixon declared in 1967 was "obsolete and inadequate" for dealing with crises during the Cold War (Keefer n.d.). The John Birch Society launched its "get US out of the UN" campaign in 1959; its allegation that the UN represents "One World Government" continues to the present day. Jeane Kirkpatrick, former US Ambassador to the UN, wrote an op-ed column in 1983 asserting that negotiations at the UN Security Council "more closely resemble a mugging" of the United States "than either a political debate or an effort at problem solving" (Kirkpatrick 1988, 229-231). In 2005, President Bush appointed John Bolton as Acting US Ambassador to

the UN. A decade earlier, Bolton claimed, "There is no such thing as the United Nations. There is only the international community, which can only be led by the only remaining superpower, which is the United States" (Watson 2005). Despite these attacks by US leaders, polls conducted over the past two decades indicate a consistent level of support in the United States for a strong United Nations (Page and Bouton 2006).

Outside of the US, there are a range of opinions about the United Nations and its many activities. Citizens of some states are openly hostile to the United Nations, partly in response to their having been targeted by the UN for human rights or Security Council violations. Because of the activities of the Human Rights Council and the Security Council in condemning Israel's occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, many Israelis are extremely critical of the UN. Both Turks and Greeks are highly critical of the United Nations because the organization's four-decade-old peacekeeping operation in Cyprus has not helped resolve the conflict in a manner acceptable to either party. A 2008 poll of seven majority Muslim nations finds people perceive that the UN is dominated by the US and that there is dissatisfaction with the UN's attempts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (PIPA 2006). On the other hand, people in the Scandinavian countries have been steadfast in their support for the United Nations. In other countries, such as India, Ghana and Mali, many have benefited from UN humanitarian activities for years, and appear to have a degree of confidence in the UN that reflects their gratitude for UN-sponsored development and humanitarian programs.

Attitudes towards the UN resemble public opinion toward other international institutions. In a 2005 PIPA poll, overall international public support for the UN, at 59%, was only slightly stronger than support for the World Bank (55%). Overall support for NGOs was 60%, and support for the IMF was somewhat lower at 47% (PIPA 2006). Thus, public opinion on the UN seems to be indicative of general public support for large international organizations, and our findings about the basis of public opinion for the UN may be equally applicable to other international institutions. Thus, this study is significant beyond its immediate impact as an explanation of international public opinion on the United Nations. Our analysis sheds light more generally on the tendency of people to accept or reject institutions that transcend their nation-states. We aim to understand more clearly why some people see themselves as world citizens and accept obligations to an entity beyond their national government, while other individuals are more wary of this transfer of sovereignty and funds.

What explains the variation in public support for the UN and other international institutions? To what extent do these survey responses reveal differences in underlying values and attitudes about government and society? Our research indicates that the most important explanations for variation in global opinion about the UN are connected to concepts of political trust and low information rationality that were originally developed in the context of US public opinion. Popkin's (1991) theory of "low information rationality" demonstrates that the US public, even with limited knowledge of specific policy issues, uses pre-existing attitudes and ideology to make reasonable policy choices. Applying the "low information rationality" to the case of public opinion on the UN, we expect that poorly informed people will rely on pre-existing views of government and territorial identity to help shape their opinion of the UN. Our analysis of individual-level data from the World Values Survey demonstrates that support for the United Nations is a function of public knowledge, trust, and territorial self-identification. We posit that

with limited specific information, respondents rely on readily available attitudes and values to inform opinion. This is especially likely in the context of foreign policy, since most citizens are less familiar with international organizations and events than they are with circumstances and institutions in their own country.

## **2. Public Opinion and International Relations**

This study draws on a variety of literatures, from the very general research on foreign policy and public opinion to specific studies of the comparative impact of trust on confidence in the UN. Early research on public opinion and foreign policy focused on the United States. The “Lippmann-Almond consensus,” held that US public opinion on foreign policy is ill informed and erratic. Theorists described foreign policy as loosely constrained by public opinion and portrayed public opinion as providing the “permissive limits” (Almond 1950) or “system of dikes” (Key 1961) through which foreign policy could flow. According to this notion, a disinterested and volatile public would accept most foreign policy initiatives as long as the policies were within a range of acceptability. This conclusion was criticized by scholars who find American opinion on foreign policy more rational and consistent (Page and Shapiro 1982; Hurwitz and Peffley 1987; Aldrich 1989; Holsti 1992; Page and Bouton 2006).

Outside of the US, much research on public opinion and foreign policy has examined attitudes toward the European Union, particularly public opinion on the expansion of the EU’s operations and powers (Niedermayer and Sinnott 1998) and on the question of the future enlargement of the EU (Kentman 2008; Tanasiou and Colonescu 2008). One prevailing perspective on public opinion on the EU is that criticism and support of the organization is primarily a reflection of the popularity of the national government (Anderson 1998; Franklin, Marsh and McLaren 1994; Kritzinger 2003). Overall support of the EU depends also on the perceived economic benefits of membership. Low-income groups, whose jobs and social welfare benefits are threatened, are most likely to oppose the EU (Gabel 1998). Hooghe and Marks (2005) use Eurobarometer data to measure the relative impact of economic calculus and community identity on European public opinion. They find that both factors are important, but that identity has a stronger impact on public opinion than does economic self-interest. The impact of identity on support for the EU is complex; Europeans have multiple and overlapping identities, including regional, ethnic, national, and European (Klandermans *et al.* 2003; Risse 2003). Hooghe and Marks (2004) find that nationalism is positively associated with public support for the EU. However, they also note that national identity has been mobilized in opposition to the EU in cases in which the political parties are polarized on the EU and the radical right is powerful. Building on the work of Hooghe and Marks, Garry and Tilley (2009) demonstrate that economic factors condition the impact of identity on public opinion of the EU. Specifically, they find that living in a member state that receives a relatively large share of assistance from the EU acts as a “buffer” that dilutes the negative impact of nationalism on Euroscepticism. Similarly, living in a state that is relatively well off economically and thus attractive to immigrants, results in more skeptical attitudes towards the EU. Garry and Tilley conclude that the national identity and economic utilitarian indicators of public opinion on the EU are complementary, not contradictory.

The factors that shape attitudes toward the UN and other international organizations may be different from those found in the EU, where the costs and benefits of membership are more

evident and the issue of territorial identity is more salient. This article, therefore, seeks to advance our understanding of the determinants of global public opinion on international organizations. The relationship between knowledge and opinion in foreign policy-making is an important element of this research. A public that understands the institutions, goals, and costs of the United Nations will be more inclined to support the organization. Correct information in a variety of foreign policy issue areas has a direct impact on public opinion (Gilens 2001). Examining the relationship between knowledge and support of the UN in 28 countries between from 1989-1991, Millard (1993) finds that favorable opinion of the UN arises when the public is knowledgeable about the institution and substantially involved in UN matters. Public knowledge is also positively correlated to support for foreign aid programs in the United States and Europe (Diven and Constantelos 2009).

While recognizing that public knowledge of specific foreign policy information is poor, Popkin and Dimock (2000) demonstrate that a weak information base does not prevent the public from expressing rational foreign policy opinions on immigration and international trade. They argue that the public responds rationally, employing a range of other mechanisms to inform their choices: “People lacking familiarity with institutions and policy processes may simply draw upon *different* sources when assembling their beliefs” (216). Citizens draw on core values and beliefs when assembling foreign policy opinions in a “low information” environment (Brewer and Steenbergen 2002; Hurwitz and Peffley 1987). The impact of core values on foreign policy is complex, however. Personal beliefs are difficult to quantify and to disentangle from other factors (Goldstein and Keohane 1993).

Extensive cross-national research on trust has demonstrated its impact on attitudes toward government and policy. There is ample evidence in the American politics literature that US citizens are deeply distrustful of government (Citrin 1974; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 1995), and that both social and political trust have declined over the past four decades (Uslaner 2002). Hetherington (2004) demonstrates that trust is an important factor in determining why Americans are more favorably disposed towards some programs than others, and Uslaner (2002) notes that trusting societies are more likely to redistribute resources from the rich to the poor. In a cross-national study, Pharr et al. (2000) report an overall decline in public confidence in government, but they note important differences among countries. In Europe, researchers report varying levels of confidence in government institutions. For example, Miller and Listhaug (1990) find that public opinion is more trusting in Norway than in other states. Cross-national analysis of political confidence indicates that trust in government institutions is a function of individual well-being and government responsiveness. In a study of public confidence in twenty-five democracies, Catterberg and Moreno (2005) find that corruption undermines political trust, though not as much in Latin America as in other regions.

Social and political trust are important factors underlying the public’s overall foreign policy orientation (Brewer and Steenbergen 2002) and its support of specific foreign policy initiatives. Brewer et al. (2004) argue that trust of other nations (“international trust”) helps shape American attitudes towards internationalism and military action in Iraq. Analyzing European and US attitudes toward foreign aid, Diven and Constantelos (2009) show that stronger support for foreign aid in Europe is related to greater European confidence in government institutions. Although the level of support for international governance in foreign and defense policy varies

by institution and issue (Everts 1998; Schoen 2008), it tends to strengthen when citizens have favorable evaluations of specific experiences in these policymaking areas (Schoen 2008).

Recent scholarship has incorporated core values into multivariate analyses of public opinion on international organizations. In developing countries, public support of the major international economic organizations depends on evaluations of economic conditions, as well as ideological self-placement and basic attitudes about the desirability of a free market. Left opposition to the IMF and World Bank becomes more pronounced during fiscal crises, when countries are receiving loans from these international institutions (Edwards 2009). Using data from the third wave of the World Values Survey (1995-1996), Torgler (2008) finds in a thirty-eight country analysis that political trust, the level of corruption, and territorial identification with the world (as opposed to the nation or locality) are associated with confidence in the UN. With the passing of ten years between the third wave and the recently released fifth wave of the World/European Values Survey, sufficient time has elapsed to warrant a fresh look at the factors shaping world opinion of the UN.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. Research Design

This study analyzes public confidence in the United Nations using data from the fifth wave (2005-2008) of the World/European Values Survey.<sup>3</sup> The survey contacted nearly 83,000 respondents from fifty-six countries.<sup>4</sup> Building on prior research findings, we examine the impact of political interest and knowledge, nationalist sentiment, territorial identification, self-placement on a left-right ideological scale, and confidence in national political institutions. Dummy variables for individual countries are included in the analysis in order to capture the impact of distinctive national characteristics and experiences. The model is specified below:

$$UN\ confidence = a + education + interest\ in\ politics + nationalism + territorial\ identification + ideology + confidence\ in\ national\ government + country\ dummies + e$$

The hypotheses, expectations, and rationale for the variables are outlined in the following sections. The pooled cross-national model is estimated using OLS multiple regression analysis with SPSS.

#### A. The Dependent Variable

Attitudes toward the United Nations were measured in fifty-one countries using question V147 of the World Values Survey.<sup>5</sup> The text of the question follows:

*I am going to name a number of organizations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in ...*



--the United Nations:

1. *'A great deal of confidence'*
2. *'Quite a lot of confidence'*
3. *'Not very much confidence'*
4. *'No confidence at all'*

Table 1 provides the mean scores for national confidence in the United Nations in the fifty-one countries where this question was asked. The highest levels of confidence are found in Vietnam, Ghana, Mali, Sweden, and India. The lowest levels of confidence in the UN are found in Iraq, Argentina, Morocco, Turkey, and Serbia. The total mean score for the pooled sample in the World Values Survey is 2.60 (n=65,335), while the country average is 2.58 (n=51).

**Table 1: Mean Support for the UN by Country, 2005-2008**  
(rank ordered from most to least supportive)

Country	mean	s.d.	n	Country	mean	s.d.	n
Vietnam	1.70	0.750	1193	Colombia	2.58	0.993	2833
Ghana	1.93	0.863	1417	Malaysia	2.58	0.857	1200
Mali	2.06	0.986	1354	Australia	2.59	0.771	1393
Sweden	2.12	0.657	987	Trinidad & Tob.	2.60	0.865	935
India	2.16	1.010	801	Britain	2.64	0.850	905
Burkina Faso	2.22	0.992	1136	Russia	2.64	0.924	1547
China	2.28	0.767	822	Chile	2.67	0.900	904
Zambia	2.31	1.013	1423	Ukraine	2.70	0.903	759
Finland	2.33	0.680	999	Andorra	2.72	0.779	986
Romania	2.34	0.832	1493	Cyprus	2.73	0.978	1049
S Africa	2.35	0.911	2471	Germany	2.75	0.798	1893
Japan	2.36	0.700	893	Slovenia	2.75	0.739	942
Bulgaria	2.39	0.874	854	Ethiopia	2.77	0.860	1359
S Korea	2.39	0.725	1182	Netherlands	2.78	0.764	967
Italy	2.40	0.771	953	Jordan	2.80	1.164	999
Spain	2.42	0.713	1132	Peru	2.83	0.896	1291
Indonesia	2.46	0.850	1812	USA	2.83	0.804	1199
France	2.50	0.866	976	Thailand	2.86	0.830	1530
Mexico	2.50	0.974	1499	Taiwan	2.92	0.801	1151
Switzerland	2.50	0.772	1192	Egypt	2.93	0.981	2790
Poland	2.54	0.794	840	Serbia	3.00	0.829	1145
Rwanda	2.54	0.858	1162	Turkey	3.03	0.949	1216
Iran	2.55	0.857	2542	Morocco	3.12	0.843	869
Moldova	2.55	0.899	972	Argentina	3.14	0.814	862
New Zealand	2.56	0.789	789	Iraq	3.53	0.875	2324
Brazil	2.57	0.982	1393	<b>Total (pooled)</b>	<b>2.60</b>	<b>0.933</b>	<b>65335</b>

Source: World/European Values Survey, fifth wave, question v147. Scale: 'A great deal of confidence' = 1, 'quite a lot' = 2, 'not very much' = 3, 'no confidence' = 4'.

Public confidence in the United Nations is not a perfect test of public opinion or the public's willingness to spend scarce public funds on this international institution. It may be that some citizens support the general role and objectives of the United Nations, but are not *confident* in the institution as it currently functions. Nonetheless, this survey question is the best approximation we have of public attitudes toward the United Nations. Our model includes six hypotheses to explain cross-national variation in attitudes toward the United Nations. They are presented in the sections that follow.

*B. Hypothesis 1: Support for the United Nations is positively associated with higher levels of education.*

The first area we examine is the impact of knowledge and political interest on public opinion. Polls conducted by PIPA suggest that Americans are more likely to support US foreign programs when they are informed about the size of those programs.<sup>6</sup> To some extent, the level of public support for the United Nations may be a function of ignorance about the organization's mission and size.

How does a lack of knowledge influence public support of the UN? We argue that limited knowledge causes respondents to underestimate the positive impact of UN programs and overestimate the tax burden that UN dues place on their government. In addition, media outlets have focused public attention on reports of UN elitism or corruption, but are less likely to report the daily work of the organization in providing vaccinations and support for refugees. Still others may be poorly informed about the structural and financial limitations of the UN; thus, they may be disappointed that the UN does not do more to alleviate suffering or resolve disputes in their region.<sup>7</sup>

In order to assess knowledge of foreign programs, we use a measure that asks respondents to identify the highest level of education attained. Although this variable does not refer specifically to knowledge of the UN, we assume that respondents with higher levels of education are more likely to have accurate knowledge about the United Nations and its programs. Assuming that better information creates support, we hypothesize that this variable will be positively and significantly related to confidence in the UN. The independent variable measuring the "highest educational level attained" is scored from 1-9 with 1 as the lowest and 9 as the highest education level attained. We predict that higher levels of education lead to greater confidence in the UN. Given the scaling of these variables, a negative correlation provides evidence that our hypothesis is accurate.

*C. Hypothesis 2: Support for the UN is greater among people who say that politics plays an important part in their life.*

It is logical that knowledge of international organizations such as the United Nations is also a function of political interest. We assume that people who say that "politics plays an important part in their life" are likely to be more familiar with the United Nations and its institutions than people who are less politically active. We posit that familiarity with the UN is positively related to support for the organization. Politically astute observers who are familiar with the scope of the UN, the size of its budget, and its achievements are more likely to express confidence in the

organization. Thus, we expect that interest in political matters is positively related to confidence in the UN. To measure this relationship we use variable 007 from the World Values Survey. The question asks:

*Please say, for each of the following, how important it is in your life:*

*Politics:*

- 1. 'Very important'*
- 2. 'Rather important'*
- 3. 'Not very important'*
- 4. 'Not at all important'*

We expect that political interest will be positively correlated with confidence in the United Nations.

*D. Hypothesis 3: People who are more intensely proud of their national heritage are less supportive of the United Nations.*

Two variables from the World Values Survey are used to measure the internationalist sentiment and geographic identification of the respondent. The first, variable V209, asks about national pride. Assuming that people place themselves on a continuum that runs from extreme nationalism to a total lack of pride in their state, this variable tests whether those who aver more nationalist pride are less likely to be supportive of the UN. This variable is coded 1-4, with 1 representing the greatest nationalist sentiment and 4 representing the least nationalist sentiment. We expect that people who are very proud of their own nationality are less supportive of the United Nations. Extreme nationalists are presumed to favor the ideals of their own country and to see the UN as potentially undermining national sovereignty. The World Values Survey question asks:

*How proud are you to be [Nationality]?*

- 1. 'Very proud'*
- 2. 'Quite proud'*
- 3. 'Not very proud'*
- 4. 'Not at all proud'*

If our hypothesis holds true and nationalism precludes internationalism, then this variable should be negatively correlated with positive public opinion on the UN.

*E. Hypothesis 4: People who identify themselves as world citizens are most likely to be supportive of the United Nations.*

Acknowledging that people's territorial identification may be complex, and that there may not be a direct trade-off between nationalism and internationalism, we use a second question from the World Values Survey (V210) to measure geographic self-identification. Respondents receive the following prompt:

*I see myself as a world citizen.*

*1 'Strongly agree'*

*2 'Agree'*

*3 'Disagree'*

*4 'Strongly disagree'*

We expect that people who identify themselves as citizens of 'the world' are more likely to be supportive of the United Nations. By contrast, people with a more parochial geographic self-identification are likely to be less supportive of the UN. We hypothesize that lower values on this variable will be associated with greater confidence in the United Nations (i.e., a positive correlation).

*F. Hypothesis 5: People who consider themselves to be more leftist are more likely to be supportive of the United Nations.*

Given the historically internationalist nature of the socialist and communist movements, it is plausible that left-leaning partisans would be supportive of an international organization such as the UN. In addition, the positions the UN advocates on redistribution of resources, human rights, women's rights, and population policy lead us to believe that a leftist ideology would be associated with support of the UN. In this regard, the UN may be perceived differently from international lending institutions like the IMF. Meanwhile, partisans of the right, opposed to redistributive programs of the state, may be equally suspicious of international institutions.

We use self-placement on the left-right political spectrum as an indicator of the values held by respondents, and we anticipate that respondents with a more left-leaning self-placement on the ideological spectrum are likely to be more internationalist, and thus more supportive of the UN. The question asks respondents to place themselves on a left-right ideological scale, positioned from 1 (far left) to 10 (far right). The text of the question is:

*In political matters, people talk of "the left" and "the right." How would you place your views on this scale, generally speaking?*

We expect that this variable will be positively correlated with confidence in the UN, indicating that respondents' support for the UN diminishes if they are further to the right on the ideological scale.

*G. Hypothesis 6: Higher levels of trust in domestic institutions of government are positively associated with public support for the United Nations.*

In a democratic republic, citizens must place their faith in government representatives to make policies and implement programs in the public interest. When that trust is challenged, public support for programs wanes. Eventually, trust in government institutions and the governing system itself may be jeopardized. Hetherington (2004) notes that trust is particularly important when the benefits of programs are not immediately apparent. He cites the example of public education and notes that support for public education is naturally higher among citizens with school-aged children. Among those without school-aged children, support or disapproval for government funding will be strongly influenced by the level of trust in government. In the case

of international transfers of taxes via organizations such as the UN, citizens in “donor” countries must have confidence in multiple layers of government, including their own governments, the multilateral organization, and governments of net recipient countries. Given the disconnect between the citizen donor/tax-payer and the recipient, a lack of confidence in international programs is understandable. Indeed, one factor frequently cited by critics of foreign aid is the prevalence of government corruption and unnecessarily high military spending in recipient countries.<sup>8</sup>

The interconnectedness of trust is an important element of our argument. We posit that trust in national governing bodies and trust in international organizations such as the UN are linked. Trust in the international organization may depend on having trust in one’s own national government. To test this hypothesis, we have included an independent variable based on a WVS question about trust in national governing institutions. The wording of the question used to test this hypothesis is as follows:

*E075: I am going to name a number of organizations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them: is it a great deal of confidence, quite a lot of confidence, not very much confidence or none at all?*

*...The government (in your nation's capital)*

- 1. 'A great deal'*
- 2. 'Quite a lot'*
- 3. 'Not very much'*
- 4. 'None at all'*

We expect that the relationship between domestic trust in government and support of the UN will be positive and significant, demonstrating the interconnected nature of political trust.

#### H. Country Dummy Variables

In order to capture the impact of country-specific influences on public opinion on the United Nations, we also included in the analysis a 0-1 dummy variable for each country.<sup>9</sup> The populations of each country share a range of experiences that help frame their national opinion of the UN. This includes a number of aspects of the state’s history and cultural heritage which will uniquely influence national perceptions of large international organizations such as the UN. These country-specific factors include (but are not limited to) past and present experience with the United Nations, including UN peacekeeping involvement in the country or in regions of unique interest to that country. Elements of national political culture will also be captured by the country dummy variables. In addition, the history of UN contributions to the country’s well-being through disaster relief, health care, food aid, or development assistance may also have a national-level impact.

#### 4. Findings

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between the independent variables and confidence in the United Nations.<sup>10</sup> We use listwise deletion of cases with missing data, which reduces the number of cases in the regression analysis to 36,791

individuals from forty-one countries. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 2. Variables testing the first and second hypotheses both are significant and in the predicted direction. Higher levels of education are significantly associated with greater confidence in the UN, as hypothesized. Higher levels of political interest were also significantly related to positive public opinion on the UN. Clearly, educated people who are interested in politics are better informed and more supportive of the United Nations.

The third and fourth hypotheses test whether an individual's sense of nationalism and territorial identification are associated with support of the UN. We hypothesized that people who are proud of their nationality are less inclined toward internationalism and thus less supportive of the UN. The findings in our model contradict our predictions; pride in one's nation is significantly and positively related to confidence in the UN. Rather than confidence in the UN existing at the opposite end of the spectrum from nationalism, the two phenomena overlap. The respondents who lack pride in their own nationality also express a lack of confidence in the UN. Newly-established states (former Soviet and Yugoslav republics, for example) are neither nationalistic nor supportive of the UN. It appears that individuals who are uncomfortable with governance structures in their own states are also unlikely to feel confidence in international governing bodies. On the other hand, long-standing states with firmly-entrenched nationalism (Northern and Western Europe, for example) are more supportive of the UN. These data suggest that nationalism "spills over" to support for the UN. When people are comfortable with the sovereignty of their own state, they seem to be more likely to accept the jurisdiction of an international organization such as the United Nations. Though we did not anticipate this finding, it seems to support our conclusions about the importance of trust in government in general as a precursor to support of the UN.

In contrast to simple nationalism, the findings on territorial self-identification did prove to be significantly related to UN confidence, in the predicted direction. Respondents who consider themselves to be world citizens are more likely to support the UN. Those who most strongly identify with their local or regional geographic groupings are less likely to be UN supporters. Given the more specific nature of the territorial identity variable, it is logical that it predicts public opinion on this foreign policy issue.

The findings presented in this model contradict our expectations with regard to self-placement on a left - right ideological spectrum. Our hypothesis is that respondents who express a more leftist ideology will be more supportive of the UN. Contrary to our expectations, the analysis reveals that the relationship between ideology and UN support is not significant. One explanation for this counter-intuitive finding is that respondents in some non-western or non-democratic countries may not employ the left - right ideological spectrum in the manner that is commonly understood by US and European researchers. In certain countries, respondents may be unaware of how their political views would be reflected on a left - right political spectrum.<sup>11</sup> Self-placement on this spectrum could vary widely across settings and it is possible that our hypothesis reflects a western or U.S. bias. For example, the more radical left in some countries would view the United Nations as a tool of western imperialism and would not support the organization's stated mission. We tested the possibility that the impact of ideology is curvilinear; that is, the extreme left and right wings are united in their dislike of the UN. However, the results of these tests showed that political extremism was not correlated with

antipathy toward the UN.<sup>12</sup> The relationship between ideology and international public opinion on the United Nations merits additional analysis.

The relationship between confidence in the national government and confidence in the United Nations was strongly significant, as predicted. It appears that citizens who trust their national governments transfer this confidence to support for international organizations such as the United Nations. Clearly, both nationalism and confidence in domestic government are positively associated with support of the United Nations. People who are wary of their central government are also wary of international organizations. This finding provides evidence in favor of the importance of building political trust in all institutions of government as a foundation for positive public opinion on international organizations.<sup>13</sup>

The adjusted R-square for the model is .223, indicating that this model captures a relatively small share of the variation in public opinion on the UN.<sup>14</sup> In order to make full use of the World Values Survey (and thus be able to use data at the individual level) we used some measures that were less than ideal. For example, because there were no direct measures of knowledge of the UN, we used levels of education and political interest as indirect indicators of this variable. We believe that if the survey questions measured more directly knowledge of the UN, the R-square would be higher.

**Table 2: Results of OLS Regression Analysis**

<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.471	.031		47.498	.000
Highest educational level attained	-.011	.002	-.029	-5.670	.000
Politics important	.022	.005	.024	4.880	.000
How proud of nationality	.028	.007	.022	4.219	.000
I see myself as a world citizen	.085	.006	.075	15.414	.000
Self positioning in political scale	-.000	.002	-.002	-.415	.678
Confidence: The Government	.325	.005	.323	62.768	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Confidence: The United Nations

**Model Summary**

N	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
36,791	.473	.224	.223	.793



**Model Summary**

N	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
36,791	.473	.224	.223	.793

## 5. Discussion

The results of the multiple regression analysis present straightforward evidence of the relationship between public opinion on the United Nations, political interest and knowledge, territorial identification, and political trust. This research indicates that attitudes toward international organizations such as the UN are based on trust, and are not merely the result of recent events. Although it is tempting to think of public opinion on foreign policy as bound by one administration or current events, we find evidence of differences in public opinion that are based on fundamental and durable factors such as knowledge and confidence in government. Additional research should be undertaken to understand better the other values and attitudes that underlie opinion on international and multilateral initiatives.

Public opinion on foreign policy initiatives seems to vary at both the individual and the state level. Citizens in some states have developed positive or negative attitudes towards the UN because of their experiences with the organization. Referring back to Table 1, it is worth noting that some of the states whose populations are most disillusioned with the UN have had negative experiences with that organization in the recent or not-so-recent past. Among the most critical are populations in Iraq, Argentina, Morocco, Turkey, and Serbia. People in some of these countries have been on the receiving end of UN sanctions; other populations believed that the UN interfered with their right to territory (Morocco in Western Sahara) or were unhappy with the UN's handling of territorial disputes (Serbia in the Yugoslav conflicts, Cyprus and Turkey in the Cyprus conflict, Argentina in the Falklands/Malvinas conflict). Given the UN sanctions and the problems with the oil-for-food program, it is no surprise that Iraqi public opinion on the UN was negative when people in that country were surveyed in 2005. Other states that fall well below the mean UN confidence score of 2.58 include a number of places in which UN missions have been problematic, such as Ethiopia and Jordan. By contrast, the states with the greatest confidence in the UN include those that have recently benefited from UN intervention or humanitarian assistance: Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Mali. Thus, although the analysis in this model concentrates our attention at the individual level, we acknowledge the impact of state-level experiences with the UN.

We are able to make several observations about the impact of individual-level variables on public opinion on the UN. An important contribution of this research is identifying the impact of confidence in government institutions on foreign programs. Whereas trust in government has long been known to be an important indicator of support for domestic programs such as education and health care, it is clear that public support of foreign programs is a function of confidence in government as well. The results of this research indicate that there is a strong connection between confidence in domestic government and confidence in international organizations. This finding provides support for Popkin's theory of "low information rationality," suggesting that core values stand alongside knowledge as relevant factors in the formulation of public opinion on foreign policy.

This examination of international support for the United Nations demonstrates that education, political interest, geographic identification, and political trust are all important predictors of opinion on foreign policy. Although a measure of variance in public opinion on foreign policy

may be based on current events, a growing body of evidence suggests that foreign policy attitudes are deeply rooted and fundamental.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Earlier versions of this article were presented at the International Studies Conference in San Francisco (March 2008) and the World International Studies Conference in Ljubljana, Slovenia (July 2008). The authors thank Cooper Drury for his valuable comments.

<sup>2</sup> The fifth wave of the WVS/EVS is the same survey as the fourth wave of the WVS. Both numbering systems are used on the organization's website.

<sup>3</sup> We previously analyzed the fourth wave of the WVS/EVS (1999-2004) and found nearly the identical results to those found in the present analysis.

<sup>4</sup> The authors gratefully acknowledge the World Values Survey / European Values Survey. Data sets and a description of the survey are available at: [www.worldvaluessurvey.org](http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org).

<sup>5</sup> This ordinal variable approximates an interval variable, and it will be treated as such.

<sup>6</sup> One PIPA (2001) report indicates that when asked how much money should be devoted to foreign aid, the majority of respondents propose an amount far higher than the actual amount. When asked for an "appropriate amount," the median response was ten percent of the federal budget. This was approximately ten times the actual spending level.

<sup>7</sup> Looking at developing countries only, Edwards (2009) finds that more highly educated individuals, whose incomes may fall from liberal global economic regimes, are less supportive of international economic organizations.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Eurobarometer (2003) and PIPA (2001).

<sup>9</sup> We exclude one country in order to prevent the occurrence of perfect multicollinearity.

<sup>10</sup> We treat all scaled variables as interval data.

<sup>11</sup> There is some evidence for this: the left-right variable generated by far the largest number of "don't know" responses.

<sup>12</sup> Political extremism was operationally defined as holding a value of "1" or "10" on the left-right scale. The correlation remained low even when the definition was relaxed to include scores of "1-2" and "9-10".

<sup>13</sup> It is certainly possible that an alternative factor led to the correlation between confidence in national and international political institutions. The most likely factor would be a more generalized personal proclivity to trust others ("social trust"). We tested this possibility by adding WVS question v23 to the model ("Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?"). An analysis of the revised model indicates that "Trust in people" is not



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a statistically significant predictor of “Confidence in the UN”; “Confidence in [your] government”, however, retained its statistical significance (at the .05 level).

<sup>14</sup> The adjusted R-square without the country dummy variables was 0.132. Thirty-two of the forty country dummy variables were statistically significant; eighteen were not.

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## **Social Connections: Resiliency and Persistence in Post-secondary Learning**

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## **SOCIAL CONNECTIONS: RESILIENCY AND PERSISTENCE IN POST-SECONDARY LEARNING**

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study will be to identify factors in K-12 education that enabled non-traditional minorities to overcome extreme poverty or perceived discrimination and continue their post-secondary education. The sample population of interest will be participants from a pre-selected age group with various ethnic backgrounds, gender representation and socioeconomic levels. Contradictory results exist among studies as to whether the social connections made early in education contribute to minority persistence and resiliency. This proposed study will contribute to the literature on this topic by identifying possible factors of persistence and resiliency within minority populations.

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### **1. Introduction and Rationale**

Persistence is defined as the result of students' decisions to continue their participation in the learning event under analysis (Webster, 2003, p. 1445). Contradictory results exist among studies as to whether gender, socio-economic levels, cultural differences, or personal contact with caring faculty can be related to student persistence and meaningful learning. Similar studies on

persistence indicate older students, part-time students, minority students, and working adults have higher dropout rates (Clagett, 1996; Voorhees, 1993). According to Henderson and Milstein (1996), resiliency has six facets which increase student success and persistence in school. These include: caring and support, high expectations, life skills, social bonding with faculty, participation and clear boundaries.

### A. *Resiliency Theory*

Bosworth and Earthman (2002) explained that researchers began to study why some students experienced positive outcomes in life despite having conditions, backgrounds and other circumstances that place them at risk for failure. They stated that resilient students are those that thrive under conditions such as poverty, racism, lack of family support, psychiatric illness, alcoholism, or abuse. Benard (2004) described resiliency as an intimate capacity for self-correction and survival in the face of adversity.

Resiliency theory has evolved from the beginning of its study in the 1970s from one of focusing on risks to focusing on what makes youth survive in spite of adversity (Benard, 2004; Bosworth & Earthman, 2002; Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Richardson, 2002). Benard added that resiliency is a universal capacity in everyone. She argued that many of those in the worst of circumstances and at greater risk somehow manage to harness the self-righting ability of resiliency in order to make a decent life for themselves.

Benard (1991) found that in the environment there were similar experiences that resilient people had that helped them overcome environmental stressors. Some of those factors included: (a) taking care of others, or having others who depended upon them; (b) having at least one good relationship with an adult that made a difference in their lives; (c) being involved in activities that brought out their talents; and (d) feeling that they were capable people and necessary.

### B. *External assets of resiliency*

Constantine, Benard and Diaz (1999) proposed a resilience framework in which external environmental protective factors are composed of three clusters: caring relationships, high expectations and meaningful participation occurring within four environments: the school environment, home environment, in the community and with peers. The three external protective factors predict the development of the internal protective assets which includes social competence, autonomy and sense of self and sense of meaning and purpose. Benard (2004) warned that even though these external protective factors may be discussed as individual components, they are actually part of a dynamic protective process that must work together. For example, “caring relationships without high expectations or opportunities for meaningful participation foster dependency and co-dependency, not positive youth development.

*Caring and support.* Henderson (2007) described caring relationships as those that provide oneself and others with “positive regard, love and encouragement” (p. 10). Werner (2007) argued that a close bond with a competent, emotionally stable caregiver is vital for children to overcome adversities. This adult may be in the school, in the family, or in the community. Thomsen (2002) listed the following characteristics of homes, schools, and communities that provide support and caring environments.

*High expectations.* Benard (2004) stated that schools, families, communities, and peers can contribute to high expectations. She described this development asset as positive messages that communicate an adult’s belief in the young person’s ability to self-righting. Benard (2004) and

Thomsen (2002) affirmed that adults have the power to help youth understand their innate resilience and then can help them reframe the narratives of their lives from the victim to the resilient survivor through messages of high expectations.

*Meaningful participation.* Benard (2004) reasoned that creating opportunities for youth participation flows naturally from caring relationships and high expectations. Youth need opportunities to participate in groups or cooperative activities, such as extra-curricular activities, Odyssey of the Mind Teams, and other groups. Youth also need opportunities to contribute and give voice to issues that have meaning to them in their homes, schools and communities.

### *C. Internal assets of resiliency*

Constantine, Benard and Diaz (1999) listed three clusters of internal assets that are the outcomes of the external protective factors previously discussed. These three clusters of internal assets are social competence, autonomy and sense of self, and sense of meaning and purpose. When the external protective factors are in place, they influence the development of these internal clusters of resiliency traits. Within the three internal assets clusters are the following factors: (a) cooperation and communication, (b) self-efficacy, (c) empathy, (d) problem solving, (e) self-awareness, and (f) goals and aspirations.

*Social competence.* Benard (2004) argued that youth have social competence when they have the skills to form relationships and positive attachments to others. Werner and Smith (1992) called this “easy” temperament and also found that it could predict the ability to adapt (p.200). Benard (2004) agreed that social communication skills enable youth to develop relationships. Cross-cultural communication skills and cultural competence are also important for social competence. Benard maintained that it is important for minority youth to accommodate the dominate culture without assimilating into it. Minority youth are able to accommodate the dominate culture through the internal asset of social competence.

Empathy and caring are other important pieces to the social competence cluster (Constantine, Benard & Diaz, 1999). Benard (2004) stated that empathy is a hallmark of resiliency as it helps to form the basis for caring relationships and compassion. Being able to read the nonverbal cues of others is a skill that resilient youth develop.

*Autonomy and sense of self.* Benard (2004) described autonomy as the ability to feel a sense of control over one’s environments. It involves an ability to act independently and have a feeling of competence and positive identity (Sidanus & Pratt, 1993; Smith, 1991). Brown (2008) reported that among racial minorities, racial socialization contributes to autonomy and positive identity. Racial socialization is a set of behaviors or communications between parents and children. For example, this communication may involve how Hispanic people should feel about their cultural heritage, or how to respond to bias. These conversations enable ethnic minority youth to develop positively valued ethnic identities (Fuller, 1996; Gay, 2000; Griffin, 2000).

*Sense of meaning and purpose.* Thomsen (2002) reported that people feel that they are needed by others and have a purpose in life. Werner and Smith (1992) agreed that at some point children from Indigenous tribes who developed into resilient adults carried out some task that prevented others from experiencing discomfort or distress. This act of helpfulness contributed to their future resiliency as adults.

Thomsen (2002) stated that believing that one has a positive future is enough to keep resilient people working toward achieving that future. Benard (2004) agreed that the future-oriented strengths, such as goal direction, achievement motivation, and educational aspiration, help young people succeed in school, provide a feeling that they can control their environment, prevents them from engaging in risk behaviors, and may help them stay in school instead of dropping out.

Most of the resilient youth in Werner and Smith's (1992) study had hobbies and avenues to express their creativity. These interests were of great comfort to some when faced with extreme challenges.

## **2. Identification of the Problem**

What contributing factors inspire and motivate people who have experienced extreme poverty, oppression or discrimination from the dominant society in furthering their post-secondary education?

## **3. Purpose**

The purpose of this study will be to identify factors in K-12 education that enabled non-traditional minorities to overcome extreme poverty or perceived discrimination and continue their post-secondary education. The sample population of interest will be participants from a pre-selected age group with various ethnic backgrounds, gender representation and socioeconomic levels. Contradictory results exist among studies as to whether the social connections made early in education contribute to minority persistence and resiliency.

This study will investigate the following questions:

- 1.) How would you describe your K-12 educational experiences?
- 2.) Did you attend traditional public school, private or charter school for grades K-12?
- 3.) Who would you consider as having been part of your support and in what way did these people support you?
- 4.) Describe how you overcome any challenges during your K-12 education.

## **4. Methodology**

This study will use the narrative approach in identifying possible factors of resiliency in people who have experienced extreme poverty, mental and physical oppression or discrimination. Narratives provide thick, rich descriptions which provide the essence of their individual experiences. Clandinin & Connelly (2000) described narrative inquiry as "the study of some experience" (p. 189). This method will be appropriate because "oral histories... can provide considerable background and social quality to research, and an increased understanding and connection with the present and the past" (Berg, 2001, p. 220). In addition, narratives respond to historical events whose cultural and political ramifications continue to be enacted in the present (Casey, 1996).

### *A. The Participants*

The participants for this study were identified and selected using specific criteria: age ranges of 35-45 years old, their current enrollment in a postsecondary institution majoring in education and were considered by society as non-traditional students. Criterion-based sampling was used in order to obtain a sample that represented "information-rich cases" and that will exhibit maximum variability across various demographic factors because a diverse sample highlights the uniqueness of individuals as well as their shared common experiences (maximum variation sampling, Patton, 1990).

### *B. Instruments*

Data will be collected by means of two in-depth, semi-structured interviews with one being face-to-face and the other interview through email or phone conversations with each participant about their K-12 educational experiences. The pilot study participants will be representative of two different minority groups with whom the researcher is personally acquainted with and who will not be part of the targeted sample. Congruent with qualitative methodology, the interview questions will be open-ended to allow new constructs to emerge that might be limited by a more restricted interview structure (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

### *C. Procedure*

Initial contact with potential participants will be made by an emailed letter and followed up by phone calls or letters. The researcher will examine the meaning and significance of these lived educational experiences which might be factors that led these participants to continue their post-secondary education despite societal stigmas, oppression, and lack of equal educational opportunities.

While the use of narrative inquiry is considered to be a way of discovery, each of the stories will include an understanding of the speaker's self-interpretation (Casey, 1996). This can be problematic and narrative inquirers must be aware that they have to put themselves into the study in order to understand and at the same time claim to have some expertise (Richardson, 2000). Establishing a rapport with participants is critical in a qualitative research where personal interactions are used for data collection. Additionally, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) warned researchers, "relationships are vitally important in what the narrative inquirers do" (p. 189). The researcher will keep a journal, as entries are a "powerful way for individuals to give accounts of their experience" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 102). Journal writing, in the field, can offer the inquirer an opportunity to reflect on what is felt during the research experiences. By "simply asking the participant to tell about their past educational experiences," (p. 13) the inquirer can glean the stories.

Field notes or journal data will also include details regarding the interview site, duration, who was present, participant nonverbal communication, information expected to contribute to data transferability (ability to recreate the interview) and triangulation (use of multiple data sources), which are important criteria in establishing the trustworthiness of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Polkinghorne, 1995).

### *D. Data Analysis*

Data analysis will be based on the narrative inquiry method of Creswell (2003) and will follow a procedure similar to that of Polkinghorne (1995). Interviews will be transcribed, sent to participants for clarifications and approval or for adding of new information, giving participants the opportunity to further participate in the research (Creswell, 2003). A narrative configuration in qualitative analysis will be well suited for this study because the participants can be understood from their unique perspectives and educational experiences. In narrative analysis, Creswell (2003) states researchers collect descriptions of events and experiences and synthesize them by means of similar themes or stories. Narrative inquirers are required to ascertain similar themes that display the linkage among the data as the stories unfold (Creswell, 2003).

## **5. Limitations and Implications**

The limitations of this particular study are dependent on direct communication with persons who have characteristics, behaviors, attitudes, and other information relevant to the study. With sufficient time, opportunity and resources, this proposed study might have been strengthened by acquiring additional data from significant others, work colleagues, and observations regarding the participants in the study.

In terms of implications of the study for practice, educators should be trained in understanding both pedagogy and psychology which can be combined to create effective teaching however, what seems to be lacking in this assumption is the multicultural acceptance and value of other cultural identities (Banks & Banks, 1995; Freire, 2003; Singleton & Linton, 2006). The results of this proposed study should provide additional information and suggestions of how to promote social resiliency and persistence for continued post-secondary education of all students no matter what cultural group or socioeconomic level they belong to.

As a civilization, credence must be given to all cultural beliefs and uniqueness. In turn, each human being should be given the equal opportunity to learn and to feel confident with his/her own identity. All perspectives should be considered and valued, as everyone contributes to the greater society (Hilberg & Tharp, 2002; Howard, 1999, Penland, 2007).

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## **The P.E.A.C.E. Project: Philosophy, Ethics, and Communal Education**

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# THE P.E.A.C.E. PROJECT: PHILOSOPHY, ETHICS, AND COMMUNAL EDUCATION

## Abstract

This article explores how universities, college students, and surrounding local communities can collaborate to build, strengthen, and sustain relations. The PEACE Project is a social justice movement in which future educators enrolled in Schools of Education, philosophy majors, and communities unite to promote cognitive, social, and affective development of children and youth through a unique ethics based curriculum. PEACE provides future teachers with the opportunity to develop new skills to explore crucial issues regarding social justice with students, while simultaneously offering philosophy majors an alternate means to explore philosophy as well as provide pedagogical training for future philosophy teachers.

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## INTRODUCTION

Poor academic achievement, low graduation rates, and high drop-out rates, among other problems, have been the central focus in current mainstream debates and policy decisions concerning the fate (or reform) of public schools in the United States. In order to meet the demands instituted from top-down officials, many of whom have very little, or no, educational or teaching experience, school administrators and teachers are faced with undue pressure to produce high test scores which often result in teachers teaching-to-the-test and entire school days devoted solely to test preparation. Incentive programs such as merit pay or performance-based assessment of teachers (supported by President Barack Obama and the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)) place even more pressure on schools and has become a highly divisive issue in the ongoing debate on educational reform.

However, this pressure is not only felt by public school administrators and their teachers. Standards-based reform movements, specifically NCLB and Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan's Race to the Top initiative, also include the assessment of "quality" teacher preparation programs situated in Departments of Education across higher education institutions. The premise is, if public schools are to improve, so must teacher preparation programs in graduating quality, skilled, and proficiently prepared teachers. At the completion of two rounds of competition for Race to the Top funding, eleven states and the District of Columbia have been awarded money based on their comprehensive (or, standards-based) education reform plans that were developed based on four key areas of improvement regulated by Race to the Top. Of the four key areas defined by Race to the Top, one focuses specifically on teacher preparation: "recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most." In addition to federal assessment measures, in January 2011, the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) began reviewing approximately 1,400 teacher preparation programs across the 50 states evaluating the structure and design quality of each program based on 17 standards considered to be instrumental in successful teacher training programs. Those schools of education not proven to meet standards are subject to sanctions by state (i.e. - termination of teacher preparation programs) and federal (i.e. - cutting off funding) officials.

Due to the pressure such measurements place on students, teachers, and administrators at all grade levels (pre-school to grade 12 and undergraduate/graduate teacher preparation programs), the heavy concentration on testing and other outcomes-based measures leave very little room for alternative methods of assessment and implementation of creative, intellectually-stimulating curricula. As an Assistant Professor (NAME OMITTED) teaching in a School of Education, the majority of students who enroll in education courses are, not surprisingly, education majors required to take an introductory level foundations course focusing on the social, historical, and philosophical aspects of education – a lot to cover in a fifteen week semester! The “philosophy” part of the course is infused throughout the semester encouraging and reminding students to reflect upon the select philosophies and philosophers introduced to them from the onset as we discuss the complex and myriad social, political, and historical issues found within the education world. However, deeper analysis and connection to teaching on the different branches of philosophy (metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, logic, aesthetics, axiology, etc), while usually briefly mentioned in education foundations textbooks, is sorely lacking. Deeper analysis and understanding of how philosophy shapes our perceptions of self, others, and ultimately, our own teaching philosophy has always been a central focus in my own teaching of pre- and in-service teachers.

Now that teacher preparation programs are experiencing similar scrutiny as P-12 schools to perform well, there is real concern that authentic, organic, innovative pedagogies when teaching content-based subjects will take a back-seat to decontextualized pre-packaged curricula that tend to be technocratic and solely skills-based, resulting in teaching-to-the-test methods that many P-12 schools have resorted to. Brooklyn College’s nationally accredited School of Education is similar to many teacher preparation programs across the country in that we aspire to integrate diversity and social justice practices throughout the program; however, my personal fear and frustration is that once our students graduate, will they truly be afforded the opportunity to implement diversity- and social justice-based lessons, strategies, programs, and philosophies that they were exposed to in their undergraduate or graduate programs? Will their knowledge and understanding of affective, cognitive, and social development of their future students be respected, considered, and realistic to integrate when developing lessons? Will they be effective in differentiating their instruction to meet the diverse academic and linguistic needs of their students? Will they have the necessary knowledge, skills, and disposition to be a successful teacher?

As a student (NAME OMITTED) majoring in both philosophy and education while also working extensively with young kids and youth in developing curricula and teaching in afterschool and teen programs in Brooklyn, NY, taking a foundations and philosophy of education course at Brooklyn College seemed natural and necessary to better understand, reflect, and improve upon my own teaching philosophy and pedagogical skills. While issues of social justice and diversity were heavily emphasized in the course, I (Ben), too, witnessed a clear disconnect with what was practiced and emphasized in public schools to what was being discussed in my education course. When does a teacher cease to be an *educator* and become an *examiner* (*and what does that do to students and communities?* If I decide to become a public school teacher, will I be able to implement creative lessons that promote *life learning* values like critical analysis, self and social awareness, and student’s agency if I am faced with pressure from administrators to teach a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) focused curriculum in rote, dry, and

meaningless ways? As suggested earlier, public school teachers and administrators (P-12) are forced to focus heavily on high-stakes testing measure resulting in less educational time spent on other subjects, particularly the humanities. Initiated by Ben, we have proposed a unique collaboration between students majoring in Brooklyn College's School of Education and the Philosophy Department to participate in a project that will build and strengthen personal and communal relationships while improving critical thinking and literacy skills. It is proposed that the PEACE: Philosophy, Ethics, and Communal Education Project (PEACE) would address a growing gap which is evident in the current direction of the public educational system. As Dr. Jonathan Cohen (2006: 201) writes "parents and teachers want schooling to support children's ability to become lifelong learners who are able to love, work, and act as responsible members of the community...yet these values have not been substantively integrated into the schools or teacher training." However, such *life learning* values are nearly impossible to foster and integrate in schools and teacher training programs with the passage of NCLB which force teachers to teach-to-the-test with strong focus on STEM. If children and youth are not able to effectively and practically explore what it means to be "responsible members of the community" through a balanced, interdisciplinary approach to learning, and teachers are not trained to facilitate such educational experiences, then both individual students and the community will be stunted in achieving their maximum potential. Without schools providing the opportunities for students to develop *real* critical thinking skills (deep analysis), self-knowledge, ethical understanding, and a sense of social justice and communal responsibility, we can never expect them to "love, work, or act" as Cohen described. To this end, Cohen argues the importance of educators addressing and implementing strategies that will include social, emotional, ethical, and academic education (SEEA) into their teaching. PEACE attempts to integrate these four domains by creating a curriculum guide which aides in the personal development of the individual through: critical thinking exercises, experiential and *embodied* learning, self-knowledge exploration, affective/emotional/value clarification, discussion/dialogue and encounter, AND the involvement and participation in communal/social action. Just as important as the implementation of the curriculum guide, extremely crucial is that future teachers are given the opportunity to critically reflect, explore, analyze, and dialogue about ethical and social justice issues concerning them or their communities. The project encourages teacher training programs to engage its teacher candidates in coupling experiential and philosophic theory and pedagogy with curriculum development followed by implementation. This creates a model bridging theory and practice, offering teacher candidates practical teaching experience immediately upon enrollment of an introductory level education course. The experience gained as PEACE facilitators will assist teacher candidates in analyzing, deconstructing, and reconstructing curricula and model alternative approaches of instruction that will foster engaging, thought-provoking, and interactive dialogue that changes the traditional power dynamics of the teacher-student relationship. Teachers and students work with - and learn from - one another, creating safe learning environments that promote the "love, work, and act[ion]" Cohen argues for. Students and schools inspired to improve or enhance their communities aim to change the way communal institutions view their role as well. These institutions are not only there to provide basic services, but to help change the environments in which they exist for the better - one which is rationally grounded, objectively aware, and morally or ethically sound.

With the recent increase of bullying in schools and among youth in general, the need of an outlet for youth to develop cognitive, social, and affective knowledge in regards to ethics social justice

has grown even stronger. PEACE offers a unique and organic response to such an education vacuum wherein philosophical thought, social justice issues, and applied ethics converge both for youth and future educators.

Teaching-to-the-test and the promotion of other mindless test-taking skills have resulted in teachers ignoring important affective, cognitive, and social development of students. The result is very little to no focus on creativity, self-exploration, and cultural awareness that can be easily remedied through the incorporation of interdisciplinary approaches to the standard curriculum or the implementation of afterschool programs integrating the arts, music, and theatre with a philosophical twist. Sadly, there is generally little to no emphasis on meta-cognitive skills in teaching, even though *thinking about thinking* (philosophy, in a general sense) is of great benefit towards academic achievement. School curricula tend to neglect important diversity and social justice issues (i.e. - race, identity, justice, freedom) and when they do, there is little to no exploration or analysis of the topic. Discovery and project-based learning, alternative assessment measures, deconstruction and reconstruction of perceived social or political problems, critical and continuous reflection, and collaboration with community-based organizations and community members are missing, particularly in urban communities where resources are scarce. Instead, diversity and social justice (if at all integrated) are taught as neutral, rote, or static resulting in very little opportunity to engage with material on any *real*, critical, deeper, intellectual level. That is, students are not able to emotionally and cognitively register material. Even more disturbing is that according to recent research in the fields of educational psychology and neuroscience, our capacities and processes of thinking and feeling are intimately connected. It has been found that we learn more while experimenting and being active, while feeling free and in control of learning, and when we are socially and emotionally balanced (Blakemore, 2010; Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007).

As a philosophy and *dynamics of informal education* major (NAME OMITTED) deeply interested and invested in public education and social justice, it was perplexing to him that the Education and Philosophy departments, with so much in common, had not partnered sooner in ways to promote social justice through education. While learning about Brazilian philosopher and educator Paulo Freire in his education class, Ben was reminded of another influential Dutch Jewish philosopher – Baruch Spinoza – whom he was studying in his philosophy seminar. .

Paulo Freire (2009: 39) noted that a “radical” is a person committed to human liberation, and “the more radical a person is, more fully he or she enters into reality so that, knowing it better, he or she can transform it...[the radical] is not afraid to confront, to listen, to see the world unveiled... to meet the people or to enter into a dialogue ... [the radical] does not consider himself or herself the proprietor of history or of all people, or the liberator of the oppressed; but he or she does commit himself or herself, within history, to fight at their side.” Freire channeled his *radicalism* through education, developing the concept of critical pedagogy as an effort to empower individuals and communities to liberate themselves, and become more fully active in their lives and societies. According to such criteria alone, we argue that Baruch Spinoza, the Dutch Jewish philosopher, may rightly be considered a radical. He is aptly remembered for his comprehensive philosophical project which championed naturalism, rationality, democracy, and humanism; a project aimed at promoting the freedom, activity, and happiness of both the individual and the community, or *universal empowerment*. In §§13-14 of his *Treatise on the*

*Emendation of the Intellect*, considered to be an introduction to his broader project, Spinoza clearly pronounces this as his goal when he writes that “my aim is to acquire such a nature [one of empowerment or happiness], and to strive that many acquire it with me...that is, it is part of my happiness to take pains that many others may understand as I understand” (Curley, 1994: 6 pg?) Taken as a whole, Spinoza’s *corpus* represents a unified perspective of how adequate accounts of metaphysics, epistemology, psychology, ethics, and politics can help foster and facilitate his ideal of empowerment. He is, in fact, outlining a radical method towards achieving such a nature both individually and socially, by liberating oneself from the passions (the affects which render us passive) and establishing a democratic state. Furthermore, his radicalism, it has been noted, is embedded in this all encompassing philosophic perspective which challenges and critiques “some of the most ingrained antinomies” (Mercon and Armstrong, 2011: 253) and beliefs in classical and folk understandings of metaphysics, ethics, human nature, religion. Specifically, Spinoza argued against the dichotomies between mind and body, knowledge and emotion, and the individual and the collectivity, as well as the common beliefs in a benevolent and intervening God (and religious orthodoxy in general), free will, miracles, and natural rights. These general aspects of Spinoza’s philosophy, in addition to his relationship with unorthodox thinkers, his *cherem*, or excommunication from the Jewish community in 1656, and his condemnation as an “atheist,” it is easy to see how Spinoza can rightly be conceived as a radical according to and beyond the criteria which Freire enumerated.

It was the “radical” philosophies of Paulo Freire and Baruch Spinoza that inspired much of the development of the PEACE Project. PEACE has a mission which aims to not only supplement, but transform the current educational and communal institutions towards liberation, democracy, and social justice. As Steinberg (2009: 47) points out, for Spinoza, *peace* is liberation and it is a “civil condition” wherein community members are conscious and committed to the common welfare, engage in rational political discourse, and “are guided by harmonious affects.” To foster such a condition – the PEACE Project concerns itself with the intersection of philosophy and social justice.

Similar to PEACE, the long existing movement, P4C (“Philosophy for Children”), established in the late 60’s – early 70’s by Professor Matthew Lipman along with colleagues at Montclair State University’s Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC), has worked at providing children and youth the opportunities to study and “do” philosophy in order to develop cognitive skills and dispositions which can help promote children’s level of “reasonableness” (the fourth “educational R”). Over the last 30 plus years, P4C advocates and implementers have been focused on helping to establish communities of philosophical inquiry; those in which members are able to freely and rationally engage in discourse and dialogue with one another. Although the development of cognitive skills (i.e. - critical thinking, rationality, logic) and myriad other opportunities offered by exposure and immersion in “doing philosophy” under the current P4C norms (i.e. - communication skills, divergent thinking, inquiry and the pursuit of truth/knowledge) are not inessential, this construal of *philosophy* can at times prevent P4C educators from taking full advantage of the more *holistic* opportunities (self and social awareness and understanding, creativity, harmonious emotional balance) which philosophical inquiry can offer (Lipman, 1988).

Furthermore, while *some* P4C curricula and initiatives are centered around ethics and moral philosophy, very little attempt to create a bridge between the “community of inquiry” in the classroom with the *community* outside of the classroom. Instead, more often than not, most ethics based P4C programs focus on older students (mostly high school) and engage *applied* or *practical ethics* merely in the fields of science or medicine. This considered, the P4C movement can be seen, unfortunately, and perhaps not wholly intentionally, as a curious bedfellow to NCLB and STEM curricula. Similar to PC4 initiatives, PEACE is also concerned with logical reasoning, truth, acquisition of knowledge, but PEACE takes into account that philosophy is a cognitive/academic discipline that is rich with social and practical implications – ones which can seriously affect change and progress. By exploring, discussing, and learning about the way we think and feel about certain issues (including ourselves and relations to others), we can contextualize, critique, and modify the way we think, feel and act towards progress. In the PEACE world, we strive to promote philosophical engagement coupled with direct and practical social action projects which aim to not only develop and improve community relations and environments but also to foster leadership skills and social participation for all of those involved (P-12 students, future teacher educators, philosophers, community leaders, etc.).

Like all human beings, children and youth are by nature curious, questioning nearly everything. Unlike adults however, who unfortunately lack the time to maintain their wonderment and discovery, children are by nature philosophers. As such, children and youth all too often concern themselves with the three major areas which Anthony Quinton notes philosophy is concerned: “the general nature of the world (metaphysics or theory of existence), the justification of belief (epistemology or theory of knowledge), and the conduct of life (ethics or theory of value)” (Quinton, 1995). Unfortunately, the current system does not allow for the cultivation and exploration of such topics which students are inclined to cogitate. Engaging philosophy with youth in regards to social justice and ethics (values of good/bad, justice, equality, obligation, moral responsibility, etc.) is invaluable. Lipman (1988: 76) points this out when he writes that “when it comes to ethical reasoning...the subdiscipline of logic is indispensable.” Furthermore, philosophy’s approach to taxonomy and classification (hermeneutics, phenomenology, dialectic, etc.) allows students to contextualize and participate in moral inquiry in a meaningful way. To be sure, ethics is by no means restrictive to children nor too complex or mature. As Gregory (2009: 117) notes: “Even young children come upon ethical problems and opportunities every day: in the school bus, the lunchroom, the playground, the classroom, the street, and the home...[and they] often feel the distinct ethical qualities of these situations more keenly than we adults do...what we have to teach them is that the more they become aware of the unfinished, potential, qualitative ethical meaning of their experiences, and learn to inquire into that meaning intelligently, the more they will be able to respond to their own ethical problems and opportunities in ways they (and we) will find satisfying, appropriate and worthwhile.”

Focusing on the ethical realities of children in regards to individual and communal development is key; deconstructing situations and experiences, analyzing the moral dimension of subject matter, and applying ethical inquiry to our lives help students to develop civic and personal values, order their emotions, and become socially aware – this is the contribution of ethics in education. The social and affective values of philosophical and ethical inquiry with children are also a reverberation of Spinoza and modern neuroscience. Our social, emotional and cognitive developments are intricately intertwined, and the development of one domain requires the



development of the others. Furthermore, our natural social inclinations and emotional dependence on others to maximize our own potential advocate that such a philosophy and ethics based initiative, if it is to be concerned with social justice should be taken on via a trans-institutional and interdisciplinary effort. It is in this vein that PEACE aims to be a communal educational enrichment initiative. Meeting the needs of students is bar none the most important task that we have as educators and as long as the system is unwilling or unable to nurture such development, we must find a way to respond outside of the system (with the hopes of inspiring change within the system). The PEACE Project works by bringing together public schools, community centers, and universities to create meaningful educational experiences for individuals and the collective. As such, the project is in a position to bring a vivid, valid, and vital social justice/action dimension to youth, having students participate in social issues affecting their communities. The PEACE Project represents a unique convergence of philosophy, ethics, and communal education creating an environment where students, teachers, and community leaders can embody, explore, and engage in critical inquiry, service, and social justice towards freedom and empowerment.

In conclusion, the overall aim of PEACE is not only the educational and social enrichment of students towards communal vitality, but also the holistic personal development of kids. Equally important, it also forces a reexamination or shift in teacher training programs and prep/communal institutions' missions (or projects). While one of the major goals is to build or strengthen community relations (with the goal of liberation, happiness, democracy or other social justice mission) there must be "communal norms" of understanding and practice of rational dialogue, analytical and critical techniques, balanced and healthy emotions (empathy is crucial for social justice as is happiness) and the pursuit of knowledge and progress. To achieve such desired community relations requires that the individuals involved must be able to adequately develop their own cognitive, affective, social and ethical dispositions and reflect on how their individual development is interrelated with other's development over these four domains.

We have included in this article the model, goals and objectives, program design, future goals, and sample learning modules in hopes of inspiring readers to take action in their own communities, schools, and affiliated universities.

## **MODEL**

The PEACE Project is currently underway as a collaborative effort by the Brooklyn College Philosophy Department and School of Education to provide an experiential philosophy and social justice themed educational enrichment program for 350-500 children and youth (grades 4-12) in NYC afterschool and teen centers. Program objectives include the promotion of cognitive, social, and affective development of NYC youth through a unique ethics based curriculum; providing future NYC teachers with the opportunity to develop new skills to explore crucial issues regarding social justice with students; and offering philosophy majors an alternate means to explore philosophy as well as provide pedagogical training for future philosophy teachers. As such, in its pilot year, the PEACE Project will be implemented by 20-25 specially trained Brooklyn College education and philosophy majors with the guidance of faculty members drawn from both departments. In its pilot year, the PEACE project will be coordinated by an intern in

the Brooklyn College Philosophy Department who will oversee all aspects of the program including educational programming development, administration, and evaluations.

## **Goals and Objectives**

The primary goal of the PEACE Project in its pilot year is to provide opportunities for 350-500 children and youth (grades 4-12) to engage and explore philosophical and ethical issues as they apply to personal/communal development through the implementation of an experiential ethics and social justice based curriculum in afterschool and teen centers in the NYC area. A desired correlated goal is that through philosophically rooted discussions and learning, children and youth will also begin to develop improved reasoning, analytic, and other cognitive techniques as well as an increased sense of community and social responsibility. Secondary goals for the project are focused on the 20-25 PEACE facilitators (students from both the BC School of Education and BC Philosophy Department) who would implement the PEACE curriculum centered on *life learning* values. Future educators/teachers within the School of Education will be involved in training and gain experience in exploring these values (philosophy, ethics, and social justice) and alternative methods of teaching with students in both formal and informal settings such as classrooms and after-school programs. Students in the Philosophy Department will be given a chance to engage philosophy outside the academic setting with a unique perspective on applied philosophy and philosophy of education. This will give philosophy students (who may also be future educators) experience in teaching philosophy and youth. The collaboration between the two academic Departments will enhance the quality of the PEACE curriculum and its implementation for the children while also promoting interdisciplinary skills on the part of the student-facilitators which will further their own personal and professional development.

## **Program Design**

The PEACE project will be staffed by the PEACE coordinator (an intern working half-time) to develop and coordinate all logistical and programming aspects of the project. An advisory board will be formed with representatives of faculty from the Brooklyn College School of Education and Brooklyn College Philosophy Department as well as staff from the after-school and teen centers in which the PEACE project is to be implemented. The PEACE project is centered on a 6-unit philosophy/ethics based (i.e. identity/self, freedom, justice/fairness, responsibility/obligation, happiness, etc.) experiential education curriculum (learning through role-playing activities, arts and crafts, games, and other modules) to be developed by the PEACE coordinator. There will be three variations of the curriculum according to the various age levels of PEACE students (elementary, middle, and high school). This is to be achieved in collaboration with the advisory board. In its pilot year, the PEACE curriculum will be implemented by 10-12 PEACE facilitator pairs (ideally, one philosophy major and one education major) who will each work with students in the age level of their concentration or interest. The PEACE project will be carried out in three stages during the length of a college semester (for both fall and spring), including two co-curricular events for middle school and high school level PEACE students in the spring semester. These events, a 3 hour mini-conference (PEACE Summit) and a community service day (PEACE-athlon), will provide an opportunity for older

students in different locations to extend their engagement in philosophy and social justice, meet one another, and gain leadership experience.

### *Stage One: Training and Development*

This first stage consists of a 6-hour PEACE training seminar which will be led by the project coordinator and involved faculty. Over the course of three 2 hour sessions, facilitators will be introduced to the PEACE project, experiential education as related to personal/communal development, and each of the six curricular units (including content, facilitation techniques, and variations according to age-levels) by engaging with the learning modules hands-on. By the end of the PEACE seminar, student-facilitators will be familiarized with the project and the curriculum, and also have an opportunity to meet with their partner and use the skills and content they learned to begin brainstorming for the mini-conference and community service event.

### *Stage Two: Implementation*

The second stage of the PEACE project is the 12 week period in which the PEACE facilitators implement the learning modules for the participants (according to the after-school and teen center's availability). Facilitator pairs will be assigned to the institution(s) and grade level(s) for whom they will facilitate the six 45 minute units over the course of the semester. Prior to implementing each unit, student-facilitator pairs will have the opportunity to meet with the project coordinator to review the content and activities and make any needed adjustments.

### *Stage Three: Evaluation*

The third stage of the PEACE project is a final evaluation period. After a unit is implemented facilitators and after-school coordinators will be asked to evaluate the unit. Classroom teachers or after-school coordinators will also be asked for feedback on the effectiveness of units.

During the remaining weeks of the semester, the PEACE project coordinator and faculty will meet with all student-facilitators to evaluate their experience and provide feedback on the PEACE curriculum and project as a whole. Teen center and after-school coordinators will also be asked for feedback on the PEACE project. It is hoped that a selected number of direct feedback interviews with students may also be conducted. After all evaluation and feedback is collected and researched, the PEACE project coordinator will write a program assessment report as well as offer considerations and suggestions for future PEACE project initiatives.

## **Future Goals**

If successful in all of its goals, the PEACE project aims to be an ongoing program offered at Brooklyn College for philosophy and education majors. The curriculum will expand to 8 units and be implemented for more children and youth in a wider variety and increased number of educational settings, including day camp.

Further, in year two, a consultant will be added to the project to help define measures to gauge academic and social progress of PEACE participants. The consultant will work with the PEACE

project coordinator and advisory board to assist in assessments and offer suggestions for future initiatives.

## Sample Learning Module

### *Rawls Relay for Justice*

Themes: Justice/Fairness

Age: 4rd – 6th grade

Location: Indoors

Time: 45 mins

Materials: “PEACE: Justice ID Cards,” persona list, bowl for lottery, veil/curtain to hide results, large post-it dry-erase board, markers.

**Goal: To have participants articulate a conception of justice and enumerate a set of values which would allow them to be advocates for justice. To have participants relate their conceptions of justice to their lives.**

#### Introduction (7 mins)

- Facilitator announces to group that “unfortunately, only *some* participants can participate in today’s activity. We will hold a race to see who will get to participate today, but to be fair, we will hold a trial run to see the positions in the real race which everyone deserves.”
- Hold *trial run*.
- Place participants into positions closer to or farther from the goal respective to how they finished in the trial with first place runner receiving the closest position and the last place runner receiving the farthest (naturalism). As participants begin to express the “unfairness” of their new positions, rearrange so that the majority are in equal positions and announce that “unless a majority of people are unhappy, these will be the final positions” (utilitarianism). Again, as participants express “unfairness” rearrange positions randomly. When those who were now less advantaged than they previously had been express dissatisfaction, announce to the group that everyone will have an opportunity to participate in today’s activity.

#### Main (28 mins)

- Facilitator gathers participants into a circle, and elicits reactions while writing responses on large post it:
  - Why was everyone unsatisfied before?
  - What is justice? Fairness? Are they the same?
  - Was the race we had just/fair or unjust/unfair? Why?  
(7 mins)
- Facilitator distributes invitations to “the original position” and volunteer reads aloud:  
**“Congratulations, you have been invited to the original position! We think of you as a reasonable, good person who gets how the world works! You are the perfect person to help us figure out certain values that will lead to justice in society. There is**

**one trick though, you are asked to forget everything about *you*, and act on behalf of *someone else*. You will not find out who you are representing until after the group comes to a decision, still do everything you can to make sure that person will be happy. - Mr. John Rawls”**

- Facilitator introduces list of possible personas which participants will represent and holds a secret lottery to determine who will be representing each persona (e.g. African-American Store Owner, European immigrant, white man with children). The participants are not told who they have been assigned to, thus creating a *veil of ignorance*. (3 mins)
- Facilitator guides discussion (15-18 mins):
  - Without knowing who you are representing, what would you think is most important in order for everyone to be happy? Are there certain rights or things which everyone should have or be able to do? (freedom of speech/thought/assembly, making decisions, property.)
  - Should people have equal opportunities to influencing decisions and acquiring positions? What about the same education, recreational activities?
  - What would the best system of justice look like? Let’s use our race:
    - Should people be unequal because some people are born with certain talents or in certain places? (First positioning)
    - What about so that a majority of the people are happy? (Second)
    - Random? (Third)
    - What if we made it so that those who weren’t as well off would get a little more and those who were very well of gave a little? So that everyone is closest to being equal? (Difference Principle)
  - Have you ever felt like something was unjust or you were treated unfairly? How did that feel?
  - How can something be unjust in school?
  - Should we aim to always act in according to justice?

Closure (10 mins)

- After holding discussion and coming up with principles and a conception of justice. Distribute the personas which each participant had been assigned to and elicit their reactions to whether or not they think the individual they were representing would be happy with the principles they came up with. Would *they* be happy? Why?
- Close by providing “Justice ID Cards” in which participants write something they can do to ensure justice (look out for classmates, share supplies, etc.). Have participants share if they like.

### **Sample Learning Module**

Theme: In-groups and Out-groups/Diversity/ Bullying

Age Group: 3rd-5th grades, middle school

Time: 2 consecutive 45-minute periods

Setting: Indoors

Materials: *The Sneetches* by Dr. Seuss, small cylindrical block, cut out stars necklaces (construction paper and string)

Goal: For students to have an opportunity to reflect on issues of identity in the context of “in-groups” and “out-groups” and how this relates to bullying by performing different scenes/perspectives of Dr. Seuss’ *The Sneetches*. To have students develop and work on imagination, storytelling, emoting, perspectives, empathy, and understanding of “the other.”

#### Introduction (15 mins)

- Play a game of “Do You See What I See?” while students are in a circle. (5 mins)
- Teacher begins the game by holding up the cylindrical block and saying “Do you see what I see? What we have here is a…” and finishes the sentence with a potential use for the block (lipstick, a roller, dynamite, a costume horn, etc.). Students then take turns coming up with a use for the block and must act either: AMAZED, SAD, HAPPY or ANXIOUS regarding what they imagine the block to be.
- After everyone has had a turn, the teacher notes that “sometimes we can all be seeing the same thing a bit differently, and everyone has a unique perspective with what they see. Sometimes, however, people unfortunately do not understand other peoples perspectives, especially when people look a bit different. We will be listening to a story and putting on skits which talk about this.”
- Read Dr. Seuss’ *The Sneetches* (10 mins)

#### Main (20 minutes)

- As a group, the teacher holds a discussion, eliciting students responses and reactions to the story.

#### Some Guiding Questions to Discuss:

- What made the Sneetches different from one another? Same?
- How do the Sneetches treat those who are different from them? Is that ok?
- How do you know one thing is different from another thing?
- Is it based on things you can see, things you cannot see, or both?
- What about the differences between what we each saw in the block earlier?
- Are there any situations in which it is okay to treat two things differently because they are different?
- Imagine that one person in class is really smart. Should they be treated differently? If not, are there any examples you can think of where you would treat someone differently?
- Why do you think the Plain-Bellys wanted to use the man’s machine? Did it really change anything about them?
- Why do the Star-Bellied Sneetches still think they are better than the Plain-Bellys after they change and have stars too?
- Have you ever been treated differently or unfairly because you were different from someone?
- How did it feel?
- Is there a lesson in the story?

#### Intermediary Closure (7 mins)

Teacher will wrap up discussion and thank everyone for their reactions and sharing their feelings/thoughts. Teacher will announce that “next time, they will be acting out different pieces

of the story in groups for each other, but before we do, we must make sure that we can begin to understand one another better, like the Sneetches did in the end of the story.” (3 mins)  
Close with a brief “mirroring” exercise to explore understanding and unity through non-verbal communication. Pairs stand opposite one another and one is assigned lead. The other will be the lead’s mirror and then switch. Call out different tasks to do in mirror (emotive faces, riding horses, dances, poses, etc)

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Intro (3 mins)

- Teacher will briefly remind students about the story of *The Sneetches* by Dr. Seuss.
- Announce to the class that they will be preparing short 3 minute skits that will retell the story of the Sneetches from different perspectives.

Main (25 mins)

- Teacher will split the students up into groups of 5-6.
- Each group will be responsible for recreating a different portion of the story through different perspectives or narrative mediums:
  - Group 1: Setting the scene by giving a brief intro to the story (“family story time” – a family recounts a bit about a story the parents once heard about beach creatures called Sneetches)
  - Group 2: How the Plain-Belly Sneetches felt after not being allowed to go to the BBQ. (pantomime with narrator) and for what reasons?
  - Group 3: How the Star-Belly Sneetches felt when they see the Plain-Bellies with stars. (“three words at a time” – each actor may only speak 3 words at a time) and for what reasons?
  - Group 4: Create a back-story for why the man decided to create the machines and how he felt about it. (“everyone is one” – each actor plays the same role, but represents different motions or thoughts regarding the character)
  - Group 5: A skit about how all the Sneetches reacted (and the lesson learned) after going through the machines and getting mixed up. (“breaking news broadcast” – anchor, reporter, witnesses)
- Teacher will assign each group to a corner or area in the room to begin creating and rehearsing their performance. Teacher will work with each group to help brainstorm and assign roles (if needed) and guide students.

Closure (17 mins)

- Teacher will welcome students to the performance and invite each group up to act out their scene, announcing the dramatic style/perspective they are implementing.
- After groups have finished, have students applaud one another, and write on the back of their star necklace one way that they can make sure they do not let differences get in the way of friendship.

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## **Raising the Curtain: Anarchist Economics, Resistance, and Culture**

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## **RAISING THE CURTAIN: ANARCHIST ECONOMICS, RESISTANCE, AND CULTURE**

### **Abstract**

Many accounts of anarchist economics argue for a specific visionary position, at times leaving aside the question of how to get to that future society. Anarchists who write about methods of achieving a new world free of domination often reduce struggles to instrumental and (classically) revolutionary practices of confrontation and class struggle. This article argues that in addition to class struggle, anarchists should fight for a post-capitalist future in the terrain of ideology and culture. Further, a truly holistic anarchist economics must account for resistance strategies to capitalism, not only through instrumental methods of struggle, but also through these interventions into culture and ideology.

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*People who talk about revolution and class struggle without referring explicitly to everyday life, without understanding what is subversive about love and what is positive in the refusal of constraints, such people have a corpse in their mouth. -- Raoul Vaneigem*

No discussion of economics from the perspective of those of us who actively resist capitalism would be complete without a discussion of ideology and culture. After all, ideology and culture have a special place in maintaining, as well as transforming, the status quo. This certainly wasn't lost on revolutionaries and militants of times past. But despite this history and wealth of theory, contemporary radicals often still relegate the problem of culture to secondary importance—a close second to transforming the structures of society.

Part of this is because so many still rely on economistic Marxist models for how society works. Marx (1977: preface), for his part, believed that the economic system of a given society was a major force for producing the culture, politics, and even consciousness of the whole of society<sup>1</sup>:

*In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely [the] relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure, and to which correspond definite forms of consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political, and intellectual life.*

*Marx believed that revolution came when the development of the forces of production began to conflict with the ways that property relations played out in society. Thus, according to Marx, as capitalism developed in the world and we became increasingly able to provide for everyone, that material fact would come into conflict with living in a world split between the wealthy few and the working many. This would lead to working people questioning the logic of living under capitalism, recognizing their own interests, and would be followed by a revolutionary rupture that would bring about socialism. This is, perhaps, a mechanical and over-simplified caricature, but a paragraph could hardly do Marx justice, as volumes upon volumes have been dedicated to interpreting his work, often times coming to wildly different conclusions.*

*While the revolution in Russia provided many Marxists with hope that this revolutionary rupture had finally begun to occur, it was not followed by international socialist revolution. Further, the Bolsheviks, who seized state power after the revolution, immediately set about to dismantling the democratic and self-managed character of the new institutions the revolution had ushered in, nurturing those organs that they controlled and disassembling those that they did not (for an interesting and short overview, see Wetzel 2008). This led to a reconsideration of the mechanical Marxist model, especially in the mid 1900s, taking a close look at ideology and culture. After all, where was this promised revolutionary rupture? Why hadn't workers recognized their collective interests and overthrown capitalism? The answer, for many radicals, could be found by looking at the cultural sphere.*

### **How Ideology Rules Us**

*Perhaps some of the most interesting work on culture and ideology have come out of these Marxist attempts to explain, ironically enough, why Marxism didn't live up to its own promised socialist revolution. Radicals turned their attention to culture as they attempted to explain how false consciousness had embedded itself so deeply in the working class. Rather than material interest being the guiding principle of working class politics, many workers not only accepted society's institutional arrangements, they also were some of its most vocal supporters (a situation not much different from today in many contexts). Anarchists can learn a lot from what Marxists got right in these explanatory attempts.*

*Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony, for example, seems particularly salient for contemporary anarchists. According to Gramsci, workers didn't end up fighting Marx's predicted revolution because they had internalized the values of the ruling class. That is, capitalism, culturally, had become hegemonic—or naturalized. People began to see capitalism as a naturally occurring, common-sense method for organizing society and, therefore, were unable to even imagine the possibilities for alternatives to organizing society into owners and workers, masters and slaves.*

*Feminists and queers have put this concept to use to describe how we've come to view things like gender and sexual identity as well. Rather than seeing gender and sexuality as fluid, ambiguous, or at times off the map, we tend to view them as essential, rigid categories that occur naturally. This leads to essentialist understandings of what it means to be a "man", a "woman", "gay", "straight", etc. It also invisibilizes the lives of anyone who doesn't fit neatly into our dominant categories for gender or sexuality. Hegemonic ideas about gender also inform the ways that men come to dominate women. Interpersonally, this often leads to men dominating discussions, relegating women to secretarial tasks, people ignoring the contributions of women, etc. It also leads to institutionalized sexism and patriarchy being embedded in our society's governing structures.*

*Particularly for anarchists, but also for anyone opposed to all hierarchical social relations, we need not stop at applying Gramsci's analysis to class. We can benefit by borrowing from the above feminist and queer thinking as well. Likewise, we can demonstrate how naturalized and hegemonic our assumptions have become surrounding race and white supremacy; the ways that we devalue and destroy eco-systems and our natural environment; and how we've come to see the entire non-human world as a resource for our use, devoid of value outside of human benefit. And anarchists can also offer our own unique criticisms of common-sense notions surrounding the state.*

*Indeed, part of the task of a contemporary anarchist economics should be to develop a distinctly anarchist criticism of the dominant ideology as well—not just in terms of critiquing capitalist property relations, but also the hegemonic ideas surrounding state authority that make people automatically assume that THE way to address the excess, exploitation, and poverty inherent in capitalism is to find the right hierarchical and state-based "solution" to it. Most people can't even imagine an economy that isn't controlled by either capitalists or the state (or, most often, some combination of the two) and the prominence of issues like nationalized healthcare, welfare, and the like effectively limit the conversation to this sloppy either/or scenario.*

*These hegemonic beliefs about the state are partially imposed in social life through ideological state apparatuses (Althusser 1971)—especially through formal education within the context of a hierarchical (and sick) society (see e.g. Armaline and Armaline 2012). From early on, we are pounded with the idea that the state is our savior, that "doing politics" means voting for a representative to make decisions for us rather than acting on our own behalf, and that the opposite of centralized state authority (anarchism) is chaos. One can even see echoes of the acceptance of this governing ideology (and explanation of what "anarchism" is) in portions of the anarchist milieu, as some anarchists criticize organizations and institutions as such rather than how they operate within the framework of our existing social relations. But anarchists have*

*never opposed organization as such. Rather, our disagreements are over organizational form, purpose, and duration.*

*Anarchists can also learn a lot from what some of these Marxist attempts at explaining the constraining effects of ideology and culture got wrong. Perhaps one of the best examples is contained in Horkheimer and Adorno's (1994) critique of the culture industry. To Horkheimer and Adorno, the culture industry under capitalism produces cultural goods for popular consumption in much the same way factories assemble standardized parts. Mass cultural goods are routinized, predictable, and formulaic. Worse still, they serve as distractions, as people become passive consumers of "easy" cultural products rather than learning to appreciate "difficult" high culture—which is much more likely to critique the status quo. However, "high" culture, according to Horkheimer and Adorno, is reserved to the elite classes, thus containing any real threat to capitalism.*

*This theory is littered with problematic assumptions, many of which likely stemmed from the fact that Adorno had little confidence that ordinary, working people could be agents of revolutionary change. For one, this analysis paints working people with an overly homogenous brush, as if all people take the same "reading" from popular cultural forms. In fact, the working class is diverse and among such a diverse population people take away many different meanings as they go through the process of decoding (Hall 1980) art, music, etc.—some of which are at odds with the intended message of a given piece. Secondly, this suggests that workers are the stupid dupes of capitalist cultural products, lacking the ability to critically analyze society and alter it. This can lead to a disregard for attempts at altering society altogether. After all, what is the use of anarchism if people don't have the potential to act in their interests to alter society? This would mean that radical change is not possible—and the historical record speaks differently.*

*Finally, this analysis of the culture industry swallows the elitist notion that we can place hierarchical value on cultural products and that, in fact, what the upper class enjoys is that which is most "difficult", sophisticated, and good. These markers of distinction between aesthetic preferences have historically been used as methods of distinguishing "proper" upper-class taste cultures from those of the common rabble (see e.g. Bourdieu 1984, Gans 1999, Levine 1988). Suggesting that the cultural forms preferred by working people can be judged as less "sophisticated" than those preferred by the ruling class accepts the class elitism that created those taste hierarchies in the first place.*

*This is by no means an exhaustive review of the literature surrounding the problem of culture and ideology and their relationship to resistance to capitalism (such a review is beyond the scope of a single journal article). However, the theoretical developments outlined in this modest section, I think, can inform anarchist practice in undermining capitalism and the state. Further, they illustrate how ideology is implicated in the maintenance of the status quo—how ideology rules us.*

*Gramsci's notion of "hegemony" shows us how hierarchical values come to be seen as the natural, unquestionable, common-sense values of everyone. These values get dispersed throughout social life through ideological state apparatuses, especially in formal schooling. It can be pointed out that these hegemonic notions about the superiority of the ruling class inform even the theories of*

*radicals at times, subconsciously swallowing the belief that the wealthy are more "cultured" than the rest of us. We can also demonstrate how the ideology of statehood has become so embedded in social life that even questioning the logic of the state can lead to serious repercussions—the least of which is not being taken seriously. Anyone who has critiqued patriotism in centers of state-chauvinism and loyalty knows well that the consequences for not expressing the expected enthusiasm for being ruled can easily lead to outright violence.*

*These naturalized assumptions about a kind, benevolent, democratic, and participatory state (that is necessary for human social organization!) are particularly difficult to overcome—precisely because this anti-logic pervades so much radical thinking, and is endemic to liberal and conservative thought. Our notions around the necessity of statehood have become so completely hegemonic that even erstwhile "radical" individuals and organizations now help campaign for reformist parties like the Green Party in the USA, as if electing a kinder and gentler ruler somehow represents a break with the existing society. And many radicals still cling to the idea that we require a vanguard Party to use the state in order to force a better society on us from above, as if the state is some big, coercive comic book hero ready to swoop in and save us from our rulers.*

*So what does this mean for bringing about social transformation?*

*I think it shows that the economic sphere is closely connected to every other sphere of life. Therefore, "anarchist economics", like all of social life, is not given to easy reduction. This also means that the cultural work that we do matters. When feminists began saying that the "personal is political", they had a good point (and still do). What follows, then, are some theoretical and strategic suggestions given the problems of ideology and culture outlined above.*

### ***Some Suggestions for Intervention***

*The German sociologist, Max Weber (2002), quite eloquently showed in his famous book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, the power that culture has. Because of the ascetic nature of Calvinism, people would work hard and save their money rather than spend it frivolously. The resulting capital accumulation helped lay the basis for investment in nascent industries that led to the rise of capitalism. This illustrates clearly that the divide between "structure" and "culture" is problematic, as they mutually effect, and constitute, one another (rather than the vulgar Marxist idea that the economic base has a determining effect on the culture of a given society).*

*If we accept that we can rid ourselves of the mechanical economism of vulgar Marxism, it seems to me that the first thing we can do, particularly as anarchists, is to discard this notion of there being an unbridgeable chasm between two "camps" within anarchism—lifestylists and social anarchists. When Bookchin (1995) wrote his polemic *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism*, he used the term "lifestylist" to denote such a wide range of people within anarchism that it's unclear what exactly he meant by the term (other than that it was reserved for people he had disagreements with). However, I hear it most often used by anarchists temporarily to insult people who find value in (and politicize!) attempting to embody their politics in their daily lives.*

*The problem with this should be obvious. If the culture(s) that we create and participate in have an effect on society's structures, then part of strategizing for achieving a stateless socialism should take this into account. Further, as anarchists—opposed to all forms of domination—is stateless socialism really "enough"? What good is a stateless socialism, for example, if women are still subordinated to men under such a system? How does stateless socialism guarantee an end to rigid gender roles and essentialist and heavily policed categories for "sexual identity"? How does stateless socialism itself "solve" racism? Perhaps more to the point, what good is a stateless socialism if we continue polluting our environment to the point of extinction (as we are already doing to many species)?*

*Anarchists could learn a lot from feminists (and vice versa), but one thing clearly sticks out here in the context of this discussion. As the anarchist women's organization, Mujeres Libres, noted decades ago, "power has its own logic and will not be abolished through attention to economic relations alone" (Ackelsberg 2005: 37). The personal is, indeed, the political. Things like men treating women with dignity and respect, riding bicycles instead of driving cars, confronting internalized racism, creating and maintaining community gardens, etc. are not going to bring on "the revolution" (another larger conversation could be had by exactly what's meant by that particular formulation). However, they do move us closer to lifeways that are sustainable while addressing hierarchies that would not automatically be resolved under stateless socialism. These can be part and parcel of what Bookchin (1969), ironically enough, referred to as "revolutionary lifestyles" in his earlier work.*

*Beyond the individual actions mentioned above, collective activities like Food Not Bombs, "really really free markets", setting up infoshops and social centers can all challenge the prevailing notion that people will not labor without some monetary gain. They also demonstrate on a small scale that we can organize among ourselves and don't require state directives to act collectively (however limited these instances may be). This kind of "propaganda by the deed", as Uri Gordon (2012) refers to some of these interventions, is useful in creating empowering cultures in which we get to experience non-hierarchical organization within our bodies and share that experience with others.*

*I want to be perfectly clear here about what I'm suggesting. I am not suggesting that these activities can replace work in social movements; or that they can replace actively attacking capital and the state; or that alone they could bring about the radical transformations anarchists want to bring about. What I am suggesting is that we refuse a reductionist view that THE way to bring about social change is through some revolutionary upsurge that in a single event magically fixes problems that a change in social structures alone obviously cannot fix by itself. Likewise, a recognition of the value of all of these kinds of activities would go far in extinguishing some of the debilitating sectarianism that arises from a belief in discrete "camps" of anarchists, "unbridgeable chasms" and the like.*

*Furthermore, this move away from reductionism of all kinds brings us closer to having a much more nuanced understanding of radical social change. The need for radicals to prove the supposed "primacy" of one particular form of hierarchy over all others is quickly becoming passé. Contemporarily, radicals are much more likely to use an intersectional (see, e.g. Hooks 1984, Hill Collins 1990, Boellstorff 2007, Cole 2008) approach to social analysis and change, as*

*advanced by black feminists and womanists. The idea that some struggles are secondary, to be dealt with "on the morrow of the revolution" is, thankfully, taking a backseat to real solidarity in analysis and action (Ackelsberg 2005: 38). Current social movement work is moving towards alliance politics, with disparate groups of people working together, regardless of ideological differences, to end all forms of domination. This reflects a pragmatic ecumenicism rather than a demand for everyone to have The Correct Line on every issue (for an excellent example of this see Best and Nocella 2006).*

*I also think we can state with confidence that, clearly, popular education should continue to be put to use by anarchists who have the inclination and capacity in the here and now—both to combat hegemonic ideas about our relations of ruling, but also to provide alternatives to ideological state apparatuses, especially as expressed through formal schools. I've written about the tensions of being an anarchist in the university before, both as a student (Armaline and Shannon 2009) and as an instructor (Shannon 2009). In short, I recognize the troubles that go along with working within the system of formal education for anti-authoritarians and the problems of trying to co-create free spaces in institutions that were built to function as ideological cages, though I am not prepared to abandon formal schools completely to the apostles of the status quo.*

*But clearly, we could also put energy into setting up alternatives to state-run schools, as anarchists have been noted for doing in the past. Community spaces like infoshops can be used as sites for popular education. Anarchists can work to establish free schools and counter educational institutions in order to build non-hierarchical forms for spreading ideas that counter those put forward by society's masters. And we can support existing efforts embodied in our counter-institutions and the many informal spaces set up for radical discussion and debate that are not confined to formal academic institutions<sup>ii</sup>. Although, without overthrowing the existing social order, these counter-institutions will remain niches for radical thought, they can at least provide a small counter to ideological state apparatuses. At their best, they can provide spaces for helping empower people and connecting education to participation in social movements in the process of attempting to radicalize them.*

*Finally, if we're going to be willing to move beyond economism and class reductionism (something anarchists are known for), we can recognize the value in reinventing our daily lives and the role this plays in revolutionary politics (again, something anarchists have a history of attempting). We can also dispose of the idea that there can be only one revolutionary subjectivity (most typically "working class").*

*For this, we might learn from radical queers, for whom this has become a political project in and of itself. Smashing capitalism includes smashing many of the subjectivities that have been created within its history. Some of us do not fit neatly into pre-made markers of identity. Others move around fluidly between gender and sexual practices. Still others prefer ambiguity. Part of the project of bringing about social transformation must also "include a radical reorganization of sexuality"—one that doesn't force people into supposedly stable identities as a result of their sexual and/or gender practices, then create hierarchies of value out of those identities (Heckert 2004: 101). While I am not suggesting a queer standard by which people's sexual or gender practices are judged (a project that would, by definition, be very "unqueer"), I am suggesting that we support the efforts of people who invent new subjectivities, identities, and ambiguities as*

*well as those who refuse identification altogether. After all, some oppressions are so completely bound up in discourse that structural changes could never fully address them.*

*Further, as long as any of these hierarchies exist, it invites the re-emergence of all the others. None of us are free while others are oppressed and the project of bringing about a libertarian socialist society is completely bound up with the project of destroying all other forms of structured inequality, coercion, and control.*

### **...Raising the Curtain**

I remember one friend describing the process of education as having the curtains raised in her house. She described her life as living in a house that she perceived as the be-all end-all of existence. She knew the house very well and was acquainted with its contents intimately. She never got to see what was outside, spending all day everyday confined within its walls. She never had any reason to believe that anything else existed. And because she never saw what was outside of it, there was little reason to even think about what she might find outside the windows if she looked. Having access to new information was like someone coming into her house and raising the curtains. She explained that now she felt like she could see how many of the things she'd always taken for granted—and how those things, indeed *everything*, should be questioned. Such is the nature of ideology, which serves as a way of containing instead of critical reflection and questioning.

Her story, and others like it, not only illustrate that sometimes, in some contexts, it's enough to simply point out the irony of living in a world where one can see the Statue of "Liberty" from behind the walls of Riker's Island Prison. It also demonstrates that sharing ideas can be a process that breaks down the divide between the giver and receiver of knowledge—that we can learn from each other if we care to listen.

It reminds me that one of the things that we could do to intervene in the stifling and greedy culture encouraged by capitalism is simply to listen to one another. Too often, our politics are framed as denunciations of what we see as our ideological "opponents". We argue to win rather than communicate to grow. And who would want to join in such a divided and sectarian movement? How many people would be comfortable throwing their lot in with a bunch of smug contrarians?

I've tried to make the case here that when we look at anarchist economics and resistance to capitalism, we should not relegate the cultural to secondary importance—nor should we see the "cultural" and "structural" as distinct spheres of life. Part of this process should be "raising the curtain" and challenging orthodoxy. Another part should be creating a reflexive practice that tries to build egalitarian cultural forms in the here and now. Again, it bears repeating, this is not a call to abandon social movements or to stop attacking the institutional arrangements that rule over us (and were created without our consent). It is a call to build a holistic politics that refuses to ignore the role of daily life *and* collective action in bringing about change. It's my belief that such a holistic view gives us the best chance of transforming the totality of social relations. And, as an anarchist, I believe we should accept nothing less.



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## Notes

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<sup>i</sup> Some have even suggested that Marx thought the economy *determined* the rest of social life.

<sup>ii</sup> For some examples of attempts at creating radical counter-institutions, see <http://www.transformativestudies.org/>; <http://www.zmag.org/>; <http://www.globalcommonsfoundation.org/>; <http://www.anarchist-studies.org/>; <http://www.naasn.org/>; <http://imaginenoborders.org/>